

# Research contributions of Universities of Kerala in the field of Malayalam

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## Abstract

*India has very various research opportunities in every field, and there are quite a fine number of research institutes in India. Research is artistic and orderly work undertaken to increase the knowledge of humans, culture, and society, and the use of this stock of information to devise new applications. Universities of Kerala offers top educational courses at Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Ph.D. level. A candidate can practice a Ph.D. at the Universities of Kerala in either a Full-Time method of study or Part-Time manner of study. This paper aims to investigate 525 doctoral dissertations in the field of Malayalam from the Universities of Kerala till the last decade.*

**Keywords:** Research, Doctoral, Theses, Universities, Kerala, Malayalam, Bibliometrics

## Introduction

Universities play an important role as leaders in teaching and learning, education, research, and technology. The role of the universities is very important to all sectors from social as well legal point of view. Universities can help in providing with the new knowledge and skills needed to meet the challenges of sustainable development in a community, in raising public awareness, and providing preconditions for informed decision-making. Universities are considered to have been regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development. The most important role they have been assigned is the production of research output to meet perceived targets. This paper's focus will be on highlighting the role of universities in Kerala in bringing out Research in Malayalam.

Malayalam is one of the prominent classical languages of our country. Malayalam literature is defined as literature written in Malayalam, especially the one whose value lies in the beauty of language or emotional effect. It means creative literature or imaginative writings produced in Malayalam. Literature is the expression of life through the medium of language. The research program is being conducted in Malayalam language and literature in its department, affiliated colleges, and various centers. Theses submitted as a result of the research program are important sources with a high reference value. The mathematical and statistical methods to these theses will give the structural growth of Malayalam Language and Literature as a subject under study.

## Review of Related Literature

Baaska Anderson (2013) examined doctoral students' perceptions of the importance of academic involvement, the frequency of experience with academic involvement in doctoral education. A survey instrument was developed, pilot-tested, and validated with doctoral candidates at three universities in the USA. Educational outcomes, including satisfaction, self-efficacy as scholars, scholarly productivity, and time-to-candidacy, were also measured.

Data from 217 respondents were analyzed using multivariate statistics, with results suggesting that participants perceived faculty mentorship and intellectual community as very important aspects of doctoral education. Participants' perceived experience with academic involvement strongly predicted doctoral educational outcomes, particularly satisfaction with the doctoral education experience and self-efficacy as scholars, highlighting the importance of academic involvement.

Mehaboobullah (2013) conducted a study on research in the Malayalam language and literature at the University of Kerala. The study was a quantitative and qualitative analysis of doctoral studies in Malayalam Language and Literature of the University of Kerala during 2000-2010. A total number of 99 Malayalam research theses produced during the period of 2000-2010 (11 years) was analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The analysis covers the general trend of research in Malayalam Language and Literature, subject-wise analysis, year-wise distribution, productivity of guides, gender-wise, and institution wise productivity of researchers. The results showed that a maximum number of Ph.D. theses was produced in 2004, followed by 2002. At Kerala University, research is concentrated mainly on Malayalam Literature (94.95%) and the linguistic aspects of Malayalam (5.05%). The study indicates that researchers in Malayalam Language and Literature give more preference to literary study than the language study and suggest more female teachers come forward for guiding the research aspirants.

Michael Jones (2013) made a study on the issues in Doctoral Studies. The scrutiny of doctoral studies as a field of academic research and discussion is relatively new, but it is growing quickly. An understanding of what has been said and why it is important because helps us to comprehend recurring themes and issues. He examines 995 papers written on issues of doctoral studies through the years 1971 to 2012. These themes include teaching, doctoral program design, writing and research, student-supervisor relationship, and the doctoral student experience. His study expands on this analysis to unveil the roads researchers have traveled and the paths they are yet to travel down.

## Need and Significance of the Study

The research output of the Universities has to necessarily be evaluated as it is one of the important criteria to evaluate the standard of the institution. Doctoral Research is one of the major quantitative measures of the basic research activity in a country or an institution. Considering these aspects, a study of the trends in research in the Universities of Kerala is essential. This analysis, therefore, gives some interesting facts regarding the trend of research in Malayalam Language and Literature.

## Key Terms

**Research:** Research is a careful investigation or a study of certain facts to get some new facts or information. It is a systematic effort to gain new knowledge (Redman & Mory).

**Universities:** Universities are an institution of higher education & research, which awards academic degrees in various academic disciplines. Universities typically provide undergraduate education and PG education. Important idea in the definition of a university is notion of academic freedom.

**Kerala:** Kerala has declared a Fully Literate State in 1991 and is the only state in India where over 90% of the people can read and write, thanks to the free and compulsory education provided to all children age 14 years. Apart from this, the Kerala government is taking every possible step to improve the quality and standard of research. Kerala stands first among other Indian states in literacy.

