**SPACE AND AUDIENCE : The Performance Culture in Shadow Puppet Play Of South India, Special Reference To *Tholpavakoothu* Of Kerala.**

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Based on Shadow Puppet Play which is an artform popular in South India,this  paper examines how **Space** and **Audience** are the essential elements of a theatre art.

This is an attempt to explain the characteristics of space in the performance of this artform and the presence and absence of the audience through a comprehensive study of Tholpavakoothu(Shadow Puppet Play), a ritual artform popular in the state of Kerala.Tholpavakoothu performed in Kerala dates back to the very ancient and based on popularTamil text‘Kamba Ramayana’.It is unfortunate that today  this ritual artform is performed in less than eighty Temples in Kerala.

The primary aim of this paper is to bring this dying artform  to the attention of the masses and scholars.The theoretical analysis in this paper is mainly inspired from the idea of absent audience by Blackburn and various  concepts on space  by Gay McAuley.In addition, this paper draws on the  conceptulaization of space by Anne Ubersfiled and Michael Isscharoff .

**KEY WORDS**: Narration,Space,Audience,Absent audience,Scenic and Extra scenic space

**Man, art and puppetry**

Puppet making is one of the earliest artistic expressions of man. Puppet making can be traced back to the beginning of artistic life all over the world. Puppets have been found in remains of Mohenjodaro and Harappa as well.

There is evidence that dates back to the use of shadow puppets by Emperor Han in China. Puppetry is a precursor to theatre. It dates back to the times of Satavahanas, Pallavas and Chalukyas in India. This paper attempts to focus on puppetry in Kerala - known as Tholpappakoothu which is quite different from puppetry in other parts of India. Kamba Ramayanam1, the Tamil translation of Valmiki's Ramayana is the core text for Tholpavakoothu.

‘Thol’ means leather, ‘Pava’ means Doll and ‘Koothu’ means the Play. Legends says as follows on the origin of tholpavakoothu.Bhadrakali requested to Siva to see the legendry battle again since she couldnot witness Ravanas’ kiling by Rama.Then the Lord Siva commanded to her to visit a Bhadrakali temple to witness tholpavakoothu for the first time.

Tholpavakoothu is ritually performed in Bhagavati/Bhadrakali temples in Kerala. Usually it is performed for twenty one days. Perceiving Tholpavakoothu as an ancient visual art performance, the unique combination of presence and absence of the audience becomes easy to understand. Tholpavakoothu is a fusion of several narratives. Although there is puppetry in Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the uniqueness of Tholpavakoothu in Kerala is that it is a ritualistic art form. The concept of the absent audience introduced by Stuart Blackburn helps to explain the narrative uniqueness of Tholpavakoothu. Concepts from Sridevi Nair's paper in the journal *Studies in Theater and Performance* have been quoted directly in this paper. While going into the details of performance of this ritual art, this paper attempts to address some of the narratives missed by the above mentioned scholars. The theoretical concepts of *Gay McAuley on Space,* Michael Issacharoff on scenic space and extra-scenic space and Blackburn on absent audience are also used.

**Koothumadom(Stage)**

The puppetry is performed in the Koothumadom, which is a permanently built structure in the temple premises. A ‘madom’ is a raised space made of wood. The floor of the madom is six feet high. A three-and-a-half feet wide milky white curtain and beneath it is a black cloth tied to the koothumadom. It is through this white curtain (Ayappudava) that the audience can see the puppetry performance.

Inside the Koothumadam there will be a wood log as long as the Koothumadam (about 40 feet) with 21 holes spaced one foot apart. In this, a coconut shell is kept and a lamp is lit. This is known as the *vilakku madom* (lighthouse).Cherathu or Diyas(lamps made of clay) are also used in small temples. The lights will be at five feet above the ground. The inner part of the tile roofed koothumadom is walled on three sides. The rule is to stand on the koothumadam during the performance2 (sitting on a chair or stool is not allowed. But this custom is not followed today.)

*Madapulavar* (Head Narrator) narrates the story of Ramayana from the birth of Lord Rama to his coronation. The koothu is held till dawn, with the chanting of the verses and the co performer asking questions and giving the main performer an opportunity to narrate the details. The audience can experience the shadows formed by the lamps of the *vilakku madom* when the puppets that are nailed to the curtain are moved according to the act and the story telling of the Pulavars. Thus a special emotional realm of music and visuals is created.

