

**EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE RITUAL ARTS, WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO MUDIYETTU**

Dissertation submitted to

**St. Teresa's College (Autonomous)**

*(Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam)*

*In partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of*

**Master of ARTs in ECONOMICS**

*By*

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## **Certificate**

This is to certify that the project titled “**EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE RITUAL ARTS WITH SPECIAL REFERCE TO MUDIYETTU**” is a record of project done by **CHITHRA S VARMA (Register No. AM21ECO005)** under my guidance and supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree in Master of Arts in Economics (**Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam**). The research work has not previously formed the basis for any Degree, Diploma, Associate ship, Fellowship or any other similar title and it represents a contributory work on the part of candidate.

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the project titled “EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE RITUAL ARTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MUDIYETTU” submitted by me for the M.A Degree in Economics is my original work and this work has not been previously formed the basis for the award of other Academic qualification, fellowship of other similar title of any other university or board.

**Signature of the supervisor**

Dr. Pearly Antony O

**Signature of the candidate**

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**CHAPTER 1-**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Kerala is always known for its rich collection of traditional, cultural and ritual art forms. The ritual art forms are performed as part of any religion or social believes. These art forms are mostly related with the Hindu mythologies and puranas. These ritual art forms strictly follow the rituals and customs while performing. Almost all ritual arts in Kerala are based on the mythological tales of Bhadrakali. The art forms like *Mudiyettu*, *Theyyam*, *Theeyatu* etc have the ritual and traditional value backed with the folk tales. The familiarity of these art forms is linked to the specific regions where they are being performed. The traditional musical instruments (*vaadhyam*), colourful pictorial representations (*kalam*), aesthetic makeups (*chutti*) and the other decorations add colours to these ritual art forms.

*Theyyam* is performed mostly in the northern regions of Kerala, like Kasargod and Mananthavady thaluk of Wayanad. The performance starts on the month of *Thulaam* (according to Malayalam calendar). *Theyyam* is also associated with Hindu rituals. It is performed in the temples, (*kaavu*) or in the ancestral homes of *Nambiar*, *Thiyyar* and *Vaniyar*. The *Theyyam* alone has a four hundred variety and they differ from each other in the forms, tales, concepts music and the style of presentation. Malayan, Velan, Vannan and Peruvannan are the communities who performs the *Theyyam*.

*Theeyatu* is performed in two types. They are namely the *Bhagavaty Theeyatu* and the *Ayappan Theeyatu*. The *Bhagavaty Theeyatu* is similar to the *Mudiyettu*. There are differences in the number of artists performing, gestures used to act and the music played in *mudiyettu* and *Theeyatu*. But the mythology, costume of Bhagavati and the *Kalamezhuthum paatum* (the ritual connected with coloured pictorial representation of Goddess) of *Bhagavaty* is very much similar in both. The community of Unni, performs the *Bhagavaty Theeyatu*. The mythological tale of the battle between the Devi and Demons (Daruka and Danavendra) is the concept for both *Mudiyettu* and *Bhagavaty Theeyatu*. The explanation about the battle between devi and demons by her to her father, Lord Mahadeva, is portrayed through *Bhagavaty Theeyatu*. As Devi is the only character, the mudras have more significant importance in *Theeyatu* than in *Mudiyettu*.

This study focuses on the *Mudiyettu*, which is a ritual dance drama, performed in the Devi temples in Kerala especially in the Bhadrakali temples of Kottayam and Ernakulam districts.

The mythological battle between Devi and Demons (Daruka and Danavendra) is the theme of the performance. The dance drama has seven characters or roles and seven scenes along with the drums. It is basically conducted to please the Goddess after the village harvest. According to the believes, conducting *Mudiyettu* will purify the village from toxicity as it uses the medicinal plants throughout the event. *Mudiyettu* has been recognised in the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

*Mudiyettu* is a dance drama where the audience are part of the performance. The performance takes place in the ground or in the courtyard of the temple. As we know, Covid -19 have affected every sector of the economy. In particular, *Mudiyettu* performers faced a severe shut down and difficulties. *Mudiyettu* cannot be performed online or on the stage, hence, they had not performed for nearly one and half years. This is one among the major concerns of this study.

## 1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Marianne PASTY's (2010)**, has written a thesis on the title; *To please the Goddess; the Mudiyettu of Kerala (south India); An Ethnographic study of a ritual theatre between tradition and modernity*. This study explains about the *Mudiyettu and Mudiyettukar* in the part one. The chapter one exclusively discusses about the mudiyettu. The chapter two deals with the variations of mudiyettu and its variations. The definitions of the mudiyettu, the performers and their families, the backstories of the splitting of the troupes, the unity and diversity in the tradition of Mudiyettu styles, and the role of headgear; muddy, are the major concerns of part one. The part two is titled as the *Mudiyettu and Goddess*. The chapter three of the part- two comprises the myths of *darikkavadham and Mudiyettu*. It deals in deep about bhadrakali temples, texts, recitations and theatre presentation of the myth and its variations. The chapter of the study is about the goddess. The title given is *the sankalpam of the Goddess and Mudiyettu*. The detail explanation of the specific sankalpas and their characteristics from different perspectives are analysed in this chapter. The *bhava* of devi which is anger and war, the beauty and violence depicted in the art, and the danger involved are examined in this chapter. The chapter four of the part- two deals with the believes associated with the Mudiyettu. It is believed that small pox can be eradicated by conducting Mudiyettu. *Small pox, the goddess and Mudiyettu* attempts to explain about those belief. The part three of the thesis identifies the personifications of the goddess. The chapter six in particular seals with the ritual and sacrifice and aspects related. The chapter seven shows the general facts of

Mudiyettu which is the preparations, procedures of getting ready, the possessions and chaitanyam etc. The spiritual presence of goddess is examined here. The final part of the thesis discusses about the evolution of the traditional families. It also gives a short history about the changes that affected the Kerala society and the Mudiyettu over these years of reforms. This chapter also focuses on the challenges of the troupes in the context of traditional Mudiyettu.

**Caldwell, Bhagavti: Ball of fire (1996)** discusses about performance of Mudiyettu in detail. He mentions that the performance ends with the victorious march of the goddess and the song in praise of Shiva. This thesis discusses each and every aspect of the performance in deep, in which the detailed and clarified explanation is provided by the writer. The role of fire, makeup, curtains, head gear, the colours used in the pictorial representation and their significance and meanings.

**Caldwell Sarah, (1996)**, extended his thesis that concentrates more on the female centre characters of Mudiyettu. The writer tries to bring up a comparison and analyse the similarities as well as difference between the characters. The author also tries to analyse the women in Kerala from the perspective of these characters.

**Caldwell Sarah, (2003)**; wrote another extension made to the author's previous studies. The thesis was titled *Margins at the centre; Tracing Kali through Time, Space and Culture*. This thesis also studies the character, and all other aspects of the lead role; Kaali. The changes happened to the character is also traced in the background of space time and culture existing.

**Vatsyayan Kapila (1991)**, according to the thesis titled, *performance: the process, manifestation and experience*, the author deals in details with the performance aspects of Mudiyettu. The process, manifestation and experience analyse the Mudiyettu from the beginning till the last point, the perspective of a viewer and his experience.

**Julius Krohton** opines that, the Mudiyettu incorporates the arts, plays, dances and rituals along with the social, emotional and cultural lives of people. The also refers the myths, legends, belief and knowledge of people.

**Geetakumari Sajeesh and KK (2015)** wrote that Mudiyettu combines ritual, art legends and mythology. The title of her work is *Folk elements in classical artforms of Kerala- A study based on Krishnanattam*. She mentions that the curtains, costume and the custom of performance by men are common or similar to many of the ritual, folk and performing arts. This invites the attention of readers to the fact that the art forms are inter related and influenced by one another.

**Dr. Liyamol S** conducted a minor research project on the topic *Ecological perspective in Mudi yettu- a ritual performed in temples of Kali in Kerala*. This research shows that the performance is devoted to goddess, without affecting the ecological balance of nature. She also highlighted that the Mudi yettu is symbolically representing the destruction of the demon which is an evil power and protects the humans. The performs also provides the realization that men and women is depending on the nature completely. The nature act as the stage for the performance. She also mentions about the medicinal effectiveness of the performance as they use medicinal plants throughout the event. The properties like headgear and the makeup products like *maynola*, and the colours for the pictorial representation of kali which is called *Kallamezhuth*, is extracted from natural products only. The conclusion speaks about the existence of a relationship between men- ritual – nature and healing through ayurveda. The essence of a ritual and art form is fulfilled when performed in the lap of nature.

**Prasanth M**, a researcher from the department of theatre, SreeSankaracharya university of Sanskrit, Kaladi conducted the research related to energy aspects of Mudi yettu and the movements of actors. The research was titled as *The Ritualistic Performance as Root for Actors Movements and Energy*. This research work explains about the preparations and the procedures of mudi yettu. In addition, a detailed interview is also included in the research. The role of lamps, fire, bhakti or faithful mind of devotees, rhythms, drums, costume or appearance and other key elements are analysed through this work.

**Chandhanasherykaavile mudi yettu** is an article discussing about the dignity and transformation of mudi yettu throughout ages. Mudi yettu have survived despite of the globalization, urbanization and changes in the consumer behaviours. It had not lost the essence of faith, ritual and divinity. The article also mentions the popular believes, and the set of rituals, and other types of ritual arts performed in Kerala. The influence of location, ecological elements, language and culture in forming a the regional artform is also shown. This article examines the role of all associated communities and castes while performing Mudi yettu, it tries to illustrate that every community in a village have a role to play during the performance of Mudi yettu, and this is crucial for the effective performance. This article is an enquiry into the partnership of various communities and the different cultural believes. The mudi yettu performed at the Chandansherrykavu is unique and special because it lies deep in the heart of Kerala's culture and it is the sacred inheritance.

**G. Venu (1984)** in his article *Mudi yettu the dance drama of Kerala*, explains the outline of the story, its makeup, musical instruments and singing, the performance and the artistes in different headings. The article simply talks about the basics of Mudi yettu.



**Zeba Vagh (2020)** wrote an article, titled *Covid-19 Impact: How Local Artistes are struggling to stay afloat*. The article of Zeba Vagh drives the attention of readers to the problems faced by the folk and classical art performers who belonged to immobile communities in small villages. The privileged artistes are able to release their works on OTTs but the folk and classical arts are not much digital friendly. He also points out the lives of martial art (kalarippayattu) performers of Munnar whose lives standstill without tourists. The pandemic affected these artistes and they hardly survived it. He also gave many examples of communities from various parts of India who faced issues.

**Janhavi Acharekar (2021)** published an article in The Hindu newspaper, *Surviving the pandemic has forced artists to make a virtue of being online*. The article is explaining how the artists stepped into the digital universe during the Covid-19 crisis to rebegin their lives. The digital revolution occurred as a result of the challenges posed by pandemic, the great divide within the various artist communities because of the unique characteristics of the art forms, and the absence of policies for the artists are the major concerns of the article.

**Anagha V. S (2021)** has done a project on the *Impact of covid 19 on performing artists in Kerala*, as part of her Master of Arts degree. This project had objectives of analysing the socio-economic conditions of performing artists in Kerala, and to examine the major problems faced by artists during the covid-19 pandemic, and finally to evaluate the various welfare programs for performing artists in Kerala as an impact of covid-19.

**Gokul K Shibu (2021)** explains about the Mudi yettu, the mythological background, the cultural significance, the characters of Mudi yettu and the scenes of the acts and rituals briefly in his article *Mudi yettu; my experience*. As mentioned in the title, the article particularly concentrates on his experience of watching Mudi yettu. The author mentioned that the mudi yettu was very much similar to a fairy tale. He stated that it was like staring at a character jumped out of a history book. He also highlights the *Aharya Pushti*, *Vachika Pushti*, *Angika Pushti*, *Satwika Pushti*, *Nritha Pushti*, and *Ranga Pushti*. They are perfection in the costume, dialogues and music, gestures, emotional expressions and theatrical display respectively. The importance maintenance of costume, and the immobility of the skilled artists is thus spotlighted through the article.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

India has a wide collection of different believes, religion, tradition, customs etc. Our country always holds the prestigious traditions rooted in the deep decades. In particular, Kerala is also

rich with its tradition. These ritual art forms were mostly transferred to the generations orally. This cause certain problems such as verbal mistakes, verbal difference (as a result of difference in the local languages of the regions), and the loss of memory causing due to the lack of performances. Many of such ritual art forms extinct due to the decline in popularity and decrease in performance. The ritual art forms like *Pathinettambali*, *Kudukayile atbhutha thanthrikal*, and *midavalis* are severely affected. These art forms are not seen anywhere these days. Therefore, a study related to ritual arts and artists are significant in the background of lock down, due to the pandemic.

The devi temples are the major places where the *Mudiyettu* takes place. It is performed either as part of temple festivals or as an offering by the devotees. The Government of Kerala organizes the Cultural, Ritual and Other performing arts for the welfare and upbringing of these arts and artists. Another motive of authorities to conduct such ritual and performing arts is to popularise and show-case the traditional and hereditary culture to the world. The *Mudiyettu* performers used to perform approximately one hundred and fifty performances in a year. The lock down affected the performers so badly, that the artists were not able to perform at least one *mudiyettu* during the covid-19 period. And the shortage of programs caused serious threats to the life of artists. During 2020-21, they only get sixty performances on an average and this shows a crucial decline.

The covid-19 have affected the lives of every people and the Government have initiated various policies and assistance for every sectors. The government have also allocated funds for the performing artists. A financial assistance of Rs.1000 have been given to those artists who were facing crisis during the lockdown. Thirty thousand artists received financial assistance from the Chief Minister's Relief fund. These financial aids were given to those artists who were not able to work or perform and for those who were suffering due to the restrictions imposed because of the pandemic. "The government will spend Rs. Three crores for this purpose, says Cultural Affairs Minister, A K Balan." The study also intends to understand more about the status of these policies and other policies taken by the government for the welfare of the artists. The cultural programs of government have not been restarted yet completely. This is also a reason for the decline in programs. The small temples which have a financial backwardness after the pandemic were not able to organize *Mudiyettu* from 2019-2021. This also accounts to the decline in the number of performances.

This study is intending to know more about the socio-economic conditions of *Mudiyettukar*, who contributes significantly to the hereditary culture of the state. The flood of 2019 was the first problem they faced, followed by the Covid-19. Almost every artist faced psychological and financial issues during the crisis. For an artist, the moments they perform their art forms is the best and beautiful moments. When they are restricted to perform, they might have gone through severe psychological issues. It is to be noted that, the other art forms like *Kadhakali*, *Thullal* and dance varieties were presented through online platforms, or on stages with the seating that follows the covid protocols, (social-distancing, sanitization and wearing mask). But most of the ritual arts are performed along with the adequate participation of the audiences. In this background the study is trying to derive the attention to the *Mudiyettu* and the lives of the *Mudiyettukar*.

#### 1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The performing artists are facing many problems. They usually perform only on the festive seasons. The off-season performances are too low in count, that they might not be able to depend exclusively on a single art. The inconsistency in the job and income is the main reason that, they depend on some other jobs or prefer performing multiple art forms. The instability of the work is the factor that keeps, even the talented artists away from the arts. And the Covid-19 has set this panic more serious. The problem arising here is that, if the artists are not given sufficient incentives and support, these traditions and performing art may not been seen with the mythical ethnicity in the future.

The second wave of covid-19 have affected the artist so badly, that they were forced to take loans from the banks. The food-kit provided by the Cultural Workers Welfare Board was not sufficient for the families of the beneficiaries. Many performers faced difficulties to meet at least the day-to-day needs. Many artists have started doing daily wage works as per the reports of articles. The first wave of Covid-19 was comparatively less harmful than the second wave when we consider the financial aspects as they managed the first wave with their savings.

The government have initiated various schemes, policies, projects and assistance for the performing artists. The problem is related to the implementation of these policies. The major concerns are as follows;

- Whether these policies are properly implemented or not, if not, where do they go wrong?
- Whether the eligible beneficiaries are receiving the aids, if they are denied, what is the reason?
- Whether we should bring any changes in the strategies and criteria of aids that government provides.

The study focuses on these problems in the light of three periods, pre-covid, during covid and post-covid years. The changes in the way the problem affected the lives, can be analysed and the remedies for these problems can be recommended through this study.

### 1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study intends,

- To analyse the economic aspects of the Mudi yettu performance.
- To study the impact of Covid-19 on Mudi yettu and mudi yettukar.
- To study the financial and social assistance received from the Government for the upbringing of Mudi yettu performers.

### 1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The impact of the pandemic can be analysed in the context of transitory negative impacts of Permanent Income Hypothesis of Milton Friedman. The Keynesian unemployment theory can explain the unemployment scenario during the Covid-19 crisis. The trend of choosing an additional job mainly in the service and IT sector can be traced among the youngster artists. This is due to the risk and unpredictability involved in the sector. The Ratchet effect as explained by James Dusenbery is the tendency of individuals to remain in the same pattern of consumption even when the agent's income has increased or decreased. The consumption of the agents remains unaffected of income in the short run. The transitory negative effect on the performers is another concept. The unpredicted short run shock, which lead to high unemployment rate and decline in the wages affected the life of performers so badly.

The Keynesian theories of unemployment argues that the high level of unemployment is the result of deficit in the aggregate demand. The major issues during the covid -19 were the

unpredicted unemployment, lay off. The pre-booked programs were postponed. The deficiency in the demand for the program (overall economic activities) lead to unemployment, but the prices for goods and services remained unchanged. This caused severe consequences on the day-to-day consumption, health expenditures, and on every economic need. Keynes argues that, adequate government interventions through fiscal policies are the solution to this instability. The government have to provide the necessary helps to reduce unemployment and bring back economic stability.

## 1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for the study is mainly collected using the primary methodology. The tool used for the primary data collection is questionnaire. The population includes the Mudi yettu artists from the twelve Mudi yettu sanghangal in Kerala. The data have been drawn using the stratified random sampling technique. The population have been divided into three strata on the basis of their approach towards the Mudi yettu. The sample data for the study will be extracted from three prominent *Mudi yettu sanghangal*, that denotes three distinctive strata. A total of thirty samples have been used for the analysis. We are collecting samples from the Shankarankutty Smaraka Mudi yettu Sangham Keezhillam, Madakil Sreebhadr a mudi yettu Sangham Mazhuvanur and Varanattu Sreebhadr a Mudi yettu Sangham Koratty. The first troupe is actively engaged in the government projects. The second troupe is more interested in promoting and performing in the places where the art is not much familiar. The third troupe is neither engaged in government projects nor performing in other places. They perform in the usual and permanent premises. The sample includes the artists who performs various roles on the stage and off the stage. The secondary data are also reviewed for the study. Online articles, books, journals and previous studies were used as secondary data source. Different technique such as average and percentage were used to analyse the data.

## 1.8 SCHEME OF THE STUDY

The scheme of the study is as follows;

- ✓ Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter deals with the introduction, review of literature, objectives of the study, significance of the study, statement of the problem, theoretical framework, methodology of research, limitation of the study and concepts and definition.

✓ Chapter 2: Overview

In the second chapter, an overview about the topic is discussed. The brief idea about the Mudi yettu, its rituals, scenes, the role of audience, the impact of covid-19 on this ritual art, and the major government initiatives are the subject matter of the second chapter.

✓ Chapter 3: Data interpretation

In the third chapter, the interpretation of the data collected through the survey is discussed. The analysis of the responds of the questionnaire that satisfies the objective is given in this chapter. The data is regarding the economic aspects of the Mudi yettu, the impact of covid-19 on the artists and also on the effectiveness on government policies.

✓ Chapter 4: Finding and suggestions

In the final chapter, the findings, suggestion, conclusion and bibliography of the study is included.

## 1.9 CONCEPTS AND DEFINITION

- Kaali – the mother goddess concept of Asian culture. The background of every mythology lies around this concept which is closely linked with the environment, ecology and harvest etc. The goodness, luck, fortune and positivity are symbolised through the concept of Amma or Bhadrakaali Devi.
- Darika- the demon in the mythology is named Darika. The reason behind the origin of Devi is to end the evil rule of this demon. The misuse of authority, injustice, crisis and pandemic are symbolised through this concept.
- Mudy – is the headgear used by the artists during the performance. The specially build and treated headgear is believed to have the Chaitanyam. For the same reason, the headgear is treated with more divinity and sacredly.
- Darikkavadham – the word simply means killing Darika. The climax of the mythological tale is comprised of the scene of devi killing the Darika. She does this honour by cutting off the head of the demon using sickle.

