

Exploring the Impact of Helicopter Parenting on Mental Well-Being of Youth and the Role of Therukoothu as a Restorative Tool

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Abstract: Helicopter parenting, characterized by excessive parental control and intrusion into the lives of children, has emerged as a significant concern affecting the mental well-being of youth. This research abstract delves into the psychological ramifications of helicopter parenting on the youth population and explores the potential of Therukoothu, a traditional Tamil Street theater, as a remedial mechanism to mitigate the adverse effects of such parenting practices. Helicopter parenting, marked by overprotectiveness and micromanagement, has been linked to increased stress, anxiety, and diminished autonomy among youth. The hyper-vigilance of parents, driven by societal pressures and heightened safety concerns, often stifles the emotional growth and independence of their children, leading to maladaptive coping mechanisms and psychological distress.

In contrast, Therukoothu, an ancient form of Tamil Street theater, offers a unique avenue for cultural expression, community engagement, and emotional catharsis. Through vibrant performances encompassing music, dance, and storytelling, Therukoothu provides youth with a creative outlet to explore their emotions, express their identity, and forge meaningful connections with their cultural heritage. Despite its therapeutic potential, Therukoothu faces challenges in maintaining relevance among contemporary youth. The proliferation of multiplex cinemas, clubs, and pubs has diverted the attention of young people away from traditional art forms, posing a threat to the sustainability of Therukoothu as a cultural heritage. This research abstract underscores the urgent need to address the mental health implications of helicopter parenting while advocating for the revitalization of traditional art forms like Therukoothu. By fostering awareness, community support, and innovative programming, stakeholders can harness the transformative power of Therukoothu to promote resilience, cultural pride, and holistic well-being among today's youth population.

In conclusion, this research abstract calls for interdisciplinary collaborations, policy interventions, and grassroots initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between traditional cultural practices and contemporary youth interests. By embracing the rich legacy of Therukoothu and reimagining its role in the digital age, society can pave the way for a more inclusive and emotionally resilient generation of young individuals.

Keywords— Include Therukoothu, club culture, youth, cultural decline, cultural shift, traditional art forms, contemporary trends, societal dynamics, cultural preservation

I. INTRODUCTION

The decline of Therukoothu, a cherished traditional Tamil Street theatre art form, is not merely a reflection of changing cultural preferences but is deeply intertwined with broader societal dynamics, including parenting styles, media influence, behavioral patterns, and the pervasive impact of helicopter parenting on the youth. As we delve into the intricate web of interconnected factors, it becomes evident that the fate of Therukoothu is emblematic of larger shifts in cultural engagement, generational values, and community cohesion. The interpretations and analyses presented shed light on the complex relationship between cultural heritage and contemporary realities. Firstly, the prevalence of strict parenting styles, as highlighted by the survey findings, suggests a shift away from the holistic appreciation of cultural traditions like Therukoothu. While some parents adopt a balanced approach, blending discipline with liberty, others resort to stringent control, potentially stifling the curiosity and exploration inherent in cultural discovery.

Furthermore, the influence of media emerges as a significant factor shaping societal perceptions and priorities. Sensationalized news coverage, focusing on crime and sensational events, creates an atmosphere of fear and apprehension, diverting attention from cultural enrichment and community engagement. The prevalence of negative portrayals in media narratives contributes to a disconnect between youth and traditional art forms like Therukoothu, relegating them to the periphery of cultural consciousness. The survey's revelations regarding behavioral patterns and dependency dynamics among youth further underscore the challenges faced by traditional cultural practices. The concealment of bad habits and overreliance on parental assistance reflect a generation grappling with identity, autonomy, and cultural inheritance. In an environment marked by helicopter parenting, where trust and communication are compromised, opportunities for cultural immersion and exploration diminish, exacerbating the decline of cherished traditions like Therukoothu. Moreover, the detrimental effects of helicopter parenting on mental well-being, highlighted by the prevalence of mental trauma and suicidal ideation among youth, amplify the urgency of reevaluating societal attitudes towards cultural preservation and youth empowerment. As the pressures of academic success and social conformity intensify, the space for cultural enrichment and artistic expression diminishes, relegating traditional art forms to the margins of relevance and recognition.