**Malayalam:** Malayalam literature comprises those literary texts written in Malayalam, a South-Dravidian language spoken in the Indian state of Kerala. Contemporary Malayalam literature deals with social, political, and economic life context. The word Malayalam originated from the words mala, meaning "mountain," and Alam, meaning "region" or "-ship" (as in "township").

## Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The number of doctoral degrees produced is widely used as an indicator of the growth of any area. Characteristics of dissertations like research guides, type of reference style, year, number of chapters, etc., have been studied to identify the basic features of the scholarly communication process.

### Most Productive Guides in Malayalam

The general role of supervisors is to guide and assist students during their period of registered study. The roles of supervisor and Examiner are quite distinct, and it is not one of the roles of the supervisor to assess the thesis. The specific roles of supervisors may differ depending on the academic discipline and departmental practice.

The supervisor should discuss with the student personal, academic, and professional skills the student requires to complete his/her research studies and to provide a skills base for a future career. Supervisors should have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the University's regulations governing research study. The supervisor should keep under review with the student the facilities which the student requires to carry out his/her research. The supervisor should encourage and facilitate meetings between the student and academics in the field through departmental seminars, external meetings, and conferences and should encourage the student to publish the results of his/her research<sup>8</sup>. Table 1 gives the list of most productive guides in Malayalam. Here, only the names of those who were instrumental in producing more than 15 theses till the last decade alone are ranked.

**Table 1: Most Productive Guides in Malayalam Lang. and Lit**

S.No	Name	Frequency	Rank
1	P.V.Velayudhan Pillai	29	1
2	K.Ramachandran Nair	24	2
3	M.V.Vishnu Namboodiri	21	3
4	D.Benjamin	18	4
5	C.P.Achuthan Unni	17	5

From the study, it is evident that the most productive guide in Malayalam literature is P. V. Velayudhan Pillai with 29 theses, followed by K. Ramachandran Nair with 24 theses and M.V. Vishnu Namboodiri with 21 theses.

### Decade-wise Distribution of Theses

One of the objectives for establishing various general universities in Kerala is the growth and development of the Malayalam Language and Literature. The rationale of establishing Departments for carrying out studies and research in Malayalam is in almost all universities in Kerala except Cochin University of Science and Technology. The research contribution of each university in Malayalam Language and Literature is presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Decade-wise Distribution of Ph. D. Theses in Malayalam Lang. and Lit.**

Subject	Period	UK	M G U	UC	KU	SSU	Total
Malayalam Language and Literature	Upto 1960	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1961-70	4	0	0	0	0	4
	1971-80	24	0	1	0	0	25
	1981-90	40	0	13	0	0	53
	1991-00	97	0	59	0	7	163
	2001-10	94	33	82	11	27	247
	2011-12	5	14	0	3	11	33
<b>Total</b>		264 (50.29%)	47 (8.95%)	155 (29.52%)	14 (2.67%)	45 (8.57%)	525 (100%)

From the study, it is clear that a little more than half of the theses in Malayalam Literature is from Kerala University, next comes Calicut University with 29.52 percent and M G University and Sree Sankara University occupy the next places. Kerala University produced four theses during the '60s. In the next decade, Kerala University comes up with 24 theses. Calicut University produced its first thesis in Malayalam Literature during 1971-80. During

1981-90, the number of theses increased to 53, out of which 40 are from Kerala University. Sree Sankara University started contributing to Malayalam Literature in the '90s. During these periods, Kerala University continued to contribute more than other universities. Though M G. University and Kannur University produced theses during 2001-2010, the outcome of M G University was three times greater than Kannur University. It can be seen that there is

a steady growth in the number of theses in all the universities except a marginal decline during 2001-10 at Kerala University compared to the previous decade. UGC regulations on minimum qualifications for appointment of teachers and other academic staff in Universities and Colleges bring forth the measures for maintaining standards in Higher Education. This is seen in the table.

### Gender-wise Distribution of Research Subjects

To find out whether there is any association between research and gender, an analysis was carried out. Table 3 presents the gender-wise distribution of researchers.

**Table 3: Gender-wise Distribution of Researchers**

Subject	Male	Female	Total
Malayalam	331	194	525
Lang. & Lit.	(63)	(37)	(100%)

From the study, it is clear that Malayalam has more number of male researchers (63%). Though women today earn college degrees at the same rate as men, the average woman still makes less entering the research work than men. The issue still needs to be addressed in Kerala. Men usually do research work longer hours than women, which is not surprising, as women also deal with childcare and daily housekeeping, among research tasks. To maintain high productivity, female workers must work in a highly efficient manner; they have less time to accomplish the same tasks.

