Positive side

Great indeed! Most of Kutiyattam practitioners’ income level shot up. The art is far better known than ever before, thanks to the press and visual media who provide excellent coverages - always underscoring the fact that this is a UNESCO designated art from. More trainees and more performers would support the sustenance of the tradition.

Negative side

The UNESCO stamp is turning out to be more of a trade mark than a tradition insignia. More viewers/publicity may prompt the practitioners to venture into more ‘show off’, often not the prescribed/pristine stage executions. Artistes who are not well established/sincere to the tradition may develop a tendency to exploit the demand by diluting the art/deviating from the very tradition that earned the art its world status – all with the object of gaining a review with a photo in the ‘weekend’ arts pages of dailies by reporters/mediocre art writers. Understandably, the reporters who are not knowledgeable about the techniques and subtleties of the form may opt to highlight the wrong things, indirectly and most dangerously hailing such deviations from the tradition and its pristine purity. Epithets like for the ‘first time ever’ “in a welcome break from tradition” are employed to land an individual artiste’s creativity in untenable innovations – innovations merely for the sake of “innovations – all to gain cheap popularity” at the cost of the art itself. ✎