

INTERIM REPORT SUBMITTED BY
THE COMMITTEE ON ARABIC COLLEGES
CONSTITUTED BY THE KERALA STATE HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL

1.	Dr. P. Anvar	Chairman
2.	Prof. C.I. Abdul Rahiman	Convenor
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9.	Dr. P. Raghavan	Member
10.	Prof. Rasheed Ahammed. P	Member

Interim Report submitted by the Committee on Arabic Colleges Constituted by the Kerala State Higher Education Council

The Committee studied and discussed about relevant issues related to the aided Arabic Colleges in Kerala, collecting general opinions through Expert sittings and hearings.

In the light of the various levels of discussions and interactions, the following suggestions are submitted for the immediate consideration and favorable action by the Government of Kerala.

1. Delinking of Afzal Ulama Preliminary Course.

As per the existing Higher Education Policy of Govt. of India, UGC is now insisting on shifting higher secondary level education from the universities. Earlier Pre degree was delinked from the universities of Kerala to Higher Secondary Directorate. However Afzal Ul Ulama preliminary course (2years) is still remaining in the various affiliated colleges. Now a lot of pressing problems are faced by these colleges due to this, in terms of availing assistance from concerned agencies, NAAC accreditation, timely conduct of examinations, student scholarship programmes, reforming and restructuring Curricula etc. Hence it is suggested that the Afzal Ul Ulama preliminary course may brought under the Directorate of Higher Secondary Education, as a Plus two course, retained under the same management.

2. Inclusion of Arabic Colleges on par with Arts and Science Colleges.

As the Colleges of Oriental Languages and studies (Arabic Colleges) are not being included in the orders and circulars issued by the authorities, the students and teaching and non teaching staff of the Aided Arabic Colleges in Kerala do not enjoy the rights and privileges envisaged by the Government on Higher Educational Institutions in Kerala, in various matters. Hence it is suggested that necessary orders may be issued to ensure that all the orders issued on Arts & Science Colleges are equally applicable to the College of Oriental colleges and Arabic Colleges as well.

3. University Statute amendment.

The committee suggests to make necessary amendments in the university statutes so as to start new courses in oriental colleges.

The statute may be amended and interpreted as ‘Oriental Colleges means a college which prepares the students for degrees, diplomas and various level programmes of the university, in such programmes which have certain courses that promote oriental languages/studies.

4. Appointment of Guest Lecturers.

In the present context where new courses have been given to the Arabic colleges and the programmes already started, a shortage of faculty is negatively affecting the proper functioning of the programmes in the Arabic Colleges as they have no provision to appoint guest lecturers. Hence the committee suggests the government to make provisions to permit the managements of the Arabic colleges to appoint guest lecturers in the respective colleges.

5. Physical Education Teacher.

A proper sports development and co –ordination is not functioning in Arabic colleges as they don’t have a physical education teacher. The students are not able to develop their sports skills and thus cannot meet the academic objectives. They are also not able to participate in the various competitions held at different levels.

Therefore a post for physical education teacher to each Arabic colleges is also suggested by the committee.

6. Arabic University.

Language and literature study of all Indian and foreign languages, including Arabic have a conventional structural method in almost all Indian universities. Presently Arabic Language is more relevant in catering job opportunities as India is one of the biggest International manpower exporters and the Arabic Speaking Countries stand abreast in importing manpower. To enhance,

the linguistic, Cultural and Political bonds of these two areas it is very essential to promote Arabic Language as a 'link language'.

Hence it is suggested that a university may be established to co-ordinate all the academic activities related to Arabic and international studies. A University for Arabic and International Studies /International University for Arabic and Advanced Studies or Kerala State International Arabic University may be considered. A detailed proposal for an International Arabic University is attached.

PROPOSAL FOR A KERALA STATE INTERNATIONAL ARABIC UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades the importance of Arabic as a global language has received an added fillip thanks to the emergence of the Middle East as an important commercial and cultural hub of the world. As an important economic and cultural centre, the Middle East occupies a prominent place in modern world.

The ties between India and the Arab world predate our emergence as nation states. The proofs of presence of the Arabs in India can be traced out from the pre-Islamic ages. It is proved in the full light of history that Arabia, even though it was a part of the East, acted as a link between the Indian subcontinent and the rest of the world and enjoyed a monopoly in the world trade for centuries. Commodities produced or found in India were introduced to the world by the Arab merchants.