In conclusion, the decline of Therukoothu serves as a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, heritage and innovation. It calls for a concerted effort to foster dialogue, bridge generational divides, and cultivate a renewed appreciation for cultural diversity and artistic expression.

II. THERUKOOTHU

Therukoothu, also known as Kattaikkuttu or Terukkuttu, stands as a beacon of Tamil cultural heritage, embodying centuries-old traditions of music, dance, and drama. This traditional form of street theater, deeply rooted in the rural landscapes of Tamil Nadu, India, has long captivated audiences with its vibrant performances, moral narratives, and communal spirit. However, the trajectory of Therukoothu is not immune to the winds of change sweeping across contemporary society, where factors like parenting styles, media influence, and behavioral patterns intertwine to shape cultural preferences and participation. As we explore the intricate dynamics shaping the decline of Therukoothu, it becomes evident that these

factors are deeply interlinked with the challenges faced by this cherished art form. The rich tapestry of interpretations and analyses presented offers valuable insights into the complex web of influences at play. At the heart of the matter lies the evolving landscape of parenting styles, where the survey findings reveal a spectrum ranging from strict authoritarianism to a more balanced approach. While some parents embrace discipline alongside liberty, others resort to excessive control, potentially stifling the curiosity and creativity essential for cultural engagement, including Therukoothu. Moreover, the pervasive influence of media narratives, particularly sensationalized news coverage, contributes to heightened parental anxieties and overprotectiveness. The portrayal of crime and sensational events in media channels fosters an atmosphere of fear, diverting attention away from traditional cultural pursuits like Therukoothu and towards more immediate concerns of safety and security. Behavioral patterns among youth, as highlighted by the survey responses, further underscore the challenges faced by traditional art forms like Therukoothu. The concealment of undesirable habits and overreliance on parental assistance reflect a generation grappling with identity, autonomy, and cultural inheritance amidst the pressures of modernity.

Additionally, the detrimental effects of helicopter parenting on mental well-being, as evidenced by the prevalence of distress and dissatisfaction among youth, further exacerbate the decline of Therukoothu. The erosion of trust and communication between parents and children fosters an environment of apprehension and constraint, inhibiting the free expression and exploration essential for cultural enrichment. In the face of these challenges, it is imperative to recognize the intrinsic value of Therukoothu as a cultural treasure deserving of preservation and promotion. Efforts to bridge generational divides, foster dialogue, and cultivate a renewed appreciation for traditional art forms are essential in revitalizing Therukoothu's relevance and resonance in contemporary society.

As we navigate the complex terrain of cultural preservation and adaptation, the decline of Therukoothu serves as a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, heritage, and innovation. By addressing the underlying societal dynamics contributing to its decline, we can chart a path towards a future where Therukoothu continues to thrive as a vibrant expression of Tamil cultural identity, cherished by generations past, present, and future. Therukoothu, the traditional Tamil street theater, holds significant importance in promoting the mental well-being of youth through its cultural, social, and therapeutic aspects.

III. CULTURAL DYNAMICS: ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data of 100 students between the age of 18-23 reveals a significant split in parental approaches, with 35.2% of respondents indicating that their parents balance strictness and leniency based on situations. This approach, described as having liberal parents who can be strict, when necessary, suggests a nuanced and adaptable parenting style. In contrast, another 35.2% reported having strictly authoritarian parents. The analysis of these findings underscores the potential impact of parenting styles on the development and behavior of youth. The group with parents adopting a balanced approach may benefit from a harmonious blend of discipline and freedom. This balance is seen as a positive method for nurturing a child's growth, allowing for self-expression and autonomy while maintaining necessary boundaries. Conversely, the group with strictly authoritarian parents raises concerns. This parenting style, characterized by an emphasis on rules and control, may lead to potential challenges for the youth. Overly strict parenting has been associated with increased stress,

rebellion, and potential negative impacts on mental well-being. It's crucial to acknowledge the dynamic nature of parenting, which can be influenced by a myriad of factors including the child's behavior. Striking a balance between being strict and lenient, as seen in the first group, seems to align with contemporary perspectives on effective parenting. However, it's essential to consider the individual needs and temperament of each child, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable. This analysis highlights the importance of understanding the diverse parenting styles and their potential implications on the mental well-being and development of youth. The data suggests that media portrayal of crime and societal issues significantly impacts parental concerns and children's behaviors. News coverage often focuses on sensationalized stories of molestation, suicides, murders, and kidnappings, creating a pervasive sense of fear and anxiety among parents and children alike. This heightened awareness can lead to overprotective behaviors and increased vigilance, as parents strive to safeguard their children from potential dangers.

