

## A COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE ON PERFORMING ARTS OF TAMIL NADU AT MINNESOTA

(Minnesota Tamil Sangam, USA)

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### ABSTRACT :

This research paper concentrates the performing arts of Tamil Nadu at Minnesota organised by Minnesota Tamil Sangam with the help of Minnesota Arts Board to conduct their summer workshop. This workshop was started in the year of 2017. The workshop of this year conducted from 8<sup>th</sup> of June to 10<sup>th</sup> of August. The purpose of this paper is to give awareness among the people about our traditional and performing arts of Tamil Nadu. This paper deals with qualitative research which includes data collection, particularly the participative observation and Interview method. The researcher of this paper is one of the trainer in that workshop who involved directly and collected the information through participative observation in a sociological aspect. The hypothesis of study is **‘Performing arts a good communication tool to know about our culture and heritage’**. From this study we can able to understand and disseminate the essence of our culture and heritage all over the world.

### INTRODUCTION :

Minnesota Tamil Sangam is a member based, non – profit organisation formed exclusively for **CHARITABLE, CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL** purpose of promoting Tamil Culture to Tamil community in the state of Minnesota registered as 501 (c) (3). The charitable purpose is to give awards yearly scholarship towards the bachelor graduation for ALL the students who acquired Bilingual. The cultural purpose of MNTS is to conduct various programs and performances to enrich the Tamil Culture. And the educational purpose is to have an integral unit for MNTS Tamil School which focus on language and arts. Minnesota Tamil population is estimated to be around 5000. It brings all Tamilians in Minnesota together with a primary objective of strengthening and expanding the reach of the Tamil Culture to the second generation Tamil kids.

Every year MNTS conducts workshops to learn Tamil Traditional Folk arts like Nadhaswaram, Thavil and other Folk dances of Tamil Nadu through a grant from Minnesota State Arts Board like summer workshop for two months from June to August. This is a free 50 hours workshop given to all Music enthusiastic throughout in Minnesota. This particular workshop was started in the year of 2017 under Minnesota Arts Board, USA.

MNTS calls Folk Artist from India to conduct above workshops at Minnesota in summer holidays. For the last 2 years Folk Artists from India went and conducted those workshops. So this year of 2019, five Folk Artist from India travelled Minnesota and conducted the various performing arts and Percussion Instruments training of Tamil Nadu.

Many enthusiastic students were participated and learnt Folk dances of Tamil Nadu through this workshop. This paper has selected only 5 folk dances and its steps, percussion instrument and its rhythm by followed the descriptive study method and participative observation.

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**The Objectives of this research paper are :**

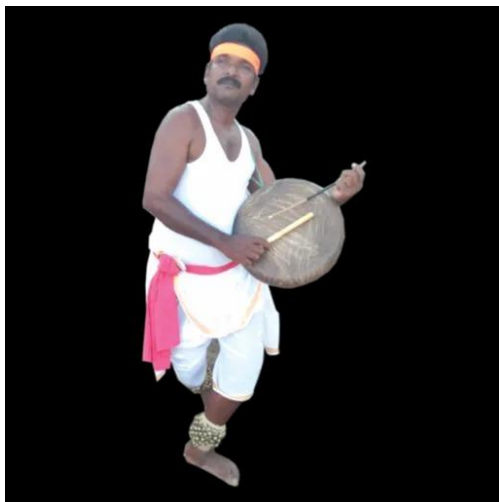
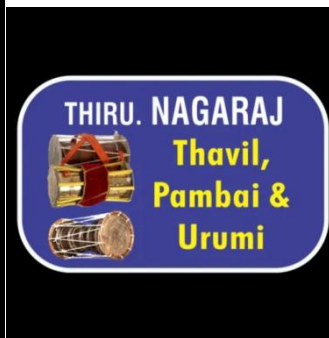
- To give the awareness for people about their culture and heritage.
- To emphasize the importance of folk dances and it's needed for our future generation.
- To document the steps names of folk dances is needed to the society.
- To educate the performing arts helps the opportunity to engage the mind, body and emotions into such collaborative expression for all human.
- To inculcate the students for exploring and presenting great themes and ideas in their life through traditional art forms.

