

Puppetry – A rich cultural tradition of India

B.SHRUTHIKAA, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

The puppetry tradition of India is an integral part of the Indian performance tradition. It includes pictorial story depiction using puppets, live music, gestures, and narration. In addition to being an art form, puppetry has philosophical significance in Indian culture. There are various types of puppetry.



Kathputli

The traditional marionettes of Rajasthan are known as Kathputli. Carved from a single piece of wood, these puppets are like large dolls that are colourfully dressed. Their costumes and headgears are designed in the medieval Rajasthani style of dress, which is prevalent even today.

Shadow puppet (*Tholpavai Koothu*)

Perhaps one of the oldest forms of puppetry, shadow puppet is found in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. Ravan Chhaya from Orissa and *Tholpavai Koothu* from Kerala are the two prominent shadow puppet theatre traditions of India.

String Puppets

India has a rich and ancient tradition of string puppets or marionettes. Marionettes having jointed limbs controlled by strings allow far greater flexibility and are, therefore, the most articulate of the puppets. Rajasthan, Odisha, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are some of the regions where this form of puppetry has flourished.

