

CHAPTER-11

Performance and language in Kathakali: A study within the Indian knowledge system

Sathiabhama J Nair

Research Scholar,

Department of English, Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburagi

sathiabhamajnair@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.66483/jsp.2026.001.ch11>

ABSTRACT

Kathakali is a traditional art form that originated in the Malayalam-speaking state of Kerala. It is a verse drama and makes use of navarasas from the Natya Shastra, authored by Sage Bharatamuni. It is one of the most complex forms of Indian theatre. The performance is a fusion of music, choreography and gestures (both hand and facial), integrating rhythm and visual storytelling into an intricate semiotic system that operates as a form of language in itself.

This paper analyses Kathakali as a performative language system while placing it within the framework of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) to explore how meaning is generated, conveyed and construed through representations of the oral and visual modes of the art. The four expressive frameworks – *angika abhinaya* (gesture), *vachika abhinaya* (oral/vocal), *aharya abhinaya* (costume and makeup), *sattvika abhinaya* (emotional) – as outlined in the Natya Shastra, probe how Kathakali disseminates meaning through its layered storytelling, consisting of the vocalists and musicians playing their musical instruments, without the performer employing spoken dialogues. The *mudras* (hand gestures) and *rasas* (facial expressions), along with the sung text functions together to create meaning through performance.

Drawing on Bharatamuni's Natya Shastra and Abhinavagupta's Theory of Rasa, this paper places Kathakali within the Indian comprehension of language and meaning as performative and embodied. The process of generating meaning through the performance is shared by the performers, audience, custom and context. Hence, it is a dynamic rather than static textual reality. This paper examines Kathakali as a linguistic and epistemological system, underscoring the refined, advanced traditional performative knowledge. Thus, Kathakali is not merely an art, but a sophisticated cultural structure that cyphers cultural memory and cognition through exemplified language.

KEY WORDS: Natya Shastra, Cognition, Embodied knowledge, Performance, Communication

1 Introduction

Kathakali is one of the most elaborate and visually striking classical dance-drama traditions of India, originating in the cultural landscape of Kerala. Emerging in its present form around the seventeenth century, Kathakali represents a sophisticated synthesis of performance, language, ritual, aesthetics, and embodied knowledge. More than a theatrical form, Kathakali is a complex semiotic system through which narratives from Indian epics and Puranic lore are communicated using codified gestures, facial expressions, rhythmic movement, costume, makeup, music, and dramatic conventions. Rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS),

<https://jnanasetupress.com/>

Bharatiya Bhasha Pariwar: A New Framework in Linguistics

<https://doi.org/10.66483/jsp.2026.001>

Kathakali challenges modern, speech-centred notions of language and communication by demonstrating how meaning can be produced, transmitted, and interpreted through the disciplined body of the performer.

Historically, Kathakali evolved from earlier performance traditions such as Koodiyattam, Krishnanattam, Ramanattam, and various temple and folk rituals of Kerala. While Koodiyattam preserved Sanskrit drama within temple spaces, Kathakali reworked epic narratives for wider audiences through stylised visual storytelling. The patronage of regional rulers and temple institutions contributed to the consolidation of Kathakali as a courtly and ritual art. Its performance contexts ranged from temple courtyards and palace grounds to community festivals, where performances often lasted through the night, emphasising endurance, devotion, and immersive spectatorship. Over time, Kathakali came to embody the social, religious, and aesthetic values of Kerala's cultural milieu while remaining deeply anchored in pan-Indian classical traditions.