Tholpavakoothu artist Ramachandra Pulavar gives a list of seventyfive temples where koothu is practiced today.Only a very small audience attends it. But every year Koothu is held. Most of today's koothu performers are engaged in other occupations. Even when the artists make a meager income, they are not ready to deny their traditional right to perform in the temples.(Interview with Ramachandra Pulavar in 2022)

In the very beginning of his book, ‘Inside the Drama house,’ Stuart Blackburn, who has studiedon tholpavakoothu, worries about the absent audiences.(Black Burn,Stuart 1996) Blackburn watched with curiosity the visual of pulavars walking back to the next shop in the morning after their performance without an applauding audience. Blackburn's absent audience brings to light not only the emptiness of the tholpavakoothu grounds, but also the invisible presences that serve as an integral part of the narrative structure of theater art. Blackburn describes in detail how invisible presences work.

**Ritual**

Only pulavars and musicians can enter the koothu madoms. They can enter only with the permission of the *Madapulavar.* Spectators are not allowed. This rule is because Koothumadam is considered as the goddess’ sacred space. But today the audience is breaking this precedent. They enter with their mobile phones and camera and click pictures. Pulavars are not allowed to pose for photos during the narration. Even though there is electricity, the performers are careful not to put a bulb inside the Koothumadom. The lamp, which is lit from the temple, is hung in front of the koothu madom. It is from this hanging lamp that a lamp is lit inside the Koothumadam after the Kelikottu(first stage of performance). Bhagavati-the goddess- gives the light to present the story of Ramayana. The ritualistic nature of tholpavakoothu can be explained as an act performed for the goddess with her help. It is believed that the land is blessed when Bhagavati is content hearing the story of Rama.

**The land (Desam)**

The land (Desam) turns into a staging ground for the Pavakoothu performance. It was believed that once the performance started, the people of the land should not go to a feast or go to another place to spend the night. Even today the boundaries of the land have not changed. joint families and ancestral houses have given way to nuclear families. Such strict rules are not followed anymore. But today, no one considers this important. Most people visit only on the last day of the narration which deals with the coronation of lord Sri Rama.This is called ‘Koothabhishekam’.

**The self of the lead narrator(Head narrator)**

The lead narrator(Head narrator) is also known as Madapulavar. He is the one who recites Ramayana for twenty one days.The verses and commentary from the Kamba Ramayana that are passed on through generations orally are performed according to the schedule of each day. Occasionally the lead narrator has to give real-time answers to questions raised by respondents.The narration is carried out with respect for the position of pulavar. His performance is also considered as a measure of quality of literature. Even though there is not a single person in the audience, the temple gives him the honor of being the one who memorized and narrated the story of Kambaramayana throughout the night. Although it is possible with experience and practice to narrate a story for long hours without repeating the same verses, Pulavars believes that it is with the help of the goddess that they are capable of doing it.

The main audience is the self of the lead narrator. During the performance, the pulavar becomes the designated person for the story-telling. Raghavan Payyanad have spoken about the occasion when the theyyam artist sheds his ‘self’ while performing the theyyam.(Payyanad.R,1998) Similarly, the pulavar becomes the performer who undertakes the special task of narrating the Kamba Ramayana. He is the person specially invited to narrate the story to the goddess. His narration is also considered the blessings of the goddess Bhagavati. He receives a small amount of money known as *Madappanam* that the devotees contribute. Many consider the value of status as lead narrator more important than money.

The priest of the temple is the only person who directly visits the sanctum sanctorum(locally known as *Sreekovil*) of goddess Bhagvati. Only a Brahmin can be a priest. But during koothu performance the pulavars attain the status of a brahmin.It means that Pulavars get some kind of elevation in caste status as well. If we observe the complexity and internal contradictions of the caste system, we can see that some temporary integrations take place in the caste hierarchy.

The lead narrator has to narrate the story by putting aside his own self. He will have to lose his identity as a pulavar and become a healer. If the respondent asks about treatments during Sita's pregnancy, the performer can reply only as the physician who prescribes remedies in Ramayana. If the question is about the childhood mischiefs of Rama and Lakshmana in Balakanda of Ramayana, the performer narrates according to the occasion and becomes a learner of children's minds. Venuji suggests that the self-evolutions that occur/should occur very dynamically are equivalent to the changing facial expressions of the performer on stage.

