

Sangeeta Isvaran



Profile

First recipient of the national award '**Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar**'
Creator of the Katradi Technique - Empathy Based Social Transformation
Founder and Managing Trustee of Wind Dancers Trust
Fellow of the International Institute of Conciliation, Boston, USA
Creator of Lorry Lolakku - mobile theatre for marginalized communities
Public speaker: People Dancing (UK), Itau Cultural (Brazil), Universidad Veracruzana (Mexico)
TEDex speaker - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr4iBABzwcg>
Born in 1975, living in Chennai, India



Sangeeta has inherited a Bharatanatyam [classical dance/theatre form from Tamilnadu, India] practice from the pioneering maestra, Padmabhushan Kalanidhi Narayanan and Smt.Savithri Jagannatha Rao. She has researched into many performing and visual art traditions across the world, creating a her unique Katradi technique of empathy based social transformation. For this she was honoured with the highest national award for young dancers, the Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar. She is an empanelled dancer of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations with a mandate for cultural diplomacy. She has also received several other national and international fellowships – Arts Network Asia, Asia Europe Foundation, Asian Scholarship Foundation, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst [German Academic Exchange Programme] – and awards – Kala Rathna, Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival; Prix de la Creation, Centre Culturel d'Enghien-les-bains, France; Vasantalakshmi Young Dancer award, India. A highly skilled performer, she has performed in more than 40 countries over Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America, where she has also collaborated with several governmental and non-governmental organisations to create spaces for people from different walks of life to access some form of art. She has studied various different dance forms from South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, and West Africa, creating her own unique style of choreography in many international collaborations.

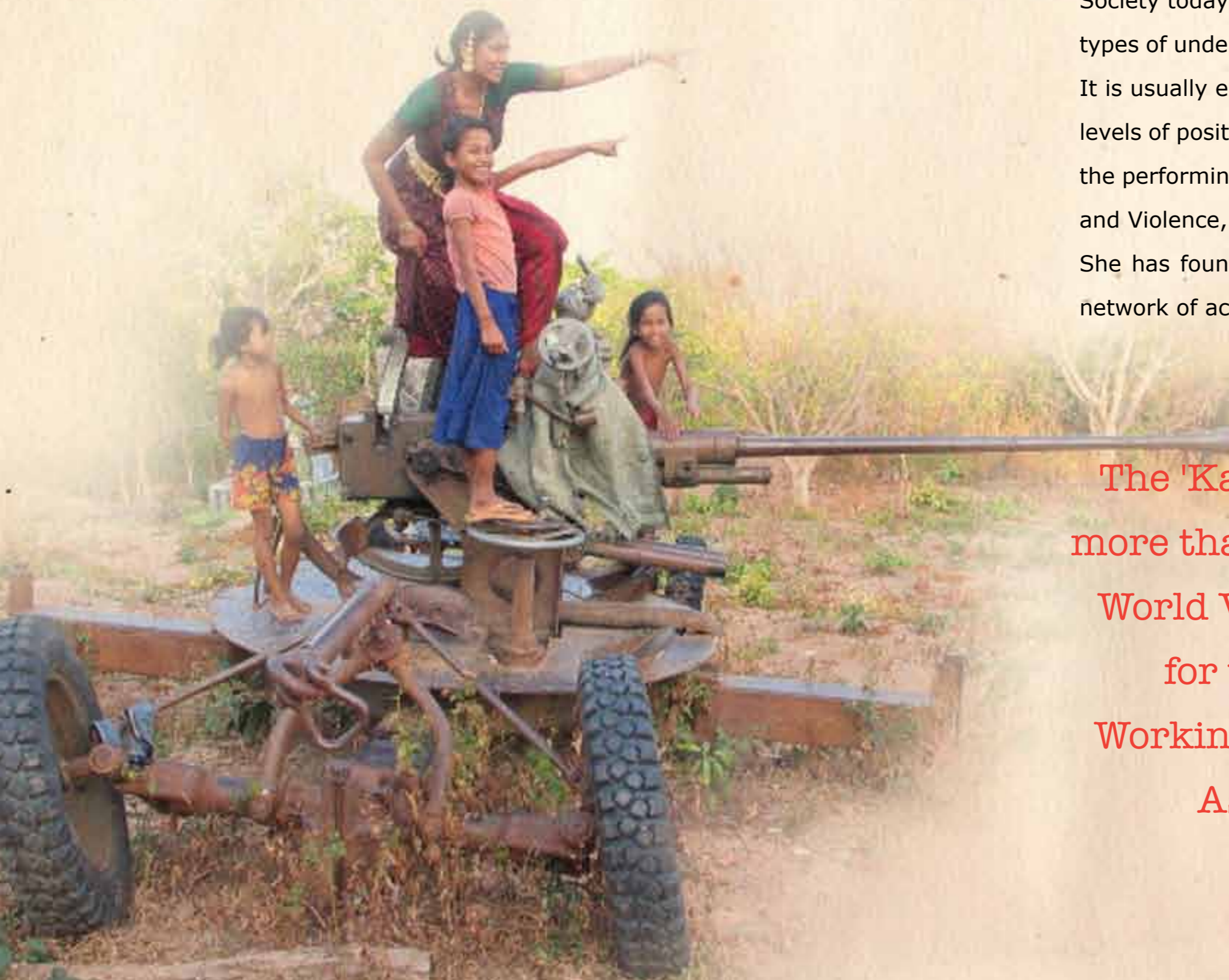
Studied and trained in over 50 dance forms covering classical, ethnic and contemporary styles from across the world