At the heart of Kathakali lies a unique approach to narrative communication. Unlike spoken drama, Kathakali performers do not use their own voice to deliver dialogues. Instead, trained vocalists render verses in Sanskrit and Manipravalam (a mixture of Sanskrit and Malayalam), while the actors enact the narrative through expressive bodily techniques. This separation of voice and body creates a layered linguistic system in which verbal language, musical intonation, rhythm, gesture, and facial expression function together to construct meaning. The actor's body becomes a text, and performance becomes an act of interpretation. In this sense, Kathakali can be understood as a form of "performed language," where grammar is visual, syntax is kinetic, and semantics is embodied. As veteran Kathakali actor Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair puts it, "When I am onstage for 'Ravanolbhavam,' my mind is a blank. It is not once or twice that I have trained in 'Ravanolbhavam,' but more than a hundred times. I don't need the mind; my body knows what to do." (Narayanan, 2015, p. 2)

The codified system of hand gestures (mudras) used in Kathakali derives from classical treatises such as the *Hasta Lakshana Deepika* and the *Abhinaya Darpana* (The Mirror of Gesture). These gestures function as a visual lexicon, enabling performers to represent objects, actions, emotions, and abstract ideas. Through combinations of mudras, actors can narrate complex episodes from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the Puranas. Facial expression (mukhabhinaya), eye movement (nayanabhinaya), and bodily posture (angikabhinaya) together constitute a sophisticated grammar of expression. Even subtle movements of the eyebrows or pupils carry semantic and pragmatic significance, guiding the audience's emotional and cognitive engagement with the narrative.

Kathakali is also distinguished by its highly symbolic costume and makeup, which function as a semiotic code. Character types are categorised through specific visual patterns: *pacha* (green) for noble and virtuous characters such as Shri Rama and Shri Krishna; *kathi* (knife) for arrogant and aggressive figures; *thati* for villainous characters; *pazhukka* noble yet aggressive characters; *kari* for demonic and forest beings; and *minukku* for gentle female and ascetic characters. These visual codes pre-structure audience interpretation, signalling moral and psychological traits even before the character begins to act. Costume thus becomes a form of visual language, conveying meaning instantly and shaping narrative expectations.

Embedded within Indian Knowledge Systems, Kathakali integrates multiple epistemic traditions. The theoretical foundation of the art is rooted in Bharata's *Natya Shastra*, which conceptualises drama as a synthesis of speech (vachika), gesture (angika), costume (aharya), and inner emotion (sattvika). The goal of performance, according to this aesthetic framework, is the evocation of *rasa*—the aesthetic experience that arises when the spectator emotionally

resonates with the performed emotion (*bhava*). Kathakali training also draws from Ayurveda and Yoga, emphasising physical discipline, breath control, flexibility, and mental concentration. The intense eye and facial muscle training required of Kathakali actors reflects an indigenous understanding of the body as a site of knowledge production, where cognition, emotion, and movement are integrated rather than separated.

The ritual dimension of Kathakali further situates it within an indigenous epistemological framework. Traditional performances commence with ritual preliminaries such as the *keli* (drum invocation) and *thodayam* (invocatory dance), consecrating the performance space and invoking divine presence. The stage is not merely a theatrical platform but a sanctified space where myth, ritual, and performance intersect. This ritualised context shapes the communicative function of Kathakali: performance becomes an offering (*seva*), and spectatorship becomes a participatory act of witnessing sacred narrative. Language in Kathakali is thus not only communicative but devotional, ethical, and cosmological.

From a contemporary linguistic perspective, Kathakali offers fertile ground for rethinking the boundaries of language. Modern linguistics has increasingly recognised multimodality, embodied cognition, and performativity as crucial dimensions of communication. Kathakali exemplifies these principles through its integration of gesture, gaze, rhythm, and spatial movement as primary carriers of meaning. Studying Kathakali through a linguistic lens enables a decolonial expansion of language theory, challenging Eurocentric assumptions that privilege spoken or written language as the primary mode of meaning-making. Kathakali demonstrates that complex linguistic systems can exist outside alphabetic or phonetic frameworks, embedded in cultural practice and embodied knowledge.

In the contemporary era, Kathakali has moved from temple courtyards to proscenium stages and global cultural circuits. While this transition has enabled wider visibility and preservation, it has also raised questions about translation, adaptation, and cultural authenticity. Nevertheless, Kathakali continues to function as a living tradition, transmitting ethical ideals, mythological narratives, aesthetic values, and indigenous knowledge across generations. As both a performance art and a communicative system, Kathakali stands as a powerful reminder that language is not confined to words alone but lives in the disciplined body, ritual practice, and collective cultural memory of a community.

