

**Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
Regional Centre, Puducherry**

Exhibition and Documentary slide show:

“A Fading Performing Art of South Indian Tradition: Puppetry “

Date: **14th July to 19th July, 2019**

Event: **Exhibition and Documentary slide show: “A Fading Performing Art of South Indian Tradition: Puppetry “**

Venue: **Exhibition House, (Sea Side Gate) Shree Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry**

Time: **4.30 pm to 7.30 pm**

Contact: **9944615164**

Concept Note

The Tholpaavaikoothu (Shadow Puppet) is one of the ancient theatrical performances South India. But this had been performed in as a Temple art and, now a days, it has come to the point of total extinction from the theatrical scenario. This traditional temple art is getting extinct as there are only few families who are still versed in this ancient art form.

Tholpaavai is a compound terms of two words 1. Thol (Leather) 2.Paavai (Doll). It is believed to have been performed even before 9th century AD. But it has spread throughout South India after having its theatrical theme from the episodic events of Kamba Ramayana as its basic performing texts.

The puppets of Tholpaavaikoothu were made of Deerskin but they are now typically made from Goatskin. The puppets are painted in vegetable dyes, as these dyes last long. Some puppets can be as tall as four feet. The puppets are controlled by using two sticks; the puppeteer holds the puppet in one hand while its limbs are manipulated by using a thinner stick, held in the puppeteer's other hand.

Tholpaavaikoothu has been facing the threat of extinction like many traditional art forms. The whys of it lie in the arrival of alternate platforms of entertainments such as Cinema, Television and other social media. The younger generation failed to take up this art form as it does not have been handed over aesthetically by its younger generation. The traditional value Puppetry and the puppetry making practice too are very important if we aspire to get it preserved and handed over to the forth coming generations.

The RCP identified “Rajapa Kalaikuzhus” Pappatri performer Shri Kuppusamy, the only son of National Awardee Shri Rajapa from Vadhanoor. His family has been performing the traditional puppetry show for more than 4 generations. RCP visited his village and requested him to Curate and Exhibit his rare and old puppets, which are made out of leather (around 70 Puppets on various sizes).

It is highly combat upon our centre to honour them with a meaningful support at least to mitigate their pangs of penury. By this exhibition wholesome acknowledgement given by our IGNCAs and shouldering the responsibility and the care of preserving the traditional ancient theatrical art form by mean of conducting exhibition and documentary slide show on behalf of IGNCAs, RCP, under the title of "A Fading Performing Art of South Indian Tradition: Puppetry".