

Costume and Makeup in Mannankoothu

Mannan-Koothu features different types of characters, including male, female, and comedian roles. Traditionally, only men performed in the Koothu, with male performers also taking on female roles. In recent times, however, this has begun to change — elderly women and young girls have started participating, marking a shift in tradition and helping to revive this age-old art form.

The male and female characters perform rhythmic dances to Koothu songs that narrate the story of Kannaki and Kovalan. The comedian character keeps the audience engaged throughout the night, as the performance often begins after dusk and continues until morning.

In earlier times, makeup was done using ash, soot, and sandalwood paste. Costumes were made from materials like tree bark and a paste prepared from wild arayani. Today, performers wear modern attire such as sarees, churidars, dhotis, and shirts, blending traditional themes with contemporary expressions.

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