- Kallamezhuthum paatum- is the traditional ritual where the deities picture representation is drawn on the specially decorated floor and the songs about the deities are sang according to the customs followed by another set of ritual.
- Sangham – the word denotes the troupe. The typical word for the team, troupe or group is called sangham.
- Renewing cost- in the study, we use this term to denote the cost of replacing, polishing and maintaining the equipment of the performance.
- Remuneration- the price at which a troupe can perform an event is termed as remuneration in the study.
- Utsavam Project- the translation for the word Utsavam is celebration. This is a project initiated by the tourism department of the state, to preserve, promote and popularize the ritual and classical performing arts.

#### 1.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are as follows.

- The lack of access to the previous studies. The studies related with ethnographical, anthropological, psychological and cultural aspects of Mudi yettu have been conducted by different authors. But the studies related to the economic and financial aspects of the Mudi yettu performance is rarely tapped.
- The availability of the secondary data is another limitation. Almost every artist either do multiple art performances or find another job for livelihood. They usually perform according to their comfort considering their program dates and the job. Therefore, it is actually difficult categorize and record the artists.

**CHAPTER-2**  
**MUDIYETTU; AN OVERVIEW**



## 2.1 Introduction

While tracing the roots of any art forms from any part of the world we reach at the laps of nature. The nature, ecological surroundings, linguistics, and geographical locations are closely associated with the art forms of the particular region. The origin and development of every art, custom and culture are hence part and parcel of the environment. In particular the ritual arts are performed as part of the popular regional festival, which are conducted annually, connected with the agricultural practices of the locale. For example, certain rituals and traditions are conducted while sowing the seeds, and some during the harvest. Therefore, ritual art forms can never be distinguished from the ecological, agricultural and religious aspects of a village.

The Mudi yettu is a ritual art form conducted during the post-harvest season of a year. The devi, the mother earth concept, is being worshipped for providing a good harvest, and for the further blessings of fertility and prosperity in coming years. The devi is the objectified character of this ritual art, who passes the pure, sacred love and nurture to the villagers. The ecological aspects of Mudi yettu are so relevant as discussed in the previous section. The performance places the nature as the prime element, they symbolise an interlink between the men and the nature. While conducting the Mudi yettu no hazardous waste is generated instead it helps in purifying the environment. The *teli* used to make brilliant flames in oil lit torches, have an aesthetic fragrance and helps in detoxicating the whole premises.

The mudi yettu is performed under strict rituals and customs. The art form is performed mainly by *Kuruppu* community. However, the performers from other communities are also taking part in this ritual art these days. Traditionally there were three shylees or styles of mudi yettu, namely, *Paazhoor*, *Koratty* and *Kunnakal* styles. Later, due to the changes brought in the costume of Kaali, and the *kottu and chuvad* that is the rhythm and the steps of devi during the Kalipurapad by Keezhillam Unnikrishnan Maarar, the *Keezhilam* have become a unique style or shylee. Therefore, four shylees exists now a days. There are twelve sanghangal or troupes of mudi yettu. This includes both professional troupes who performs on various temples, and also who performs only at certain kaavukal, which are there mandatory centres (adiyandhara stalangal). At *Koratty* there are three troupes, Kozhappily and Kunnakal, who follows Kunnakal style. Paazhoor, Thirumarayoor and Puthankurishinkal troupes perform in the Paazhoor style. The Keezhilam mudi yettu sangham is one among the popular troupes. Two new sanghangal have originated at Puthankurishinkal and Muzhavor. It is to be noted that the first women to act the Kaali's role in the mudi yettu, is Paazhoor Bindhu. Despite of the Kurup

community, many communities are given the hereditary rights and roles while the Mudi yettu is performed.

The lives of all these Mudi yettukar were affected during the Covid-19 pandemic. Each sanghanga is consists of a maximum of thirty members and a minimum fifteen people are essentially required to perform a Mudi yettu. The study intends to examine about the social and economic conditions of performers.

## 2.2 MUDIYETTU: RITUAL AND SCENES

The Mudi yettu is considered as the first ever folk drama. The origin of mudi yettu with a strong literature support can be traced back to the period between seventh and fourteenth century. The literature used in Mudi yettu is a bilingual mix of Tamil and Malayalam. It is popularly assumed that the drama must have originated years before the seventh century, without the literature contents. The first ritual while performing mudi yettu is *Kallamezhuth paatu*. This is followed by lighting the *kalivilaku*, *Sandhyakeli*, *Arangathkelli*, and *Aranguvazhthal*.

### ***Kalamezhuthum paatu***

Kalamezhuthum paatu is one among the earliest form of art traditions of Kerala. The picture of the respective god or goddess is drawn in the specially decorated and sacred floor at the kaavu. This picture is drawn using the *panchavarna podikal*, the five colours, white, red, yellow, green and black. All these colours are naturally produced and the other colour varieties are produced by appropriate mixing of these basic five colours. The kalam or the pictorial representation of the deities is depicting the most prominent story of the respective deity. This is followed by a set of rituals, called, *pooja*, *thiriyozhichil*, *kalam paatu*, *kalam maaykal* etc. The Kalamezhuthum paatu is mostly performed for the deities like *bhagavaty*, *sarpangal*, *gandharvan*, *vettekorumakan*, *shastavu*, *yakshi* and *vellumbhagavathy*. The picture of Bhadrakali holding Darika's head in her hand is drawn in the floor. This ritual had significantly contributed to the origin of Theeyatu, Mudi yettu etc. Mudi yettu, is presented in the form of a theatre drama and it is found to be the oldest art form to use the flashback technique in the story telling which is very much prominently used in the movies and books today. The Kalamezhuthum paatu depicts the last scene of mudi yettu through the picture and story of the *Darika Vadham* (the tale of killing the demon Darika) is narrated through the seven scenes of the drama.

### ***Sandhya keli***

The chenda, valamthala and elathalam are played to let people know, Mudi yettu is happening, that day. The instruments like chenda, valamthala, and elathalam are having prominent role throughout Mudi yettu. They keep the entire performance on the rhythm. The first announcement or keli is conducted at the evening, hence it is known as Sandhyakeli.

#### ***Kalivilakku theliyikal***

The lamp of the Mudi yettu which is placed on the centre of stage is lightened from the kalam vilaku. The lamp of the stage is holding the chaitanyam of the devi, and has a vital role throughout the drama. Every character is connected to the lamp in one or the other way. The character called kooli, blesses the villagers, especially the kids, using the light of the lamp and the oil in it. The light setting of the stage is very relevant especially during the early times when electricity was not used.

#### ***Arangathkeli***

After lighting the lamp of the Mudi yettu, the same kottu, which is the announcement, played using the drums and other musical instruments is repeated. Arangathkeli is the one which is played in the centre space of performance as the words depict, the major objective of this ritual is to let know the villagers, that lamp has been lightened. In other words, arangathkeli is used to let know the people that Mudi yettu is about to begin.

#### ***Aranguvaazhthal***

Aranguvaazhthal is the procedure where the deities are praised before starting the Mudi yettu. The lord Ganapathy, Saraswathy, Siva and other deities are been praised for the blessings and for the smooth conduct of the performance without any obstacles. These rituals are mandatory while performing Mudi yettu.

There are seven scenes in the Mudi yettu. They are as follows:

1. Siva-narada samvadham
2. Darika purapadu
3. Kaali purapadu
4. Koyimbada nair
5. Kooli purapadu
6. Koodiyaattam
7. Darika Vadham

Mudiyettu, is consisted of seven scenes and seven characters. As mentioned above, Siva, Narada, Darika, Kaali, Koyimbada nair, Kuli and Danavendra are the seven characters of Mudiyettu. The curtains used in Mudiyettu is similar to the one used in the Kadhakali. A rectangle shaped multi coloured curtain is used, which is being hold by two people. A brief scene by scene explanation of the Mudiyettu is given below.

### **1. *Siva-Narada samvadham***

This is the first scene of the drama. The scene depicts the conversation between the sage Narada and the lord Mahadeva. The literature used in the conversation is a bilingual mix of Tamil and Malayalam. The part of lord Siva is conveyed through songs, which showcases a style of sopana-sangeetham. This is because the Kuruppu community is the one who served the deities in the temple, they have initiated the kotti paadi seva or sopana-sangeetham. This is the ritual of singing about the deity, especially during the poojas at temple. These songs especially highlight the beautiful appearance of the deity, or the praises the deeds, and victories of the respective deity. Later, when the Kuruppu community began the Mudiyettu, the essence of sopana-sangeetham was also added into it, to make it more beautiful. The part of Narada is conveyed through dialogues, which is spoken in a unique sing-song pattern.

### **2. *Darika purapadu***

The entry of the demon Darika is portrayed through this scene. The scene creates a terror effect among the villagers. The horrifying expressions of Darika along with the flames of fire makes the environment more terrifying. He locks gazes with few among the audience, exhibiting and intimidating demeanour and appearance. Furthermore, accompanied by the howling and bellowing sounds creates fright among the audience. The role of fire in evoking fright among the audience is inexplicable. The demon shows the gestures expressing his courage and dignity over the villagers. The arrogance of the demon also showcases the call for fight. The viewers turn into the supporters of the demon in this scene; asurspada.

### **3. *Kaali purapadu***

The Kaali purapadu is the main scene where Bhadrakali makes her entrance. The Mudy, that is headgear is decorated with jungle geranium flowers and palm leaves. This head gear and the sickle is worn by the actor after the poojas in the temple (Kaavu). It is believed that the chaitanyam or the spirit of the devi is then transferred to the actor. He is now the vehicle of the devi who is objectified and praised. The elements of bhakti have a crucial part while performing the Mudi yettu. The Kaali-purapadu is the scene where devi moves according to the rhythm of musical instruments. The dignity and divinity of the presence of devi is more spiritualized through the two oil lit torches. The powdered product called *theli* is used to make the flames from the fire torches. The actor initially moves around the deity and comes out to the main space of performance. The actor picturizes the bhadrakali as the angry and vigorous lady, with desires. The anger of the devi is acted through the wild running, dance steps, the noises and expression through eyes. The movement and expression of these actors creates a magical feeling among the villagers. The viewers have significant role in this scene as well. Here, they are assumed to be the supporters of devi; bhoothaganam.

#### **4. *Koyimbada nair.***

The scene of Koyimbada nair is again comprised of both dialogues through speech in a singsong pattern and the song in the sopana-sangeetham style. The conversation shows a light humour shade.

#### **5. *Kooli purapadu***

Kooli is said to be the daughter of Kali. Her acting and costumes depict a tribal woman. This young character is on the advanced period of her pregnancy. The misbehaving and evil rule of the demon Darika and Danavendra is explained in this scene through the character of kooli. The kooli is a humour centric character who makes sarcastic dialogues and interact with the villagers. The little kids are being blessed by this character as well. The role of kooli in this scene is to entertain the people. The kooli purapadu ends with entrance of Kaali into the scene. In the final sequence of kooli purapadu she informs Kaali that, Darika and Danavendra are also searching her. This increases her temper and she hands over a weapon to kooli; deciding to start the war with the demon brothers.

#### **6. *Koodiyaattam***

In this scene the war between the goodness and evil is been acted. Kaali and Kooli are on one side and the demons Darika and Danavendra are on the other side. The war is acted through the steps which is accompanied by the rhythm of temple musical instruments and the ball of fires. In this scene, the man who acts the role of Kooli is also becoming a mediator of the war. It is popularly believed that, the chaitanyam or the unique spirit of the goddess is acting upon the actor, and hence the character who plays the role of Kooli acts wisely at the timing to control the temper of the lead actor.

### **7. *Darika Vadham***

The final scene of the Mudi yettu is Darika Vadham. In this scene, the headgear of Darika and Danavendra is removed by the actor who plays the role of Kaali. The headgear is then offered to the lamp in the centre, which was formerly mentioned as the kalivilaku.

The Mudi yettu ends with another set of rituals. The light torch and the headgear of devi is being used to ward off evil spirits from the audience and the performers. This is a ritual that holds a belief that every evil and bad presence is removed from the people therefore leaving them blessed and peaceful. The actor in the devi's role will bless the villagers especially the babies by lifting them up carefully and blessing them from the divinity of the sacred lamp. According to the believes, this will help in reducing and removing the fear from the children's mind. The flowers from the head gear or Mudy of the devi is given to the devotees which is also seen as special.

## **2.3 THE ROLE OF AUDIENCE IN MUDIYETTU**

In Mudi yettu, we may not be able to differentiate the viewers from the performers. In other words, the villagers themselves have various roles to play while Mudi yettu is being conducted. The main feature of the ritual art forms is that they are not being performed on a stage. The ritual arts and folk arts are mostly performed on a specially decorated floor space inside the temple, or on the courtyard inside the temple, or else within the village. Certain types of Theyyam are being conducted by visiting the homes of villagers one by one. The artist along with drums and other instrument players visit each home of the premise of particular temple and bless the households. The ritual art forms like Theyyatu, is mainly conducted within the premises of the temple, which is most often a beautifully and traditionally decorated area.

In Mudiyyettu, the audience are participants of the event. The viewers become the chief factors of the performance. The support of the viewers determines the energy of the program. The active participation can be briefed as the energy packed interactions of viewers to the artists keeping the limits; to the extend where the artists can perform without any obstacles. The main characters, Kaali, Kuli, and Darika have more scene space with the villagers. These interactions have different natures as the characters differ. In the scene of Darika purapadu, the viewers become the asura pada, or the group of demons, in the Kaali purapadu the same viewers become the bhootha gana or the assistance of the goddess Bhadrakali. In contrast in the scene of Kooli purapadu, the viewers are treated as the children of Kooli. The terror or frightened feel is evoked in the first two scenes mention here. But in the third respective scene, the actor makes fun of the viewers. The sarcastic jokes are cracked by the actor who resembles a tribal woman. The actor also blesses the participants. This character is often considered as a comic, despite of the depth of the character sketch and the mannerisms. For example, the Kooli have a very significant role in moderating the war between Kaali and Darika.

The role of the audience is so crucial that we can never differentiate them from the performers. The viewers are the part and parcel of the Mudiyyettu, without whom we cannot conduct the Mudiyyettu with its full soul. The artists move from point to point and attends every viewer. The viewers also feel an inclusiveness, while watching the performance, no matter they sit at the same place or move around along with the actors. The performance also demands an energy packed set of audience to cheer the main characters Kaali and Darika. The viewers dance and make noises along with the rhythm of the drums and other instruments. The social and cultural background of the society is showcased through the behaviour and mannerisms of the audience. The behaviour of the individuals definitely differs from one another. The difference might create various variations in the pattern of the performance. The small conflicts are very common in the society, the use of alcohols and other drugs is analysed as the primary reason for such conflicts. In addition, unlike other performing arts, the Mudiyyettukar are able resolve the small issues happening in between the Mudiyyettu.

To conclude the viewers are the heart and soul of Mudiyyettu. Also note that, art forms like Mudiyyettu, are not meant for an entertainment purpose, instead they are being performed as part of the custom, belief and ritual. Therefore, a code of conduct is very much essential for the proper accomplishment of the performance. The participation of the viewers is the pre-requisite of performing Mudiyyettu, provided the maintenance of discipline throughout the event. The lack of adequate awareness about the Mudiyyettu is sometime causing nuisance during the

performance. Hence, creating disturbances to the performers. On the contrary, the performance of the same without audience is impossible. The impact of covid-19 was therefore so hard on the Mudiyyətukar. They were not able to do any performance and this have very badly affected the lives of artists. The unpredicted spread of epidemic had created mess on the lives and hopes of the artists.

## 2.4 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MUDIYETTUKAR

The origin and spread of the pandemic Covid-19, was from the Chinese city of Wuhan, in December 2019. The reason for the outbreak is still under investigation. The spread of the coronavirus from person to person through the droplets produced from the cough, sneeze or speak created world-wide pandemic. This resulted in the declaration of the Primary Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization on 30 January 2020. The statistics shows that, till 7 January 2020, a round figure of 6.7 million deaths were confirmed, due to the Covid-19. The prevention through various measures were considered the vital step to break the spread of the virus. The prevention measures included numerous restrictions such as travel curtailment, cancelation of public events, imposition of lockdown and implementation of break the chain campaign etc.

The first case in India was reported in Kerala on 30, January 2020. This case was confirmed at Thrissur. On 20, February 2020, all the then positive cases tested negative. But, the second wave had reported on 9, March 2020. As the spread of the pandemic increased in the alarming rates, the educational institutions shut closed, on 10, March 2020. This was followed by nation-wide one day voluntary Janata curfew on 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2020. The government of Kerala announced state wide lockdown from 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The other states of the nation also reported many positive cases. This paved the way to the declaration and imposition of nation-wide lockdown on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

The first wave of covid-19 was on March 2020. On March 8 2020, the government of Kerala, announced high alert due to the increasing spread of coronavirus. They initiated various programs like activation of telephonic counselling, facilitating isolated beds for infected persons. The number of home as well as hospital quarantines cases were not falling down. The telephone counselling program by the health care workers provided psycho-social support to the citizen, especially to those families who were infected. The government of Kerala also started a channel on the YouTube to update the information and awareness regarding the status of state. The government restrictions tightened on the 10 March, this included the curtailment



of public gatherings, the limitations were set on the pilgrimages, festivals, entertainment programs, and public ceremonies. The Break the Chain campaign was implemented on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. The salons, and workout centres were also closed soon, the unemployment rate gradually increased. The day-to-day updates were provided through the press meeting by the Chief Minister, Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan. The restrictions and regulations were alternated according to the situations and status of the spread of pandemic. The protocols however, strictly restricted the public gatherings, and made sure that sanitization, social distancing, and masking were followed without any failure. The financial assistance was also provided for the needed. In addition, the zonal wise categorization was another initiative of the government.

The second phase or wave of covid-19 was from May to August 2020. This have mostly affected the southern districts of Kerala especially, in Thiruvananthapuram. The third wave was the end result of the relaxation of the restrictions for the state festival, Onam. The lockdown restrictions were relaxed in the late August, the number of cases thus increased significantly on September. The number of cases declined gradually on October, but the restrictions were not relaxed further for any more festivals. A minor increase in the number of positive cases were reported in the December 2020 and January 2021. This increase was due to the municipality and panchayath elections held in December and was recorded as the fourth wave. After the fourth wave, the positive cases stood steadily and declined gradually.

The fifth wave of covid-19 occurred after the State Legislature election. The election was conducted on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The active cases recorded the highest till the date. This was due to the relaxation of the restrictions for the smooth conduction of election. Due to the alarming rate of positive cases, the government was forced to reimpose the protocols and restrictions. The popular festival of the state, Thrissur Pooram, was conducted with limited participation. The public gatherings were not allowed further, and the shortage of vaccines and oxygen cylinders and other medicines made the situations more difficult. This was followed by the declaration of second lockdown, on 8 May 2021 to 16 May 2021. But uncontrollably rising number of the active cases, lead to the extension of lockdown. Hence second lockdown extended till 16, June 2021, with relaxations. By this time, ninety-five percentage of the adult population completed the vaccination dose against the coronavirus.

The Mudi yettu is usually conducted on the Vrishchika, Dhanu, Makaram, Kumbham, Meenam months according to the Malayalam calendar. These month falls from the second half of November to the first half of April. The Dhanu falls approximately on the second half of

December and first half of January. The number of events conducted in the first two respective months are very less. The season begins in Makaram and ends in the Meenam. Before covid, the prominent Mudi yettu sanghangal performed an average of one hundred fifty performances annually. The number of performances declined sharply during the covid-19 period and the years soon after the pandemic. The main reason for the decline in the event was due to the nature of mudi yettu. As we have discussed earlier, the viewers become the participants of the performance. The covid protocols mandated the social distancing, masking and sanitization and the Mudi yettu, demanded the participation of viewers, and masking and social distancing cannot be met during the performance.

The performance of mudi yettu in the season 2019-2020 was so poor that they had not performed any program. On 2020-2021 they restarted performance, but was forced to stop the performance due to the spread of virus on April 2021, after the election. The number of performances increased on the following years. The gradual increase was, around of ten performances on the year 2021-2022. The year 2022-2023, brought back the festivals and performances to a normal and formal pattern. At the same time, the financial situation did not rise in the same rate. The temple and devotes find it hard to provide the artists the amount they used to pay before. The current season, 2023-2024, is giving a new hope and optimism within the artists. The payments are also more or less favourable these days.

