

Malayalam Manual: Language and Culture



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Demographics & Language

Population:

31,841,374 (2008 Census) Males: 15,471,420 Females: 16,369,955

3.44% of India's people live in Kerala. At 819 persons per km², its land is three times as densely settled as the rest of India.

Religion:

Current Religious Population:

- Hinduism-56.2%
- Islam -24.70%
- Christianity -19.00%
- Other- 0.02%

Past religions that were prominent in Kerala were Dravidian, Jainism (ended at 8th century), Buddhism and Hinduism. The oldest church in India is found in Palayoor, which was constructed in A.D. 52 by St. Thomas. The Hindu, Christian and Muslim people are considered peaceful and live as good neighbors.

Languages Spoken in Kerala:

Malayalam is Kerala's official language; Tamil, Tulu, Kannada, Hindi and various Adivasi (Tribal) languages are also spoken by ethnic minorities especially in the south-western region.

Social Development:



Kerala ranks highest in India with respect to social development indices such as elimination of poverty, primary education and healthcare. In 1911 the people of Kerala and nearby states in India worked towards boosting healthcare and education in their state (unusual focus on India at the time), and by the time of Kerala's post-independence inauguration they had reached their goal with a percentage of 91% literate and the highest life expectancy in India. Kerala was declared a baby-friendly state because UNICEF and the World Health Organization promoted a program to improve infant and mother care in health facilities.

Also a popular part of healthcare in Kerala is Ayurveda, a traditional system of medicine. Kerala's population is steadily aging — indeed, 11.2% of Keralites are age 60 or over.

Linguistic Community:

Malayalam (/malayALam/)- main language of of Kerala (South India) & the Lakshadweep Islands (Laccadives) (west coast of India). Malayalis (speakers of Malayalam) are almost totally literate. 4 % of the population of India speak Malayalam and 96% of the population of Kerala speak it (29.01 million in 1991). Malayalam ranks 8 among the 15 major languages of India. The great majority of residents of Kerala are Malayalis, but there are many smaller ethnic groups including Tuluvas, Tamils, Kannadigas and Konkanis.



Women of Kerala in traditional attire



Men of Kerala in tropical attire

Geographical Distribution:



The Arabian Sea is in the west. The Western Ghats, towering 500-2700 m are in the east and Kerala is networked by 44 rivers.

Climate is tropical.



Women in rice fields in Kerala



Beautiful beaches



Kerala is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia.

All information above taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Kerala

Pictures from: google image

Population in the United States of America:

There were 179,860 speakers of Malayalam in the United States, according to the 2000 census. Most lived in Bergen County, New Jersey and Rockland County, New York.

Information take from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayali>

Phonology

Malayalam Vowels: Each vowel contains 2 separate vowels; an independent symbol to form the initial syllable in sequence and a dependent symbol when serving as a nucleus for a syllable with a consonant onset.

	Front	Central	Back
High	iī		uū
Mid	eē		oō
Low		aā	
Syllabic Vibrant		●	

Vowel Chart (above)

Malayalam Consonants: 38 consonants. There are special symbols for double consonants and consonant clusters. Only language with a 6-way phonemic opposition (labial, dental, alveolar, palatal, retroflex, and velar). Dravidian language and Sanskrit influenced. See attached document for complete list of consonants.

Syllable Stress: syllable structure is CVC. All Malayalam words contain 2 or more syllables. The stress is usually on the third syllable. Information taken from:

http://mylanguages.org/learn_malayalam.php

Syntax

Declaratives: Malayalam is an SOV language. All modifiers in a noun phrase are to the left of the headword (head-final clause construction).

Questions: Often interrogative phrases occur immediately before the verb and direct objects normally appear immediately before the verb with other case roles to their left in the verb phrase.

Negation: In verb phrases, usually done with suffix –illa. The distinction between intensitive and future/habitual is lost in the negative.

Morphology

Nouns: 7 noun types: nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, associative, instrumental, and vocative.

Pronouns: There are several levels for social status and familiarity. Masculine 3rd person has 3 ranked pronouns while feminine 3rd person has only 2. Second-person includes 5 pronouns, but the upper 2 are for highly exalted people. There is only 1 first-person pronoun.

Plural Forms: number is optional therefore the plural marker-kaL is mostly used in written text and in formal speech. It is deleted in everyday conversation.

Verbs: No markings for gender, number, or person in verbs.