**Sahapulavar (co performer) as the audience**

Generally, the co performers with the lead performer are considered aschorus singers. They are not recognized as having the same level ofexpertise as the lead performer. But in the narration of the story of tholpavakoothu, the Sahapulavar are the ones who take the conversationforward by constantly raising crucial questions and help narrate the wholestory through the lead performer. It turns out that the Sahapulavar who areconsidered irrelevant have a crucial role in taking the narration forward.They can intervene and orientate the narrative. The Sahapulavar perform*kathakeli*(the oral game) or *kathasamvadam*(discourse), which helps move

the plot forward by unwinding the knots of the story.

The flow of the story isimportant in tholpavakoothu. The story needs to be told continuously forfive or six hours a day. A different narrative strategy is required in each ofthe temples where the performance is staged for twenty one, seven orfourteen days. The lead performer narrates the story for the Goddessbhagavathi, for the fellow performers, for the spectators on the field, for thepuppets and for himself. Blackburn says that the Pulavar perform for theirown self as well.It is important not to waste even a moment when bhagavathi is witnessingthe narration. Thats why a humming is rendered in rhythm. It’s areminder of the value in storytelling. Meaning that the listener cannot wasteeven a single moment. It is a reminder of the importance attributed tolistening to stories.Some subtle details can be found in the narration. For example, the timewhen Ravana abducted Sita is said to be Krishna Paksha, Ashtamipakkamat the sunset before the moon rose, at dusk.This is how their qualities are described while saluting the ancestors:

*Avar vaibhavam epadiyental*

*kannukko karpooradeepam parthapol*

*Karnathukko puranam kettapol*

*Thondakko poo virinthalpol*

*Chonna navukko rasapadartham bhujichapol*

*Kakko ashtakadakam pottapol3 (*Ramachandrapulavar2015:51*)*

Puppets like Moothapatter, Mallishapattar, Shomayaripattar, GangaiyadiPattar are invited to narrate the story. As the narration proceeds withqueries and answers and problem solving, the self of the co performers isalso set aside. The performers relinquishment of their self differentiatesTholpavakoothu narrative (the Pulavar is both listener and storyteller at thesame time).

Moothapattar, Mallishapattar, Shomayaripattar and Gangaiyadi Pattar are

imagined to be listening to the story from the sky. Both the lead performer

and the Sahapulavar have an equal status in narration. But today there is a

tendency for the unskilled to be Sahapulavar.

**Who are the listeners of the story?**

The components of storytelling in Tholpavakoothu are reminiscent of theIndian storytelling tradition. Observing the audience who come to listen tothe Ramayana story, can give an idea of the diversity of the audience.Basically tholpavakoothu is performed as an offering for goddessbhagavati. The battle of Rama and Ravana took place when Bhadrakaliwas away to defeat Darikasura. Lord Siva promises Bhadrakali whoreturns after defeating Darikasura that if she lives in many places on earthshe will get a chance to witness the Rama Ravana battle.This promise isfulfilled through Tholpavakoothu. Although it is believed that bhagavathisees the Koothu, the sanctum sanctorum(*sreekovil*) is closed after the offerings andprayers. But it is believed that bhagavathi is invited and brought from thesanctum sanctorum to the koothumadom. bhagavathi is the first silentaudience who comes to listen to the narration. Thus the absence ofbhagavathi during the original Rama and Ravana war is considered thereason behind Tholpavakoothu. At the beginning of the gathering, fourbrahmin puppets come to listen to the story as well. But after the initialprayers, they stay away, deciding to let the Pulavars tell the story and theylisten to the story from the sky. Ramachandrapulavar says in an interviewthat since the Putter puppets (Brahmin Puppets) are believed to be in the sky, brahmin

puppets are placed slightly above and not from beneath when it is time totake them down. The lead performer and the respondent listen to eachothers stories. Beyond this are those who come to Koothumadam groundto watch Tholpappakoothu. Today even when the audience is nominal, theart form exists as a ritual of narrating for an absent audience.