The covid-19 most significantly affected the youngsters, this was because the professional and senior artists were already established and had a space and popularity within the industry. They even managed to receive the financial aids from the government for the proficiency they have achieved through their lifetime experiences. The youngsters who were solely depending on the Mudi yettu and other temple arts have fallen apart through the emergence of covid-19. The unpredicted origin and spread of pandemic along with the shut-down of institutions, religious places and public gatherings like festivals, left these skilled youth unemployed. They were left with no employment and income. Perhaps, these artists were forced to choose an alternative job to meet their daily consumptions as well as other requirements. Many artists began small self-employed jobs like catering services and other jobs. The educated youth had chosen the jobs that suits their qualification. However, a set of youth have not chosen any alternative jobs. They were jobless throughout the whole pandemic period. On the other hand, there also artists who were engaged in the daily wage works and was left unemployed either way. The earlier generation who is the senior most artists are able to meet their lives depending on the mudi yettu alone but the new generation is doing the ritual arts as a secondary job now a days. The risk

involved in choosing the ritual art form alone for livelihood is not consider as a rational decision. The financial security, during the pre-covid period was fair enough to meet the standard of living, however the outbreak of the crisis, left them with nothing. This is the not just the case of Mudi yettu, but also the story of all performing artists.

The cost involved in the maintenance of properties and costumes Mudi yettu is another area of concern. Despite of the availability of the performance, the costumes and properties should be maintained annually. The first attraction of any creation is its beauty we seek from the first glance. Therefore, the maintenance of costumes is as mandatory as every other matters. The cost of preparing as well as renovating the costumes and equipment are very costlier. Many of the troupes were forced to take loans or borrow money from others to complete the preparations. On the other hand, there were tropes, who have restricted themselves from the renovation process. The full preparation costs around one lakh rupees. This includes the stitching of clothes of characters, and the curtain, buying and making of equipment like headgears of the characters, daggers of demons, sword of devi, the artificial fang of devi, miniature model of an ox that represents the vehicle of lord Siva, the sword and the shield etc. The costume includes red and black jackets, the dhotis draped in unique methods which suits the character, the gilt-breast plates decorated with gold colour works and other artistic works, the breast plate of devi is designed in a way that, it resembles the mythical form of devi. The bangles, flower garlands, hip belts, big and well decorated ear-ring like items are the major ornaments used by the characters. The making cost of the equipment also falls within this. The cost of making the headgear by carpenters, the cost of doing the required poojas as part of the rituals should also be met.

The make-up, costumes and headgear have significant differences as the style changes. For example, the Korraty troupe uses the costumes, makeup and headgear which are more similar to the Kadhakali. Whereas the Keezhillam and Thirumarayoor styles are very much different from the above, yet holds certain uniqueness and similarities. Hence, the cost involved in the preparations and renovation also have unevenness. The gap between renovations also changes which adds to the expense. The headgear is built on the stem of the jack tree. The resemblance of the Bhadrakali is carefully drafted and moulded by the assigned carpenters; this is followed by the customs of invoking the chaitanyam through the rituals. The cost of the properties, equipment and costumes are expensive as well as uneven.

## 2.5. THE RITUAL AND ENTERTAINMENT PERSPECTIVES OF MUDIYETTU

Every art form despite of being a ritual or performance are basically made for the entertainment purpose. Tracing back the history, growth and evolution of the art we end up with the ideas of entertainment and social responsibilities. The artists are as socially responsible as the other professionals. They entertain the society along with the motive of correcting the political and social issues. The statement given to the Mudi yettu by the performers is that, it is the victory of the dharma over the adharma. The misrule of the demon king Darika was an end result of the boon he received from the lord Brahma. The boon granted him the immune to not be killed by any man. However, the boon also mentioned that a women can do the honour of killing him. The arrogant and ignorant Darika firmly believed that no women is strong enough to dare look at him. He, on the contradictory begin to harm the unarmed women of the kingdom. They also attacked the men and killed them with no mercy. To end this adharma and kill the evil king, Lord Siva sends his daughter, Bhadrakali. The victory of ending the miserable rule by the hands of a women is hence forth celebrated and performed as various art forms. Mudi yettu is the most important ritual art that portrays the drama through the typical styles.

The artists try to put light on the issues of the contemporary world as well. The characters use sarcastic interpretation on the present life, linking them with the script and creativity of the presentation. The viewers also participate in the ritual with their own dance moves along with the rhythm of drums and other instruments. The scenes like Kaali purapadu and Darika purapadu ensures the sole participation of the viewers.

The average duration of the Mudi yettu performance is four hours. But this duration varies according to the demand and the purpose of conducting the Mudi yettu. While the performance is conducted simply as an offering, the rituals are been given the focus and the entertainment is given less importance. The participation of viewers is not mandatory in such cases. The Mudi yettu is basically conducted as the offering by the devotes for fulfilling their wishes. In certain kaavukal, the mudi yettu is not at all seen as an art of entertainment. The performance will be short enough that it holds the essence of the script. The temples where the mudi yettu is strictly viewed as an offering mostly follow this pattern. The remuneration will also be lesser while the performances focus on the ritual alone. The troupes only use the minimum number of men to reduce the cost and pay the artists well enough.

In the second category, the ritual as well as the entertainment is given equal relevance. The proper balance between the customs and entertainment will ensure the accurate display of Mudi yettu. While the performances are conducted in such a manner, the time duration may increase. The artists may act in detail with lot of entertainments, luxuriously five long hours. The viewers play a very vital role here. The entertainment part of any art form basically depends on the attitude and the energy level of the audience. Even though the mudi yettu is a ritual based art, the art itself is created for the entertainment purpose. The performance is mostly conducted in this form, where the devotion and entertainment are given equal importance by the viewers. As discussed in the above sections, the Mudi yettu is largely performed on the central Kerala region, in the districts like Kottayam, Ernakulam. In these regions, the performance mainly follows pattern of combining ritual along with art giving it equal priority.

The next category incorporates the main essence of the mudi yettu and are performed to a society who are not familiar of the Mudi yettu. The performers hence describe about the Mudi yettu and explain the act scene by scene. They then plan the duration of each scene on the basis of the factors like interest and participation of the viewers, the time allotted to them, the purpose of conducting Mudi yettu etc. Such performances are usually done to popularise the ritual art. The performers design the programme such that the purpose of conducting mudi yettu is been satisfied. Such programmes are usually done for the purposes like documentation, creating awareness, or introducing the beauty and divinity of this ritual art to an unfamiliar society. The government usually initiates the projects and schemes through which the ritual art can attain the deserving popularity. The documentaries may only have a short duration of thirty minutes, from this we can understand, that the such programs are simply meant to present a capsule form. The remuneration might also be lesser and the cost involved may not differ much. The transportation cost and the cost incurred for the make-up, costume, ornaments and equipment are still more or less the same. The number of artists performing can be reduced to an extent. However, this solution also come across several shortcomings, as we need seven characters on the event along with a minimum of seven instrument players. The duration is too much short, that, the performers may not get enough time switch from one character to another, which they do on the other programmes at temple.

From the perspective of performers, the population demands more of entertainment than rituals in the regions other than central Kerala. Hence, they intentionally remove the slow, lagged and less popular portions and scenes of the performance when they are staged in a new locality.

The other two aspects related to the ritual and entertainment is that both of these factors have significantly contributed to the increase in the number of programmes in the post covid period. The devotees are now trying to fulfil the promise of offerings they have made in the pre-covid-19 period. Since the outbreak of covid-19 has restricted everything around the globe, the post covid period witness the very vast participation of the viewers. The isolation faced during the pandemic and the popularity, the art forms gained through the social media platforms, attract more and more viewers to the places where the Mudi yettu is conducted. The participation of viewers almost doubled during the post-covid period, says the performers.

## 2.6 THE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

The dance, drama, music, art, ritual and literature heritage of our country is as rich as the diversity it holds in culture, tradition, believes, custom and languages. The government have a prioritized concern on preserving, protecting and promoting the unique traditional art forms and cultural varieties. For the same objectives government have initiated various schemes under various ministries as well as academies.

### 2.6.1 MINISTRY OF CULTURE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

This is the institution which is taking the responsibility of conserving, preserving and promoting the various art and cultural tradition of the nation. They have categorised the art and cultural traditions into two broad categories that is the tangible and intangible form of art and culture. This ministry takes care of all the ritual, folk and performing art, music, painting, literature and every other cultural aspect of the nation. The museums, institutions, ancient texts and regional art forms are given special attention to bring them before the world. The main mission of the ministry is to prevent the nation's cultural traditions and also to help the artistes who live with the ritual art alone. The ministry also works to develop a creative and aesthetic sensibility of the citizen. They work to generate the awareness about our own varieties of culture and tradition and to promote them to the international audience. They have initiated various policies and schemes, to fulfil the missions. The selected schemes which is applicable for the Mudi yettu and its artistes is discussed below.

#### 2.6.2 Scheme of scholarship and fellowship for promotion of Art and Culture

In this scheme, the senior as well as junior artists are awarded fellowship for their outstanding performance in their respective fields. The young artistes who belong to different cultural fields are awarded with scholarships if they have successfully passed the criteria of selection.

### **2.6.3 Scheme for financial assistance for Veteran Artists**

This is the scheme where the most experienced and professional artists are given the financial assistance. The artistes who were either awarded National or State award or categorised /recognized by Akasha Vani/ Dooradarshan are selected as the Veteran artistes. They should also substantially prove their source of income was from the art activity alone during their active age. The artistes must also prove that their monthly income is within Rs.4000/- and the annual income lies on or below Rs. 48,000/-. The scheme provides Rs.6000/- per month to the beneficiary and Rs. 5999/- in case of transfer of Financial Assistance to spouse on the death of initial beneficiary. The beneficiaries also include those artistes who already receives the pension fund. The financial assistance for Veteran Artistes is for those artistes who are aged more than sixty years.

### **2.6.4 Scheme for pension and medical aids to artists**

The artistic pension is given after a detailed verification and scrutiny by an expert committee of Ministry of culture. The physical inspection and verifications are assisted by an expertise set of people from their respective cultural fields. These procedures are carried out time to time by the committee members. The disbursement of these financial assistance is done through the Public Financial Management System (PFMS). The Direct Benefit Transfer is used, that is the fund is directly credited to the bank account of the beneficiaries.

The intangible cultural heritage deals with the Mudi yettu and other folklores of the nation. Various programs were carried out by the nation to conserve, promote and prevent the folklore culture. The mudi yettu is a prominent ritual art which is identified as the Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO. This underlines the significance and dignity of mudi yettu and its reputation around the globe.

### **2.6.7 Utsavam – Tourism department of Government of Kerala**

The Utsavam is government of Kerala initiative. This project is designed to promote the traditional arts, tribal, cultural and folk arts. This is a government initiative project where the performers are invited to perform. The performances take place in different districts and in

front of different audiences. The main aim of the organization is to popularize the art form to a much bigger population. The government can also help the performers by providing more programmes.

The Mudi yettu artists are also invited to perform for the foreign audience, as the initiative of Utsavam Project initiated by the tourism department. The registered troupes get a round of sixty performances annually through this scheme. The major goals such as, popularising the traditional and ritual art forms, providing stages to the ritual art performers, attracting the tourists with the heritage are met through the scheme of Utsavam. The Utsavam project all ensures the participation of every form of ritual and performing arts. The registration of the troupe is mandatory for the opportunities to participate in such government projects.

#### **2.6.8 THE DIAMOND JUBILEE FELLOWSHIP**

The Diamond Jubilee Fellowship is a Kerala government initiative which was started in the year, 2017. The fellowships are announced for two years. During the covid -19 period, the duration of the fellowship was extended to three years. The aim of the scheme is to promote the art and culture. The government intends to provide fellowship to the deserving artists by assigning the duties of teaching and popularising their respective art to the common people. The applications are invited from the candidates for the fellowship and the expert committee and the recognised institution of the folklore academy selects the eligible candidates from the nominates. The selection procedure is based on particular criteria which includes an age limit of thirty-five years, the knowledge, experience, talent and the recognition of the candidate. The government selects thousand artists from all art forms, and provide Ten thousand rupees monthly for two years. The local self-government bodies, government and aided schools are hosting the infrastructural facilities to teach and to train the students. The government also monitors whether the scheme functions wells. The beneficiaries of the fellowships should update about the progress of training. This scheme is having a very wide scope of empowering the art and artists. If implemented properly, the common people can learn any among the wide choices of art free of cost, very near to their home, and with no restrictions.

This scheme provides men and women equal opportunity to learn Mudi yettu despite of the traditional restrictions. But the scope of performance of what they have learned remains as a question itself. This particular ritual art cannot be learned under a classroom conditional guidance. Numerous performances, along with the live audience and the circumstances are so necessary. The experience is so crucial for the artists that it teaches the artists on how to handle



the situations with propriety. However, the Diamond Jubilee Fellowship have a significant role in the development, promotion and welfare of the Mudi yettu and its performers.

## Chapter 3 - DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter consists of the analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected. The stratified sampling method was used for the purpose of data collection. The performers of Mudi yettu from three major troupes were selected. The characteristics, style, advantages and motives of the three troupes are different from one another. Therefore, the responds of the random samples drawn from the three respective troupe shows the economic aspects, impact of covid-19 and their views on the government initiatives and policies in the upbringing of the artists. The data was collected through the questionnaire. The questionnaire included the questions that would help to find the answers for the objective.

### 3.1 PROFILE OF TROUPES

Shankarankutty Smaraka Mudi yettu Sangham, is one among the prominent troupes which is now headed by Keezhillam Unnikrishnan Maarar. He had completed thousand five hundred performances in the lead role (Bhadrakali vesham). The troupe have around of forty performers. The troupe brings approximately fifteen artists for a normal performance and nearly twenty-five people for bigger performance that demands more percussion. They perform mostly on the temples at Kottayam, Alappuzha and temples near their residence; Keezhillam at Ernakulam district. They also perform at various projects of folklore academy and other institutions.

Madakil Sreebhadr a Mudi yettu Sangham, is a new born troupe. The troupe is owned by Sree Kuttan Maarar, they have fifteen members in the troupe. They mostly perform in Kottayam, Alappuzha, Idukki and Ernakulam Districts. The troupe also performs at other districts like Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Palakkad, where mudi yettu is not familiar. The performs with an objective of popularizing and to let know about this ritual art. The troupe started in the year 2018.

Sree Bhadr a Mudi yettu Sangham Varanattu, is an another old and prominent sangham. This troupe is now headed by Madhu Maarar. The troupe was handed over by his ancestors. The origin can be traced back to decades. The performance is normally spread across Ernakulam, and Thrissur districts. They concentrate more on the customs and traditions, and usually restrain from the government projects and performance. The troupe have fifteen performers on an average. In the program that demands more percussion twenty artists are brought to the event.

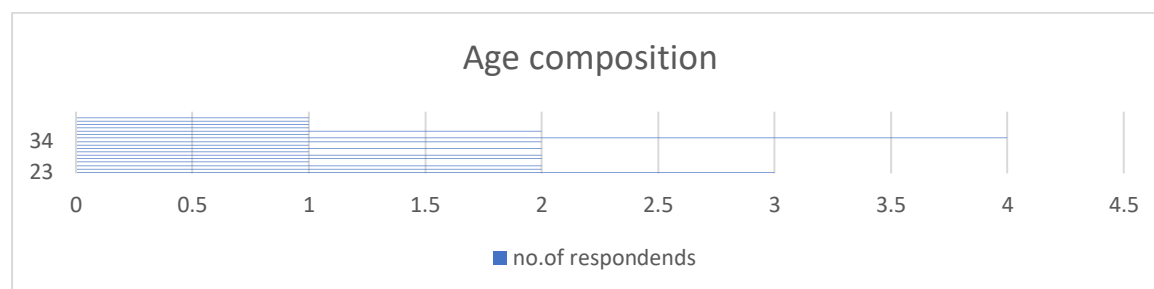
### 3.2 Age composition

Table 3.2 Age composition

Age	No. of responds	Percentage of respondents
23	3	10
24	2	6.7
25	2	6.7
26	1	3.3
27	2	6.7
29	2	6.7
30	1	3.3
31	2	6.7
32	1	3.3
34	2	6.6
35	4	13.3
36	1	3.3
37	2	6.7
46	1	3.3
50	1	3.3
51	1	3.3
60	1	3.3
65	1	3.3

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.2 Age composition



Source: Primary Data

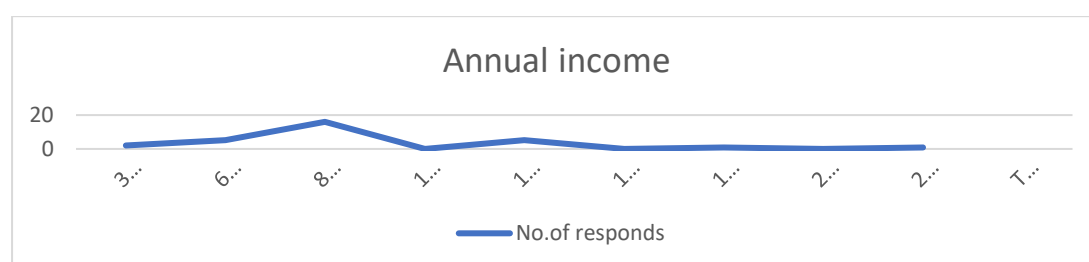
The details regarding the age of the respondents were collected to analyse the participation of youth as well as the elders in the Mudiyettu performance. The responds shows that the participants are mostly from the age group of thirty-five, and this is followed by the age group of twenty-three. The data also depicts a more or less similar distribution of frequency. The participation of youth is also satisfactory, this implies that, more youth is taking up Mudiyettu despite the challenges it poses in terms of inconsistency in income and instability of the number of programmes. The participation of elderly people is comparatively lower, the health issues due to the age would be the reason for the same.

### **3.3 Annual income**

Table 3.3. Annual income

Annual income (in rupees)	No. of responds	Percentage of responds
35000-60000	2	6.7
60000-85000	5	16.6
85000-110000	16	53.3
110000-135000	0	0
135000-160000	5	16.6
160000-185000	0	0
185000-210000	1	3.3
210000-235000	0	0
235000-260000	1	3.3

Figure 3.3. Annual income



Source: Primary Data

The income distribution of the respondents are as follows. The data that the majority of respondents receive an annual income of around of rupees one lakh. Only one respondent had an income higher than rupees two lakhs. This income is generated through additional job rather

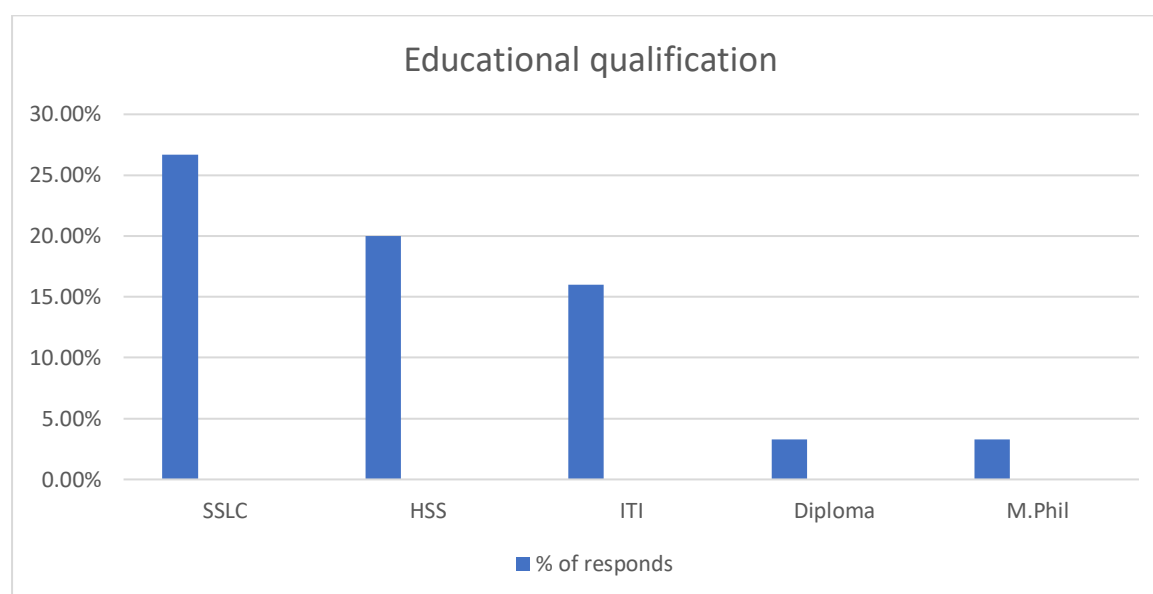
than Mudiyetu. Seven respondents earns less than eighty-five thousand rupees. The data hence reveals that a major portion of the artists belong to the lower income category of the society.