Prepositions: Learning the Malayalam prepositions is very important, because its structure is used in every day conversation. Malayalam prepositions link nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition.

Information taken from: http://mylanguages.org/malayalam_prepositions.php

Gender: Malayalam has no grammatical gender, so there is no agreement rule for modifiers. For natural gender, Dravidian kin terms show final-aL for feminine and –an for masculine. Sanskrit-derived kin terms have –an for masculine, but show final –l for feminine.

All information above taken from: Garry, Jane, & Rubino, Carl. (Ed.). (2001).

Kerala Celebrities



Mammootty

Mammootty is one among the few actors who have won the National film award for best actor three times and six state awards in the 'best actor' category.



Kalamandalam Gopi

Kalamandalam Gopi, Recipient of 2007 **Kerala** Sangeetha Nataka Accademy Award



Mohanlal

A renowned Indian actor who is known for his light hearted roles, with his easy and natural acting style.



Raja Ravi Varma

A Prince Among Painters and A Painter Among Princes



Adoor Gopalakrishnan

The Dadasaheb Phalke Award winner for the year 2004



Fr. Abel

Founder of Kalabhavan



Padmabhushan Dr. K.J. Yesudas

A South Indian musician, and a leading playback singer in most of the Indian languages



Mr. K.R. Narayanan

A true nationalist, democrat and a messiah of the down trodden.



P. Leela

Renowned playback singer and Carnatic musician of yesteryear.



Arundhati Roy

A world-renowned writer, author of the Booker prize-winning 'The God of Small Things', campaigning activist and inspiration to all those who seek to support the poor and oppressed.



Kamala Suraiya

Kamala Suraiya, besides being one of India's best-known English poets, is the most famous writer of short stories in Malayalam. [She is better known to Keralites as Madhavikutty.]



Laurie Baker

Laurie Baker, Eco-friendly Architect and Engineer, known as the 'brick master of **Kerala**'



Anju Bobby George

She made history when she won the bronze medal clearing 6.70 m in Long Jump at the 2003 World Championships in Athletics in Paris, becoming the first Indian athlete ever to win a medal



P.T. Usha

The queen of Indian track and field for two decades. Well known as Queen of Indian Track and field, Asian sprint queen, Payyoli Express, Golden girl.

Information taken from http://www.kerala.com/kerala_Celebrities/index.php

Linguistic Transfer

Jancy James (2000) has categorized the influence of English on Malayalam in different ways. The use of /f/, a fricative phoneme, is extensively used in the Malayalam phonology. However, /f/ does not have an independent script. The letter for the Malayalam phoneme pha, a voiceless aspirated bilabial stop is used to indicate the phoneme /f/. The Pha takes place initially and medially in loan words. Loan words stand as educational registers such as Math, Physics, High School, College, University, etc.

Another linguistic area that carries English influence is the common use of passive voice. The Malayalam verb is on the breadline of a proper passive voice. However, the passive implication is conveyed in a number of different ways. In such organization, it is essential to give importance to the object of the sentence. For example,

Kumaranasan ezhuthiya kavitha 'The poem that Asan wrote.'
The poem that was written by Asan

The first line is the literal and direct translation. The second line is descent, but it introduces the passive voice. Malayalam's currently employ the organization as in the second line.

Passive organizations in Malayalam started with the influence of Sanskrit, but it became more evident and stronger as a result of the influence on English. Now, passive organizations are used daily in Malayalam showing a strong significance in the language.

Overall, the presence and influence of English has been distributed over the Malayalam language. The influence of English on Malayalam is the most frequent primarily because of the gratitude Malayalam speakers share toward this. One of the most common features that you will see is code switching between Malayalam and English.

Taken from: <http://www.languageinindia.com/may2005/girishenglishmalayalam1.html>



Image taken from Google

Video Clips and Audio Recordings

Listed below are various video clips and audio recordings that give examples of Malayalam speech, language, and even a brief basic teaching lesson on some common everyday phrases in Malayalam.