The Fourfold Expressive Framework in the *Natya Shastra* and Its Application in Kathakali

The Indian classical art forms differ itself in the variety of narration where the plot remain the same. Without the presence of the props it expresses ideas effectively and clearly through words, symbols, percussions and body language. Here the non-literary elements are communicated through various techniques and the language. (Krishnan & Krishnan, 2019, p. 2)

The *Natya Shastra*, attributed to Bharata Muni, is the foundational treatise of Indian dramaturgy and performance aesthetics. It conceptualises performance as a composite art form that integrates multiple modes of expression to produce aesthetic experience (*rasa*) in the spectator. One of the most influential theoretical formulations in the *Natya Shastra* is the fourfold expressive framework of *abhinaya*, which identifies four interconnected dimensions of performance: *angika* (bodily expression), *vachika* (verbal expression), *aharya* (costume and makeup), and *sattvika* (inner or psychological expression). Rather than functioning as separate components, these four modes operate together to generate meaning, emotion, and narrative coherence in theatrical performance. Kathakali, the classical dance-drama tradition of Kerala, exemplifies this integrated framework in a highly refined and codified manner. This section

<https://jnanasetupress.com/>

Bharatiya Bhasha Pariwar: A New Framework in Linguistics

<https://doi.org/10.66483/jsp.2026.001>

examines each mode of *abhinaya* and analyses how Kathakali makes use of the fourfold expressive system within the epistemic framework of Indian Knowledge Systems.

Angika Abhinaya (Bodily Expression) Angika abhinaya refers to communication through the body, including posture, gesture, movement, facial expression, and eye movement. In the *Natya Shastra*, the body is conceptualised as a semiotic instrument capable of conveying complex meanings without reliance on spoken language. Kathakali elevates angika abhinaya to its highest level of codification. The performers undergo rigorous training to control each muscle of the face and body, especially the eyes, eyebrows, cheeks, and lips. This bodily discipline enables the precise enactment of emotions (*bhavas*) and narrative actions.

Hand gestures (*mudras*) form a crucial lexicon in Kathakali's bodily language. Derived from classical manuals such as the *Hasta Lakshana Deepika*, these gestures function like words and morphemes, combining to create narrative sentences. For instance, a sequence of gestures can narrate episodes from the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* without verbal speech. Kathakali's stylised footwork and circular movement patterns structure the spatial grammar of performance, while eye movements (*nayanabhinaya*) direct attention, indicate deixis (here/there), and convey emotional emphasis. Thus, angika abhinaya in Kathakali constitutes a full-fledged embodied language system that aligns with contemporary theories of multimodality and embodied cognition.

Vachika Abhinaya (Verbal Expression) Vachika abhinaya refers to verbal and vocal expression, including dialogue, song, intonation, and rhythmic speech. In Kathakali, this mode is realised through a distinctive performative arrangement: the actors themselves do not speak; instead, trained vocalists seated at the side of the stage sing the verses in Sanskrit-Manipravalam, accompanied by percussion instruments such as the *chenda*, *maddalam*, and *chengila*. This separation of voice and body produces a layered communicative structure. The singer provides the verbal narrative, while the actor translates the sung text into visual language through gesture and expression.

This arrangement exemplifies the *Natya Shastra*'s conception of vachika abhinaya as part of a composite communicative system rather than a self-sufficient mode. The musicality of the sung text shapes the rhythm and tempo of bodily movement, while changes in raga and tala signal shifts in mood and narrative intensity. As Drew Leder explains, this paradox of 'presence to the other/absence to the self' characterises most conditions of heightened activity: While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also essentially characterized by absence. That is, one's own body is rarely the thematic object of experience. When reading a book or lost in thought, my own bodily state may be the farthest thing from my awareness. I experientially dwell in a world of ideas, paying little heed to my physical sensations or posture. (Leder, 1990, p. 1) Vachika abhinaya thus functions as an auditory scaffold for the visual grammar of Kathakali. The audience engages with language not merely as semantic content but as rhythmically and emotionally inflected sound that guides interpretation.

