

Nagaraja Thira dance

April 4, 2023

In news— The 'Nagaraja Thira' was celebrated at the Sree Muchilottu temple at Kuthiravattom in Kozhikode, Kerala recently.

About the dance-

- **Thirra or Theyyam thira is a ritual dance** performed in "Kaavu"(grove)& temples of the Malabar region in Kerala.
- This art form is **performed by the artists of malaya** (the artist who recognised for performing the art form called as a "perumalayan") **community**.
- It is **performed during Utsavam** (annual temple festival).
- **Clan deities such as Bhagavathi, Shiva are worshipped in these forms.**
- **Theyyam thira is main sub division of Theyyam.**
- It is **similar to the Theyyam dance** performed in the same region, except that **in Theyyam the performer is considered as the god he is representing, while in Thira the performer is considered as to be possessed by god.**
- **Thira brings the gods to life.** Performers dress up with ceremonial facial paint and loud clothing and dance in front of the deity, the bhagavathi.
- **The objective clearly is to bring a sense of awe to the proceedings.** Each performer represents a particular deity and is sponsored by devotees as a prayer offering.
- These **dancers are viewed as being possessed by the gods** when they are in their act, with devotees queuing up to meet them to share woes and wishes.
- **Toddy plays a very significant role in the proceedings,** it is an offering to the gods and almost all the performers dance under the influence. This helps in

creating the feeling of being “possessed”.

- The performers belong to the “Peruvannan” caste of , who are given prime importance in Thira .
- Therefore in Kerala, both upper caste Brahmins, and lower caste tribals have an important place in worship.

Further reading:
<https://journalsofindia.com/theyyam-dance-of-kerala/>