Settlement of Arabs in the south-western coastal areas of India continued even after the spread of Islam. These increased settlements have paved the way for the formation of a new social group in Malabar called “Mappilas”. There were a number of cultural contributions for the Arab settlers and Mappilas in the linguistic, literary, cultural and social spheres of Kerala throughout history. For instance, before the reforms made by Ezuthachan in the Malayalam script, Arabic script was used to write Malayalam and Tamil. It is one of the amazing chapters in the history that the first book on the history of Kerala, by a Keralite (Shaikh Zainudin Makdhoom) was written in pure Arabic. Following the suit, there were a number of scholars from Kerala who wrote Arabic books in an array of religions as well as secular subjects.

There are studies that reveal the literary and cultural contributions of Indians, who settled permanently or virtually in Arabia over the past several centuries. At present, there are millions of Indians working in the Gulf Arab countries and most of them are from Kerala.

The proposed university will be a giant step in reclaiming the spirit of the fraternity between this south-western coastal area of India with the Arab World.

Keralites working in Gulf countries constitute the bulwark of Kerala economy. According to available data, the total contribution of Non-Resident Keralites based in Gulf countries to the state economy was a whopping 75,000 crores in the year 2013. An approximate three million.

Kerala households directly depend on income from gulf countries for their livelihood. The number of indirect beneficiaries would work out to nearly 80% of the population of Kerala.

Keralites enjoy a major part of advantage in the overseas job-markets owing to their knowledge of Arabic; a language that seeped into the cultural geography of Kerala through contacts antedating the advent of Islam in India. It is an interesting fact to note that the Arabic script was widely used in Kerala to write Malayalam until the spelling reforms in the 15th century.

The proposed Arabic University can hence be considered as an appropriate response to a historical and cultural need of the present trajectory. Besides training Arabic students and prospective job seekers, it will also play a vital role in re-assembling, researching and marshalling the invaluable knowledge concerning Kerala and Indian history recorded in Arabic manuscripts by travelers and scholars.

The University will thus be able to contribute positively to the growth of knowledge and learning apart from chopping new pathways in fostering greater intra and inter cultural dialogue.

VISION

- To impart the skills of learning, unlearning and relearning in keeping with the demands of the time while anchoring oneself firmly in the realities of the present.
- To maintain an effective learning environment with an optimum student population size, quality applied research, and outstanding community services.
- To focus on international recognition of excellence through accreditation and external evaluation of all its activities.
- Achieving the highest academic quality in the field of Arabic Language Studies, and boosting the department's relations with other interdisciplinary studies.

MISSION

- To be a centre of learning and research, producing graduates and scholars conversant with modern technology and orientated towards future.
- To contribute positively to the enhancement of knowledge and intercultural exchange with a spirit attuned to mutual accommodation and dialogue.
- Supplying quality manpower committed to the betterment of society and country to national and international job market in keeping with the demands of the time.

- Equip the student community with skills of necessary adaptability and flexibility in a challenging global job scenario.
- To meet the educational and cultural needs of the Indian society by providing programmes and services of the highest quality.
- To contribute to the expansion of knowledge by conducting quality research and by developing and applying modern information technology.
- To play a significant role in leading cultural, social and economic development in the country.
- Supplying qualified manpower in different fields that correspond to the evolving needs of the labour market.

SALIENT FEATURES

1. To be modeled after such leading universities like JNU Delhi, AMU Aligarh, and EFLU Hyderabad, the proposed University will be set up as a non- affiliating University.
2. The programmes offered by the University will have at least two compulsory courses in Arabic.
3. The University will try to establish academic tie-ups with international Universities to facilitate teacher-student exchange programmes.
4. All norms of reservation of Govt. of Kerala will be applicable for admissions in the University. However, special provisions will be made to admit international students in addition to the sanctioned seats.
5. Special bridge courses will be introduced for students without Arabic background at University level.

SCOPE

- The proposed University can turn out to be a centre for academic studies and researches par excellence in a variety of conventional and non conventional disciplines with a futuristic view, giving continuity to the centuries old multifaceted relations that Kerala has got with the various regions of the world, especially the Arab World.
- It will maintain international quality so as to attract students and academics globally.
- It will amplify the employability of its products in the international job market by providing importance for Arabic in its curricula.