**Summer Workshop :**

MNTS's two months summer workshop was started from 8<sup>th</sup> of June to 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 2019. The first day inauguration meeting was conducted by MNTS with above 80 people including kids were participated 'Thirukural Competition' on that day. Mr. Sivanandham is one of the leader of MNTS introduced all 5 artists one by one those who came from India. The following artists **Mr. Marimuthu (Nadhaswaram)**, **Mr. Nagaraj (Thavil and pampai)**, **Mr. Rengaraju (Parai and Folk singing)**, **Mr. Anandh (Parai, Other Folk dances and Folk singing)** and **Me, Dr. Arul Selvi (Parai, Others Folk dances and Folk Singing)** were stayed in New Hope City and conducted several workshops at PIM (Performing Institute of Minnesota) Arts High School.

**The following pictures are about artists:**







MNTS Workshop Flyer :



50 workshops were conducted by Minnesota Tamil Sangam in this year. Many workshops were happened in PIM and some the other part of Minnesota. Around 75 participants learnt and performed about Tamil Nadu Musical Instruments and folk dances.

### Communication Perspective on Tamil Nadu Folk Dances:

The purpose of MNTS's workshops on folk dances is people to know and understand about the importance of Tamil Culture and Heritage. Because folk dances will be having an educational process whereby the central process is the learning and studying the dance as the medium to understand one's self society and culture. It is an inner impulse of man to rhythm or music expressing his feeling of joy, moods, sentiments or any human experience.

Folk dances are numerous in number and style, and vary according to the local tradition of the respective state, ethnic or geographic regions. Here in Minnesota, different kind of Folk Dances of Tamil Nadu like **Kummiyattam, Oyilattam, Kaliyalattam, Kambathattam, Kaisilambattam, Badugarattam, Cheranaattu kummi, Paraiyattam and Parai with Bharatham** were conducted by artist who travelled from India.

This research paper have analysed particularly two folk dances of aforementioned as communication perspective. Those information are coming below :

## 1. Paraiyattam :

Paraiyattam is one of the old traditional folk dance of Tamil Nadu. It has been an instrumental part of all the celebrations in Tamil culture. In earlier period, Parai was used for multiple purpose which were during festivals, wedding celebrations, worship on nature, warning the wild animals about people's presence, gathering farmers for farming activities and so on. Parai is a leather instrument which will be the main percussion instrument used in paraiyattam. Performers does the steps according to Parai rhythm.

So it is considered as one of the symbols of Tamil culture why because this percussion instrument is the root for all other leather instruments which we are using now. It will be a circular wooden frame preferred neem wood with one end closed. Cow skin uses around the frame by with the help of tamarind paste. One side is covered and the other side will be in open. There will be a small whole for putting leather rope will help to hang parai in shoulder. Typically people hang parai in their left shoulder and beat it with two sticks. One is larger and thinner made by flat bamboo stick is called 'Sindu kuchi or Simbadi kuchi'. The other one is thick and shoter is called 'Adi kuchi'. Left hand will hold Sindu kuchi and the right Adi kuchi. Both sticks are used for beating rhythm in different way.



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### Paraiyattam Team :

There were 2 paraiyattam team in this workshop. The first team is already learnt paraiyattam for the last 2 years. The other team is called 'Beginners parai team'.



**Parai Team 1 :****Parai Team 2 :**

Both teams were learning more Parai rhythm and its steps. The first team trained by Mr. Godwin Anand and the second team trained by Mr. Rangaraju. The following rhythms inculcated for both the team participants.