### **3.4 Educational Qualification**

Table 3.4. Educational qualification

Qualifications	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
SSLC	8	26.7
HSS	6	20
UG	9	30
ITI	5	16
Diploma	1	3.3
M. Phil	1	3.3

Figure 3.4. Educational qualification



Source: Primary Data

The below given data shows the educational qualification of the respondents. According to the data, the thirty percentage of the respondents are holding an Under Graduation degree. This is followed by the Secondary level education which is constituting a twenty-six percentage of responds. The sixteen percentage are having qualification from the Industrial Training Institute.

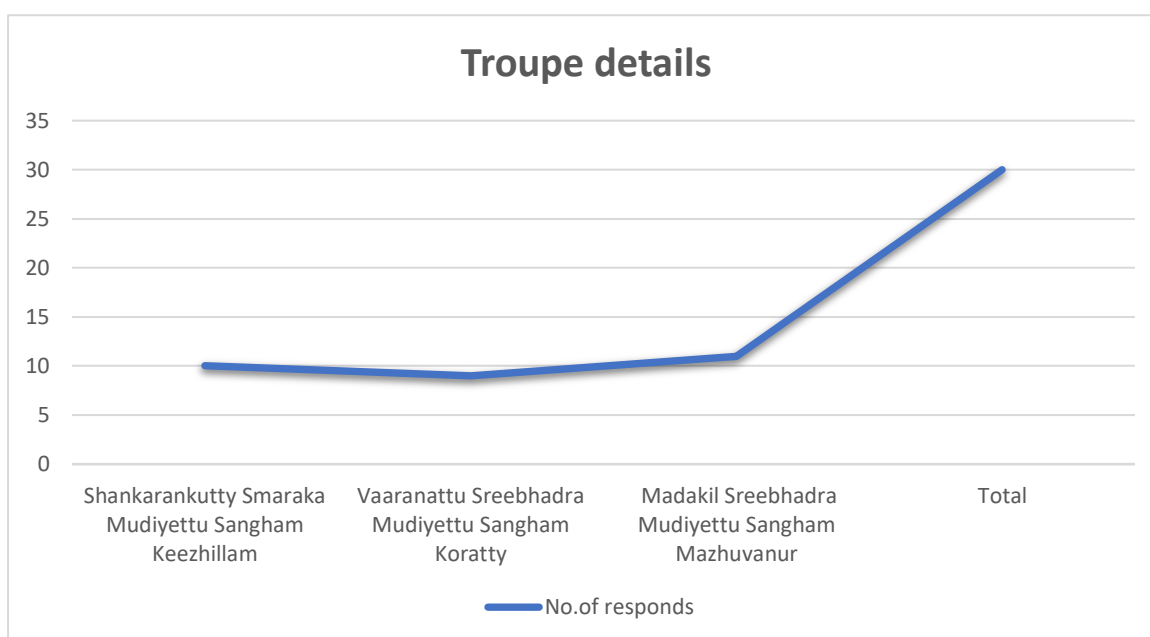
### **3.5. Troupe details**

Table 3.5. Troupe details

Name of the troupe	No. of responds	Percentage of responds
Shankarankutty Smaraka Mudi yettu Sangham Keezhillam	10	33.3
Vaaranattu Sreebhadra Mudi yettu Sangham Koratty	9	30
Madakil Sreebhadra Mudi yettu Sangham Mazhuvanur	11	36.6

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.5 Troupe details



Source: Primary Data

The data was collected from the three prominent troupes of Mudi yettu. The first one is Shankarankutty Smaraka Mudi yettu Sangham Keezhillam is the most popular as well as the biggest troupe. This troupe is a parental troupe of Madakil Sreebhadra mudi yettu Sangham Mazhuvanur. The Vaaranattu Sreebhadra Mudi yettu Sangham is another prominent Mudi yettu sangham from Koratty. We use a thirty sample from the population for the study. Ten samples

from Keezhillam, nine samples from Koratty and eleven samples from Koratty is used for the data analysis.

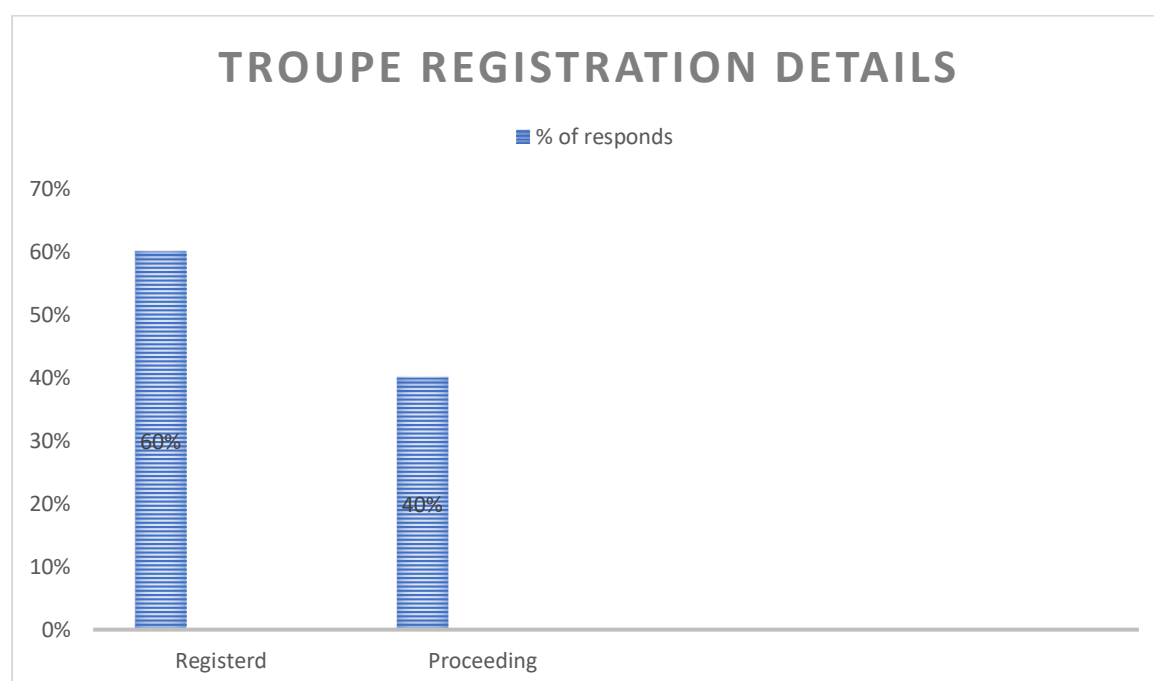
### **3.6 Troupe registration**

Table 3.6 Troupe registration

Registration status	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Registered	18	60
Proceeding	24	40

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.6 Troupe registration



Source: Primary Data

The registration of the troupe is mandatory for the analysis and accounting of the details about any institution. The troupes and institutes in the field of ritual, performing and theatre arts are registered at the Sangeeth Natak academy. The registration is essential to transfer the information as well benefits of the government initiatives. The official procedure of registration holds various formalities, paper works and criteria. The existence of the troupe is officially recorded only if they are registered, therefore, to avail the benefits and opportunities of the government policies the registration is vital.



From the data, it is understood that the sixty percentage of the responds belong to the registered troupe and the rest is proceeding with the process of registration. We can use this data to analyse whether or not every registered troupe enjoys the privileges and advantages of being registered. The data would also help to compare and analyse the problems of the unregistered troupe

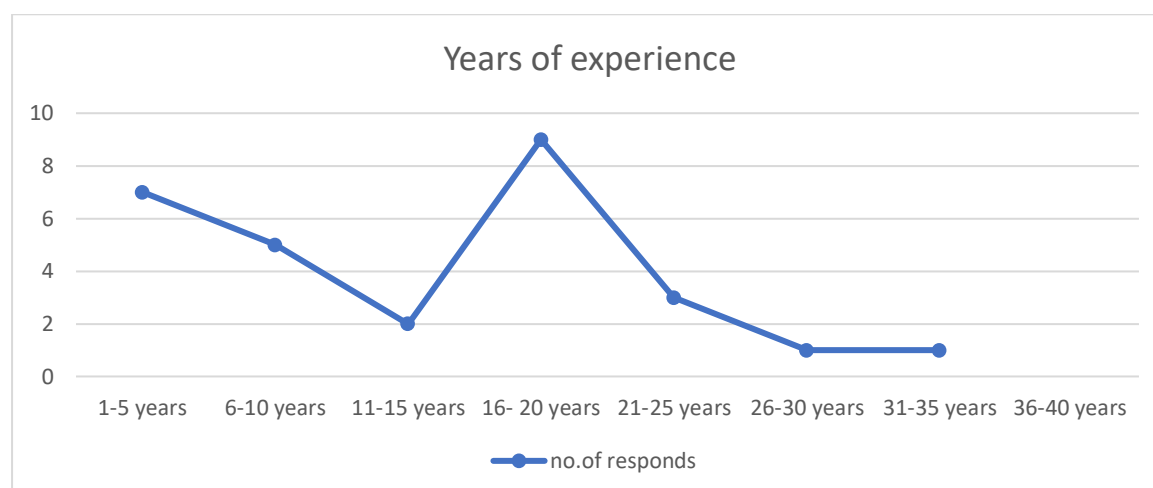
### **3.7 Years of experience**

Table 3.7 Years of experience

Years of experience	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
1-5 years	7	23.3
6-10 years	5	16.6
11-15 years	2	6.6
16-20 years	9	30
21-25 years	3	10
26-30 years	1	3.3
31-35 years	1	3.3
36-40 years	2	6.6

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.7 Years of experience



Source: Primary Data

The years of experience is very much important for the expertise in any working space. To be very particular, the ritual and performing arts demands more experience and deep understanding. Mudi yettu, on the other hand has very unique characteristics which

differentiates it from the other forms of arts. The performers act and dance to the vigorous characters, whose vibrant movements are unpredictable. As this dance drama is performed along with the viewers, experienced actors only be able to manage the rhythm, steps, expressions, viewers all at once.

The data shows that majority of the respondents have an experience between sixteen to twenty years. We can also note that twenty-three percentage of the respondents only have an experience of less than five years. It shows the trend of youngsters coming to this ritual art.

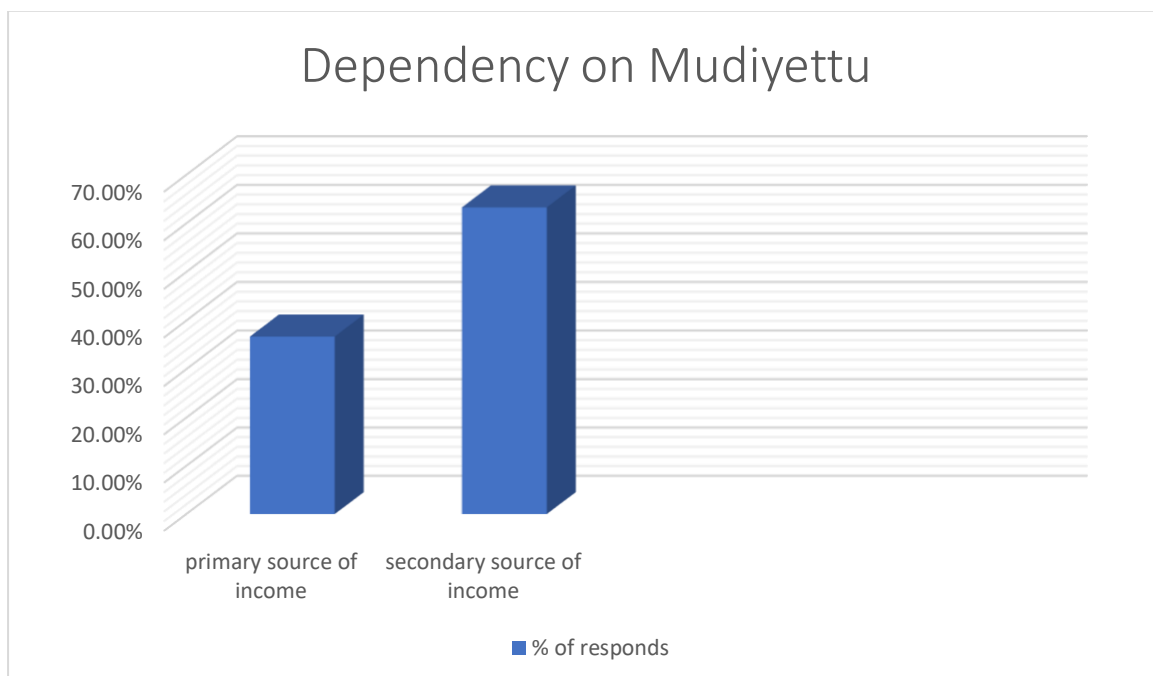
### **3.8 Dependency on Mudi yettu**

Table 3.8 Dependency on Mudi yettu

Dependency on Mudi yettu	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Primary source	11	36.7%
Secondary source	19	63.3%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.8 Dependency on Mudi yettu



Source: Primary Data

The instability and inconsistency of income as well as the working days forces the performers to take another job as a primary job. The data shows that around thirty-six percentage of the

respondents are considering the Mudi yettu as a primary source of income. The rest of the respondents are engaged in the Mudi yettu due to the passion. This implies that the majority of respondents cannot depend on the Mudi yettu as a primary job.

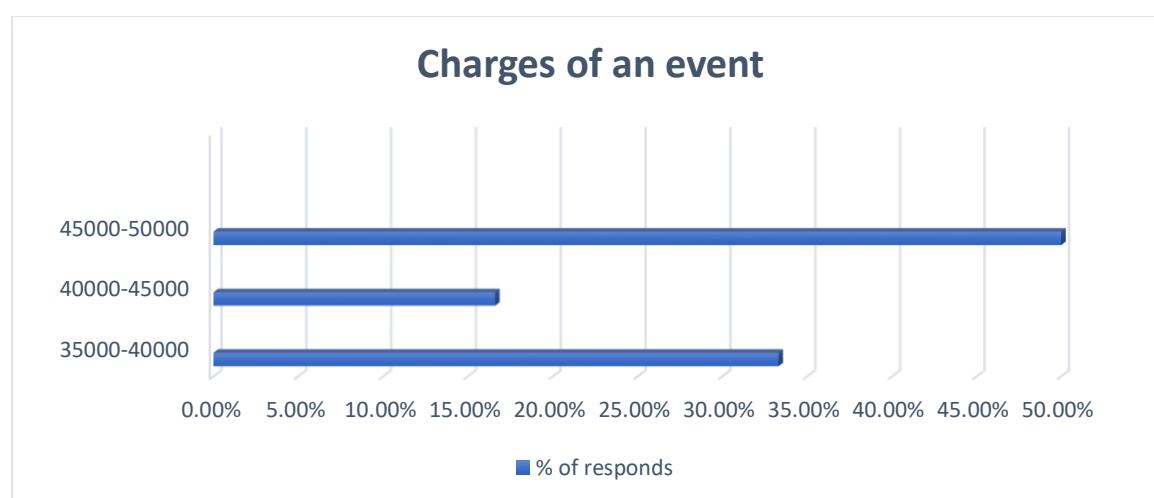
### **3.9 Charge of an event**

Table 3.9 Charges of an event

Charges of events (in rupees)	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
35000-40000	10	33.33%
40000-45000	5	16.6%
45000-50000	15	50%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.9 Charges of an event



Source: Primary Data

The data shows that, the charge of a performance vary between thirty-five thousand to fifty thousand. Here, the minimum charge for a performance is rupees thirty-five thousand. The payment for the artists who performs in the Mudi yettu and the travel expense are the main cost included in the remuneration. The charges will be minimum in the temples which conduct the Mudi yettu as an offering. In such temples, the rituals are focused and the entertainment aspects are ignored. The amount of payment can increase depending on the temple and the number of artists conducting the performance. Such programs satisfy the purpose of ritual as well as the entertainment. The participation of the viewers, duration of the performers and the number of artists participating will be more compared to the former. The former category focuses solely

on the ritual, where the performers and the people who have made the offering will only be present. The number of performers as well as the duration will be very precise and hence less expensive.

According to the data collected, we can interpret that fifty percentage of respondents are mostly performing luxuriously where they get a higher payment. Around thirty-three percentage of the respondents are mostly performing on the basis of ritual perspectives. And the rest are flexible between the ritual and the entertainment purpose.

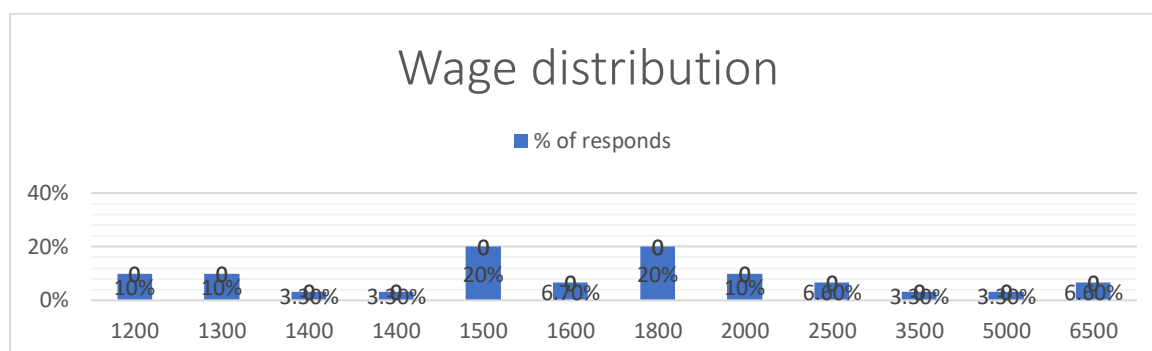
### **3.10 Wage distribution**

Table 3.10 Wage distribution

Wage – in rupees	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
1200	3	10
1300	3	10
1400	1	3.3
1500	6	20
1600	2	6.70
1800	6	20
2000	3	10
2500	1	6.60
3500	1	3.30
5000	1	3.30
6500	2	6.60

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.10 Wage distribution



Source: Primary Data

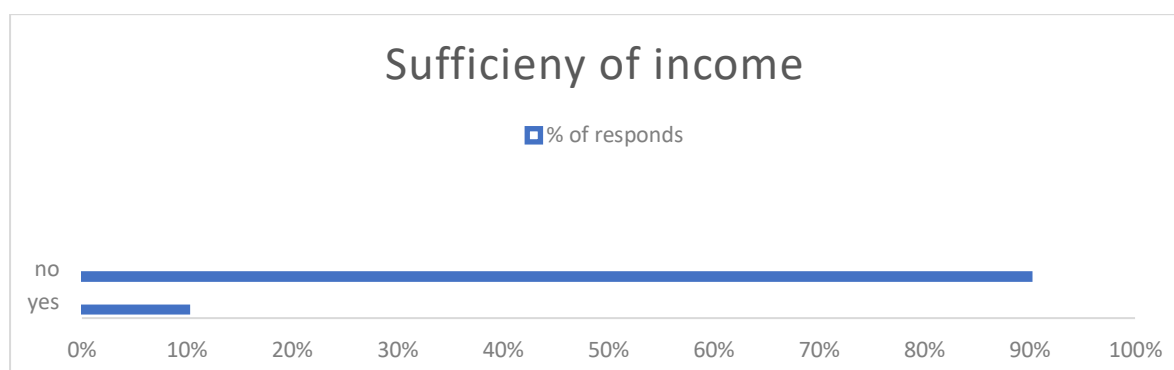
According to the data collected, the highest percentage of responds receives a payment of rupees one- thousand five hundred and one thousand eight hundred. The salary of the performers depends on the roles they are assigned with and the level of experience and expertise the artist is equipped with. Therefore, the artists who can handle different roles on the stage, assist the co-actors in the greenroom, and can handle the instruments. The highest remuneration is received by the head of the troupes who have the highest experience.

### **3.11 Income sufficiency**

Table 3.11 Income sufficiency

Whether the income is sufficient	Number of respondents	Percentage of response
Yes	3	10%
No	27	90%

Figure 3.11 Sufficiency of income



Source: Primary Data

From the data we can interpret that the income from Mudi yettu is sufficient only for the ten percentage of the respondents. The head or the managers of the three troupes constitutes the ten percentage. The experience, expertise and the profit after meeting the costs of the troupe is contributing to the income of the head of the troupe. The other twenty-seven, that is ninety percentage of the respondents do other jobs to meet their additional requirements.