Video Clips:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUugYA6a55U>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLex0UKQHCo>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uq8w3FEmYtc&feature=related>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_NDIG1e9jw&feature=related

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xekHwiYY8Zc&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGF2waqKIP>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKdpJcYbYto>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsUai4wt6Yk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rdxLsTEjVQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLyaJJAbXU4>

Audio Recordings:

http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=find&language=malayalam

Tests and Assessment Materials

Relatively few information is available on standardized tests and assessments in Malayalam. For further information contact the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing at:

All India Institute of Speech & Hearing (AIISH)
Manasagangothri, Mysore 570 006, INDIA

Or by calling +91-0821 2514449, Faxing at 91-0821-2510515, or email director@aiishmysore.in

(Information taken from: http://www.aiishmysore.com/en/search.asp?zoom_query=Malayalam)

Pragmatics

***These refer to people from India in general and are not necessarily specific to people of Kerala**

Indians may give an affirmative answers since they do not like to give negative answers. Their answers may appear to be deliberately vague about any specific details. This will require you to look for non-verbal cues, such as a reluctance to commit to an actual time for a meeting or an enthusiastic response. Rather than disappoint you, for example, by saying something isn't available, Indians will offer you the response that they think you want to hear. This behavior should not be considered dishonest, because an Indian person would be considered very rude if he did not attempt to give a person what he asked.

Business Relationships & Communication



Google Image

- Indians prefer to do business with those they know, so it might take a few sessions of building rapport before they feel comfortable enough to work with you.
- Mutual trust and respect is revered in business relationships.
- It may be a good idea to go through a third party introduction. This gives you immediate credibility.

Business Meeting Etiquette

- Confirm your appointments as they do get cancelled at short notice.
- The best time for a meeting is late morning or early afternoon. Reconfirm your meeting the week before and call again that morning, since it is common for meetings to be cancelled at the last minute.
- Indians are impressed with punctuality, so arrive to your meetings on time.
- Meetings will start with a great deal of getting-to-know-you talk. In fact, it is quite possible that no business will be discussed at the first meeting.
- Always send a detailed agenda in advance. Send back-up materials and charts and other data as well. This allows everyone to review and become comfortable with the material prior to the meeting.
- Follow up a meeting with an overview of what was discussed and the next steps.

Business Negotiating

- Indians are non-confrontational. It is rare for them to overtly disagree.
- Decisions are reached by the person with the most authority.
- Decision making is a slow and careful process.
- Be careful with your temper. If you lose your temper you lose face and prove you are unworthy of respect and trust.

Dress Etiquette

- Business attire is conservative.
- Indian men usually wear dark colored conservative business suits.
- Indian women usually dress conservatively in suits or dresses.

Titles

- Indians revere titles such as Professor, Doctor and Engineer.
- Status is determined by age, university degree, caste and profession.
- If someone does not have a professional title, use the honorific title "Sir" or "Madam".
- Wait to be invited before using someone's first name without the title.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do wash your hands thoroughly before eating (especially clean the fingernails).
- While eating Indian food, use only one hand (usually right hand) to eat with (other hand serves).
- Say "goodbye" to each person individually.
- Do not share leftover food or utensils (unless with close family).
- When eating on the floor, don't sit with legs straight out (do cross your legs).
- Don't open gifts when received. Wait until after the gift-giver leaves.

Information taken from: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/india-country-profile.html>

Society and Culture

Sports and Amusement: Kerala is well known for Kalaripayattu, a form of martial arts. Many people start training at the martial arts gyms, called Kalari, as young children. They are trained by gurus, who hold great influence in the student's lives. The training starts with massaging & physical exercises, which helps in building a supple body and agile limbs. The weapon used in Kalaripayattu is a long flexible sword known as Urumi.



Google Image

Onam-the most important festival of Kerala from aug-sept (marks harvest season). 10 day celebration, floral decorations in front of every house, elaborate lunches, family gatherings, gifts given, dancing/festivities. Dancing-The participants arrange themselves in a circle and clap their hands rhythmically, with dancing steps, along with the accompaniment of songs. Games to prove physical prowess (men)



Google Image: Children celebrating Onam

Vishu- festival for astronomical New Year Day of the Malayalis (1st day of Medam (April-May)). It is believed that a person's fortune for the whole year depends on the object that he first sets his eyes on, on Vishu day. The night before, beautiful gifts and treasures are set out for the family to see as soon as they wake up. They celebrate with fireworks and a large lunch.



Google Image: Family celebrating Vishu

Thiruvathira- a women's festival to worship Lord Shiva and pray for marital bliss. (dec-jan)
Special dance: Thiruvathirakkali. Women wake up as early as 4 am and take bath in the river water, fast, and sing together in the water.