**Lyrics of Rhythm :****வாசிக்கும் முறைகள் :**

- இடது கை குச்சி : சிண்டுக்குச்சி (Left hand stick)
- + வலது கை குச்சி : அடிக்குச்சி (Right hand stick)
- ± இரு கை இணைந்து இசைத்தல் (Both left and right)  
(சிண்டுக்குச்சியும் அடிக்குச்சியும் சேர்த்து வாசித்தல்)

**முதல் நிலை :****தாளம் 1 :**

-	-	-	-
த	த	த	த
1	2	3	4

**தாளம் 2 :**

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
த	த	த	த	த	த	த	த
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

**தாளம் 3 :**

- +	- +	- +	- +
தக்கு	தக்கு	தக்கு	தக்கு
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

**தாளம் 4 :**

- +	- +	- +	- +	- +	- +	- +
தக்கு	தக்கு	தக்கு	தக்கு	தக்கு	தக்கு	தக்கு
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10	11 12	13 14 15 16

**தாளம் 5 :**

--	--	--	--
தத	தத	தத	தத
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

**தாளம் 6 :**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
தத	தத	தத	தத	தத	தத	தத	தத
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10	11 12	13 14	15 16

**தாளம் 7 :**

++	++	++	++
குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

**தாளம் 8 :**

++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++
குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு	குக்கு
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10	11 12	13 14	15 16

**தாளம் 9 :**

-++
தகுக்கு
1 2 3

**தாளம் 10 :**

-++	-++
தகுக்கு	தகுக்கு
1 2 3	4 5 6

**தாளம் 11 :**

-++	-++	-++	-++
தகுக்கு	தகுக்கு	தகுக்கு	தகுக்கு
1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12

**தாளம் 11 :**

-++	-++	-++	-++
தகுக்கு	தகுக்கு	தகுக்கு	தகுக்கு
1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12

**தாளம் 12 :**

-++			-++			-++			-++		
தகுக்கு			தகுக்கு			தகுக்கு			தகுக்கு		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
-++			-++			-++			-++		
தகுக்கு			தகுக்கு			தகுக்கு			தகுக்கு		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

**தாளம் 13 :**

±
தீம்
1

**தாளம் 14 :**

±	±
தீம்	தீம்
1	2

**தாளம் 15 :**

±	±	±	±
தீம்	தீம்	தீம்	தீம்
1	2	3	4

**தாளம் 16 :**

±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±
தீம்	தீம்	தீம்	தீம்	தீம்	தீம்	தீம்	தீம்
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

**தாளம் 17 :**

± +
தீம்கு
1 2

**தாளம் 18 :**

± +	± +
தீம்கு	தீம்கு
1 2	3 4

**தாளம் 19 :**

± +	± +	± +	± +
தீம்கு	தீம்கு	தீம்கு	தீம்கு
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

**தாளம் 20 :**

--	++
தத	குகு
1 2	3 4

**இரண்டாம் நிலை :****தாளம் 1 :**

-	++	-
த	கூக்கு	தா
1	2 3	4



**தாளம் 2 :**

-        ++    -                -        ++    -  
 த   கூக்கு தா த   கூக்கு தா  
 1   2 3   4   5   6 7   8

**தாளம் 3 :**

-        ++    -                -        ++    -                -        ++    -        -        ++    -  
 த   கூக்கு தா த   கூக்கு தா த   கூக்கு தா   த   கூக்கு தா   த   கூக்கு தா  
 1   2 3   4   5   6 7   8   9   10 11   12 13   14 15 16

**தாளம் 4 :**

-+ +                -+ +                -+ +                - +  
 தகுக்கு   தகுக்கு   தகுக்கு   தக்கு  
 1 2 3   4 5 6   6 7 8   9 10

**தாளம் 5 :**

±        ±        -+ +        -+  
 தீம்   தீம்   தகுக்கு   தக்கு  
 1   2   3 4 5   6 7

**தாளம் 6 :**

--        ++        -  
 தத   குக்கு   தா  
 1 2   3 4   5

**தாளம் 7 :**

--        --        --        ++        -  
 தத   தத   தத   குக்கு தா  
 1 2   3 4   5 6   7 8   9

**தாளம் 8 :**

±        -+  
 தீம்கு   தக்கு  
 1 2   3 4

**தாளம் 9 :**

±+        -+        ±+        -+  
 தீம்கு   தக்கு   தீம்கு   தக்கு  
 1 2   3 4   5 6   7 8