- To boost the international cooperation between India with other countries, organizations and societies and to provide academic dimensions for such relations by fostering studies and research works on international affairs not confined to political point of view, but in cultural, financial, social and historic perspectives as well.
- To promote academic studies in the fields related to cultural, philosophical, and theological areas related to the Arabs and to promote studies and research works in the areas pertaining to Arabic Language, Literature and Culture.
- To prop up maximum use of state-of-the-art technology and well-updated methodology in the field foreign language education.

RATIONAL OF ESTABLISHING AN INTERNATIONAL ARABIC UNIVERSITY

1. Strengthening the Bilateral Relations: - Centuries old relation of India, especially Kerala, with the Arab World, can be strengthened.
2. Greater Employability: - Arabic is the official language of 22 countries and one of the six languages recognized by the United Nations. It is considerable that the Arab countries are the major importers of manpower in the world and India is one of the major exporters of the same. The proposed university will impart education in various disciplines considering its merit and career prospects. At the same time, students in any discipline will have to earn a working knowledge in Arabic as part of their curriculum. As such, the proposed university can produce experts in various disciplines with a working knowledge in Arabic. This will increase the employability of the candidates in the world job market.
3. From the economic side, the lion share of the Indian exports is made to the Arab countries. The students with aspirations in the fields of international business will also benefit from the working knowledge in Arabic that they earn as part of their curriculum under this university.
4. From the cultural point of view, Arabic speaking regions are very important as land of many ancient civilizations like Mesopotamian, Assyrian, Phoenician, Babylonian and Egyptian. It is also the birth place of three major religions of the world – Christianity, Islam and Judaism. On the other hand, India is also rich with its ancient civilizations and it was the birth place of a number of religions. The world has realized the significance of strengthening the cultural relation between different communities, societies and nations. Such relations have made - and will make wonders in avoiding clash of civilizations. The proposed university will encourage such relations between the two great lands of ancient culture and civilization.

5. Arabic ranks first among the foreign languages taught in Indian universities. Among them Kerala ranks first among the Indian states considering the popularity of Arabic education in India. Arabic is taught here right from the Lower Primary School level to research level. The proposed university will be a seat for leading Arabic Education in India in general and in Kerala in particular in a progressive way.
6. Studying Arabic can lead to exciting careers in various fields. The following are only a few of the many positions open to the Arabic speaker:
 - Communications: foreign correspondent, reporter, translator.
 - International finance: international banker, international consultant, political risk analyst.
 - Industry: manager of government relations for oil companies, market analyst for export companies.
 - Law: contractual and corporative consultant.
 - Academia: teaching and research positions; the U.S. government currently considers Arabic a critical language and many scholarships are available for learning.
 - Arabic at home and abroad.
 - Government: foreign-service officer, development program officer, intelligence analyst, government relations specialist, translator or interpreter.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Arabic language holds huge commercial potential in modern times. Given the economic and cultural prominence of Arabic-speaking countries, this is bound to continue in future. Realizing this potential many universities in western countries are trying to tap this market by introducing specialized packages for Arabic learners. In order to retain our leverage in this area more needs to be done to boost the educational opportunities for Arabic in Kerala. The proposed Arabic University aims to play a pivotal role in this scenario.
- ❖ Arabic being the first language of more than twenty countries is widely used on the net. Unlike India, where most of the netizens prefer English as the language of interaction, Arab speakers generally use Arabic on the net. Given India's role as a leader in software industry, the Arab market offers promising prospect for Indian companies. By introducing specialist packages the University will be able to train our software

professionals in the use of Arabic for computers. This will give an immense boost to Indian Software industry.

- ❖ Besides the soft-ware industry, other industries like hospitality, medicine and nursing too would benefit from a labour force equipped with Arabic knowledge. India has a definite edge over many European and North American countries in Medical services given the efficiency and cost of medical services here. Many patients from the Middle East now rely on expensive European medical services for treatment. The scenario can definitely be tilted in our favor if our health service personnel are equipped with working Arabic knowledge. The proposed university would make adequate provision to fulfill the needs of diverse professional belonging to various backgrounds.
- ❖ Arabic is a language with a rich cultural heritage. Many of the standard texts of Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultural traditions have been produced and preserved in this language. Being a language with a diverse cultural background steeped in tradition and modernity, as exemplified by the writings of Khalil Gibran, Amin Maalouf and Naguib Mahfouz the learning of Arabic can foster a spirit of cultural harmony and tolerance.
- ❖ Many of the important records concerning Indian and Kerala history are preserved in Arabic. This includes the travel documents of Ibn Bathuta and even the writings of indigenous scholars like Zainuddin Makhtoum. The University can play a major role in fostering further research on these timeless treasures of ancient wisdom.
- ❖ Arabic is an integral part of Kerala culture as exemplified in the songs of eminent poets like Moyinkutty Vaidyar and the writings of a host of scholars. A sound knowledge of Arabic is indispensable for the preservation of this rich literary tradition of Kerala. The University will play a major role in the preservation of this tradition by promoting research in these areas.
- ❖ Arabic opens the way to centuries of history, science, literature and culture. It opens the way to a body of authentic material and a collection of manuscripts that cover all fields of study including the Qur'an, and Islamic writings and thoughts. It opens the way to the Middle East, and provides access to the varied market of 21 countries and over one billion Arabs across the globe. It provides us the tools to build bridges with communities and groups that are in the heart of current affairs, and communicate for creating a more peaceful and prosperous world.
- ❖ Studying Arabic has many benefits. Arabic is a beautiful language with a rich heritage of literature, scholarly work and ancient culture. It was adopted by the United Nations as