While some news channels may exaggerate or sensationalize crime stories to boost ratings, it's essential to recognize that crime rates are a genuine concern in many communities. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence and exploitation, further amplifying parental worries and protective instincts. Consequently, both parents and children must remain vigilant and informed about potential risks in their surroundings. Moreover, the data highlights the prevalence of certain negative behaviors among respondents, despite a majority claiming not to have bad habits. Around 70% of respondents acknowledge having some form of negative habit or behavior. This finding underscores the importance of open communication between parents and children regarding behavioral issues and the need for parental guidance and support in addressing them. Additionally, the analysis reveals that a significant portion of respondents, approximately 45.8%, prefer to handle small activities independently, without relying on parental assistance. This desire for autonomy suggests a growing sense of self-reliance and independence among youth. However, a considerable percentage, approximately 25.7%, express confusion regarding their need for parental help, indicating a potential gap in communication or understanding between parents and children. The data underscores the complex interplay between media influences, parental concerns, and youth behavior. While media portrayal of crime can heighten parental anxieties, it is essential to balance awareness with rational assessment and proactive measures to ensure children's safety. Furthermore, fostering open communication and mutual understanding between parents and children is critical in addressing behavioral issues and promoting healthy independence among youth.

The analysis reveals that a majority of respondents claim not to have bad habits, yet a significant percentage acknowledges having some form of negative behavior. This contradiction suggests a potential discrepancy between self-perception and actual behavior among respondents. Additionally, 11% of respondents admit that their parents are aware of their bad habits but show little concern about their parents' knowledge. This finding underscores the importance of open communication and parental involvement in addressing negative behaviors among children. A considerable portion of respondents, approximately 45.8%, expresses a desire for independence in handling small activities, indicating a growing sense of autonomy among youth. However, a notable percentage, around 25.7%, appears uncertain about their need for parental assistance, reflecting potential confusion or ambivalence regarding their level of independence. This uncertainty underscores the need for clearer communication and mutual understanding between parents and children regarding roles and responsibilities within the family dynamic. The data indicates that a significant majority of respondents, approximately 65.7%, admit to having bad habits, with nearly half

of them deliberately concealing these habits from their parents. This tendency to hide negative behaviors highlights underlying issues related to trust, communication, and accountability within the parent-child relationship. The prevalence of concealed habits suggests a potential breakdown in parental oversight and guidance, contributing to challenges in addressing and remedying negative behaviors effectively. Overall, the data underscores the complex dynamics at play within parent-child relationships, particularly concerning habits, independence, and communication. Addressing these issues requires fostering open and transparent communication channels between parents and children, promoting mutual understanding, trust, and accountability. Additionally, parents play a crucial role in providing guidance, support, and positive reinforcement to help children navigate challenges and develop healthy habits and behaviors. By fostering a supportive and nurturing environment, parents can empower their children to make informed decisions and cultivate positive relationships built on trust and respect.

The data indicates that a significant portion of respondents admit to bunking college, with only 35.2% claiming not to do so. This suggests that the majority of students engage in this behavior at some point, driven by reasons such as boredom. The prevalence of college bunking reflects a tendency among youth to seek entertainment and stimulation, possibly due to the addictive nature of dopamine release associated with engaging activities. A concerning finding reveals that 19% of respondents who bunk college have been caught by their parents. While 40% of respondents claim not to bunk, the high percentage of students caught bunking underscores parental concerns regarding their children's behavior. This discovery suggests that parental overprotectiveness may stem from experiences of distrust and disappointment, leading to the imposition of stricter rules and regulations, potentially contributing to helicopter parenting dynamics. The data highlights the detrimental impact of pornography and social media addiction on individuals and society as a whole. With 33.3% of respondents admitting to social media weakness and 41% claiming addiction to pornography, it is evident that these digital vices pose a significant threat. The prevalence of such addictions not only undermines individual well-being but also fuels concerns related to helicopter parenting. Parents, upon discovering their child's addiction, may resort to intrusive measures in attempts to mitigate the perceived threats posed by these digital influences.