Aharya Abhinaya (Costume and Visual Design) Aharya abhinaya encompasses costume, makeup, ornaments, stage properties, and visual design. The *Natya Shastra* recognises that visual appearance is integral to meaning-making in performance. Kathakali is globally recognised for its elaborate costumes and facial makeup, which operate as a symbolic semiotic system. Characters are categorised into moral and psychological types through colour codes and facial patterns.

These visual codes function as pre-linguistic signifiers that frame audience perception before any action unfolds. The massive headgear (*kireedam*), layered skirts, and facial prosthetics

transform the performer into a mythic figure, suspending ordinary realism and situating the narrative in a cosmic-mythological register. Aharya abhinaya in Kathakali thus extends the fourfold framework into the visual semiotics of costume and space, reinforcing character typology, ethical polarity, and narrative function.

Sattvika Abhinaya (Inner Emotional Expression) Sattvika abhinaya refers to the internal emotional and psychological state of the performer, manifested through involuntary or subtle physical signs such as trembling, tears, changes in breath, and stillness. The *Natya Shashtra* considers sattvika abhinaya essential for the authentic evocation of *rasa*, as it bridges external technique and internal emotion. In Kathakali, sattvika abhinaya is cultivated through disciplined training in concentration, breath control, and mental visualisation, drawing on yogic and meditative practices embedded within Indian Knowledge Systems.

Kathakali actors do not merely imitate emotions; they cultivate an inner alignment with the character's emotional state. This inner disposition animates the precision of angika gestures and facial expressions, lending them emotional depth. The performer's capacity to sustain intense emotional states over long durations—often during all-night performances—reflects a psychophysical integration of body and mind. Sattvika abhinaya thus provides the affective core that unifies the other three modes of expression.

Integration of the Fourfold Framework in Kathakali Kathakali exemplifies the *Natya Shastra*'s vision of performance as an integrated expressive ecology. Angika, vachika, aharya, and sattvika abhinayas do not function in isolation but operate synergistically to produce aesthetic meaning and emotional resonance. The bodily lexicon of gestures is shaped by the rhythm of sung language; visual codes of costume frame narrative interpretation; and inner emotional alignment animates external technique. Together, these modes create a holistic communicative system that aligns with contemporary understandings of multimodal discourse while remaining grounded in indigenous epistemological traditions.

In conclusion, the fourfold expressive framework of the *Natya Shastra* finds one of its most refined and sustained realisations in Kathakali. By integrating bodily movement, vocal narration, visual semiotics, and inner emotional discipline, Kathakali embodies the classical Indian conception of performance as a total language system. Studying Kathakali through the lens of the fourfold *abhinaya* not only illuminates the sophistication of Indian aesthetic theory but also offers valuable insights for contemporary linguistics, performance studies, and multimodal communication.

2 Kathakali as a Linguistic and Epistemological System

Kathakali, the classical dance-drama tradition of Kerala, is often celebrated for its visual splendour, elaborate costumes, and powerful enactment of mythological narratives. However, beyond its aesthetic appeal, Kathakali functions as a complex linguistic and epistemological system rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). It operates as a structured mode of communication with its own grammar, lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics, while simultaneously embodying an indigenous way of knowing the world. By integrating bodily expression, gesture, music, visual semiotics, emotion, and ritual, Kathakali challenges narrow, speech-centred definitions of language and foregrounds embodied, performative, and culturally situated forms of knowledge production.

From a linguistic perspective, Kathakali can be understood as a multimodal language system. The primary “lexicon” of this language consists of codified hand gestures (*mudras*), facial expressions, eye movements, postures, and movement patterns. Manuals such as the *Hasta*

Lakshana Deepika provide a systematic inventory of gestures, enabling performers to “spell out” objects, actions, emotions, and abstract concepts. These gestures function similarly to words and morphemes, and their combinations follow culturally recognised conventions that resemble syntactic ordering. For example, narrative sequences from the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* are constructed through ordered gesture strings, where actions, agents, emotions, and temporal markers are visually encoded. This visual grammar enables the performer to narrate complex events without uttering a single spoken word.

