

## Directory of Kutiyattam Artistes: 20th Century

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MARGI MADHU AND UNNIKRISHNAN

### *A. Performers: Male.*

Ammannur Chachu Chakyar (1880-1967): Trained under Cheriya Parisha Parameswara Chakyar. Specialized in Prabandha Kuttu and as Vidushaka. Guru of Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Painkulam Rama Chakyar.

Ammannur Kochukuttan Chakyar (alias Moozhikulam) (1928- ): Studied under Ammannur Unnichakyar, Kunjunni Chakyar, Kallangara Narayana Pisharoti, Kunjunni Kartha, Kidangur Narayana Chakyar, Painkulam Narayana Chakyar, Ammannur Madhava Chakyar, Mani Madhava Chakyar. Received State and Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Kerala Kalamandalam Award. Specialist in Vidushaka roles and Prabandha Kuttu. Revived many rare items at Margi.

Ammannur Kuttan Chakyar: b. 1950: Studied under Madhava Chakyar and Parmeswara Chakyar; also performed abroad. Fellowship of Ministry of Culture. Teaches at Ammannur Gurukulam.

Ammannur Madhava Chakyar: b. 1917; Studied under Madhava Chakyar and Chachu Chakyar, Bhagavata Kunjunni of Kodungallur Kovilakam. Major roles include Bali in Balivadham. Performed outside Kerala and abroad. Padmashri, Kalidas Samman, Awards from State and Central Sangeet Natak Akademis. Virashrinkhala, Prabandha Vachaspati. Taught at Kerala Kalamandalam and at Margi. Now Head at Ammannur Gurukulam. Among his contributions are the Attaprakarams or performance manuals for Parnasalanakam, Mayasitankam, and the Seventh Act of *Ascharyachudamani*.

Ammannur Parameswara Chakyar: b. 1915; Studied under his uncles. Notable role: Hanuman in Anguliyankam. Does not perform outside temples. Kerala Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

Chakyar, P.N.N. b. 1952; of Pothiyil family. Studied under Mani Madhava Chakyar. Teacher, Ministry of Culture Fellowship.

Cheriya Parisha Rama Chakyar (1854-1940): Trained by uncles Madhava Chakyar and Parameswar Chakyar. Main roles: Pacha, Katti and Pazhukka. The first to present Jatayuvadhankam.

Cheriya Parisha Raman Narayana Chakyar (1901-1979): Studied under Kidangur Rama Chakyar and Parameswara Chakyar and under Kidangur Rama Pisharoti. Major roles: Sugriva in Balivadham and Hanuman in Toranayuddhankam. Received Kalaratnam title from Travancore Devaswom Board.

Kalamandalam Narayana Chakyar: b. 1960; of the Koypa family. Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Painkulam Rama Chakyar. Main roles: Jatayu, Hanuman.

- Kalamandalam Radhakrishnan: b. 1962; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Painkulam Rama Chakyar and Kalamandalam Sivan Nambudiri and Rama Chakyar. Ministry of Culture Fellowship.
- Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar: b. 1950; Son of Ammannur Parameswara Chakyar. Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Painkulam Rama Chakyar. Teaches at Kerala Kalamandalam. Has performed overseas also.
- Kalamandalam Ravindran: b. 1966; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Kalamandalam Sivan Nambudiri and Rama Chakyar, continued training under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar. Ministry of Culture Fellowship. Main roles: Hanuman in Balivadham and Ramilakan in *Bhagavadajjukiyam*.
- Kalamandalam Sivan Nambudiri: The first non-Chakyar to study Kūṭiyattam. Studied under Painkulam Rama Chakyar. Teaches at Kalamandalam. Main roles: Ravana and Arjuna. Has performed overseas also.
- Koyya Narayana Chakyar; b. 1893; Studied under Cheriya Parisha Rama Chakyar and Kidangur Rama Pisharoti. Proficient in oral rendering. Notable role: Surpanakha in Surpanakhankam.
- Kuttancheri Cheriya Narayana Chakyar (1898-1930): Studied under his uncles and under Pottayil Govinda Menon. Specialized in the verbal delivery of Kuttu.
- Mani Damodara Chakyar: (1890-1958): Expert in Atiyantira Kuttu (ritual performance in temples). Presented Anguliyankam more than 100 times and *Mattavilasam* over 500 times.
- Mani Damodara Chakyar: b. 1946; Studied under Mani Madhava Chakyar. Has a Masters degree. Working as teacher. Senior Fellowship of Ministry of Culture. Main roles: Udayana in Swapnankam and Jimutavahana in *Nagananda*.
- Mani Madhava Chakyar (1898-1990): Studied under Vasu Nambeesan, Pannisseri Sankaran Nambudiri, Parikshit Rama Varma Tampuran. Performed outside Kerala and abroad too. Received Kalidas Samman, President's Award, Padmashri, Awards from Kerala Sangeet Natak Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Kerala Kalamandalam, Virashrinkhala from various temples, Natyacharya, Vidhushakarattam titles. Author of *Natyakalpadrumam*. Taught *rasabhinaya* to Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair. Among his disciples are Ammannur (Moozhikulam) Kochukuttan Chakyar, Mani Damodara Chakyar, Pothiyil Narayana Chakyar, etc.
- Mani Narayana Chakyar (1873-1941): Known as *Naganandam* Narayana Chakyar for successful performance in the play *Nagananda*, Proficient in acting as well as oral delivery.
- Mani Neelakanta Chakyar (1859-1943): Famous for histrionics. Superb in *rasabhinaya* and *chollyattam*.
- Mani Vasu Chakyar (1888-1950): Proficient in Prabandha Kuttu Major role; Vidushaka.
- Mani Vasunni Chakyar (1870-1930): Proficient in acting in Mantrankam, *Mattavilasam* and Anguliyankam. Specialist in *aharya* or costume design.
- Margi Madhu: b. 1966; Studied at Pothiyil family. Kerala Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship. Intensive training at Margi under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Kochukuttan Chakyar. Currently specializing in Mantrankam under P.K. Narayanan

