



STEPARC

PUTHALIKA PATRIKA

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Warm Greetings to All !!

India has long treasured history of traditional arts and crafts that have developed over ages. Just not each region, but even the smallest hamlet or community have their own unique traditions. These traditional arts are earning arts for livelihood. Some of these art forms are slowly disappearing, unheard and unknown. The irony is a few are striving to exist midst of digital world and a few are getting tagged as '*dying arts*'. Is it for the reason that the arts and culture sector is often given less importance in economic development policies? or is it due to non availability or non existence of artists, craftsmen and the communities? Or is it due to lack of recognition and remuneration paid to the artists or skilled craftsmen? Alternatively, no more audience are appreciating and honoring these artists and art forms? Or is it that the most of the artists and craftsmen reside at isolated locations and finding it difficult to meet a hand to mouth situation and are forced to leave their traditional work? Or is it due to continuous pronouncement of 'dying art forms', 'dying art forms...' and making the art form extinct? One has to look in the rapid change in lifestyle, aging, the vast collection of oral literature, knowledge that continued and raised the artists, performers, craftsmen and the community at large is fast disappearing from the mainstream in the present day context. Well, we as art lovers need to explore the best possibilities towards the re-emergence of the arts forms.

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Best

Padmini Rangarajan

Traditional Puppetry of Karnataka State, India

In a way, we need to be thankful to the western researchers and scholars who have not only taken great interest and initiative to study the rich folklore and folk arts of India



but also documented it. Namely **Col. Colin McKenzie**, who came to India in 1783 collected around 2076 "*Kaifiyath's*" in various regions of Karnataka.

They contained valuable information regarding folk mythology, legends, stories, beliefs, medicines, rituals, and so on. Later, many other Western and Indian Scholars have enriched this field with their invaluable



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contributions. Be it **Somana kunitha**, or **Dollu kunitha**, **Doddatta** or **Sannata** or **Bombeyatta**. In Karnataka, the traditional puppetry has existed since ancient times. One can easily find the references of the same in the compositions of *Devaranamas* songs composed by '**Sri Kanakadasa**' and '**Sri Purandaradasa**'.

Thanks to the Institutions established by the government and private individuals such as '**Janapada and Yakshagana Academy**', '**Kannada Sahitya Parishath**', '**Karnataka Janapada trust and Regional Research Centre of Udupi**' are conducting a systematic study of folklore and also This is the ray of hope for the future existence of the folk art forms.

According to research studies in most part of Karnataka one could find eight types of puppets prevailing, like: Joint Puppets, String Puppets, Rod Puppets, Shadow puppets, String-Rod combination puppets, Garudi Gombe, Glove puppets, and Yakshagana style string puppets which further has two different styles called-Tenkutittu and Badagatittu.

Prof. S.A. Krishnaiah has done extensive research on string puppeteers of Karnataka. According to him, in 2002-2003, there were around 32-35 string puppeteers performing in the state, however, their number has gradually come down.

There is an interesting news of mechanized puppet called **Kilu Gombe** show in a village named **Acchatnahalli** in Kolar district that performed pounding, moving cradle, singing and so on. According to Sri M.R. Ranganatha Rao-a Senior Puppeteer and Sangeet Natak Academy award, opines that it was during Dussera Shri Sanjeeva Reddy directed it. Later, this tradition is passed on to his brothers who are now continuing with the performance during the Dussera festival.

The uniqueness of all these puppet forms in Karnataka is that they are quite distinctive in style, puppet costumes, music rendition, and performance style resembling **Mudalpaya Yakshgana** known as Eastern style and **Doddaata** live folk theatre style.

Padmashri Award to Smt. Moozhikal Pankajakshi



Smt. Moozhikal Pankajakshi, one of the veterans of the art form of the art form '**Nokku Vidya Paavakali**' awarded Padmashri – India's Fourth Highest Civilian Honour 2020. Moozhikkal Pankajakshi is Kerala's last surviving link with Nokkuvidya Pavakkali - a unique form of puppetry that is centuries old."This puppetry form requires the performer to balance puppets on the upper lip and manage the movements with constant gaze and by controlling the strings"-Says Smt. Moonzhikal Pankajakshi. For five centuries, Moozhikkal Pankajakshi's ancestors have



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practiced Nokkuvidya Pavakkali in Kerala. She started learning at the age of 8, she has been carrying on their inheritance by performing this original puppet theatre form across India and the world. The 81-year-old is credited with preserving a traditional art form that is today under the threat of extinction. Now, she has started training her granddaughter and grandson who are carrying forward the family legacy.