Kathakali also demonstrates a sophisticated use of non-verbal grammar. Facial muscles, eyebrows, lips, and especially eye movements function as grammatical markers that indicate emphasis, deixis (here/there), emotional modality, and shifts in perspective. The eyes guide the audience’s attention, signal narrative focus, and regulate discourse flow. Pauses, stillness, and rhythmic acceleration function as pragmatic markers, shaping how meaning is interpreted. In this way, Kathakali exemplifies what contemporary linguistics terms multimodal discourse, where meaning emerges through the orchestration of multiple semiotic resources rather than through speech alone.

The separation of voice and body in Kathakali further illustrates its linguistic complexity. The verbal text, sung by vocalists in Sanskrit-Manipravalam, forms one linguistic layer, while the performer’s bodily enactment forms another. The actor does not speak but translates the sung language into visual and kinetic expression. This process resembles intersemiotic translation, where meaning is transferred from one semiotic mode (verbal) to another (gestural-visual). The rhythmic and melodic contours of the sung text shape the tempo and emotional colouring of bodily movement, creating a coordinated multimodal grammar. Kathakali thus operates as a dialogic system between sound and movement, where language is distributed across bodies, voices, instruments, and space. As Philip Zarrilli observes, in genres like Kathakali, Odissi, Kathak, or Bharatnatyam, the entire whole-cloth of performance is deconstructed, broken down into its smallest units – the independent articulation of individual sets of musculatures. Knowing how to articulate such muscles is necessary in such highly codified forms in order for the student to reach even a minimally acceptable level of expressivity and competence. [...]in all cases the constant repetition of set exercises [...] eventually leads to a level of ability beyond empty, vacuous, presence-less, and powerless mimicry. The student passes from sheer repetition to a reconstruction enlivened by proficiency. (Zarrilli, 1990, p. 133)

Beyond functioning as a linguistic system, Kathakali also operates as an epistemological framework—that is, a way of knowing, remembering, and transmitting knowledge. Rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems, Kathakali integrates aesthetic theory (*Natya Shastra*), embodied cognition (Yoga and Ayurveda), ritual semiotics (Tantric and temple traditions), and devotional philosophy (Bhakti). Knowledge in Kathakali is not transmitted primarily through abstract propositions or written texts but through embodied practice, imitation, apprenticeship, and performative memory. The performer learns narratives, ethical codes, emotional registers, and cosmological concepts by training the body to enact them. The body becomes an archive of cultural memory, preserving mythological knowledge, moral frameworks, and aesthetic values across generations.

Kathakali also functions as an epistemological system by encoding ethical and cosmological knowledge through visual semiotics. The colour codes and makeup patterns classify characters into moral and psychological types: noble heroes (*pacha*), arrogant villains (*kathi*), noble yet aggressive characters (*pazhukka*), villainous figures (*thathi*), demonic figures (*kari*), and gentle or ascetic characters (*minukku*). These visual codes embody an indigenous moral epistemology, where virtue, vice, and cosmic order are immediately legible. The audience does not merely receive entertainment but participates in a culturally grounded mode of ethical cognition,

learning to recognise and emotionally engage with moral archetypes. Knowledge here is experiential and affective rather than purely conceptual.

The ritual dimension of Kathakali further reinforces its epistemological function. Traditional performances are framed by ritual preliminaries that consecrate the performance space and invoke divine presence. The stage becomes a liminal site where mythological time intersects with present time, enabling spectators to experience cosmological narratives as living realities. This ritual context situates knowledge within a sacred epistemology, where learning is not detached observation but participatory witnessing. The audience's familiarity with mythic narratives and performance conventions forms a shared cultural competence that enables interpretation. Knowledge, therefore, is relational and communally sustained.