Here,the human audience is unimportant. The invisibleaudience is for God.Bhagavati is also invisible. The real audience is also invisible. Althoughthere is no audience, Tholpavakoothu has an audience in every house inthe *desam*. It is customary for elderly people who have not left theirhomes to listen to the story asking the ones who are back from the templeabout where the story of Rama has reached. It means that they are alsopart of the koothu. It can be perceived that the whole *desam* is there tolisten to Koothu as the goddess of the land is present there. In short, thelistener of Tholpavakoothu is the whole *desam.*

**Narratives**

Tholpavakoothu is made of several narratives. It is sharpened in thefurnace of classical art forms and its narrative style. Inviting to narrate thestory, singing the glory of the deities, summarizing the story to the listeners,and ending the story are very much similar to the Indian tradition. But whenit comes to the rituals, one can see a fusion of local customs and beliefs.Blackburn explains this by dividing it into two;implied audience andimagined audience.During the narration of the story, the members of the family who havedonated for the Koothu that day are congratulated and they are wished luckand blessings of bhagavati. This is called *sadya vazhthal*.(praising of feast) At this pointthe serious story telling gives way to humor.

Eg: *Paripudan nalla pachadi palavakai*

*Parameetu Porikari Ivaka*

*Aruppamana Mashiyal Karyudan*

*Anam Vaitha kulambum adhikamam.*

*Paruppile Tuvarai Parup, Avarai Parup, Pachai Parup, Kadlai Parup, Vellai*

*Parup, Uluntu Parup, ippudi palavishamaana paruppukalaikond vanth*

*parumarinalkal. Pachadiyanal vellarikkai, parangikkai, thengai,*

*mangai,nellikkai, pudalangai, pavakkqithey ivvidhamaana pachadikalai*

*konduvanth parumarinalkal4*.

The presentation of this part is wrapped in humor with rhymes and rhythms.

At the end of each verse, the co performers adds *Aa... aha...* to therhythm of the narration.After hearing the part about Rama having Seventy boats as the leadnarrator talks about Ramas armies, the respondent will ask, *vallamennal*

*enta? (what do you mean by measure vallam?)*

The Pulavar will answer, naalu kalu kondathu onnu, onnu Pathu kondathu

pathu, Pathu Pathu kondath nooru, nooru pathukondathu aayiram, Aayiram

pathukondathu pathinayiram, Abhi Na Aayiram pathukondathu

Noorayiram(laksham), Nooraayiram pathu kondathu patunooraayiram ,

pathunooraayiram pattukondathu kodi, kodi pathu kondathu pathukodi,

Pathu kodi pathukondathu nooru kodi, nooru kodi nooru kondathu

noorayiram kodi, nooranikodi nooru kondathu mahakodi, mahakodi nooru

kondathu akshakodi, akshy kodi nooru kondathu vindam, vindam nooru

kondathu mahavindam, mahavindam nooru kondathu padmam, padmam

nurukondathu Mahapadmam, mahapadmam noorukundathu Kumudam,

Kumudam nooru kondathuu mahakumudam, Mahakumbh Damnoorukondathu samudram, samudram nurukonda mahasamudram,mahasamudram nooru Kondathu pralayam, pralayam nooru kondathumaha pralayam, mahapralayam nooru kondathu oru vallam, ithakumvallam5 (Ramachandra Pulavar 2015:71)

**Blackburns’ observations on Absence : Criticism**

Tholpavakoothu is a ritualistic art. The mixture of culture of desham and the

Margi culture can be seen in the outer structure of the art form itself.Mistakes can be found in Blackburns’ observations as a result ofapproaching Tholpavakoothu as a theater art without taking into accountthe culture associated with temple and desham. Bhagavathi is known askali in some temples.The problem of Blackburns’ theory is associated withhis ignorance of the origin of bhagavathi temple and the beliefs associatedwith it. Kali undertakes the protection of the desham. The temple, Deshamand Kuthumadom cannot be determined as three different positions.Concepts of Western theater are unsuccessful in identifying interconnectedritual exchanges.Blackburns’ idea is based on the theory of performance.Blackburn has not been able to fully explain the ritualistic aspect ofTholpavakoothu. The culturality of implied or imagined presence remainsuntethered. This is the problem with trying to learn Tholpavakoothu fromthe temple or the desham. The activities of the different caste groups inKerala are evident in the rituals and performance of Tholpavakoothu. It isalso an art that ensures the combined work of various classes likeCarpenters, Musharis, Kollans, Parayans, Cherumans, Nairs, Namboothirisand Brahmins.