**Table 5: Percentage Distribution of the Sample According to Pages**

Subject	<=200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	601-700	>700	Total
Malayalam	26	236	179	52	14	9	9	525

Dissertations normally report on a research project or study or an extended analysis of a topic. There is a large variation in the size of the theses in Malayalam. Degree-awarding institutions often define their regulation style that candidates have to follow when preparing a thesis document. Where these are not available, the student should consult the supervisor about the length of the thesis appropriate

### Chapters of Ph. D. Theses in the field of Malayalam

The five major chapters of a thesis are the introduction, review of related literature, design and methodology, findings, and conclusion. Based on the topic of study, the researcher needs to change the specific format of the thesis.

**Table 4: Number of Chapters in Theses**

Subject	<5	6-8	9-11	12-14	>14	Total
Malayalam lit	169	269	54	20	13	525

Theses in Malayalam have mainly 6-8 chapters. This is represented in table 4. "Travelogues in Malayalam literature" by Sheela. A of Kerala University has the maximum (19) number of chapters. The thesis in Malayalam literature titled "Descriptive grammar of Eluthachan's Adhyatma Ramayana" by N. R. Gopinatha Pillai of Kerala University is presented in a single chapter.

### Length of Ph. D. Theses

A thesis or dissertation is a document submitted in support of candidature for a research degree presenting the author's research and findings. The required complexity or length of a thesis or dissertation can vary by country, university, or program, and the required minimum study period. Table 5 reflects the percentage distribution of the sample according to the number of pages. Out of the total number of 525 theses analyzed, about 236 have a length of 201 to 300 pages. The thesis entitled "Descriptive grammar of the hull parts by Kunchan Nambiar.." submitted by Vijayakrishnan of Kerala University was found to have the maximum number of pages (4031).

to his/her particular topic of research.

### Method of Referencing

Referencing can be described as giving credit, with citation, to the source of information used in one's work. Research is a buildup on what other people have previously done; thus, referencing helps to relate your work to previous work. Table 6

gives the pattern followed in giving references in the Malayalam language and literature.

**Table 6: Method of Referencing**

Subject of research	No references	End Note	Foot Note	Total
Malayalam lit	47 (9)	346 (65.9)	132 (25.1)	525 (100%)

From the study, it is clear that 66 percent of theses in Malayalam have Endnote references. 25 percent of theses have footnotes. Nine percent of theses have not given any references. Unacknowledged use and presenting someone else's ideas as if they were your own is plagiarism. Referencing is important for several reasons, and the universities of Kerala take plagiarism very seriously.

### Numbered Bibliographical Reference

A standard thesis should have a numbered bibliography. The numbering of bibliographies is not strictly followed in Ph.D. theses in the field of Malayalam. The bibliography of the work is arranged by the order in which the citations appear in the text. Using the numeric system is particularly justifiable. Table 7 presents the distribution of numbered bibliographical references. From the study, it is found that more than half (51%) of theses in Malayalam has given importance to numbered bibliography.

**Table 7: Distribution of Numbered Bibliographical Reference**

Subject of research	Not Numbered	Numbered
Malayalam lit	257 (49%)	268 (51%)

### Most Commonly Used Citation Style in Ph. D. Thesis

Information resources are used in theses, research reports, etc., to support presented claims. A text must include references to the resources that are used. When a work has been referenced correctly, readers can retrieve the cited information easily. The reader of the work must always tell whether the information they are reading is the creator's thought, a summary of, or a direct quotation from another work. Many disciplines have established practices to cite sources and citation styles. Always the same style should be used in-text citations and bibliographic references

in the research work. Table 8 presents the most commonly used citation style in Ph.D. theses.

**Table 8: Most Commonly Used Citation Style in Ph. D. Thesis**

Subject	No style	APA	Chicago	MLA
Malayalam lit	35 (6.7)	66 (12.6)	278 (53)	146 (27.8)

From the study, it is evident that Chicago (53%) is the most commonly used citation style in Ph.D. theses in the field of Malayalam. 6.7% of the theses do not follow any of the styles.

### Bibliographic Details are Given in the Thesis

A good bibliographic record contains all the data elements necessary to help users identify and retrieve that resource and additional supporting information, presented in a formalized bibliographic format. Association of full bibliographic details given in the thesis based on the subject of research is presented in table 9. From the study, we can see that more than 90% of theses in Malayalam have given full bibliographic details.

**Table 9: Bibliography**

Subject of research	Fragmented	Full
Malayalam lit	32 (6.1)	493 (93.9)

### Conclusion

Universities of Kerala are well-known universities of our country and play a significant role in disseminating knowledge to its academic communities. Research in Malayalam evinced remarkable progress during the last decades. More and more research scholars have obtained their Ph.D. degrees. The number of research guides is also increasing year by year. Bibliometric study of theses in Malayalam language and literature will help to examine the general trend of research in the Universities of Kerala, and the policy makers can use appropriate methods and techniques for improving the quality and quantity of the research output.

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