Kathakali's training pedagogy exemplifies indigenous epistemic practices. Knowledge transmission occurs through the guru–shishya (teacher–disciple) relationship, where learning is experiential, repetitive, and embodied. The disciple internalises not only techniques of gesture and movement but also ethical discipline, emotional control, and aesthetic sensitivity. This mode of learning foregrounds tacit knowledge—skills and understandings that cannot be fully articulated in words but are acquired through practice. Such embodied epistemology challenges Western academic privileging of textual and propositional knowledge, offering an alternative model where the body is a primary site of cognition.

From a decolonial linguistic perspective, Kathakali expands the definition of language itself. By functioning as a rule-governed, interpretable, and culturally embedded system of signs, Kathakali qualifies as a language system even though it does not conform to alphabetic or phonetic models. Recognising Kathakali as linguistic practice disrupts Eurocentric hierarchies that privilege spoken and written language as the sole carriers of meaning. It affirms indigenous performance traditions as legitimate knowledge systems with their own grammars, semantics, pragmatics, and epistemologies.

In the contemporary context, Kathakali's movement into global stages and academic institutions raises questions of translation, adaptation, and epistemic authority. While global circulation enables preservation and recognition, it also risks decontextualising the tradition from its ritual and cultural frameworks. Nevertheless, Kathakali continues to function as a living epistemological system, transmitting narratives, ethical values, aesthetic sensibilities, and embodied knowledge. As both a linguistic and epistemological practice, Kathakali offers a powerful model for rethinking language not merely as speech or text but as embodied, performative, and culturally situated knowing.

3 Orality, Memory, and Music in Kathakali

Kathakali is sustained not only through visual spectacle and codified bodily language but also through powerful traditions of orality, performative memory, and music. Together, these elements form a vital epistemic and communicative infrastructure that enables the transmission of narratives, techniques, and aesthetic values across generations. Within Indian Knowledge Systems, knowledge is often preserved and circulated through oral traditions and embodied practices rather than through written texts alone. Kathakali exemplifies this indigenous mode of knowledge transmission, where story, technique, and cultural memory are maintained through spoken, sung, and performed forms.

Orality in Kathakali operates at multiple levels. The narrative texts performed in Kathakali are primarily drawn from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and Puranic literature, rendered in Sanskrit-Manipravalam verses. These texts are not simply read but sung by trained vocalists,

whose oral rendition carries meaning through intonation, rhythm, and emotional colouring. The singers function as narrators and interpreters, shaping the audience's understanding of character and situation. Even for spectators who may not fully comprehend the linguistic content of the verses, the oral delivery communicates affective meaning through musical phrasing, tempo, and vocal modulation. Orality thus extends beyond semantic transmission to include emotional and atmospheric communication.

Memory plays a central role in Kathakali training and performance. Underlying its pedagogy is the presupposition of a certain hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student, characterised by the exercise of power and violence from one side, and submissive compliance and deference from the other. The crucial aspect of this relationship is that it is at once both an extension and a recreation in an instructional setting of a set of social relations that characterised the time and social space in which the practice developed and came to be established. (Narayanan, 2015, p. 8) Performers internalise extensive repertoires of gesture sequences, narrative episodes, rhythmic patterns, and emotional registers through repetitive practice and apprenticeship under the guru–shishya tradition. The teacher merely shows what is to be done, and the student does it – effectively imitating the form of the action – till he gets it right, and then repeats it till it is formally inscribed in his body. A notable case would be that of the enactment of *sringara* – the erotic bhava – which is taught primarily as a set of facial and eye movements with little explanation of or allusion to the mental or emotional state that it refers to. (Narayanan, 2015, p. 4) This process cultivates performative memory, where knowledge is stored in the body rather than in written scripts. Episodes from the epics are remembered not as abstract narratives but as sequences of movements, expressions, and emotional transitions. Such embodied memory functions as a living archive of cultural knowledge, enabling continuity even in contexts where written documentation may be limited or secondary.

