

## **SESSION 7 (Papers)**

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### **Lost and/or Forgotten Cultural Roots: Some Issues on the Migration of Malays to Sri Lanka**

Historical information regarding the migration of Southeast Asian cultures to Sri Lanka are obvious from the times of Portuguese colonization to date (Adelaar 1991; Hussainmiya 2010). The colonizers brought Malays to Sri Lanka for various purposes such as military services and as slaves who were employed in various constructions and plantations. At present, 0.2 percent of the Sri Lankan population consists of Sri Lankan Malays who were identified as the descendants of Malay migrants from colonial periods. Since then, their language and music practices have been separated from their mainland and subsequently localized. The Malay language used by Sri Lankan Malays is known as Bahasa Melayu Sri Lanka. The Malay pantun, Hikayat, syairs are still in existence among Sri Lankan Malays. Likewise, some music practices have been changed and most of them are forgotten and lost.

This paper aims at identifying what are the Malay music practices that migrated to Sri Lanka along with Malay migrants and how they have been changed in the Sri Lankan cultural context. This research also includes how Malays adopted immediate music cultures encountered in their living surroundings.

The research for this paper included study of relevant scholarly literature, interviews with Sri Lankan Malays, and recording and analyzing current musical practices on a micro level using transcriptions and spectrograms. One of its aims is to contribute to documentation of endangered cultural practices in need of urgent attention.

#### **Bio**

**Chinthaka P. Meddegoda** is professor at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo and specialist in North Indian vocal music. His teaching covers Hindustani vocal music and student research. He explores different Asian musics, social issues, philosophy, and cultural studies. His PhD degree (2015) is from the Putra University, Malaysia; there he also acquired skills in audiovisual archiving and conference organization. His musical foundation includes learning Hindustani music from gurus in Lucknow and Banaras. In 2018, he was appointed UVPA Research Coordinator and later became the Director of the UVPA Center for Quality Assurance.