- Nambiar. Ministry of Culture fellowship. Performed in India and abroad. Specializes in acting and oral delivery.
- Margi Narayanan Sajeev; b. 1964: Studied at Pothiyil family. Intensive training at Margi under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Kochukuttan Chakyar. Good in roles like Bali and Jatayu.
- Margi Raman: b. 1962; Early training under Madhava Chakyar. Continued training at Margi. Main roles: Shri Rama in Surpanakhankam and Vibhishana in Toranayuddhankam.
- Narayana Chakyar P.N.: b. 1931: Studied under Pothiyil Parameswara Chakyar and Mani Madhava Chakyar. Proficient in Kuttu.
- Neelakanta Chakyar, P.V.: b. 1923; of the Mani family. Studied under Mani Madhava Chakyar, Mani Narayana Chakyar, and Kochampalli Raman Nambiar. Performs regularly in temples. Received Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award.
- Painkulam Rama Chakyar ( -1980): Born in the Koypa family. Studied under Ammannur Chachu Chakyar. Proficient in acting and in oral delivery. Guru at Kerala Kalamandalam. Performed outside Kerala and abroad. Received Kerala Kalamandalam Award. Main roles: Ravana, Surpanakha, Vidushaka, etc.
- Pothiyil Kochunarayana Chakyar (1862-1923): Equally proficient in acting and in oral delivery. Guru of the Kathakali actor Thakazhi Sankaran Nambudiri.
- Pothiyil Narayana Chakyar: b. 1966; Early training at Ammannur Gurukulam. Continued training at Margi.
- Pothiyil Parameswara Chakyar (?): Studied under Pothiyil Narayana Chakyar and Ammannur Chachu Chakyar. The only expert in rare items like *Dutaghatotkacha* and *Dutavakya*.
- Rama Chakyar, C.N.: b. 1927; of the Kidangur family. Trained under Painkulam Narayana Chakyar, Rama Chakyar and Kidangur Rama Chakyar. Performs in temples. One of the few who can present Mantrankam in its entirety.
- G. Venu: b. 1946; Disciple of Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Parameswara Chakyar. Director of Natana Kairali. Looks after the programmes at Ammannur Gurukulam. Main roles: Hanuman, Surpanakha, etc. Author of *Production of a Play in Kutiyattam*.

**B. Performers: Female.**

- Kalamandalam Girija: b. 1959; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Painkulam Rama Chakyar and later under Kunjipillakutty Nangiaramma. Teaches at Kerala Kalamandalam. Performed overseas also. The first artiste outside the Nangiar community to study Kūṭiyāṭṭam.
- Kalamandalam Sailaja: b. 1961; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Painkulam Rama Chakyar. Teaches at Kerala Kalamandalam. Important roles: Subhadra in *Subhadra Dhananjaya*, Cheti or maid in *Bhagavadajjukiya*.
- Kunjimalu Nangyaramma (1906-1981): of the Kochampally family. A highly-rated performer of female roles in Kūṭiyāṭṭam and Nangiār Kūttu.
- Kunjipillaikutty Nangiaramma: of the Vilvattathu family. Equally adept in Kutiyattam and Nangiār Kūttu. Proficient in reciting *ślokas*.

Maja Nangiaramma (1955); Of the Kochampally family. Acted as Nayika or heroine and Cheti or maid. Proficient in reciting *slokas*.

Margi Sathi: b. 1963; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Painkulam Rama Chakyar. Continues at Margi under Ammannur (Moozhikulam) Kochukuttan Chakyar. Main roles: Sita in Mayasitankam, Lalita in Surpanakhankam. Performed outside Kerala and overseas as well.

Nangyeli Nangiaramma (1874-1933): Most famous role-Malayavati in *Naganandam*. Expert in the intricate *abhinaya* of *kettijnazhal*, having presented it on more than 16 occasions.

Nangyeli Nangiaramma (1890-1969): An active artiste whose main role was that Cheti or maid in *Nagananda*.

Parvathi Nangiaramma: b. 1911; Sister of Kunjimalu Nangiaramma and equally gifted.