Music in Kathakali acts as the connective tissue between orality and memory. The percussion ensemble, including instruments such as the *chenda*, *idakka*, *chengila*, *ilathalam* and *maddalam*, structures the temporal flow of performance, marking emotional intensity, dramatic transitions, and narrative climaxes. The melodic framework provided by specific ragas and rhythmic cycles (talas) shapes the performer's timing, movement quality, and emotional expression. Musical cues function as mnemonic anchors, helping performers recall specific sequences of action and emotional tone. Music also serves as a shared memory system for the audience, whose familiarity with recurring rhythmic and melodic patterns enables anticipatory engagement with the unfolding narrative.

Together, orality, memory, and music form a dynamic triad that sustains Kathakali as a living tradition. They enable the transmission of linguistic content, performative technique, and cultural knowledge through embodied and communal practices rather than through textual preservation alone. This triadic system foregrounds an indigenous epistemology in which knowledge is relational, performative, and temporally sustained through collective memory and rhythmic continuity.

References:

- Zarrilli, P. B. (2000). Kathakali dance-drama: Where gods and demons come to play. Routledge.
- Bharata Muni. (1987). Nāṭyaśāstra (Vols. 1–2, K. P. Narayana Pisharody, Trans.). Kerala Sahitya Akademi.
- Leder, D. (1990). The absent body. University of Chicago Press.
- Nair, K. P., & Balan, N. (2004). Natyacharyante jeevithamudrakal. Current Books.

- Schechner, R. (2002). *Performance studies: An introduction*. Routledge.
- Zarrilli, P. B. (1990). What does it mean to become the character? In R. Schechner & W. Appel (Eds.), *By means of performance* (pp. 131–148). Cambridge University Press.
- Narayanan, M. V. (2016). Body centric knowledge: Traditions of performance and pedagogy in Kathakali. *Indian Journal of the History of Science*, 51(1), 131–142. <https://doi.org/10.16943/IJHS/2016/V51I1/48385>
- Paulose, K. G. (n.d.). Kathakali – Textual traditions. Retrieved from <https://kgpaulose.info/articles/pdf2/English/11.%20Kathakali%20-%20textual%20traditions.pdf>
- Nair, J. S. (2023). Intertwined body and mind: Embodying character and reflections on the performative experience in Kathakali. *Indian Theatre Journal*, 7(1), 47–63. https://doi.org/10.1386/itj_00029_7
- Sudheer Variathu Chorathu, & Gopinathan, A. (2024). Kathakali music: A search on the evolutionary trajectory. *AEMR*, 14, 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.30819/aemr.14-6>

YOUR DISSERTATION DESERVES RECOGNITION, NOT A PLACE IN A STOREROOM

Publish Your Dissertation as a Book through the Emerging Scholars Series

Transform your thesis or dissertation into a professionally published scholarly work, boosting its academic visibility and impact.

Benefits

-  ISBN Registration*
-  Crossref DOI Assignment
-  ORCID Integration
-  Google Scholar Discoverability
-  Enhanced Citation Opportunities
-  Wider Academic Reach and Recognition
-  Long-Term Preservation and Accessibility

Publication Options

Jnanasetu Repository	Jnanasetu Repository Publication with an ISBN
✓ Crossref DOI Assignment ✓ Online Archiving and Preservation ✓ Academic Visibility ✓ Citations	✓ ISBN Registration ✓ Crossref DOI Assignment ✓ Professional Book Publication ✓ Global Accessibility ✓ Academic Visibility ✓ Citations

Looking to Publish Research Articles?

Researchers and scholars may also submit manuscripts to **Jnanasetu Journals** for quality-focused scholarly publication.

- ✓ Peer-Reviewed Journals
- ✓ DOI Assignment
- ✓ Open Access Publishing
- ✓ Academic Visibility
- ✓ Timely Editorial Processing

We Also Publish

-  Edited Books
-  Scholarly Monographs
-  Conference Proceedings
-  Academic Journals

For more details:

Press	jnanasetupress.com	support@jnanasetupress.com
Repository	jnanaseturepository.com	editor@jnanaseturepository.com
Journals	jnanasetujournals.com	editor@jnanasetujournals.com