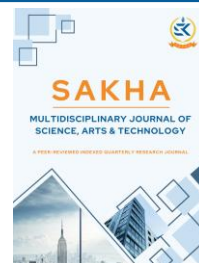




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Devarattam - A Historical View

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Abstract

Folk dances are the gateways that reveal the Tamil tradition, the way of life of the people and the cultural roots of the land. The main occupation of these people is hunting. Through this game, we can see how the human body works while hunting. Devarattam is performed as a ritual event, not as a recreational game or a professional game to please people. When we say Devarattam, we tend to associate it with the caste of gods. Devarattam has no connection with the Devarina people. Most of the rituals that take place in the life of the carpet weavers are performed outside the village. This place is called Mandhai or Kottaimedu. The ritual of building a hut in the flower ceremony held in the Kambalathu Nayak community and the ritual on the 16th day of bringing the flower-covered woman home from the herd are notable. Musically arranged sounds and body movements like Parinamitra are given the names of dance and atom. The original poetry composed by man under the inspiration of his poetic sense is presented as dance. Devarattam is a social activity of the Sumanathars, which has a unifying effect that unites all the members of the community. It also has a collective effect that unites the individual with the community and has a wide platform where even a hundred people can dance together at the same time. Devarattam is characterized by its freedom, simple control, and attracts and captivates everyone.

Keywords: Ceremony, Movements, Positions.

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Introduction

Folk dances are the gateways that reveal the Tamil tradition, the way of life of the people and the cultural roots of the land. In this, the performers of a particular folk dance art will perform according to the mood of the audience who will accept the conditions in their culture through their dance art. This will also be in line with the worship of the gods. The art of Devarattam, which includes such dances, is performed by the Rasa Kambalathar living in Tamil Nadu.

The Kambalathu Nayaks live in the districts of Tirunelveli, Madurai, Dindigul, Trichy, Coimbatore, Salem, and Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu, and are widespread in other areas, with their ancient cultural traditions. Darshan mentions that they migrated to Tamil Nadu from Andhra Pradesh in the 16th century.

The main occupation of these people is hunting. Through this game, we can see how the human body works while hunting. Devarattam is performed as a ritual event, not as a recreational game or a professional game to please people. When we say Devarattam, we tend to associate it with the caste of gods. Devarattam has no connection with the Devarina people. The word Devar in Devarattam refers to the gods. 'Devara Nuvodu' means God is the helper. It is said that the Kambalathu Nayakkars are playing the game in the name of Devarattam, which is played by the gods called roots. They believe that Kannan lifted the Govardhana Giri mountain with one finger and saved the Yadavas from the evil deeds of Indra and that we are the descendants of that caste. They do not start this game without thinking of their clan deity Jakkamma. This game is played only by men. At least 9 players are required for this. We will take a detailed look at this traditional game in this article.

Circumstances in which the Devarattam is Performed

Most of the rituals that take place in the life of the carpet weavers are performed outside the village. This place is called Mandhai or Kottaimedu. The word Sangiyam is used for the ritual. Rituals are considered to be of two types. 1. Rituals of transition (performed when a person changes from one social status to another. For example, the Pookunitha Nirattu ceremony, marriage, etc.) 2. Rituals of worship associated with the imagined deity (worship of minor deities, worship of major deities)

2.1 Flower Ceremony

The ritual of building a hut in the flower ceremony held in the Kambalathu Nayak community and the ritual on the 16th day of bringing the flower-covered woman home from the herd are notable. After completing various rituals for 16 days, the woman is brought home with a procession. The herd and the streets where this event takes place become the stage for the procession.

2.2 Wedding Ceremony

The Devarattam is closely associated with the wedding of the Kambalathars. The groom is welcomed and brought in by the Devarattamadi by making him stand outside the village and playing the Devarattam. In this context, the Devarattam performed is a dance to welcome the new relationship coming to their village and to dance with joy. After the various rituals are completed, the groom is taken to the bride's hut and the bride to the groom's hut with the Devarattam. The Thali tying ceremony also takes place in the early morning.

2.3 Death Ritual

The sixteenth day ritual is important in the death ritual of the Kambalathar. This ritual is performed in the Urum Manda. The custom of worshipping the ancestors in the name of the evening deity during the sixteenth day ritual has been passed down from generation to generation. They perform such worship in the hope that the spirits of the ancestors will humble them. The old dances called the Pettha Kala Attam in the Devarattam are performed during the death ritual.

2.4 From a Structural Perspective, Devarattam

Musically arranged sounds and body movements like Parinamitra are given the names of dance and atam. The original poetry composed by man under the inspiration of his poetic sense is presented as dance. Many body parts move simultaneously. Paying attention to the order in which the movements and connection methods of the significant body parts are arranged in the dance tradition will help in understanding the dance.

Physiological Elements and Methods of Reaching Movements of the Right Hand

Extending towards the floor in front, lifting above the head, lifting and folding above the head, extending straight to the arms, folding forward straight to the chest like a "D", extending straight to the face, leaving it on the right side, lowering from top to bottom, placing the hand on the waist, rotating the hand in front, rotating the hand in the back.

3.1 Left Arm Movements

Touching the floor in front, lifting above the head, bending the chest in a straight position, lifting the head, taking it back to the left, extending it to the side, rotating it to the left, placing it on the hip, crutches on the floor.

3.2 Wrist Movements

Bending and rotating it inward, palm facing the face, palm facing outward, palm facing up, palm facing the floor.

3.3 Leg Movements

3.3.1 Right Leg Movements

Foot fully on the floor, putting the foot forward, putting the foot forward and punching it back, putting it to the right side, putting it to the right side and punching it forward, tapping in a standing position, tapping the foot and jumping to the side, lifting the leg forward, lifting the leg back, walking forward with eight, placing it in front and to the side for hip movement, Sitting on the half-knee, stretching the leg with the hand.

3.3.2 Left Leg Movements

Putting it forward, taking it back, jumping to the left, crossing the left leg over the right leg, moving forward, jumping to the half-knee.

3.3.3 Two-Legged Joint Movements

Starting position of the game, stepping with the soles of the feet on the ground, sitting with both legs, walking around with both legs on the hands, jumping with both legs, jumping with both legs together and turning.

3.3.4 Body Positions

Hands folded, standing, crouching, leaning to the right, leaning to the left, moving the body forward, moving the body backward, sitting on the half-knees, leaning on the floor with hands on the ground forward and backward, clapping, lifting the legs to the right and left sides, moving forward, jumping, washing clothes, pounding rice, shooting, holding, and rowing.

Conclusion

Devarattam is a social activity of the Sumpnanathars, which has a unifying effect that unites all the members of the community. It also has a collective effect that unites the individual with the community and has a wide platform where even a hundred people can dance together at the same time. Devarattam is characterized by its freedom, simple control, and attracts and captivates everyone.

The Kambalathar Devarattam can be danced at any time. They do not hesitate to dance. The elegant dance expression of those who can dance in this art is worthy of admiration and excellence. However, there are unique performance environments for the Kambalathar. It is only in that environment that the Kambalathar can be felt and understood properly. The Kambalathar can be seen regularly performing the Kambalathar Devarattam in the life and ritual events of worship, and the Kambalathar themselves can be seen as participants. They can also be seen as spectators.

The Kambalathar have the pride of preserving and preserving the ancient cultural traditions, rituals, dance arts, and folk customs of Tamil Nadu. But the various arts of the Tamils are not preserved. This art is one of them. The Kambalathar culture is widespread. It is a treasury of ideas, a repository, and a cultural treasure trove for ethnographic data.

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