

KALAMANDALAM M. P. S. NAMBOODIRI**Kathakali Actor**

Born on 1 July 1943 in Karikkad a village in Malappuram district, Kerala. Commenced training in Kathakali acting at Keralakalamandalam. Trained under great gurus Kalamandalam Gopi, Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair, Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair and Vazhenkada Kunju Nair. On completion of course joined in the faculty. Served as teacher cum performer for 30 years at the above institution and officially retired in 1998 as Principal. After an interval I was reappointed as the Dean, Department of Kathakali when the institution was upgraded as Deemed University. For 8 years I was the Director too at the Nila Campus where Post Graduation Courses are being conducted. At present I am a Visiting Professor there.

Extensively toured in many foreign countries including U.S.A., England, France, Mexico, Peru, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Indonesia etc. as a member of Kalamandalam troupe. Studied Sri Lankan dances. Served as Visiting Professor at the University of California (UCLA), University of Wisconsin (Madison) in the United States. Collaborated in theatre productions with Eugenio Barba and Dr. Phillip Zarrilli well known theatre directors.

Participated in several seminars and workshops in and outside India. Contributed articles both in English and Malayalam in several journals. Published a book on the History of performing tradition of Kathakali (2007) co-authored by Killimangalam Vasudevan Namboodiri pad which is now a reference book for Post Graduation courses at Kalamandalam.

Recipient of several honors including Sangeeth Nataka Adami award (2013) from the President of India

Evolution Methods and Contemporary Challenges in Actor Training – Kathakali Dance Drama

Kathakali, the centuries old dance-drama continues to be a vibrant theatre tradition in its homeland, Kerala, India.

Choreography - During the long period of existence, since 15th century, it had been subjected to various kinds of refinements in respect of its presentational techniques which include Choreography. There are certain milestones in this regard which should be discussed in detail. Creativity of artists as well as the aesthetic sensibility of the audience got exchanged according to the demand of the situation and time keeping the tradition to be a live one.

Legacy Transmission - Kathakali is much indebted to Natyasastra, science of Dramaturgy (2nd B.C. to 4th A.D) which itself is a part of ancient Vedic tradition. Vedas are considered as the fountain head of all knowledge. The traditional method of imparting knowledge in India was known as Gurukula. Oral tradition was its main feature. Kathakali too followed the Gurukula system in the beginning. However, in the beginning of the last century, due to lack of patronage, influence of western education etc. a state of decline happened. It was a matter of survival too. Promotional system as well as training methodology have to be reviewed so as to fit into the modern time. Through the establishment of Kerala Kalamandalam (an institution founded under the leadership of the great poet Vallathol Narayana Menon) in 1930 Kathakali began to regain its aesthetic supremacy. The new vision of great Gurus like Pattikkamthodi Ravunni Menon, Guru Kunju kurup is commendable in this regard.

Transformation - A comprehensive training culture and discipline is a part of the Kathakali. Rigorous, time consuming, year-long training regimen began to face practical difficulties in a contemporary society which moves furiously fast. In this context it is necessary again to remodel the training structure that is more feasible to the modalities of time, space, attitudes and expectation of the contemporary student without much compromise on the aesthetic integrity of the art. A new generation of audience too is emerging. New media are playing an important role in familiarizing Kathakali to them. The role of new technology can effectively be utilized even in the pedagogical aspect, I believe.