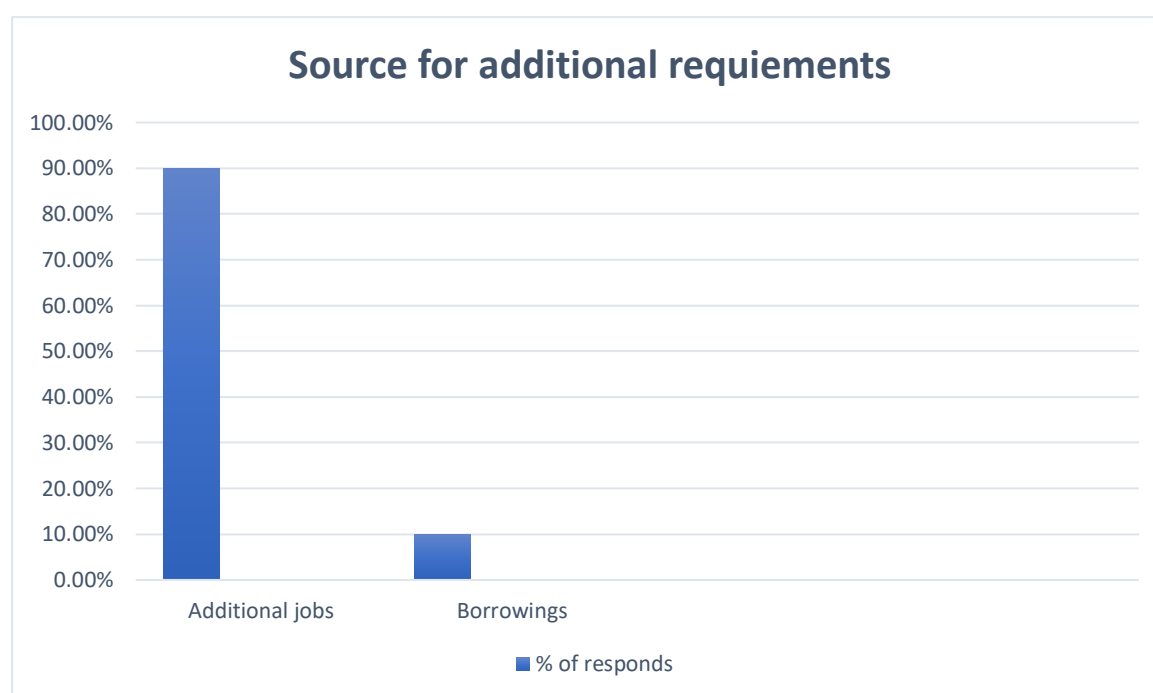
### **3.12 Meeting the additional requirements**

Table 3.12 Source of additional requirement

Sources of meeting additional requirements	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Additional job	27	90
borrowings	3	10

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.12 Source of additional requirement



Source: Primary Data

Majority of the respondents are doing other jobs to meet the additional financial requirements. It is clear that around ninety percentage of the respondents cannot survive alone with the Mudi yettu. Around ten percentage of the respondents depends on the borrowings to meet the additional needs. These borrowings are not bought from the formal institutions. They either

collect it from friends or other informal institutes. This is because of the limitations of the commercial banks to provide loan for the artists who lacks income stability.

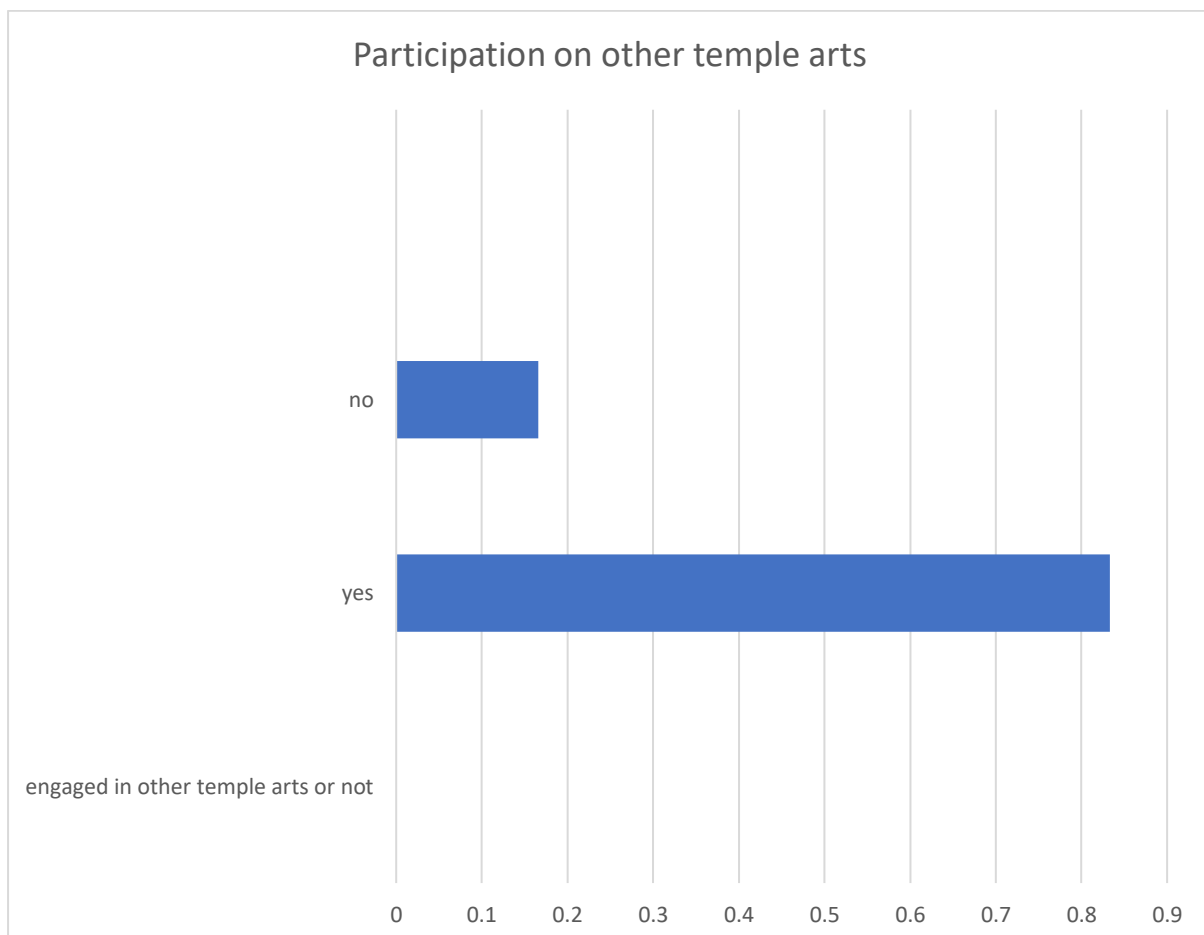
### **3.13 Respondents engaged in other temple arts**

Table 3.13 Participation on other temple arts

Whether or not engaged in other temple arts	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Yes	25	83.3
No	5	16.6

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.13 Participation on the other temple arts



Source: Primary Data

The data shows that around eighty-three percentage of the respondents are performing various temple arts. This shows that the performers cannot solely depend on a single art form and they

master various skills with passion and dedication. These skills also add to their remuneration especially during the festival seasons.

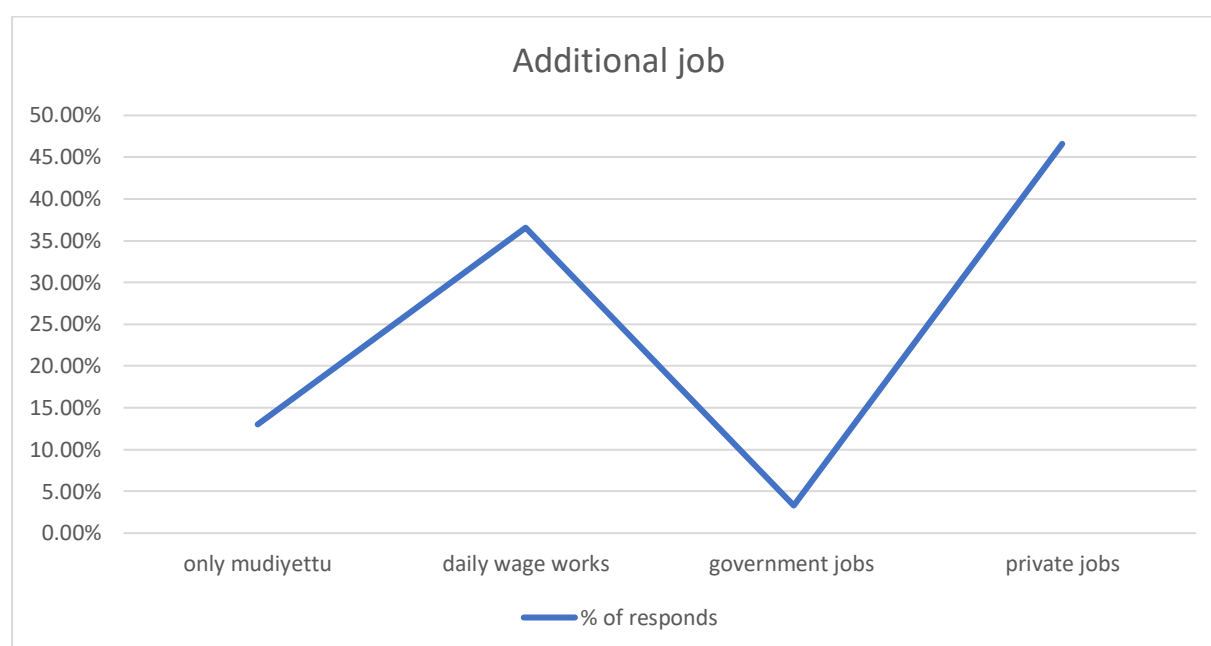
### **3.14 Occupational structure**

Table 3.14 Occupational structure

Occupational structure	Number of responds	Percentage of response
Engaged only in mudiyettu and other temple arts	4	13.3
Daily wage works	11	36.6
Government jobs	1	3.30
Private jobs	14	46.60

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.14 Additional job



Source: Primary Data

From the data obtained, we can interpret that highest percentage of the respondents are working in private sectors. This is followed by the respondents working in the daily wage jobs. The percentage of respondents working in the government sector contributes the least. From this we can understand that the artists are not working in a formal or organised sector. They choose to work in informal sectors where the works and timing can be adjusted with the convenience of the program schedules.



### **3.15 The reason for continuing to choose mudiyettu as profession despite of the income insufficiency challenges it poses**

Table 3.15 Reasons for continuing this profession

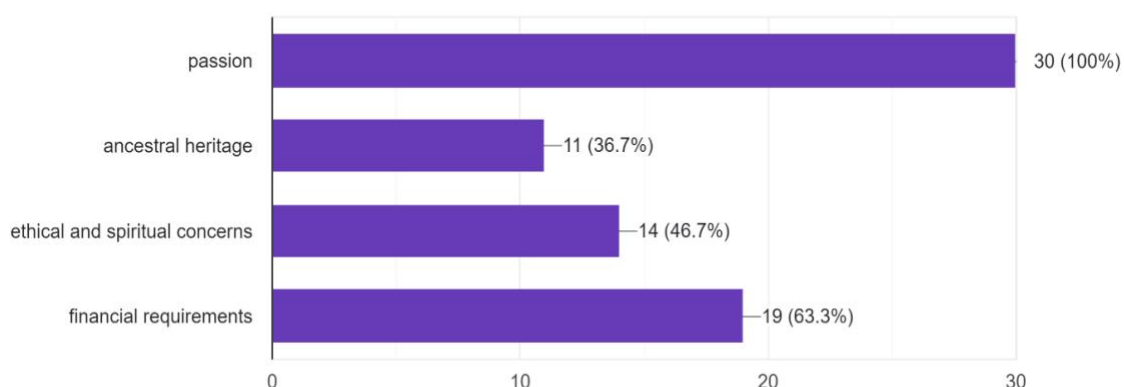
Reasons	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Passion	30	100
Ancestral heritage	11	36.7
Ethnical and spiritual concern	14	46.7
Financial requirement	19	63.3

Source: Primary Data

Figure. 3.15 Reasons for choosing this profession

How would you define your reasons for continuing to choose this profession despite various challenges ?

30 responses



Source: Primary Data

The respondents had multiple responds for this question. The whole hundred percentage have chosen passion as the primary reason for continuing Mudi yettu. Around thirty-six percentage have an objective of following and handing over the divinity of art to the next generations. Around forty-seven percentage responded they have ethnic and spiritual concerns. They deeply believe in the spiritual and divinity of the art and place this as their main reason for continuing the ritual art. Around sixty-three percentage of the respondents view the ritual art as a source of income. They depend on the art for the financial requirement.

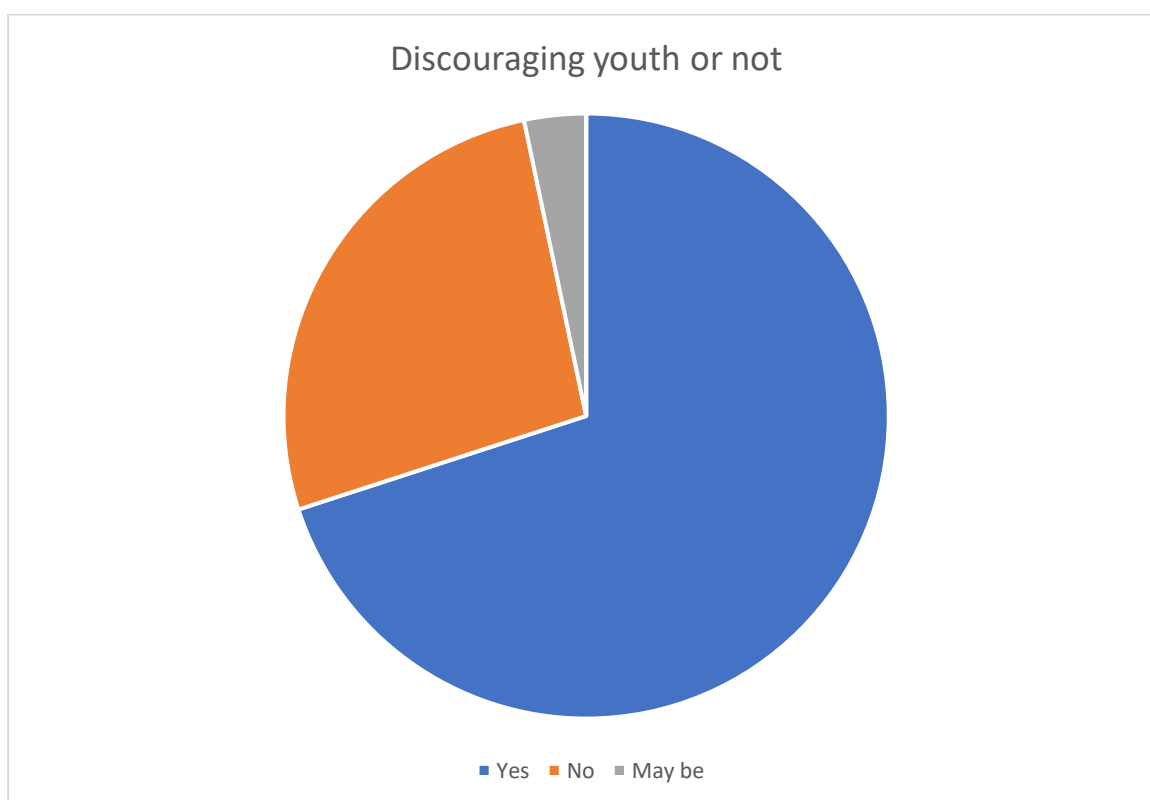
### **3.16 Whether or not you think these challenges are discouraging the youth from taking up this ritual art as a primary source of income**

Table 3.16 Discouraging youth or not

Whether or not the youth is discouraged from taking up Mudi yettu as a primary job	Number of respondents	Percentage of responds
Yes	21	70
No	8	26.7
May be	1	3.3

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.16 Discouraging youth or not



Source: Primary Data

The responds from the participants shows that seventy percentage believes that the youth is getting discouraged from taking up this art as a primary job. They believe that it is not wise to take up Mudi yettu as a primary job. Rather it can be treated as an additional seasonal job.

Around twenty-six percentage of the respondents believes the youth is not discouraged to take up this art as a primary option. The data show that the participation of youngsters is actually higher. Approximately one percentage responded like they are not sure about the case.

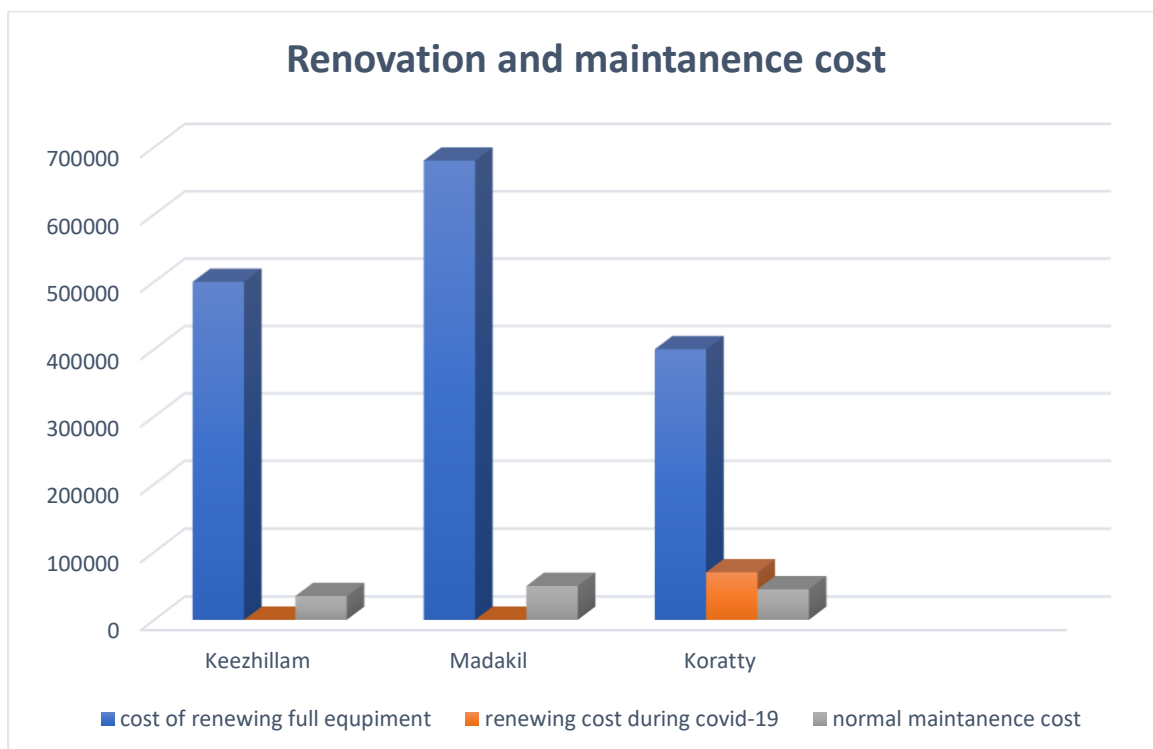
### **3.17 Cost of renewing, and maintaining the costumes and equipment of mudiyettu**

Table 3.17 Renewing and maintenance cost comparison

Name of the troupe	Cost of renewing full costume ornaments and equipment	Cost of renewing during covid-19	Maintenance cost for a year
Keezhillam	500000	Not renewed	35000
Madakil	680000	Not renewed	150000
Koratty	400000	70000	45000

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.17 Renovation and maintenance



Source: Primary Data

The cost incurred in the Mudi yettu performance includes mainly the cost of making muddy (headgear), kuppayam (costume), ornaments, tightening and polishing of instruments and properties etc. the cost for these activities varies according to the experience of the troupe, the styles they belong to and also the source of renewing. For example, if the carpenter is belonging in the same troupe, they can do the maintenance at a lower cost.

The data shows that for making a completely fresh set of properties, costumes and ornaments, the troupes require different amount of rupees. The very new troupe, Madakil Sreebhadra Mudi yettu Sangham is headed by a beginner and they required Rs. Six lakh Eighty thousand to complete the making and arrangements. The other troupes, Keezhillam and Koratty can meet this at a lower cost. They require Rs. Five lakhs and Rs. Four lakhs respectively.

