

Philosophical Overview on Indigenous Art Forms: *Kalaripayatt* and *Parichamuttukali*

Joby John

MA, Bed.in English

E-Mail: jobykeelath@gmail.com

Abstract: *The academic paper entitled Philosophical Overview on Indigenous Art Forms: Kalaripayatt and Parichamuttukali is an attempt to analyze the similarities, philosophy and social problems shared in the indigenous art forms such as Kalaripayatt and Parichamuttukali. In order to examine the common ground shared between Kalaripayatt and Parichamuttukali we have learned both of these art forms along with its history. By using the analysis method proposed by Fr Vincent BW, who teaches Indian Studies: Folk Philosophy a fruitful study is conducted and its results are presented in this essay.*

Key Words: Kalari, Indigenous Art Forms, Parichamuttukali

1. Introduction

Performing Art is the product of systematic and scientific arrangements of movements, words, theory, rules and so on. It makes a kind of poetic ecstasy in the audience as well as in the performers. It encompasses a diverse range of human activities, creations, and modes of expression, including music, literature, film, photography, sculpture, and paintings. What makes martial art different from other art forms is its respect for life and deep understanding of human body. Martial art teaches people to retain the human values without slipping into savagery even in the midst of violent fights. Present day the martial art is also considered as a performing art. Here is given an analysis between a martial art (*Kalaripayatt*) and performing art (*Parichamuttukali*).

2. The Experience of the Indigenous art forms

2.1. Context: *Kalaripayatt* has two areas of presentation: *Akam* (*Kalari*) and *Puram* (*Battlefield*). We preferred the second one that is *Puram*. Therefore, we wished to perform both of these art form in a natural atmosphere where the ambience of forest is available. We performed *Kalari* with the war background music taken from the movie *Pazhasiraja* in which a historical feel is set.

3. Text and Texture

3.1.1. *Kalaripayatt*, the Mother of all Martial arts is originated in the Indian Subcontinent and that indigenous

martial art form is taken to the nook and corner of the world. *Kalaripayatt* is the oldest martial art form indigenous to Kerala, a southern Indian State. This martial art form claims more than 2000 years' tradition. This martial art form is practiced to attain neuromuscular coordination for self-defense, improve concentration, for healing and maintain physico-psycho balance. It includes many flexible body movements and attacking modes. *Kalaripayatt* disciplines the self. It was during the colonial period *Kalaripayatt* lost its glory.

In the performance we did *Guruvandanam*, *Vandanachuvad*, *Adithana Adithata* and *locks and weapons*. We shed our main focus on bare hand fight, because it is applicable in every situation. The forest ambience also creates the sense of insecurity. But *Kalari* will provide the inner strength to overcome any such life threatening situations.

3.1.2. *Parichamuttukali* is a martial dance form of Kerala practiced by [Saint Thomas Christians](#) (also known as Syrian Christians or Nasrani) who trace their origins to the evangelistic activity of [Thomas the Apostle](#) among [Jews](#) and natives in the 1st century. It is performed by men bearing swords and shields and follows the movements and steps of *Kalaripayattu*. The origin of the art can be traced back to ancient days when *Kalaripayattu*, a martial art of Kerala, was in vogue.



The reason behind the performance of *Paichamutt* in the same place is to show that firstly this indigenous art form is not performed on the stage but on the ground in the woods of the early villages and secondly to show that this art form is originated from *Kalaripayatt*.

4. The Positive Elements

a. *Kalaripayatt* and *Parichamuttukali* shares similar body movements, and use simple dress code. Both of these performing art forms are performed with *Vaithari*.

b. In *Kalaripayatt* the performers are trained warriors but the performers are only warrior like in *Parichamuttukali*.

c. All the steps of *Parichamuttukali* is taken from *Kalaripayatt* and performed with the accompaniment of music.

d. A number of South Asian fighting styles remain closely connected to [yoga](#), dance and performing arts. Some of the choreographed sparring in [kalaripayattu](#) can be applied to dance and *Parichamuttukali* dancers who knew *kalaripayattu* were believed to be markedly better than other performers.

e. Some traditional Indian classical dance schools still incorporate martial arts as part of their exercise regimen.

f. Whereas *Kalaripayatt* directly deals with freedom struggle, solution for social problems (*Mamankam*), Patriotism, Self-defense and control of the mind etc.

g. *Kalaripayatt* and *Parichamuttukali* shares same pattern of performance. Because the steps of *Kalaripayatt* is given a dance form in *Parichamuttukali*

5. The Social, Cultural and Religious Issues

5.1. Social Issue: We wished to point the issues regarding individual security and health especially with regard to women and children. Present day we can see the rate of atrocities against women and children are rising day by day.

5.2. Cultural Issue: Our entire society is leaving the rich culture behind and trying to modernize itself. It makes a cultural lag between younger and the elder generations.

5.3. Religious Issue: The all-encompassing Indian culture is at its end now due to the fanatic attitude of the authorities. The security of the minority has become a question mark now.

6. Enunciation of solution

Teaching *Kalaripayatt* in schools will be helpful to overcome the socio-cultural issues stated above.

7. Justification

If *Kalaripayatt* is made part of the curriculum all students will achieve a physic- psycho balance to face any changing situations. This martial art form also inculcates self-control. That means it maintains the spiritual growth too. Systematic training of *Kalaripayatt* is helpful to be healthy and to get rid of infirmity. Martial art also provides women and children to defend themselves from any danger. It also helps the younger generation to know the richness of the culture.

8. Critique

Due to colonization *Kalaripayatt* was banned in British India. This time *Kalaripayatt* was practiced in connection with religious festivals. Therefore this art form was not known to the public and it did not developed according to the needs of the time. When this martial art is taken to China, the Chinese people made it part of the life and developed according to the need. They made it available to the public. If our government does something to nurture this martial art form it will be available to the public.

9. Conclusion

Kalaripayatt and *Parichamuttukali* share common ground in the following aspects:

a. **Simplicity:** *Kalaripayatt* and *Parichamuttukali* are easy to learn. Those who know *Kalaripayatt* will be an excellent performer in *Parichamuttukali*. This itself shows the influence of *Kalaripayatt* on *Parichamuttukali*.

b. **Community Feeling:** Both *Kalaripayatt* and *Parichamuttukali* inculcates coherence among the community.

Protest Character: *Kalaripayatt* and *Parichamuttukali* are used to show protest towards the social injustices of the past. They also promote patriotism. By this study we have come to conclude that *Kalaripayatt* and



Parichamuttukali share common ground and Parichamuttukali is originated from *Kalaripayattu*.

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