Subhadra Nangiaramma: Of the Vilvattathu family of Nambiars. Could perform *Kettijnazhal*. Received Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award. Still performs.

Thangam Nangyaramma ( ): Of the Edanad family of Nambiars. Performs Nangiar Kuttu in the olden style.

Thankamma Nangiaramma: b. 1921; Daughter of Kunjimalu Nangiaramma. Proficient in Sanskrit. Could perform *Kettijnazhal*.

Usha Nangiar: b. 1968; Disciple of Ammannur Madhava Chakyar. Graduate. Chief roles: Tara in *Balivadhram* and *Lalita* in *Surpanakhankam*. Performed widely in India and abroad.

Usha Ratnam: b. 1966; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam under Kalamandalam Girija and Sailaja. Now studying at Margi.

### C. Percussionists

Chathakutam Govindan Nambiar: Expert as *mizhavu* player.

Chathakutam Krishnan Nambiar: b. 1924; Active in the profession at Kerala Kalamandalam and Ammannur Gurukulam. Received Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award.

Chengamanad Kunjan Nambiar ( -1944): was a very active artiste.

Edanadu Govindan Nambiar : Expert *mizhavu* player and Pathakam artiste.

Edanadu Narayanan Nambiar : Popular *mizhavu* and Pathakam artiste.

Kalamandalam Achuthanandan : b. 1972; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam. Now working at Margi.

Kalamandala Eswaranunni Warriar: b. 1957; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam. Teaches at Kerala Kalamandalam.

Kalamandalam Hariharan: b. 1965; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam. Now works at Ammannur Gurukulam.

Kalamandalam Ramanunni : b. 1974; Studied at Kerala Kalamandalam. Now works at Margi.

Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nambiar: b. 1954; Studied first under uncle Narayanan Nambiar and later at Kerala Kalamandalam. Worked at Ammannur Gurukulam. Now works at Margi. Expert in Pathakam (oral narration of puranas) and also in costume and make-up.

- Kanakkavil Krishnan Nambiar  
 Kanakkavil Raghavan Nambiar } Brothers. Performed between 1940 and 1970.  
 Kanakkavil Raman Nambiar }
- Kidangur Cherumanathu Kochukunjan Nambiar (1910- ): Was a very prominent artiste. Received Virasinkhala. Expert in costume and make-up also.
- Kidangur Damodaran Nambiar: b. 1910; Expert *mizhavu* player and Pathakam artiste.
- Kochampalli Govindan Nambiar: Son of the late Mani Madhava Chakyar. An accomplished *mizhavu* and Pathakam artiste.
- Kochampalli Krishnan Nambiar: b. 1922; Disciple of Kochampalli Raman Nambiar. Expert *mizhavu* player.
- Kochampalli Narayanan Nambiar (1882-1922): Disciple of Kochampalli Raman Nambiar. Famous for *mizhavu*-playing and the rendering of Pathakam.
- Kochampalli Raghavan Nambiar (1855-1961): Disciple of Kochampalli Raman Nambiar. Expert *mizhavu* player and Pathakam artiste. Expert in *vyavahara* or intricate and complex rhythmic patterns.
- Kochampalli Raman Nambiar (1876-1950): Known as *Vadyavisarada*. Outstanding *mizhavu* artiste and a great teacher. His disciples include Kochampalli Raghavan Nambiar and Narayanan Nambiar.
- Meledathu Damodaran Nambiar : b. 1920; Active *mizhavu* player and Pathakam artiste.
- Meledathu Govindan Nambiar: b. 1910; Expert *mizhavu* artiste.
- Meledathu Ravunni Nambiar ( -1984) : Active *mizhavu* player.
- Moozhikulam Damodaran Nambiar: No details available.
- Moozhikulam Kochu Mani Nambiar : Expert *mizhavu* player.
- Moozhikulam Raghavan Nambiar : b. 1925; Known as 'Viratarkan' Raghavan Nambiar.
- Moozhikulam Raghavan Nambiar: ( ) : Was active in the field from 1950 to 1975.
- Narayanan Nambiar P.K.: b. 1927; Son of Mani Madhava Chakyar. Taught at Kerala Kalamandalam. Received Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award, Kerala Kalamandalam Award, Guruvayurappan Award, Panivadya Tilakan title. Author of *Mantrankam* and *Srikrishnacharitham* Nangiar Kuttu. Expert *Mizhavu* player. *Tayampaka* on *mizhavu* is his innovation.
- Vadakkiniyath Govindan Nambiar: b. 1910; Details not available.
- Vilvattathu Damodaran Nambiar } Brothers. Expert *Mizhavu* players.  
 Vilvattathu Govindan Nambiar }
- Vilavattathu Ravunni Nambiar: b. 1915; An accomplished *Mizhavu* artiste and an expert in Pathakam and Kūṭiyāṭṭam make-up. Received Ammannur Gurukulam Award.
- [Note: The above list is by no means exhaustive; omissions, if any, are unintended and only for want of details.]

Translated by Rama Iyer.



