



## Kutiyattam

**Kapila Venu** recently played a composition “**Parvati Viraham**”, **part of** the age-old repertoire of **Kutiyattam**, at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi.

- **Kutiyattam** is one of the oldest traditional **theatre forms of Kerala** and is based on **Sanskrit**



theatre traditions. [//](#)

- The word “**kuti**” in Malayalam language primarily means “**combined**” or “together”, and “**attam**” means “**acting**”: therefore, the word “**kutiyattam**” means “**combined acting**”.
- In its stylized and codified theatrical language, netra abhinaya (**eye expression**) and hasta abhinaya (**the language of gestures**) are prominent. They focus on the thoughts and feelings of the main character.
- It is traditionally performed in theatres called **Kuttampalams**, which are located in the Hindu temples.
- Kutiyattam is performed by a community of **male actors** called **Chakyars** and **female** performers called **Nangiar**s, assisted by **drummers** called **Nambiars**.
- **Pakarnattam** is an aspect of Kutiyattam that involves embodying and emoting male and female roles. Switching between the masculine and feminine and interpreting multiple roles at the same time is considered a challenging skill within the repertoire.
- **Nangiar Koothu** is the solo section of female performance in Kutiyattam.
- Kutiyattam includes the plays of almost all the major **playwrights in Sanskrit**, including Bhasa, Harsha, Saktibhadra, Kulasekhara, Neelakantha, Bodhayana and Mahendravikramavarman. However, notable exceptions are Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, whose plays are not traditionally part of its repertoire.
- Kutiyattam has been **declared as among the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity** by [UNESCO](#).