one of its six official languages in 1974. It is considered by the United States government as one of the critical languages for Americans to learn.

- ❖ The governments of nineteen countries and of Palestine list Arabic as their dominant language. Arabic is spoken by over 160 million Muslims use Arabic for religious purposes because it is the language of the Quran and Islamic traditions and literature.
- ❖ The University aims to develop and promote Arabic Language and Culture along with Indo-Arab relationship to maintain International fraternity.
- ❖ To boost the International co-operation between India with other countries.
- ❖ To elevate advanced academic studies in the areas pertaining to language, literature, and Global Socio-political arenas.
- ❖ To maintain International quality in academics to attract students and academicians globally.
- ❖ To amplify the employability in the international job pool.
- ❖ To prop up maximum use of technology and we'll updated methodology in the foreign language education.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES:

At the initial stage, the University plans to run the following programmes:-

Post Graduate Programmes:

MA Arabic Language and Literature
MA Comparative Linguistics
MA Comparative Literature
MA Translation Studies
MA Classical Languages and Literature
MA International Studies
MA Islamic Economics and Finance
MA Development Studies
Master of Communication and Journalism

Education Programmes:

BEd.
Med

Research Programmes:

MPhil
PhD

Under Graduate Programme:

BA Hons Degree in English and Arabic double main (3 years).

PG Diploma Courses:

PG Diploma in Translation and Secretarial practice
PG Diploma in Functional Arabic
PG Diploma in Tourism Management
PG Diploma in Creative Writing
PG Diploma in Computer Assisted Language Learning
PG Diploma in Computer Aided Teaching.

Certificate Courses:

Certificate Course in Arabic Calligraphy.
Certificate Course in Gulf Arabic.

Conclusion:

Knowing Arabic helps understand Arab media and develop insight in to the cultural, religious and political forces that motivate the people of the Arab world to act the way they do. It facilitates and enhances travel to Arab counties and the exploration of the sites of many ancient civilizations and the birthplace of major religions. It provides the ability to work and interact effectively with speakers of Arabic; to learn about their interesting cultures, histories and traditions; and to enjoy their warm hospitality and it provides a tool to explore a very rich and exciting world of Arabic philosophy, essays, literature, poetry and calligraphy.

The Government may accept the proposal in principle and constitute an Expert Group to work out the details and to draft a bill for establishing the University.

COMMITTEE ON ARABIC COLLEGES

Dr. P. Anvar Member Secretary, KSHEC.	Chairman
Prof. C.I. Abdul Rahiman, Member, Executive Council, KSHEC.	Convenor
Dr. E.K. Ahammed Kutty Rtd. Professor & HOD, University of Calicut.	Member
Dr. A.F Mathew Associate Professor, IIM, Kozhikode.	Member
Prof. Abdul Nazir Kolothumthodi Anvarul Islam Arabic College, Kuniyil, Kizhuparamba.	Member
Dr. C.P. Aboobacker HOD, Dept. of Arabic, Farook College, Kozhikkode.	Member
Prof. Shahad bin Aly Rauzathul Uloom Arabic College, Faroke, Kozhikode.	Member
Dr. Liyaqath Ali HOD of Arabic, Govt. College, Mokeri.	Member

Dr. P. Raghavan
Joint Registrar (Administration),
University of Kerala.

Member

Shri. Rasheed Ahammed. P
Assistant Professor,
Darunnajath Arabic College,
Karuvarakundu, Malappuram .

Member