In the third column, the renewing cost during the covid-19 period is analysed. During this period most of the troupes had only less programs. For the same reason the properties and costumes were not that dirty or torn. The costume and properties were said to be in a good condition. But during end of that season for some other reasons, the Koratty troupe renewed some of the urgent properties and costumes. This costed nearly seventy thousand rupees.

In a normal season a simple maintenance of the minimalist needs would cost Rs. Thirty-five thousand for Keezhillam, Rs. One lakh fifty thousand for Madakil and Rs. Forty-five thousand for Koratty troupe. We can analyse that Keezhillam has a cost advantage than the other troupes. And the new born troupe have to put on more efforts to survive in the field.

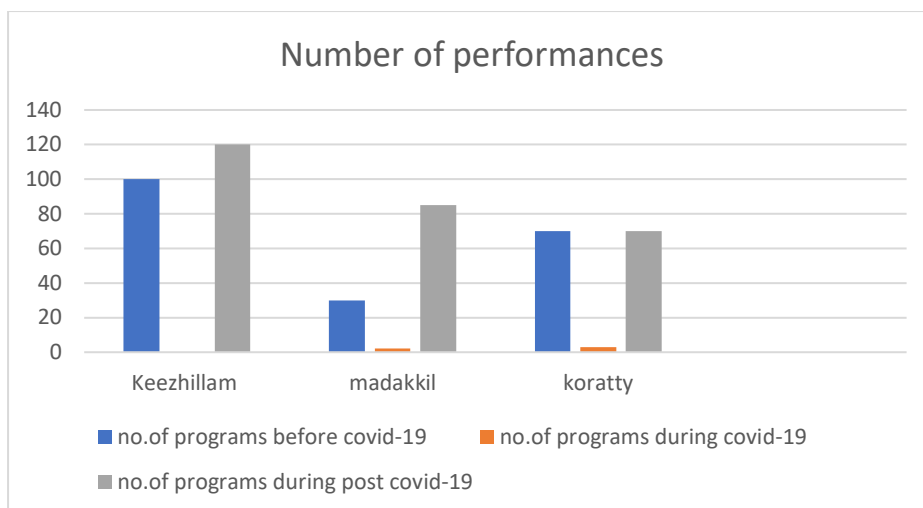
### **3.18 Programs before covid -19, during covid-19 and post covid-19 period**

Table 3.18 Number of programs

Name of the troupe	No. of programs before covid-19	No. of programs during covid-19	No. of programs during post covid-19 period
Keezhillam	100	0	120
Madakil	30	2	85
Koratty	70	3	70

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.18 Number of performances



Source: Primary Data

The Mudi yettu is generally conducted in the temples as per the season, festival and rituals. As we have already discussed the season begins from the second half of November and ends in the May. The popular troupes get programs at different temples from the central Kerala. The registered troupes on the hand gets invitations to perform on the various cultural events of the government. From the data on the number of programs each troupe performs, we can understand that, Keezhillam have a privilege in the number of programs. They perform the highest number of programs. The reason for this is the popularity of the troupe as well as its participation in the government's cultural events.

During the beginning stages of the troupe, they were only able to perform less than thirty events, the spread of pandemic was another reason for the fall. Madakil troupe have not been able to complete its registration procedure, hence do not get chance to perform on the such cultural events. But they perform on the other new localities; Mudi yettu is not much familiar. That is how they manage to have a good number of programs.

The third troupe focuses on the ritual and temple performances only. They do not encourage the participation in the government's cultural activity where the rituals and customs are put aside. The third troupe mentioned here, is not entertaining the mere demonstration and capsule presentation of the ethnicity and tradition. The conduct performance as per their ancestors were concerned and taught. For the same reasons they lesser number of programs. We can notice an increase in the number of performances during the post covid-19 period.

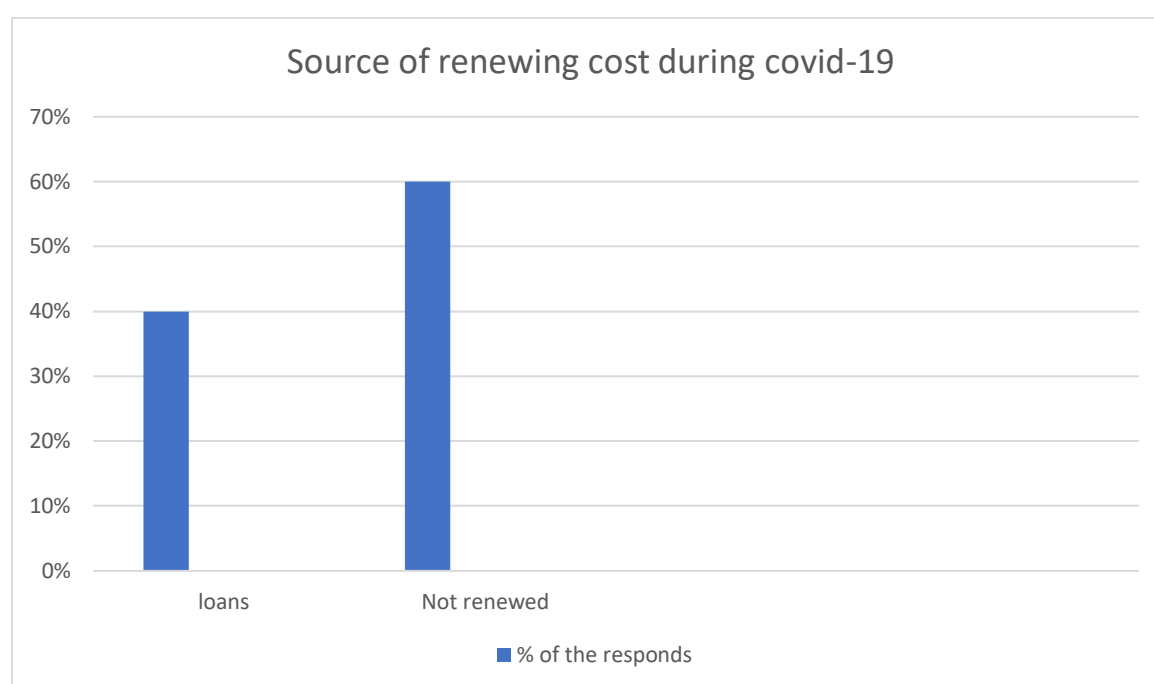
### **3.19 Source for renewing cost during covid-19**

Table 3.18 Source for renewing cost during covid-19

Source	Number of the responds	Percentage of the responds
loans	12	40
Not renewed	18	60

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.19 Source of renewing cost during covid-19



Source: Primary Data

The performers mostly do not get any financial support to renew the equipment, even though the cost is very much high as we have seen. The renewing and maintenance cost is therefore met with their own pockets. The instability in the income due to the inconsistency in the number of programs, the artists might find it difficult to finance the cost easily.

During the covid-19, sixty percentage of the respondents did not renew the equipment. This is because, the number performance on the year; 2019-2020 was lower than the usual. The other forty percentage was having personnel reasons to renew their belongings and this was done with the help of loans and borrowings.

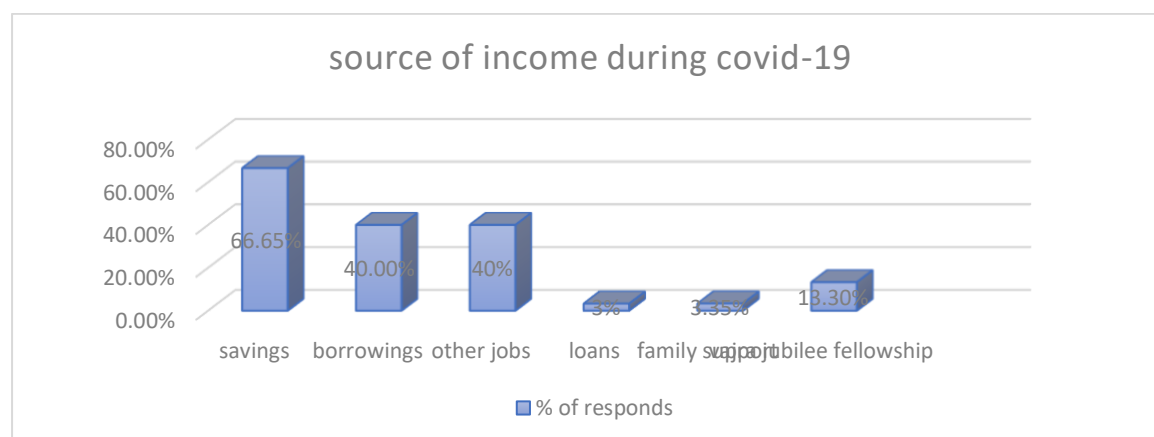
### **3.20 Source of income during covid-19**

Table 3.20 Source of income during covid -19

Source of income	Number of respondents	Percentage of responds
Savings	20	66.7
Borrowings	12	40
Other jobs	12	40
Loans	1	3.3
Family support	1	3.3
Vajra Jubilee Fellowship	4	13.33

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.20 Source of income during covid -19



Source: Primary Data

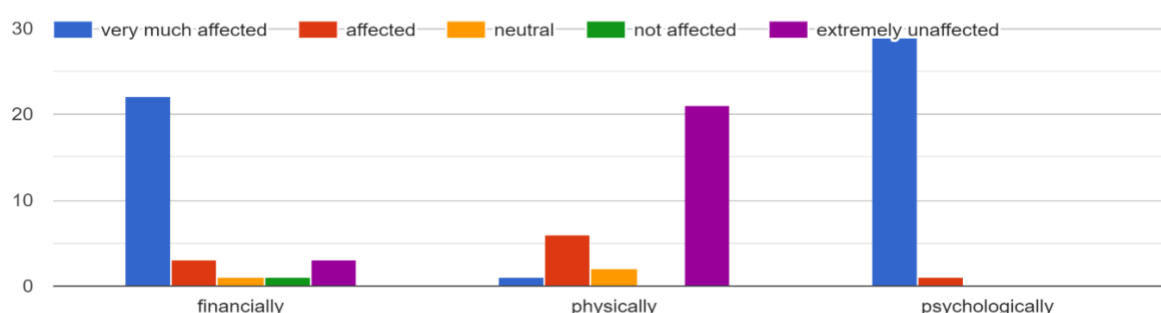
From the data, we can analyse that the artists have depended on multiple sources to meet their daily needs during the covid-19 period. Around sixty-seven percentage of the respondents were depending on the savings during the lockdown period. Forty percentage of the respondents were seeking borrowings from friends and other institutions to meet the needs. Forty percent of the respondents was depending on other jobs for the income. The other jobs mentioned here includes, driving auto-rikshaws, distributing drinking water, the work from home jobs in IT sector, ambulance driving, and other essential jobs that were permitted even while lock-down existed. Around three percentage of the respondents depended on the loans for the additional requirement and emergencies that situations demanded. The other three percent belong to the student category, they depended on the family's support during the

pandemic and unemployed period. Finally, a round of thirteen percentage was using the Vajra Jubilee Fellowship amount for the survival of the pandemic period.

### **3.21 Effect of covid-19 on the artists**

Figure 3.21 Effect of covid-19 on the artists

Rank how much Covid 19 has affected you, on the following :



Source: Primary Data

The artists have suffered from the financial and psychological issues during the covid-19 rather than the health issues. The data shows that nearly thirty percentage of the respondents have suffered concerns and mental issues during the lock down period. Around of twenty-three percentage of the respondents were very much affected with financial issues. As per the data, nearly twenty percentage of the respondents were not having any health issues.

### **3.22 Current remuneration status**

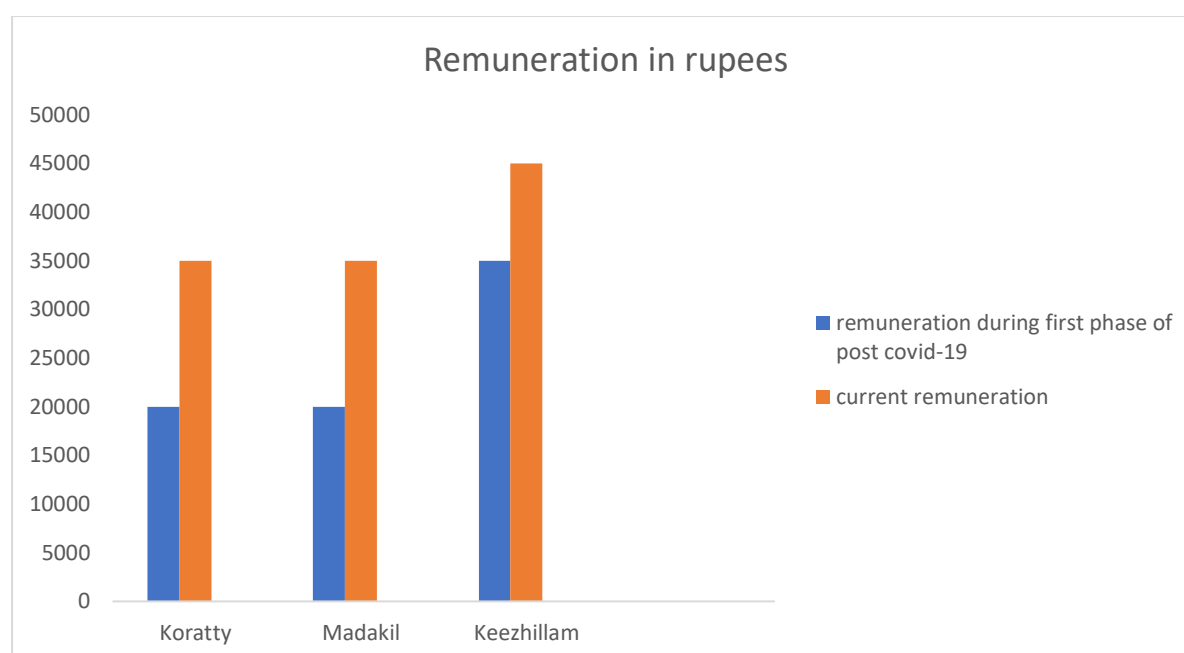
Table 3.22 Remuneration of the troupes

Name of the troupe	Remuneration during first phase of post covid-19 period	Current remuneration
Koratty	20000	35000
Madakil	20000	35000
Keezhillam	35000	45000

Source: Primary Data



Figure 3.22 Remuneration of the troupes



Source: Primary Data

The data shows that around fifty-three percentage of the respondents are aware of the government initiatives on the upbringing of the mudiyettu and its artists. Around twenty-seven percentage responded that, they are not aware of the government initiatives. The rest twenty percentage responded that they are not concerned about the government initiatives or schemes.

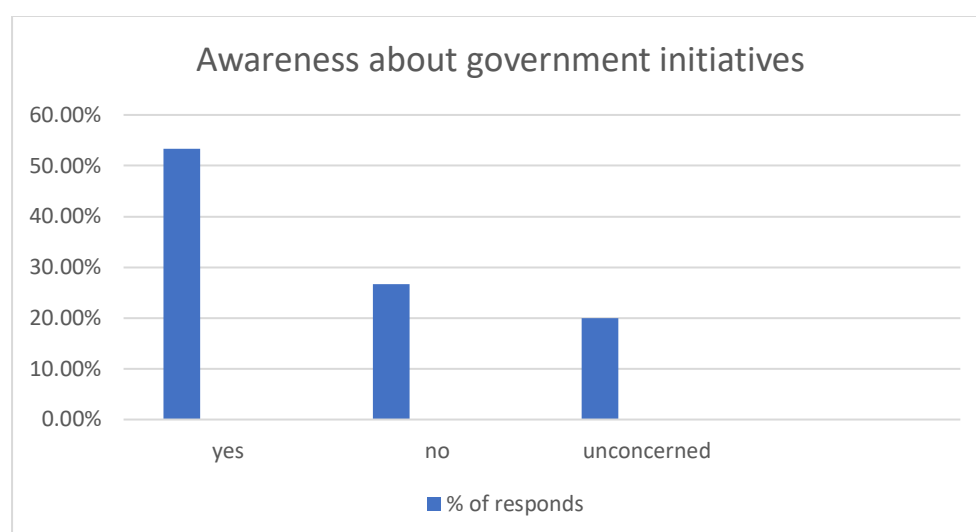
### **3.23 Awareness about government initiatives**

Table 3.23 Awareness about government initiatives

Whether or not aware of the government initiatives	Number of respondents	Percentage of responds
yes	16	53.3
no	8	26.7
unconcerned	6	20

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.23 Awareness about government initiatives



Source: Primary Data

The data shows that around fifty-three percentage of the respondents are aware of the government initiatives on the upbringing of the mudiyettu and its artists. Around twenty-seven percentage responded that, they are not aware of the government initiatives. The rest twenty percentage responded that they are not concerned about the government initiatives or schemes.

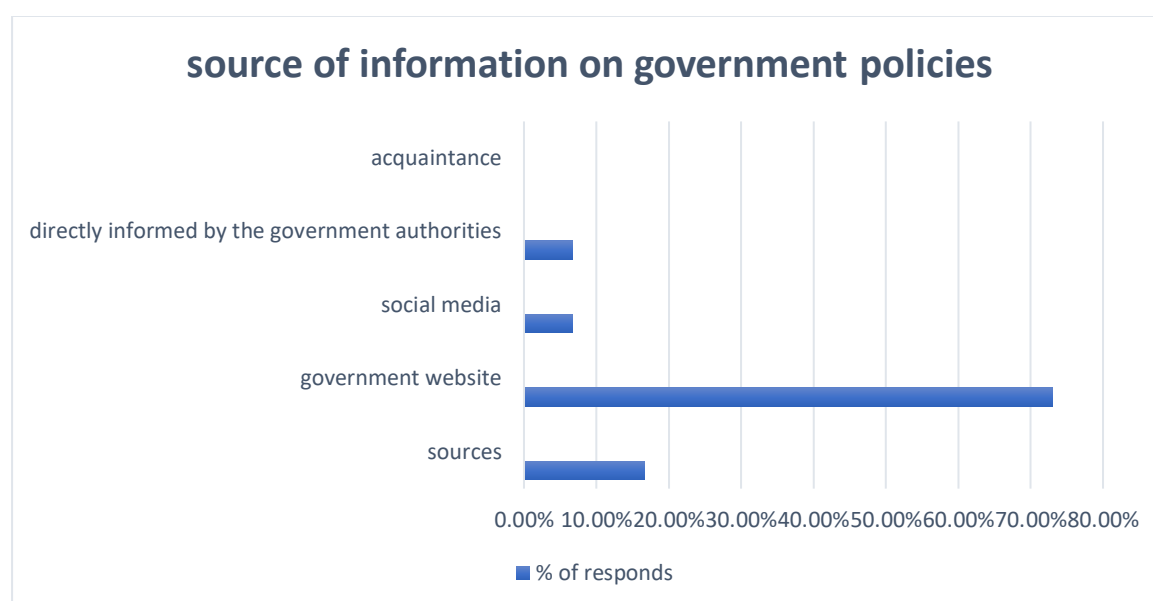
### **3.24 Source of government information**

Table 3.24 Sources of government initiatives

Sources	Number of respondents	Percentage of responds
Government website	5	16.7
Social media	22	73
Directly notified by the government	2	6.7
acquaintance	1	3.6

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.24 Sources of information on government policies



Source: Primary Data

The information about the government initiatives is announced through website notifications, direct notification through mail, letters or phone calls or through newspapers and radios. In the modern days, the information is passed to one another mainly through social media. As we can see the data, the majority of the responds receive information through social media platforms like WhatsApp group messages, Facebook posts, Instagram post etc. Around sixteen percentage of the respondents depends on the government websites for getting the policy updates. The privilege of getting informed directly from the government authorities or institutions is enjoyed by a very few six percentage of the respondents. The other three percentage is not much interested in knowing about the new schemes. They just let know when someone speaks about the information.

