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Marginalized Moor's Music and Misunderstanding

This research video documentary presents the story of a marginalized ethnic/cultural minority group in Sri Lanka that lives in the Eastern Province. This people, known as Moors, originating from Middle Eastern countries and India, arrived in Sri Lanka during the seventh century AD, bringing along their cultural traditions and customs. In Sri Lanka, they have established a unique characteristic way of life and a distinctive form of Islamic culture. They adopted Tamil as the language of communication. Performing arts and musical practices of this group are at risk and rapidly diminishing because of religious ideologies of strict Muslim communities/leaders and the marginalization from other cultural groups. In this narrative ethnographic study, we explore why music and performing arts practices of this particular group of Sri Lankan Muslims who live in Ampara are not observable and what are the contributing factors, in order to sustain cultural practices for the future generations. During the field visits, interviews and discussions were used to further interpret the data recorded on video. Currently, we do thematic analysis of the collected data. Our 20-minute long documentary presents important findings from a part of our research.

Bios

Manoj Sanjeewa is an enthusiastic musician and lecturer at the Department of Western Music, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is a Western classical singer, music composer, voice trainer, choir director, choir conductor, and psychology counsellor. He is also a member of the Professional Counsellors Association and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Countries' Youth Choir.

Kamani Samarasinghe is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Information Technology at the Faculty of Dance & Drama, University of the Visual and Performing Arts (UVPA) in Colombo. She is a member of the National Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage, ICOMOS (Sri Lanka), ISME, and IASA.

Rohan Nethsinghe is an esteemed figure in the fields of music, composition, and music education, currently serving as Vice Chancellor of the University of the Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo. He earned his Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts degrees from the Donetsk State Conservatory. These formative years laid the foundation for his multifaceted career as a musician, composer, community artist, music director, music teacher, academic researcher, and lecturer. His academic journey continued with Honours in Education from Monash University, followed by a Ph.D. His articles in international journals focus on creative arts education, teaching, learning, and assessing music and creative arts, STEAM education, cultural heritage, and community education.