

Suma Mukundan

Actor and Social worker

-Lakshmi V

Suma Mukundan is a versatile Mumbai Malayalee actor and an active social worker ready to help Malayalees at times of crises on her own or through samjams.

Suma Mukundan is an actor who has the distinction of having acted with senior Mumbai Malayalee artistes of older days as well as today's actors. She has acted in Malayalam dramas directed by veteran directors of yesteryears as well as today's younger set.

Suma Mukundan started her acting career late in life. But she has of date acted in more than 70 Malayalam dramas on more than 300 stages. Suma belongs to Vaka in Mattam near Guruvayur and completed her schooling at Mattam High School. Her father Achutan Nair was working for a private company in Mumbai and her mother Ammukutty Amma was a teacher in Mattam. After completing her schooling she came to Mumbai in 1968 and learnt typing and stenography courses. Suma got married in 1970 to T Mukundan who is an ex- employee of Bennett & Coleman. She took up a job after marriage and was working in clerical post till her eldest daughter Latika was born.

Since childhood, Suma had a passion for



Jose, Suma and Balaji in Prathibha Theatres' *Gopuranadayil ninnu*.

acting. She has participated in school youth festival drama competitions. In those days family girls in Kerala did not act in dramas (boys played girls' roles). But Suma recalls that she played the heroine's part in a play in her village at a function. In fact she was the first girl over there who dared to act. Without her strict

For a drama to run successfully the script must be good. Today there is an interest in reviving Malayalam drama.



Suma with her husband and family members.



Suma in her first drama *Shokha pakshi*.

grandmother's knowledge she used to go for rehearsals with her cousin brother, she recalls with a smile.

After her marriage and birth of her daughters, Suma was busy looking after her family. Her first stage drama *Shokha pakshi*, written by CL Jose and directed by K Rajan was in 1992 for Chembur Malayalee Samajam. Slowly she started playing break through roles in dramas like *Veerasingala*, (directed by Anthappan), *Sangharsham* (directed by Augustine Fernandes), *Rajyasabha* directed by Unni Varieth, *Visha sarpatinu vilakku vekyarathu*, *Nidhi*, *Nyan Swargathil*, directed by Vinod Achutan, *Avinash*, *Ormakal unarthhathathe*, directed by Vinod Ranganath, *Panchajanyam*, *Aarada Valiyavan* directed by Rajendran Padiyur, *Snehapurathu sokaryam* directed by Soman Kudakara etc.

She participated in Children Surya Festival - an AIDS awareness event and performed a drama.

Suma has acted in a Malayalam teleserial directed by P Chandrakumar that was telecast on Amrita Channel.

Awards and accolades

Suma won the best Actress award for her outstanding performance in the Hindi play *Chotasa break* which also won 5 awards at the International Drama Festival in Cuttack in 2004.

She received Gram Ratna Award for Best Actress in the play *poya dinangale vannittu pogumo*. *Makarakoith* in which she played the main role directed by Rajan received the Best Drama award from Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana.

Suma has received recognitions from several Mumbai Malayalee Samajams where she has staged different roles as a young girl, middle aged woman and mother, pairing with several young and old male actors and her performances have always been appreciated by the audience.

Suma recalls a touching moment in her life. On February 2 this year she participated in a drama competition and along with others staged



Suma in Snehapurathu Sokaryam.

a play *pudhiya adhyayam*. The irony was that the drama was staged on the same day that the noted actor and social worker Rajan Kadannapally who directed *pudhiya adhyayam*, passed away and it was with a very heavy heart that the entire team acted out the play. "I will never forget the emotions we went through as we enacted his last direction," she says.

Social activist

Suma is also a social worker. In March 2013 she won the She Impact Awards for her Outstanding service in Social Work and guarding the environment, as part of All Thane Malayalee Association (ATMA). She is associated with several Malayalee Samajams in their social and cultural activities. She is General Secretary of Kairali Malayalee Samajam, and Secretary of Malayali Mission (Thane). She is Managing Committee member of Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana, Chembur Malayalee Samajam, All Thane Malayali Association, All India Malayali Association, and Committee Member of the Ad hoc Committee of Kerala Nataka Sangeeta Nataka Academy. She is Vice President of Rhythm Arts Malad.

Suma and Mukundan have two daughters. The elder one Latika is a postgraduate in MS and working as a teacher in the senior section at Smt Sulochana Singhania School (ICSE). She is also a trained Bharatanatyam dancer who gives performances and judges dance competitions. She is married to Madhusudan Nair who is into Construction Business. They have a son Siddhant who is pursuing his three-year Diploma in Civil Engineering from Father Agnels', Vashi.

Suma and Mukundan's second daughter Lajitha is an MBA and working for Aptech India in a senior position. She is also a Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam dancer and has given performances. In addition, Lajitha is a black belt in taekwondo (karate) and was a state gold medallist for the same in 1998. Lajitha has acted in a Malayalam television serial *Hello Inspector* that was telecast on the Malayalam Channel. She is married to Sureshkumar Thampi who is working with Knight Frank (India) Pvt Ltd. They have a daughter Samiksha who is currently doing her first year BMM and is a trained dancer.

Mukundan is also artistically inclined and has acted in Malayalam dramas for samajams and given musical performances. ■

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