

Musical Instruments of the Tamil Peoples of Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

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Musical instruments play a pivotal role in the cultural fabric of communities. This research delves into the rich musical heritage of the Tamil community in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, exploring the diverse range of traditional musical instruments that play a pivotal role in their cultural expressions. Through a comprehensive ethnographic study, this research examines the historical significance, craftsmanship, and sociocultural context surrounding these musical instruments. Data were collected using a combination of qualitative interviews, field observations, and archival research to document and analyze the various musical instruments unique to the Tamil peoples of Batticaloa. The *Parai*, for instance, continues to be associated with the *Parai Mela* Kooththu, a tradition of dancing with the drum accompanied by a double-reed instrument called *Sornali*. Other instruments such as Mathalam, Uduku, Nadaswaram, and Thavil each carry its distinct cultural narrative, contributing to the vibrant musical tapestry of the region. Findings reveal not only the cultural significance of these musical instruments but also their multifaceted role in fostering community identity, preserving historical connections, and serving as living embodiments of artistic heritage.

Keywords: Batticaloa, Cultural Heritage, Musical Instruments, Sri Lanka, Tamil Peoples