Announcement:

"Katha Sangraha"-Call for short stories to be featured in Puthalika Patrika. The best Stories will be awarded and adapted for our in-house production.

Puppeteer of the Month: Smt. Sandhya Sabane

Marathi theatre has always been regarded as one of the most culturally rich theatre traditions in the country. '**Kalasutri Bahuliya**' as traditional puppetry is known in Marathi has its origin in 1600 A.D. '**Kal**' meaning forefingers of the human hand, '**Sutri**' meaning black thread and '**Bahuliya**' meaning puppets.

In the city of Pune resides **Smt Sandhya Jayant Sabane** with Master studies in Hindi and is engaged in performing puppet shows and training in puppetry since 1990.

It was in 1989, during the Durga pooja festival, the Bengali Samiti organised for a puppet show '**Alibaba and the Forty Thieves**'. The excellent soundtrack and an extraordinary show drew Sandhya ji

towards puppets. She then turned her daughter's decapitated doll into a puppet. She arranged it in a manner that would allow the puppet's head to rest on her index finger, and the puppet's dress could be supported using her thumb and pinky or little finger. She never dreamt that her first successful maneuver of the puppet would be a turning point in her life!



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This germination seed of puppet making pushed Sandhya ji to try out different varieties of puppet characters like birds, animals, etc. Her neighbourhood little children were the first audience. She named her show as "**Magical cave**". For this show she made a handful of specialized



puppets, including those of a king, queen, prince, princess, folk song singer, maid, monster, sparrow, fish, lion, and of course, the magical cave it included drama and songs, story and narration by her. Her family also supported her passion by arranging good lights and music. The success of her first show boosted her confidence to take up puppetry art seriously.

In the beginning years, she performed storytelling with puppets at Marathi medium kindergarten schools. Then she structures the lesson plan based puppet show for schools.



Simultaneously, she started experimenting with different types of puppets and puppet making. She works in collaboration with a Pune-based NGOs named **Swaroop Vardhinee, Kamayani, Jeevandhara, Nari Samata Manch, Urmi and Action for the Rights of the Child (ARC)**. The word of mouth has made Sandhya ji move far and wide for more shows in other cities, **Wai, Ratnagiri, and Satara**. Even after thirty years of journey into the field of Puppetry, Sandhya ji, is not only opened to learn the art from various sources like institutions and internet but thrives hard to save this art form from declining.

Ideas for DIY puppets from best out of waste

There are many things that we dump in the trash as waste. Before, dumping it is a good to reuse waste than can reduce dumping waste. The best way is to recycle waste into craft projects. There are several things made from waste materials at home. Teachers can make use of these waste things like empty carton boxes of soaps, oats, choacos or so and make wonderful talking puppet project works.

A word of caution:

Kindly avoid **toxic waste** like old medicines, paints, chemicals, bulbs, spray cans, fertilisers and pesticide containers, batteries, shoe polish, packages and boxes and so on. Toxic waste can be dangerous and harmful to health and bad for the well-being of all. It is important to get rid of them immediately.

Uses of using other healthy wastes:

- ✓ It's fun fun and a creative way to keep children occupied in waste management projects.
- ✓ Helps to develop imagination.
- ✓ Develops the ability to think and organize things before wasting and reuse and recycle.
- ✓ Best explore the environmental concepts and actions which are beyond the curriculum & syllabus.
- ✓ Best control the harmful effects of waste on our environment.

Create awareness among students to use the waste products in the best possible manes. Various things can be put to different uses. Recycling and reusing the valuable waste material does result in development of fantastic and usable products.



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Look for the waste materials that you find around and make a list. Then think what best can be made out of it. Sit with children engage them in telling stories and make puppets. Below are a few pictures of puppets that can inspire you to try it out.



Announcement:

Artists, Art lovers, Parents, Teachers, anyone passionate towards traditional and folk arts are welcome to contribute articles for **Puthalika Patrika Puppetry News Magazine**

For enquiries about Storytelling, storytelling with puppets, Puppet shows, puppet making workshop and customized puppet making contact:

Editor: Padmini Rangarajan