**தாளம் 10 :**

±+    -+        +        ±+    -+        ±+        -+        ±+    -+  
 தீம்கு   தக்கு   தீம்கு   தக்கு   தீம்கு   தக்கு   தீம்கு   தக்கு  
 1 2   3 4   5 6   7 8   9 10   11 12 13 14   15 16

**தாளம் 11 :**

±+        -+ +    -+ +                - +  
 தீம்கு   தகுக்கு   தகுக்கு   தக்கு  
 1 2   3 4   5   6   7 8

**தாளம் 12 :**

±+        - +    -+ +                - +  
 தீம்கு   தக்கு   தகுக்கு தக்கு  
 1 2   3 4   5 6   7 8

Totally 13 steps were taught the students and they have done all the steps very happily with aforementioned rhythms. We can know the step's details which follow:

**Name of the Steps :**

1. Front and Back Step
2. Hip movement step
3. Bend and Straight step
4. Side movement step
5. Side turning step
6. Right leg lift up step
7. Walk and stop step
8. 'V' Shape step
9. Head shaking step
10. Sala salappu step
11. Both side movement step
12. Both side body slanting step
13. Right leg lift up and look back side step

**2. Kummiyattam :**



**Kummiyattam** is a kind of traditional folk dance which performs by women. It is popular in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in India mostly Tamil women will do this in a circle format. There are many references about kummi in Tamil Literature like Ahanaanooru, Palamozhy Naanooru, Silappathiharam in the names of 'Komma, kaihalai kuvithu kottuthal'. Researchers are saying that kummi might be come from the word of 'Kuravai' which comes under ancient Tamil Art and Culture. This dance will be in simple steps with rhythmic clapping.

Particularly this dance is performed by women in various harvesting activities. The main purpose of kummi is to express the happy of people because of getting profit from their agricultural land.

**There are different clapping methods which follows:**

1. Both hand clapping together
2. Clapping right hand on left hand
3. Clapping left hand on right hand
4. Worship clapping on up and down

The above clapping methods have taught the students in first and followed the worship clapping method. Totally 10 steps were inculcated in this class.

**Playing Instruments :**

Thavil and Nayanam will be accompanied in this dance.

**Lyrics of rhythm :**

Typically Themmaangu beat will be using in this dance.

*தீம்த தகித தகித தத்தா*

*தீம்த தகித தகித தத்தா*

**Name of the steps:**

1. Forward and Backward Step
2. Hip shacking Step
3. ‘ + ’ Shape Step
4. Clapping near right ear Step
5. Fan Step
6. Double clapping Step
7. Finger rotating and right moving Step
8. Boat movement step
9. Kneel Step
10. Hip rotating Step

**Suggestions and Recommendations :**

- ❖ From this study we can able to understand the value of our culture and heritage and things to be done to protect it for satisfied and valuable life. Tamil culture is one of main thing of the Tamil people. Here are some suggestions and recommendations which help to protect our traditional art forms.
- ❖ Our folk dances are very important because they help to keep our culture alive. People who are interested have been performing folk dances for hundreds of years above to keep valuable one of traditional art forms.
- ❖ Folk dances are a kind of art and entertainment tools which will help us to enjoy with our emotions and feelings because they all are group and individual performance with some classical forms for getting popularity and entertainment value. We have to understand the link

between folk dances and our emotions and feelings which are needed in every human life will be fun and meaningful.

- ❖ It is helping to get a physical strength of our body to increase flexibility and improve heart and lung health. Through this way people can improve their memory to understand in a good manner with full of confidence.
- ❖ Folk dances of Tamil Nadu are developed by people and it reflects the life of the people of a certain country or any region etc. Culture is the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular society. It is also a proper method which gives importance for children to become a part of the culture by inculcating their ideas and customs through folk songs and dances. We can save our young generation to live with happiness. Now a day our younger generation mind does not have solutions to the problems. Folk art forms will help them the realities of life in its bare form.
- ❖ There are many advantages to explain about our traditional art forms. This research paper has suggested some of the points above to protect and save our culture and heritage.

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