In conclusion, the data underscores the pervasive influence of digital distractions and behavioral patterns among youth, ranging from college bunking to addiction to pornography and social media. Addressing these issues requires multifaceted approaches that encompass both individual accountability and societal interventions. Parents play a crucial role in fostering open communication and providing guidance and support to help children navigate challenges associated with these digital vices. Moreover, concerted efforts from policymakers and stakeholders are necessary to address the systemic issues underlying the proliferation of harmful digital behaviors and mitigate their adverse impacts on individuals and society. The data reveals a stark divide within the population, with almost half claiming not to engage in certain undesirable activities while the other half admits to involvement in behaviors that parents typically strive to prevent, such as drinking, smoking, pornography consumption, theft, and use of absurd language. The statistics indicate concerning trends regarding the prevalence of problematic behaviors among the population. It is particularly alarming that 30% of respondents were caught watching pornography, highlighting the pervasive nature of this issue. Additionally, 29.5% of individuals were caught engaging in drinking and smoking.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Therukoothu provides youth with a platform to connect with their cultural roots and heritage. Engaging in traditional art forms fosters a sense of belonging and pride in one's cultural identity, which can contribute to a positive sense of self-esteem and mental well-being. By participating in Therukoothu performances, youth gain a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage, promoting a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Therukoothu offers youth a creative outlet for self-expression and emotional release. Through acting, singing, and dancing, participants can channel their emotions and experiences into artistic expression, helping them to process and cope with life's challenges. The immersive nature of Therukoothu allows youth to explore and express a range of emotions in a supportive and non-judgmental environment, promoting emotional resilience and well-being. It fosters a sense of community and social connection among youth participants. Collaborating with peers and mentors in the creation and performance of Therukoothu builds strong social bonds and support networks, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness. The sense of camaraderie and belonging experienced within the Therukoothu community can provide youth with vital emotional support during times of stress or difficulty.

Participation in Therukoothu exposes youth to positive role models and mentors within the traditional arts community. Experienced performers and instructors serve as mentors and guides, offering support, encouragement, and valuable life lessons to youth participants. The mentorship provided within the Therukoothu community can help youth develop important life skills, resilience, and a sense of purpose, contributing to overall mental well-being. Therukoothu provides youth with a constructive and culturally enriching alternative to negative influences such as addiction to pornography, alcohol, or other harmful behaviors. By immersing themselves in the art of Therukoothu, youth can find fulfillment and meaning outside of addictive behaviors, redirecting their energy and focus towards positive and constructive activities. Therukoothu often conveys moral and ethical lessons through its storytelling, highlighting themes of courage, compassion, integrity, and justice. By engaging with these narratives, youth are exposed to traditional values and principles that promote personal and societal well-being. The moral lessons embedded within Therukoothu performances can serve as guiding principles for youth navigating the complexities of adolescence and young adulthood.

Parents can encourage their children to participate in Therukoothu classes, workshops, and performances, recognizing the cultural and educational value of traditional art forms. By actively supporting and facilitating their children's involvement in Therukoothu, parents reinforce the importance of cultural heritage and artistic expression. Parents can attend Therukoothu performances with their children, actively engaging in cultural experiences and fostering a shared appreciation for traditional arts. By attending performances together, parents demonstrate their support for their children's interests and promote family bonding through cultural activities. Parents can provide financial support for their children's participation in Therukoothu classes, workshops, and performances, recognizing the investment in their children's cultural education and personal development. Additionally, parents can offer emotional encouragement and praise for their children's efforts and achievements in Therukoothu, boosting their confidence and self-esteem. Parents can model the importance of cultural values and traditions within the family, integrating elements of Therukoothu storytelling, music, and dance into family celebrations and rituals. By

embodying cultural values and traditions in everyday life, parents reinforce the significance of Therukoothu as a living expression of Tamil culture and heritage. Therefore, Therukoothu plays a vital role in promoting the mental well-being of youth by fostering cultural connection, creative expression, social support, and positive values. By supporting youth participation in Therukoothu and actively promoting its importance within families and communities, parents can empower their children to cultivate a deep appreciation for traditional arts and develop essential life skills for personal and social flourishing.

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