**Observations on Presentation analysis**

M.V Narayanan’s books Idam avatharanam kazhcha vazhikal (Current books Thrissur) andormayude ulbhavamexamines the finer details of performance art underthe concept of Performance Space. A presentational analysis of the ritual

artform of Koodiyattam is similar in some respects to the presentational

study of Tholpavakoothu.

He discusses how the performance space known as *Koothambalam*becomes crucial in understanding and analyzing the unique presentation ofKoodiyattam. Koothumadom, the presentation space of Tholpavakoothu,showcases local sculpture skills. In fact, the presentation culture ofTholpavakoothu has evolved through the multi-level interactions betweenKoothumadam, narration, the temple community and the audience for thepast three or four centuries. The local influences and local history in theconstruction of the Koothumadom are not recognized and honored butignored.

There are absences of characters in the curtain of Tholpavakoothu. Whileall the characters are lined up on the curtain, the characters who arenarrating on a particular day are sometimes at the edge of the curtain.However, the attention of the audience is only on the characters that areimportant for the part of the story and situations narrated on that day. Thecharacter of Sita is present during the part of *lakshmanopadesha* whenRama advises Lakshmana, character of Rama when Hanuman burnsdown Lanka and characters of Dasharatha and kaikeyi during Ramas’ lifeof exile in the forest are present on stage even when they are absent in thescene.

The performance of Tholpavakoothu is not only influenced by the plot, theaudience, the goddess, the Pulavar, the musicians and the puppeteers,butthe Koothumadom and the lamps that create alternate darkness and light,plays a major role. The presence and absence of some of these elementsbecomes crucial in providing the overall visual treat.M.V Narayanan divides the time of presentation into three. One is the actualtime that the presentation takes place. The second is the time period of thestory. The third kind is the internal timing of the presentation. It is in theunity of these three times that Tholpavakoothu communicates effectively.

When Kathakali artist Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair was asked abouthis preparations for performing *Ravanotbhava,* he says that his mind isblank when he reaches the stage for the performance of *Ravanotbhava*.Not once or twice has he performed *Ravanotbhava*. He says that hedoesn’t need the help of his mind. He believes that his body knows what todo.When the same question is asked of the Tholpavakoothu artist, heemphasizes the importance of persistent practice.He also mentions thatmany parts of Kamba Ramayana were difficult to memorize for the

narration (Interview with Ramachandra pulavar in 20226). But they can do this easilyduring the performance without putting great effort.Although training isrequired, artists believe that another body and mind is at work to move thepuppets in during the puppetry performance. The artists move the puppetsby hiding themselves behind the curtain. They move the puppets keeping inmind the reflection of the moving puppets.

M. V Narayanan explains the absence of body in Ramankutty Nair’sstatement: This does not mean that the actor is not aware of his own body.Indeed, the actor is aware that he is engaged in a performance practicethat is different from the routines of everyday life and that his body servesas the center of that performance. But the truth is that the actor generallylacks a detailed idea of the finer intricacies of the performance, like theconscious preparation of what is to be done at each stage of theperformance. As the body is almost on its own and in a free state, itwithdraws from the realm of consciousness.

The withdrawal of his body from the actors consciousness, and himbecoming a natural second self is made possible by the practice of specificperformance and the body language becoming a part of external bodilyawareness. (MV Narayanan: 2018:85) It is not difficult to see that the samething happens in the performance of Tholpavakoothu, the performancebody of the Pulavar retreats and a natural second self becomes possible.As a result of the awareness of the intricacies of ones own body, theperformance is completed at ease.

**Blackburns’ limitation**

Blackburn had been often led to some misunderstanding due to languageand cultural barriers. He misspelled ‘Aayappudava’, the curtain tied on theKoothumadom,as ‘Ayyappudava’. ‘Skanda Purana’ is mistakenly understoodas ‘Kanda puranam’.Blackburn who mentions that there was no electricity inKoothumadom when he watched Koothu in 1989, could not explain thevisual excellence of the shadows of puppets in the light of the oil lamps orthe aesthetic beauty of moving images. It can be seen that he has left outmany parts that the audience has to complete the lacking elements bythemselves for entertainment.

**Space in Tholpavakoothu**

Space is an important topic of discussion in theories about theater and performance.