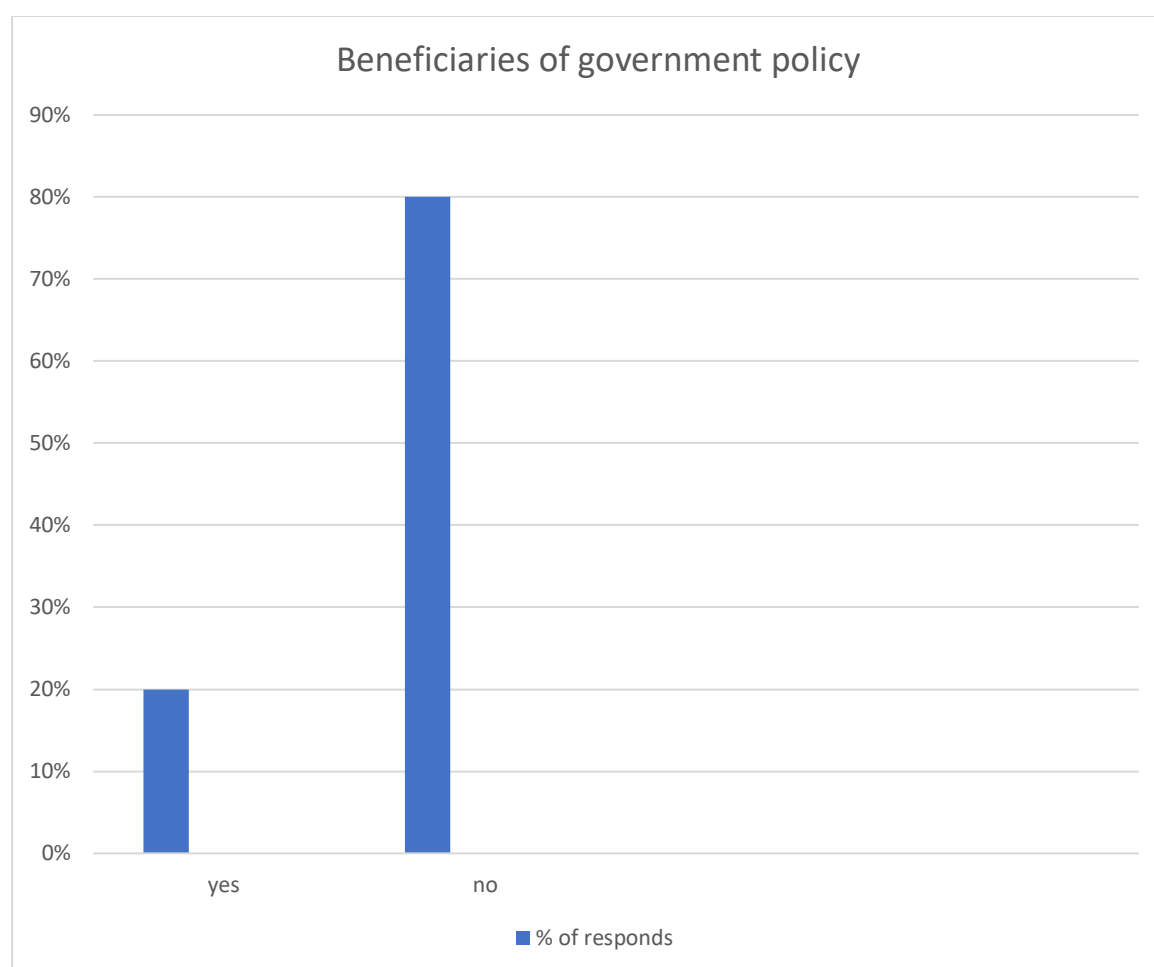
### **3.25 Beneficiaries of government policy**

Table 3.25 Beneficiaries of government policies

Whether or not a beneficiary of any scheme	Number of respondents	Percentage of responds
Yes	8	20
No	22	80

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.25 Beneficiaries



Source: Primary Data

The data depicts that only twenty percentage of the respondents are beneficiaries of any schemes or policies of government. The rest eighty percentage is not having any benefit from the government policies. This shows the existence of problems like, corruption, ineffectiveness, barriers to entry etc.

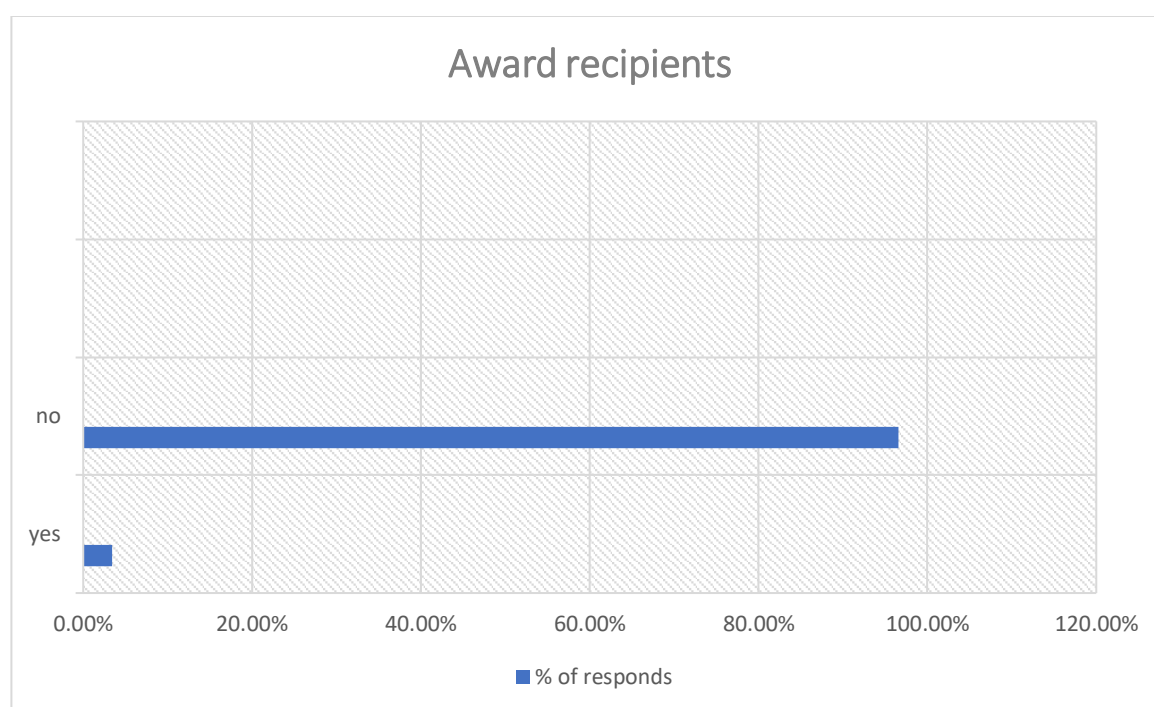
### **3.26 Award recipients**

Table 3.26 Award recipients

Recipient of any awards or not	Number of respondents	Percentage of responds
Yes	1	3.4
No	29	96.6

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.26 Award recipients



Source: Primary Data

The data shows that from the three prominent sample troupes there is only three percentage of respondents who have received any awards for their performance and contribution to the Mudi yettu. This data implies that despite the proficiency one gain from the art, the power and authority has also roles in determining the awards. The rest ninety-six percentage also have numerous talented and professional artists.

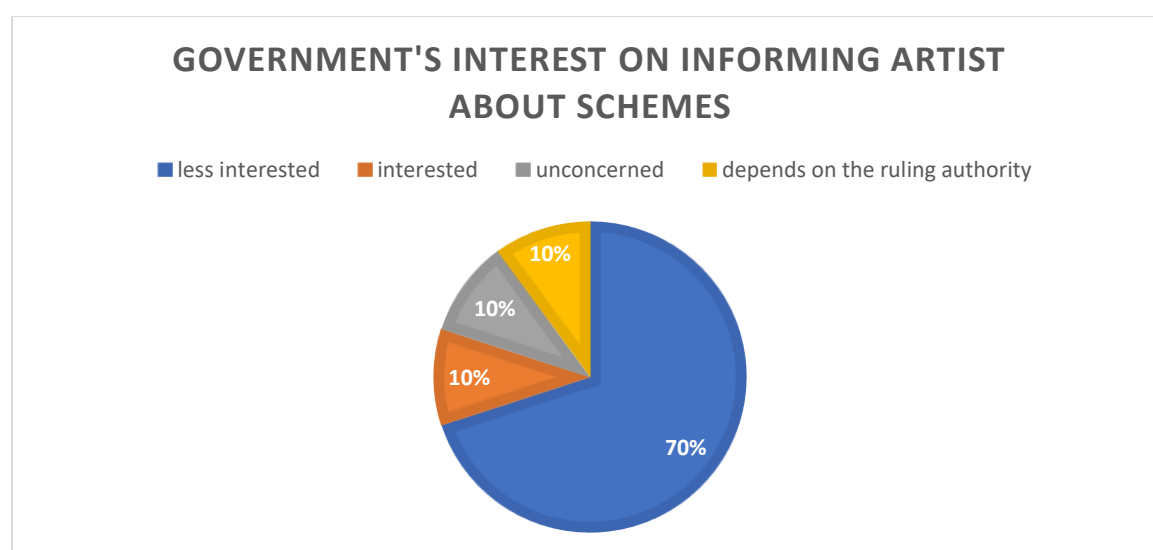
### **3.27 Comment on government's interest on informing artists about the policy updates**

Table 3.27 Government's interest on informing the artists

Responds	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Less interested	21	70
Interested	3	10
Unconcerned	3	10
Depends on the ruling authority	3	10

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.27 Government's interest on informing artist about schemes



Source: Primary Data

According to the data, seventy percentages of the respondents commented that government is showing less interest in informing artists about the policy updates. Only a ten percentage of the respondents believe that government is interested in informing the artist about the relevant policies and schemes that benefits them. The next ten percentage is not concerned about the policies and schemes. They do the performance with passion and depends on an additional job for the lives. The rest ten percentage believes that the activities of the government and its institution depends on the ruling authority. When the ruling authority is favourable to the artists and art, they take interest in informing and ensuring that the deserving artist receives benefits.

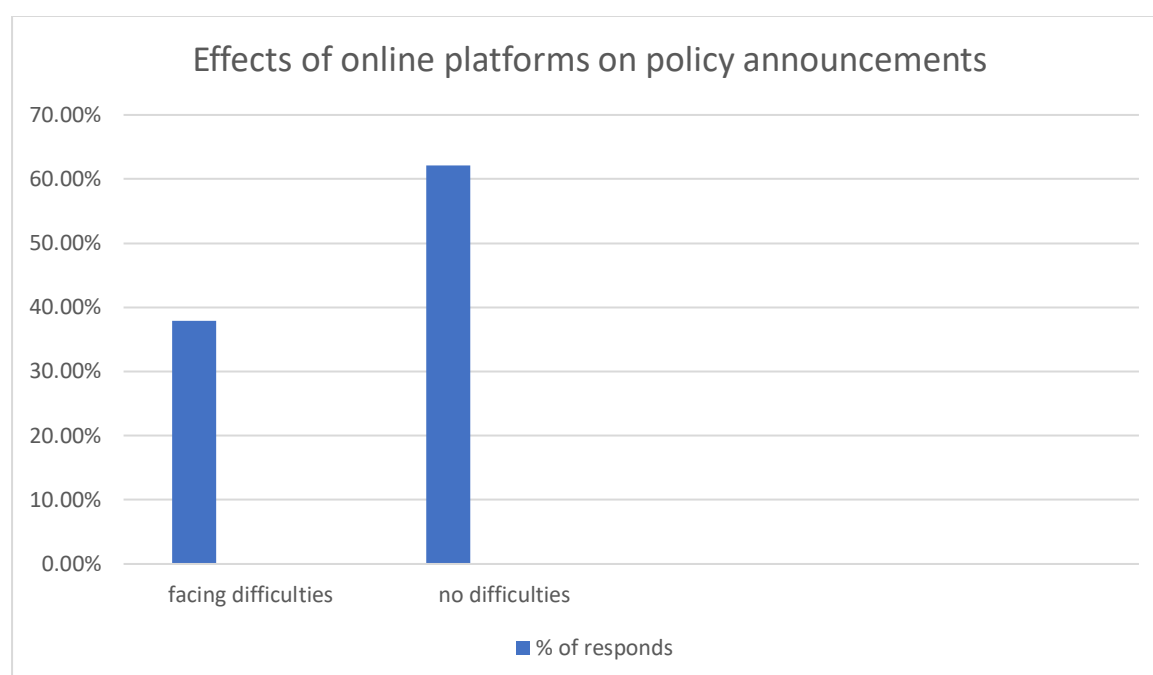
### **3.28 Difficulties while policy updates are informed through online platforms**

Table 3.28 Difficulties arising while policy updates are informed through websites

Responds	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Facing difficulties	11	37.9%
No difficulties	19	62.1%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.28 Effects of online platforms on policy announcements



Source: Primary Data

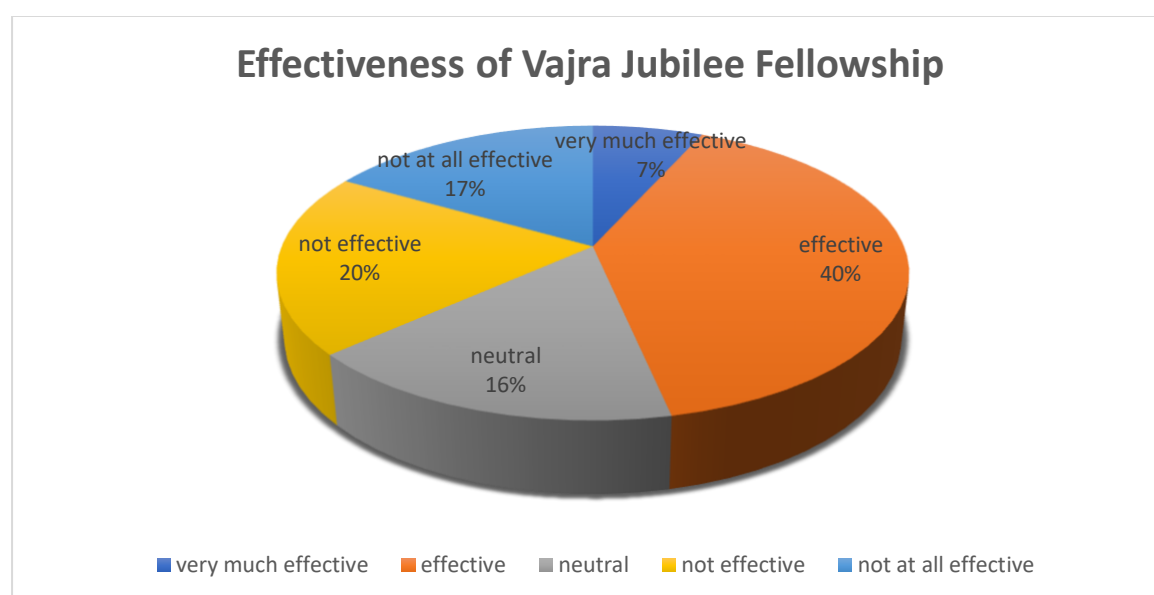
The information and policy updates used to be published in newspapers in the old days. But now a days most of the policy updates are informed through websites of government institutions rather than through newspapers. Around thirty-seven percentage of the population feels it difficult while the policy updates are done through websites. The rest sixty-two percentage do not find it as difficult as the others. The technology updates are actually need of the hour, and the majority of the respondents are comfortable even if the websites are used to inform about schemes, policies and projects.

### **3.29 Comment on effectiveness of Vajra Jubilee Fellowship**

Table 3.29 Effectiveness of Vajra Jubilee Fellowship

Comment on the effectiveness of VJF	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Very much effective	3	6.7%
Effective	12	40%
Neutral	5	16.7%
Not effective	6	20%
Not at all effective	5	16.7%

Figure 3.29 Effectiveness of Vajra Jubilee Fellowship



Source: Primary Data

According to the data, only around six percentage of the respondents believes the Vajra Jubilee Fellowship is very much effectively conducted in the case of Mudi yettu. The greater half is not satisfied with the conduct of the fellowship. Fort percentage of the respondents believes the fellowship is just effective. Around sixteen percentage of respondents is indifferent or neutral; they have not heard about the scheme, or do not have a proper idea about the scheme or else have got no concerns about the scheme. Twenty percentage of the respondents thinks the fellowship is not effective. And the rest sixteen percentage believes the fellowship project is very much ineffective to meet its objectives.

### **3.30 Participation on Utsavam project**

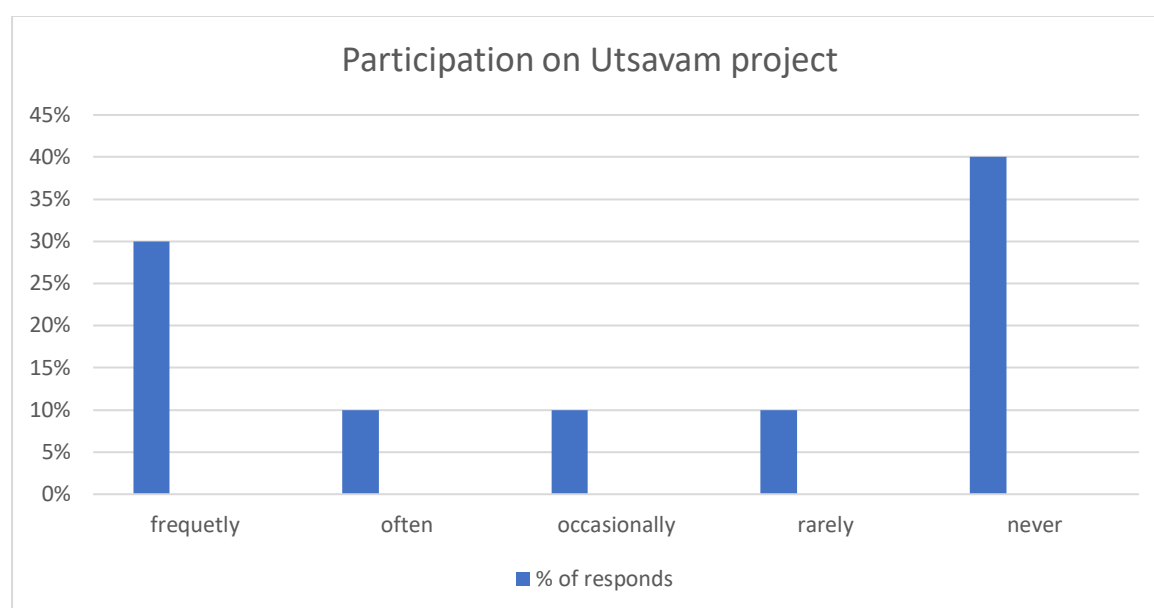
Table 3.30 Participation on Utsavam project

Responds	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Frequently	9	30%
Often	3	10%
Occasionally	3	10%
Rarely	3	10%
Never	12	40%

Source: Primary Data



Figure 3.30 Participation on Utsavam project



Source: Primary Data

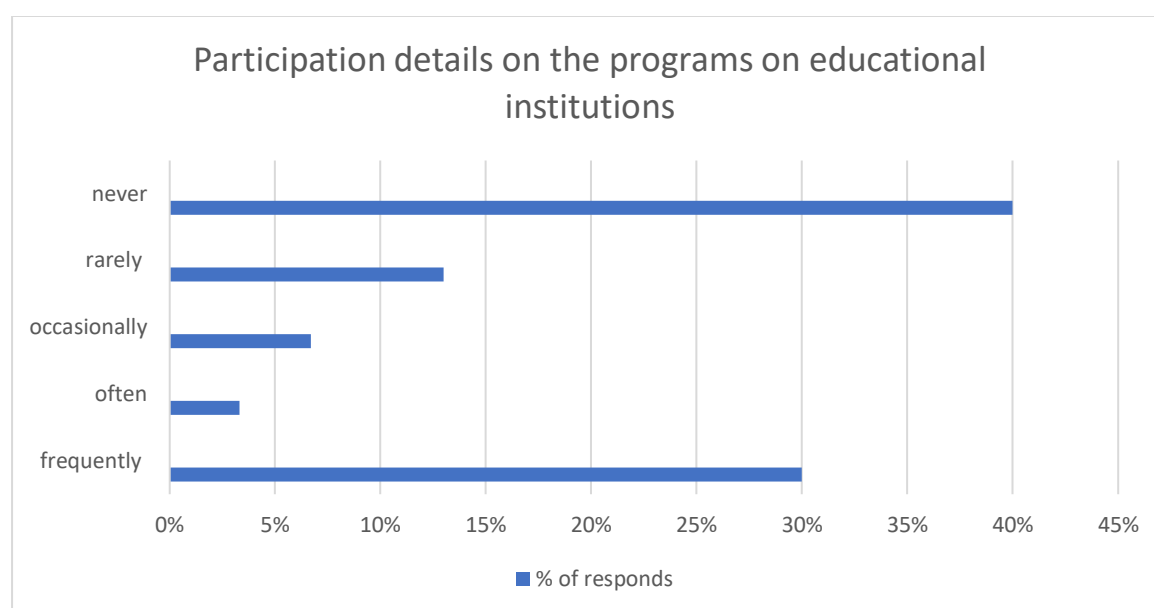
The data depicts that the forty percentage of the respondents have never taken part in the Utsavam project of tourism department. And thirty percentage is participating frequently in this project. Ten percentage of the respondents have often participated in the event. The next ten percentage have made an occasional participation and the rest ten percentage have rarely participated. The participation is depending on the registration of the troupe, and the interest of the troupe to perform.

