Women in Koothu

Traditionally, women of the Mannan community did not perform Mannan Koothu. One major reason for this restriction is the presence of Ayyappa worship and related rituals within the performance, which prohibit participation by menstruating women. Elderly women, however, were sometimes allowed to take part. Another reason lies in the belief that the Koothu arena is protected by magical spells cast by learned elders. Women generally avoided entering these spaces, fearing potential repercussions from these protective rituals.

In recent times, these restrictions have become more flexible. As the number of elders skilled in such ritual magic has declined, the sense of fear has lessened. Some teenage girls have started showing interest in Koothu performances, though they usually refrain from participating during ritualistic occasions. While a few elders express concern about possible unfavorable outcomes, many within the community welcome these efforts as a positive step towards the revival and continuation of Mannankoothu.

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