
TAMIL NADU KATTAIKKUTTU KALAI VALARCHI MUNNETRA SANGAM, TAMIL NADU

The Tamil Nadu Kattaikkuttu Kalai Valarchi Munnetra Sangam works in the rural setting of Punjarasantankal village, promoting Kattaikkuttu — the principal rural theater tradition of northern Tamil Nadu. Kattaikkuttu uses music, songs, dialogue, dance, elaborate make-up and costumes to act out traditional narratives throughout the night. It is usually performed by men.

Kattaikkuttu is the mouthpiece of the local population through which people express and confirm their own cultural identity and evaluate the society in which they live in.

An integral part of the Sangam is the Youth Theatre School or gurukulam which offers professional training in music and acting as well as basic education to about 40 children. The gurukulam enables the students to learn, live and train together for about four years, within a protective environment so as to help them further their own interests, before being engaged as full-time performers, teachers and stage technicians.

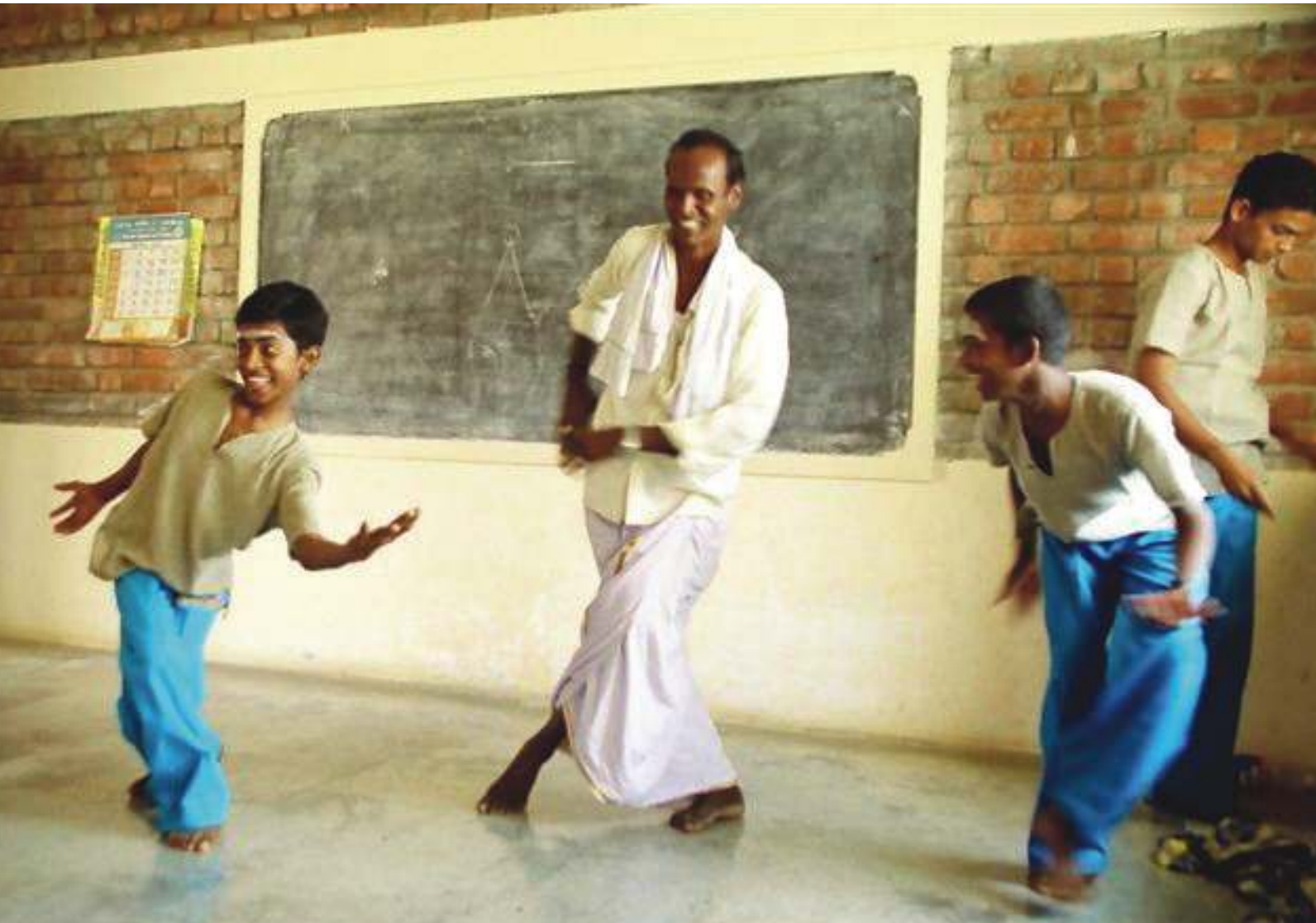
For the first time, young girls have also been inducted into the fold of the School. The gurukulam supports the artistic training of the girls, who are on an equal footing as the boys, donning as the male students often do, opposite gender roles.

Even though the children come from poor and at times difficult family backgrounds, the school views the education process and the performing arts training as a development of their talents and skills and not for the fact that they are underprivileged. Access to quality artistic training and education offers them the possibility to transform their artistic and intellectual abilities into professional skills.

A grant of Rs 11.00 million was sanctioned in 2005-2006, from the JRD Tata Trust, for four years.

Young students learn the Mukavinai — a rare wind instrument





Rehearsing a comedy sequence with a senior teacher



Applying make-up for a forthcoming performance



The All-Girls Company performs Mandara Pu — Bhima and the Mandara Flower



Scene from one of the 'modern' plays, Parkadal — The Milky Ocean