

Guru Sreedevi Rajan, a leading authority in Mohiniyattam, is a pioneer who has enriched this dance form immensely. Her contributions span from Mohiniyattam adaptation to many literary works of great masters, and her own literary compositions to a comprehensive work on the hand gestures used in Mohiniyattam. She is blessed with numerous illustrious students who are carrying the tradition of this dance form worldwide.

Daughter of **Late Guru Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair and Late Guru Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma**, **Sreedevi Rajan** was introduced into the field of Indian classical dance world from her very childhood, even before she was four years old. She underwent training in the Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme in Mohiniyattam (under the guidance of the late **Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma**), Kathakali (under the late **Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair**), Bharatanatyam (under the late **A.R.R Bhaskar**, Tanjore) and Carnatic Music (under the late **Prof. Kalyanasundaram**). She did her arangetram in both Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam when she was five years old.

Awards & Accomplishments:

Smt. Sreedevi Rajan has to her achievement, numerous stages performing Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Mohiniyattam. She had also been a vocalist for classical dance performances for Kerala Kalalayam (her Alma mater where she played a tremendous role assisting her parents) and her institution, Nrithyakshetra. Her career for over six decades has won numerous accolades, both as an amateur and as a professional dancer and vocalist for both Mohiniyattam and Bharatanatyam. In **1959** she won **1st position in Bharatanatyam for All India Inter University Youth Festival, New Delhi**. She was a **B high-grade singer for All India Radio** from 1960s to almost three decades.

A few of her recent Awards:

Senior Fellowship from Ministry of Human Resources, Govt. of India
Title Natyashreshta 2007 by Kaladarpanam, Art & Cultural Movement of India
Kalasagar Puraskar 2012, Kalamandalam Krishnankutty Poduval memorial Award
Kalasree Award 2013 Kerala Sangeeth Natak Academ.

Contributions to the field of Mohiniyattam:

Smt. Sreedevi started dance choreography at the very early age of 15. She choreographed numerous items in Mohiniyattam, for the music compositions of legends, such as *Maharajah Swati Tirunal*, *Sri Irayimman Thampi*, *Sri Thyagaraja Swamikal*, *Sri Kabir*, *Sri Tulsidas*, *Sri Muthuswami Dikhshitar*, *Sri Purandara Dasa* and *Smt. Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma*, to name a few. She also wrote and choreographed many Ganapathi Sthuthis, Padams and an Saphthams as part of her contribution to Mohiniyattam repertoire. She directed and presented many TV performances for the Doordarshan Kendra and private Indian channels, such as Asianet and Kairali TV.

Being a Post Graduate in Malayalam literature and a Senior Fellow of the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, Smt. Sreedevi Rajan worked on the Medieval and Modern Malayalam literature for widening the reach of *abhinaya* in Mohiniyattam.

Some of the recognized efforts include the following:

Sri Adi Shankaracharya's Soundralahari
Ezhuthachan's Ramayana and Mahabharata
Poonthanam's Jnanappana
Unnayi Warrior's Nalacharitham Aattakadha
Vallathol Narayana Menon's Magdalana Mariyam
Kumaran Asan's Karuna
Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer's Karnabhooshanam
G. Shankara Kurup's Sooryakanthi
O. N. V Kurup's padams
Muthuswami Dikhshitar's Navavarna Krithis (9 Keerthanas)

She is continuing her work, with special emphasis on *Nava rasas*. Her endeavor is to elevate the theme of Mohiniyattam from just *Sambhoga Shringara* and *Vipralambha Shringara* to extend the range of the concept of 'Love' in Mohiniyattam. She has contributed her sincere effort as a member of the team of research conducted by the late Guru Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma. She has conducted several lecture demonstrations and performed her Mohiniyattam repertoire in many parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. As mentioned earlier, she has also directed and presented many TV programmes.

Smt. Sreedevi Rajan has also served as a member of the selection committees for Mohiniyattam exams conducted by Ministry of Human Resources and Cultural Development and Centre for Cultural Resources and Training to promote young talented artists in the country. Her brilliant talent in teaching, and composing dances and lyrics for Mohiniyattam is highly commendable.

She runs an institution, *Nrithyakshetra* (Temple of Dance), at Kochi, which is an offshoot of her parent's institution, *Kerala Kalalayam* at Tripunithura to promote Indian classical dance forms. Sreedevi continues teaching, and composes dances and lyrics in Mohiniyattam, Bharatanatyam and Keralanatanam in her own institution, *Nrithyakshetra* at Ernakulam, Kochi. Her objectives in running *Nrithyakshetra* are as follows:

- To develop a love for Indian classical dances among the youth.
- To instill in students a sense of devotion, dedication, and discipline by learning the great dance forms, especially Mohiniyattam, Kathakali and Bharatanatyam, and classical music.
- To carry on the great tradition and initiate, the uninitiated, to the enchanting world of beauty, grace and charm.

Currently, Smt. Sreedevi Rajan visits the U.S. Chapter every year to conduct workshop and other master classes. Sreedevi Rajan is the managing trustee of ***Kalyana Krishna Foundation***, which is a not-for-profit organization focused on the promotion and cultural goodwill of the classical performing art world.

Many of Smt. Sreedevi Rajan's disciples are now eminent Mohiniyattam performers is a testimony to her commitment to this art form. A few of her illustrious students who are in the limelight today:

- **Mr. Ennekattu Narayanankutty**
- **Ms. Brigitte Chataignier**
- **Ms. Hisayo Watanabe**
- **Ms. Lawrence Fallot**
- **Ms. Priyadarshini Ghosh Shome**
- **Ms. Radha Dutt**
- **Ms. Radha Karman**
- **Smt. Deepthy Omchery Bhalla**
- **Smt. Gopika Varma**
- **Smt. Radhika Varma**
- **Smt. Shyamala Surendran**
- **Smt. Smitha Rajan**

Along with her numerous literary compositions for elaborating items in Mohiniyattam her comprehensive work, "***MUDRAKYAM, A Visual Dictionary of Mohiniyattam Hand Gesture***" is published in 2012. For more detail of the book:

<http://www.kalyanakrishna.org/KalyanaKrishnapublications.asp>