### **3.31 Participation in the performances on educational institution**

Table 3.31 Participation in the performances on educational institutions

Responds	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Frequently	9	30
Often	1	3.3
Occasionally	2	6.7
Rarely	4	13
Never	12	40

Figure 3.31 Participation details on the programs on educational institutions



Source: Primary Data

The forty percentage of the respondents have never participated in the educational institutions. The thirty percentage take parts in such projects frequently. Around three percentage of the respondents often participates and approximately seven percentage of the respondents participates occasionally in such projects. The rest thirteen percentage performs rarely in such projects.

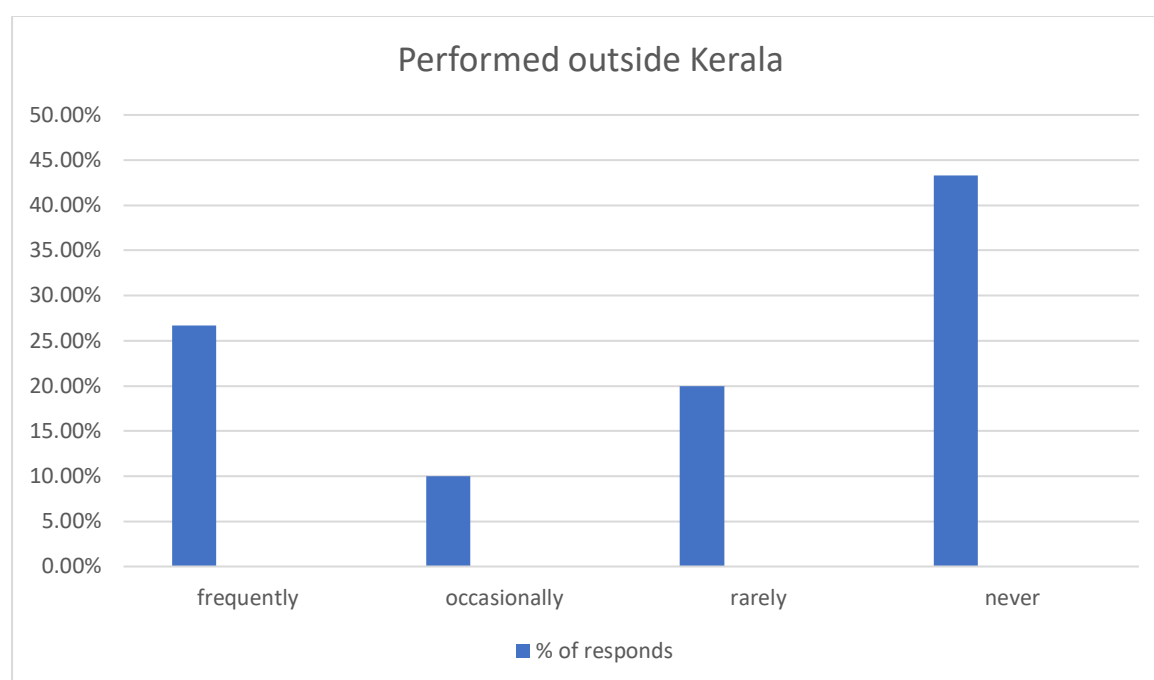
### **3.32 Performance outside Kerala**

Table 3.32 Performances outside Kerala

Responds	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Frequently	8	26.7
Occasionally	3	10
Rarely	6	20
Never	13	43.3

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.32 Performed outside Kerala



Source: Primary data

Even in this data, approximately forty-three percentage of the respondents have never performed outside the state. The percentage of respondents who have frequently participated is lower than the percentage of participation in educational institutions and Utsavam project. Ten percentage of the respondents participates occasionally, whereas twenty percentage of the respondents have rarely participated in such performances. We can interpret that some kind of monopoly power exists in the field.

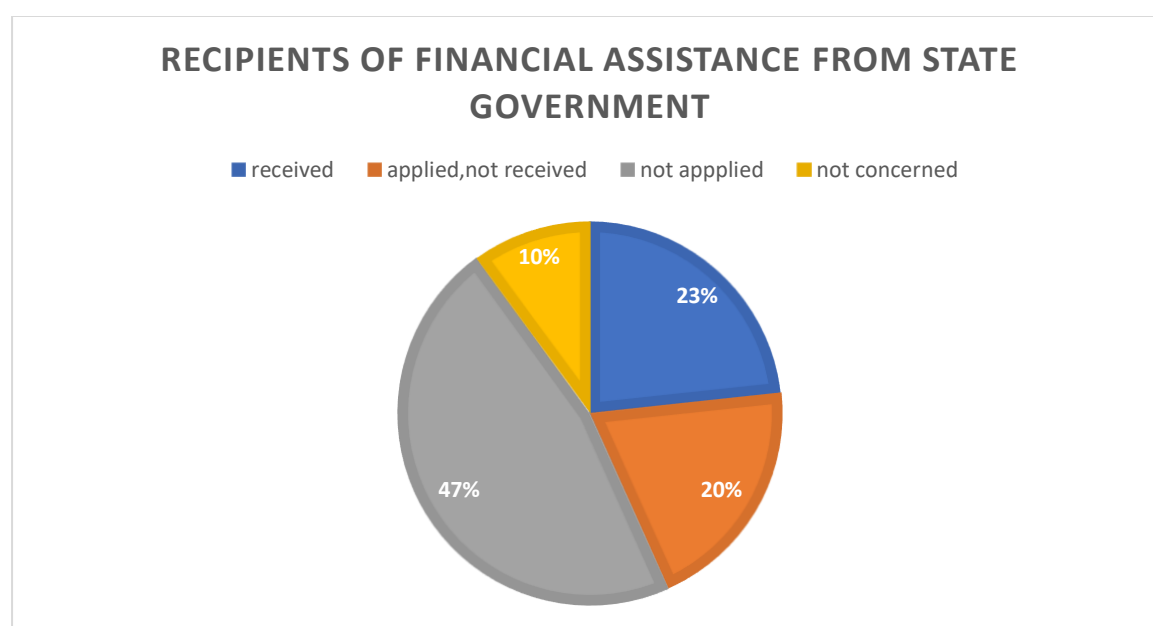
### **3.33 Received financial assistance from the state government or not**

Table 3.33 Details regarding the financial assistance scheme

Responds	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Received	7	23.3
Applied, not received	6	20
Not applied	13	46.7
Not concerned	3	10

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.33 Recipients of financial assistance from State government



Source: Primary Data

The state government of Kerala have announced a relief financial assistance for artists during the covid-19 period. The assistance had ensured Rs. Two thousand for the deserving artists. The question was asked to know what percentage of the respondents received this financial support. According to the responds, around twenty-three percentage of the responds have received the financial aid. Around forty-seven percentage have not applied for the support. The twenty percentage have not received the financial support eve after applying for the same. The rest ten percentage was unconcerned about the financial support from the government.

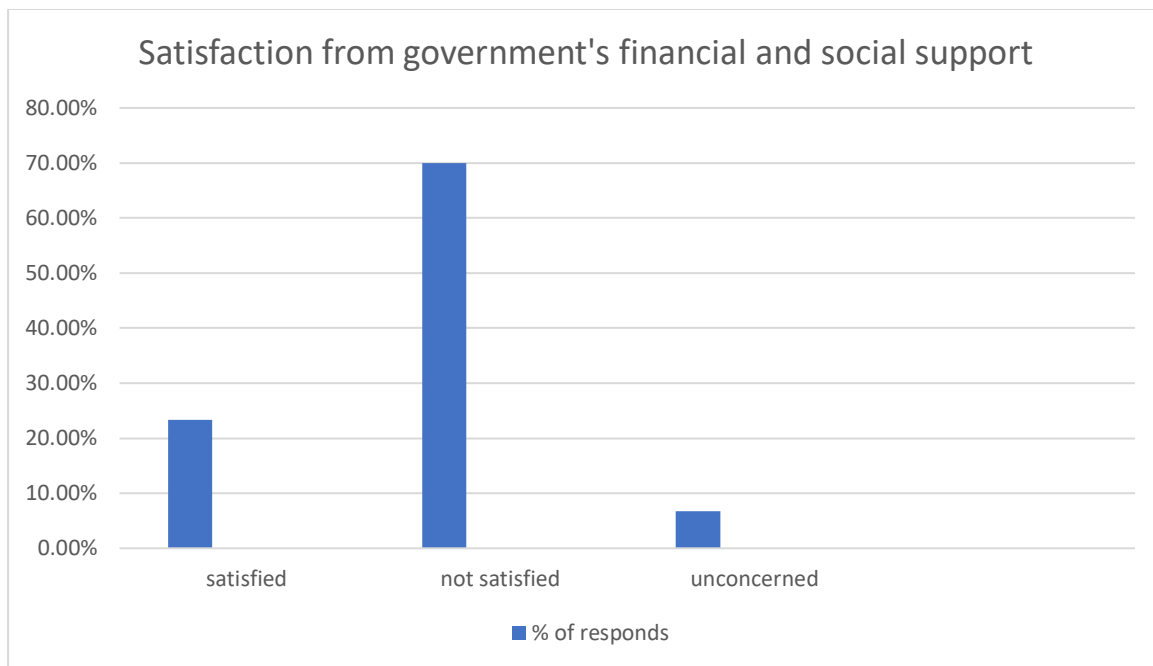
### **3.34 Satisfaction from the government support**

Table 3.34 Satisfaction from the government support

Responds	Number of responds	Percentage of responds
Satisfied	7	23.3
Not satisfied	21	70
Unconcerned	2	6.7

Source: Primary Data

Figure 3.34 Satisfaction from the government's financial and social support



Source: Primary Data

According to the data, around six percentage of the respondents are unconcerned about the government actions. Twenty-three percentage of the respondents are satisfied with the government initiatives for the upbringing of the Mudi yettu and its artists. The rest seventy percentage is not at all satisfied with the financial as well as the social support government provides for the Mudi yettu and its artists.

## **CHAPTER-4 FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

In this chapter the finding and suggestions of the study is included. The study focused on the three troupes of Mudi yettu. The findings are given below.

#### 4.1 FINDINGS

- The annual income of the mudi yettu performers lies mostly below one lakh rupees.
- Sixty percentage respondents are part of registered troupes but around thirty percentage only enjoys the privilege of being in the registered troupe.
- Years of experience bring fame and higher remuneration along with certain privileges from the society and government.
- Only a round of thirty-six percentage of the respondents can depend on the Mudi yettu alone for the livelihood. The rest sixty-four percentage is depending on additional jobs and holds Mudi yettu as a secondary source of income. For almost ninety percentage of the respondents the income from the Mudi yettu is not sufficient to meet all the requirement.
- Average amount of conducting a Mudi yettu is around forty thousand rupees. The average cost and expense of conducting Mudi yettu in a season is around sixty thousand rupees. This varies under the different condition and as the sty e changes. The travel expense of the artists is excluded in this cost.
- The head of the troupe or the owner of the troupe enjoys certain other privileges like the ownership of oil, dhotis, rice and coconut etc, offered by the devotees for the ritual. He also gets the greatest share of income from the program.
- The wage of the artists mostly depends on the role they handle on the stage and off the stage. The highly experienced and senior most artist along with artists who handles the lead roles get a higher payment. The roles of Kaali, Darika and Danavendra along with the artist who do the makeup have priority when payment is done.
- Eighty-three percentage of the respondents are engaged in other temple arts as well. They are experts who can handle multiple instruments or art forms. The participants are mostly working in self-employed or in organized works. This is mainly to adjust the work conveniently, so that can perform maximum programs in the festival season.
- The cost of renewing the whole items of a mudi yettu troupe is very much expensive. But they are not receiving the deserving support from the authority despite the fact that, the fund from UNESCO is allocated for Mudi yettu. UNESCO had declared Mudi yettu

as an intangible tradition and have allocated a huge amount to preserve and protect the same. But the artists have no information regarding the allocated fund.

- The post covid-19 phase witnessed an increase in the number of performances. Three major reasons can be traced for this trend. First, the devotees are trying to fulfil the offering promises at the earliest. The offerings were delayed due to the unpredicted spread of virus and the lockdown that followed. Second, is the influence of social media, and movies. The information and beautiful photographs and videos of unique culture and traditions are going viral on social media. This had positive impact on attracting the viewers to the programs. This also results in welcoming the artists to their native and performing them with the authenticity. Third reason is that the pandemic had given a negative mental pressure on people, that they start to explore outside rather than lying on the couch. A trend of rush and crowd is very common sight now-a-days. The people begin to watch and enjoy their festivals with more soul and luxuriously now.
- The covid-19 have affected the artists financially and psychologically rather than physically. For every artist the moment they are with the art is the soulful and fullest. A complete lockdown restrains from the art have affected most of the artists. They were confused and stressed without performance. The survival became a question in front of the artists. The unemployment and no income were the major issue they encountered until everything started to work on full fledged.
- Nearly fifty percentage of the participants responded that they are aware of the government policy, schemes and updates. But this data does not match when the beneficiaries count is analysed. The participants are not utilising the schemes or certain barriers restrict them when they approach the same.
- The policies, schemes, and projects are distributed within a creamy layer of artists. The rest have no access to the power. The opportunities and benefits are shared among a privileged class without reaching the bottom layer.
- We can also interpret some kind of malpractices and corruption exist within the field. Only thirty percentage is extracting benefits from different kind of government initiatives.
- The finding also shows that the projects like Vajra Jubilee Fellowship and Utsavam also fails to serve its objective in the fullest possible manner.
- The majority of the respondents have not received the financial aid from the State government. The shocking data is that approximately forty-six applications got rejected



and was not given the support. This would discourage the artists from applying for the further other projects or schemes in the future also even if they are eligible to the criteria of selection.

- To sum up, the artists are not generally satisfied with the government's attempts in upbringing the artists. No matter how much effort they put on to bring up the artists, if not channelised properly, the benefits will not reach the hands of deserving people.
- The absence of an expert-skilled and irrational artist from the field of Mudi yettu in the decision-making committee is one among the major drawbacks.
- The traditional artists are not interested in presenting the capsule model of the art in front of foreigners or other audience. Therefore, that kind of projects that exists now is not encouraged by them. The policy makers hence have to design new policies that satisfies the performers, as well as meet the objective of promoting and preserving the ritual art, particularly, Mudi yettu.

## 4.2 SUGGESTIONS

The suggestions for the problems under concern is discussed below.

- A separate association of the Mudi yettu artists should come up joining every mudi yettu artists. The association should function with a good cooperation so that an overall welfare can be achieved.
- An irrational and skilled expert member should be unanimously selected from the whole performers of Mudi yettu to take the major decisions about the new projects in the expert committee.
- The capsule demonstration in front of the foreigner and others should come to an end, instead of that, people who are really interested to know and watch the rituals should come to the temples where Mudi yettu takes place. The authority should arrange a safer and smooth environment for the people from other states and foreigners to experience our ethnicity. This would help the foreigners to explore the very heritage of Kerala in the true essence.
- It would be really better if we can appoint the mudi yettu artists in some positions of government authorities, so that mudi yettu turns out to be the primary source of income of the artists. Appointing them as teachers, or policy makers can enhance their

productivity as an artist. They can even contribute to the research and development if the artists are having proper incentives to spend their endeavour on mudiyettu.

#### 4.3 CONCLUSION

The true artists, under any circumstances holds the art. They give the heart and blood without expecting anything in return. On the other hand, art returns what we have invested in it. Hence art is one among the sectors which produces high returns if treated properly. Therefore, the government should take this sector with a better more concern and seriousness in action rather than in words.

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## Questionnaire

### A. General information

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Educational qualification      Primary education\_\_      Secondary education/ SSLC\_\_  
Higher secondary/ Pre-degree\_\_      Under-graduation\_\_  
Post- graduation\_\_      Any other\_\_ kindly mention\_\_
5. Annual income \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name of the troupe \_\_\_\_\_
7. What are the roles you play on stage and off stage during the mudiyettu performance  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How long have you been performing mudiyettu \_\_\_\_\_
9. From where did you learn mudiyettu \_\_\_\_\_
10. In which source of income do you consider mudiyettu based on the priority  
Primary source of income\_\_      Subsidiary source of income \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Economic aspects

11. How much do your troupe charge for an event \_\_\_\_\_
12. How much wage do you get from doing an event \_\_\_\_\_
13. Whether the money you receive from performing mudiyettu is sufficient for your needs?  
Yes\_\_      No\_\_  
If no, how do you meet the additional requirements:  
Additional job\_\_      Credits\_\_      Borrowings from friends\_\_      Borrowings from  
other institutions\_\_ kindly mention\_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you think, it is easy for ritual art performers to receive loans?      Yes\_\_  
No\_\_
15. Do you feel that, inconsistency of income discourage youth from taking up this ritual art as  
a primary job?  
Yes\_\_      No\_\_
16. Do you do any other jobs other than performing mudiyettu before the covid period?  
Yes\_\_      No\_\_  
If yes, kindly mention the reason for choosing another job \_\_\_\_\_
17. How much does it cost for your team to renew the equipment of the mudiyettu annually  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Rank the statements from 0 to 5 according to your opinion

Statement	I strongly agree	I agree	Neutral	I disagree	I strongly disagree
1.The participation of viewers is very much important during the performance of mudiyettu					

2. The performance of mudiyettu without viewers is very much difficult					
3. As mudiyettu, is a ritual art it is not mandatory to have viewers.					
4. The performance can be more beautiful with the appropriate participation of viewers					
5. The awareness about the ritual art is not adequate within the population					

### C. Impact of Covid-19

19. Kindly rank how much Covid-19 has affected you on the following:

	Very much affected	Affected	Neutral	Not affected	Not at all affected
Financially					
Physically					
Psychologically					

20. How many programmes have been done annually in the pre-covid 19 period?

\_\_\_\_\_

21. How many performances have you done during the covid-19 period\_\_\_\_\_

22. Did you face a decline in the remuneration during the post covid-19 period?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, kindly mention the difference happened in the wages \_\_\_\_\_

23. How has your team covered the cost of renewing the costumes and other equipment during the covid-19 period\_\_\_\_\_

24. What was your source of income during the covid-19\_\_\_\_\_

25. Did the crises you faced during the pandemic prompt you to do another job?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, what kind of job did you choose during the crises

Temporary jobs\_\_\_\_\_ Part-time jobs \_\_\_\_\_

Self-employed jobs \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperate jobs\_\_\_\_\_

Any other, kindly mention\_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you face serious difficulties while dealing many jobs together?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, kindly mention the issues concerned \_\_\_\_\_

27. What is your current status in terms of the following:

Number of performances\_\_\_\_\_

Remuneration\_\_\_\_\_

Overall satisfaction\_\_\_\_\_

**D. Government initiatives**

28. Are you aware of the government initiatives for the welfare of ritual arts and artists?
29. Kindly mention the source of information which provides the updates of Government policies and schemes\_\_\_\_\_
30. Are you a beneficiary of any of the government policies? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_  
If yes, mention the details\_\_\_\_\_
31. Do you think the government takes less interests in informing the artists about the new policies?  
Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
32. Do you find difficulties while the policy updates are provided through the online platforms?  
Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
33. Do you think the Vajra Jubilee Fellowship initiatives of Folklore Academy, in teaching mudiyettu is effectively implemented? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
34. How often have you performed in the 'Utsavam' project of Government of Kerala?  
Never\_\_\_\_ Frequently\_\_\_\_ Rarely\_\_\_\_
35. How often have you performed in the educational institutions as part of the initiative taken by the Folklore Academy? Never\_\_\_\_  
Frequently\_\_\_\_ Rarely\_\_\_\_
36. How often have you performed outside Kerala?  
Never\_\_\_\_ Frequently\_\_\_\_ Rarely\_\_\_\_
37. Are you eligible for pension schemes? Yes\_\_\_\_  
No\_\_\_\_  
If yes, are you receiving the pension amount accurately? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
38. Did you receive the Rs. 1000/- financial assistance from the government of Kerala as part of Covid-19 relief programme? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
39. Do you think the government facilitates enough financial and social support for the welfare of the mudiyettu and its artists? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
40. Kindly add your valuable suggestions and remarks \_\_\_\_\_

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