This is how space is defined by Gay MacAuley. Space is a social dynamic, an incessant movement. It's a wave or rather, a whirlpool. Place is not the permanent a priori of that flow but its momentary destination or rather, its synthesis.(2002,07)

Performance theorists believe that there is a space between the performer and the audience. Performance becomes truly dynamic through the communication between performer and audience that results in a cultural exchange.It can be called the cultural spectrum.

Based on Gay MacAuley's observations, it can be seen that various kinds of spaces are created in tholpavakoothu. The space for presentation, the physical space, the space between the audience and the performer, the space energized by the performers, the space that is the curtain(which is called Ayapputava locally), the visual space of the shadows, and the verbal space.In tholpavakoothu, the temple and the nearby Koothumadom can be considered as the space of presentation. The whole desham consisting of the temple and koothumadom is the Physical space. It almost covers the entire village. Desam is the primitive form of village. The gathering is held for the wellness of the entire people of the desam. Another space is formed between the audience and the performer. In the middle of the 20th century, there would be a huge crowd that it was difficult for everybody to watch koothu. Today people who come to watch Tholpappakoothu are very few in number. Sometimes there is no one. Koothu is performed only as a temple ritual, but some people take pictures of the koothu and try to share it on social media. Even if the audience is very few today, the potential of the space it creates for the audience remains the same. The story is narrated with remarkable additions according to the performer's own logic and aesthetics (the term for this in kathakali is Manodharma). So the performance is not the same every time. If a season's koothu performance is considered as a single unit, this actually covers an infinite number of possibilities of space. The white part of the curtain in the Tholpavakoothu represents the *earth* and the black part represents the *pathala*(the underworld). The legend unfolding on earth is projected through the shadows. It is the representation of scenes on earth that the audience is witnessing. The shadows help to create a meaningful space acceptable for everyone's imagination and philosophy. Thus it makes an array of space possible Tholpavakoothu unlike any other theater art.

Michael Iasscharoff, (1989) puts forward the concept of scenic and extra scenic space. He takes into account the space of the particular scene context in the play to be important. The space created through the imagination of the performer and the audience is evaluated as extra space. In Tholpavakoothu, the Head pulavars who combine the Kamba Ramayana with their own life lessons in the performances creates an extra space through their narration.

Anne Ubersfeld, who has guided the theoretical discussion on space meaningfully, divides space in art forms into five.1 Stage Space : The space that contains the stage of performance.2 Scenic Space : Includes the stage and the activities taking place there.3. Theatrical Space: General notion of the whole complex function of Space in the theater.4. Theater Space : specific place of performance5. Dramatic Space: Made up of both Textual and Performance signs.

The Koothumadom, the ceremonies starting with the kelikottu, the narration, the dramatic space created by puppetry in the audience, the emotions evoked by the visuals on the screen and the enjoyment of narrative and oral performances create a fusion of modern and ancient spaces. It is through this synthesis of spaces that Tholpavakoothu is relished.

**Conclusion**

The ritualistic art form of Tholpavakoothu is the art of making beauty out ofabsences and of fusion of modern and ancient spaces. A theoretical research of the crucial role played by these spaces and absences in presentation, narration and ceremony would open up newavenues in the study of art forms in Kerala.

**NOTES**

1 Valmikis’ Ramayana was translated into Tamil by the Tamil poet Kambar

(1180-1250) in the 12th century. This is known as Kambaramayanam.

Kambaramayana consists of six kandas namely Balakanda, Ayodhya

Kanda, Aranyakanda, Kishkindha Kanda, Sundarakanda and

Yuddhakanda. Apart from this Kambar is also believed to have composed

works like Irezhuupatthu, Silai ezhupathu, Kankai Puranam, Sadakopar

Anthathi and Thirukaivazhakam.

2. The rule that the performer has to stand up during the narration is

because Koothu is believed to be performed for the goddess bhagavati.

The host expresses his honor to a guest by standing up when the guests

arrive at home. During feudal times it was a crime to sit in front of kings and

nobles. In most of the photos of Pulavas performing Koothu, they can be

seen standing.

1. The narrator uses Tamil mixed malayalam language.
2. The Pulavar narrates on the feast in decorative language.
3. They says that One Vallam will be measured as crores and crores.It indicates the strength of the army of Rama.
4. I had an interview with veteran puppeteer Ramachandra Pulavar on his home at Koonathara, Near Ottappalam, Palakkad.

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