Taught in over 20 universities and international organizations

Performed in over 40 countries across 5 continents

Speaks 8 international languages

Katradi - Empathy based social transformation



A passionate advocate for using art to create social change, Sangeeta has worked with the arts in education, empowerment and conflict resolution with many marginalised communities across the world, such as sex workers, street children, indigenous communities, landmine victims, people with disabilities, victims of caste and religious conflict and so on. 25 years of work in the field has led to the creation of the 'Katradi' technique. It is a dynamic technique working on a grid of five levels of communication and understanding: physical, emotional, sensory, intellectual and intuitive. This is not just a theoretical construct; each module of Katradi design is a blend of activities that work through these five levels of understanding. Many forms of visual and performing art and sport have powerful techniques to generate empathy and positive energy embedded in them. Tapping into several of these forms, the Katradi method has evolved to create powerful and joyous spaces of transformation. The strength of Katradi lies in the creation of empathy as a transformative tool.

Society today places emphasis on the intellectual approach: it is privileged to the exclusion of all other types of understanding. But, the root of conflict, abuse and discrimination is not a logical or rational one. It is usually emotional, sensory and intuitive factors that trigger violence. Combining empathy and high levels of positivity Katradi creates sustainable, deep-rooted transformation. Some modules include using the performing arts to educate children and adults on Child Sex Abuse, Substance Abuse, Gender Equity and Violence, Literacy Development Programmes, and Rehabilitation programmes for Sex Workers. She has founded the Wind Dancers Trust to develop the Katradi initiative along with an international network of activists that use art and sport as a platform for community development and social change.

The 'Katradi' technique has been used across the world, in more than 30 countries, with organisations such as UNESCO, World Vision, Handicap International, Angkor Association for the Disabled, Arunodhaya Centre for Street and Working Children, Deepam Educational Society for Health, Aseema Trust, Snow Leopard Trust, and Oxfam.

Teaching Experience

Sangeeta Isvaran is invited as visiting professor to teach courses, conduct seminars and lead workshops in Universities, NGOs, public and private institutions around the world – **Museu de Arte Moderna**, Department of Education, Sao Paulo, Brazil; **Fabricas Culturales**, Govt. Sao Paulo, Brazil; **Ecole international de Danse Irène Tassembédo**, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; **Hochschule für Musik und Tanz**, Köln, Germany; **Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán**, Mexico; **Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques**, Paris, France; **Institute Seni Indonesia**, Yogyakarta, Indonesia; **Royal University of Fine Arts**, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; **Chulalongkorn University**, Bangkok, Thailand.

- 2016 Using the arts in environment - education, Snow Leopard Trust, Kyrgyzstan; **Community Dance, Kalakshetra, India**; Living Gender, Nature Conservation Foundation, India
- 2015 Cyber Rikshaw, Les Poussieres, France; **Empathy Based Transformation - the Mundane and Divine, Compagnia Nad, Italy**; Lorry Lolakku - Stories of Madras Kuppams, Madras Day, Arunodhaya Centre for Street and Working Children
- 2014 Wind Dancers - Creating Change', Foundation of Community Dance, UK; **'Wind Dancers', Universidad Veracruzana, Xalapa, Mexico**; 'Dust and Ashes', Antananarivo, Madagascar, Ouaga dougou, Burkina Faso, Torino, Italy
- 2012 'Dead Space, Living Space' - Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2010 'When the body is all eyes' - Hibridaciones trans-escénicas, Universidad Veracruzana, Xalapa, Mexico; **'Body signs and Semiotics' - International Seminar on Art, Politics and Education, Bienal do Brasil, São Paulo, Brazil**; 'Social stigma - Negative perception of the female body on stage'; University Of Hyderabad, India; **'Art Attack – Creative Approaches to Community Change' - Pakistan and India: Shifting identities in culture, history and justice; Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan**
- 2009 'Peace-Building though the Arts' - South Asia – China Cultural Forum, New Delhi; **International Seminar on Cultural Languages: Challenges of Non-formal Education, Instituto Itau Culturau, Sao Paulo, Brasil**
- 2008 Creative Movement in Education, Hochschule für Musik, Cologne, Germany
- 2007 Using Art to heal for Mediation History, Making Peace: The Henry Everett Workshop for Professionals working with issues of Conflict, Peace and Justice, The International Institute of Conciliation, Boston, USA; **Migration of Peoples, Cultural Flows and the Surrounding Political Debate for Open Dialogue XI: Global Connections to Cultural Democracy, The Association of American Cultures [TAAC], Denver, Colorado, USA**; Physical Theatre, Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán, Merida, Mexico
- 2004 Rasa - a Lifeskill, 10th Annual Conference of Performance Studies International 'Perform - State - Interrogate', Singapore; **Creative ways of justifying creativity in the regular school curriculum, UNESCO conference on Art and Education, Hongkong**; The aesthetics of Rasa across Southeast Asia and its varied implications in the contemporary social context, 3rd International Convention of Asia Scholars, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2003 Art in Education, European Arts in Education Congress, UNESCO, IDEA et FIDEA, Helsinki, Finland
- 2001 Development of techniques from traditional art forms to combat contemporary social problems, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre d'études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud, Paris, France; **Indian and Southeast Asian Dance-theatre traditions, Institute Seni Indonesia [Indonesian National Institute of the Arts], Yogyakarta, Indonesia**; Bharatanatyam and Cambodian Classical dance, Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, Cambodia



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