Women celebrating Thiruvathira

Information taken from: <http://www.keralafestivals.com/>

Food:



Google Image

Traditional banquet or Sadhya-a vegetarian meal served with boiled rice & side-dishes served especially during special occasions and festivals.

Main Foods: coconuts, rice, seafood, tapioca, black pepper, cardamom, cloves, ginger, cinnamon, curry, coriander, mint, tumeric, cumin seeds, green & red peppers

Payasam- a sweet dessert native to Kerala.

(a preparation of milk, coconut extract, sugar, cashews, dry grapes, etc)

Kerala cuisine is a blend of indigenous dishes and foreign dishes adapted to Kerala tastes.

Kerala is known for sour sauces

Sadhya is served on banana leaf, and is a formal-style meal with three or more courses of rice with a side-dish (usually sambar, rasam, buttermilk, etc.)

Information above taken from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadya>

Resources

Web Resources

<http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/Mrc/Resources/Malayalamresources.htm>

Malayalam Cuisine:

Dishes are both vegetarian and non vegetarian which then uses fish, poultry, and meat. These dishes are adapted to Kerala taste. Coconuts are grown in abundance, so then grated coconut and coconut milk are used widely used in dishes. Curries are used a thickner and flavoring ingredient. A strong fish-industry has contributed to many sea-and-river food based dishes. Rice and tapioca are the main starch ingredients. This is an area for production of spices such as, black pepper, cardamom, cloves, ginger, and cinnamon.

Website Name: Malayalam-English Food Ingredients Glossary

Web Address: <http://www.salkkaaram.com/2007/01/malayalam-english-ingredients-glossary.html>

Website Name: Cookery Show

Web Address: <http://www.cookeryshow.com/channel/31/malayalam-channel-cooking-show/>

Website Name: Malayalam Food Recipes

Web Address: <http://www.learn-malayalam.com/Malayalam-food-recipes.html>

Website Name: Cooks on Video-Malayalam Cuisine

Web Address: <http://www.cooksonvideo.com/video-theme/malayalam%20cuisine>

Malayalam Language:

It is one of four major Dravidian languages of Southern India. It's one of 22 languages in India with its official language status being in the state of Kerala and the union territories of Lakshadweep and Puducherry. The earliest script used to write Malayalam was the Vattehuttu.

Website Name: Omniglot Writing Systems and Languages of the World

Web Address: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/malayalam.htm>

Website Name: Malayalam

Web Address: <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/usr/vipin/www/mal.html>

Website Name: TDIL Resource Center For Indian Language Technology Solutions-Malayalam

Web Address: <http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/>

Website Name: All About Malayalam Language-Details about Malayalam

Web Address: <http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/>

Malayalam History:

Tamil is its neighbor and on the south and east and Kannada on the north and east.



Website Name: Malayalam Language

Web Address: <http://www.nriol.com/malayalam-page.asp>

Website Name: Malayalam Literature

Web Address: <http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/Mrc/literature/history.html>

Website Name: History of Indian Languages

Web Address: <http://www.esamskriti.com/essay-chapters/History%20of%20Malayalam-1.aspx>

Website Name: History of Malayalam Cinema

Web Address: <http://cinema-malayalam.tripod.com/id26.html>

Malayalam Traditions:

Native traditions include classical performing arts, a form of Sanskrit drama or theater, and Human Heritage Art.

Website Name: Malayalam Traditions and Festivals in Kerala

Web Address: <http://protapbodmay.t35.com/malayalam-traditions-and-festivals-in-kerala.html>

Website Name: Malayalee Wedding Rituals

Web Address: <http://weddings.iloveindia.com/malayalee-wedding/wedding-rituals.html>

Website Name: Malayalam Instrumental Songs

Web Address: <http://www.timesofmusic.com/category/malayalam-songs>

Website Name: Cultural Spirit

Web Address: <http://kerala-online.in/Profile/Culture/>



Image retrieved from Google

Therapy Materials

- Online Malayalam Bookstore
 - <http://dcb.puzha.com/>
- Malayalam Magnetic Therapy Book
 - <http://kochi.quikr.com/online-free-malayalam-magnetic-therapy-book-Text-books-Study-Material/online-free-malayalam-magnetic-therapy-book/x18222213001>
- Speech Therapy in Malayalam
 - <http://softwaretopic.informer.com/speech-therapy-in-malayalam/>
- Malayalam Speech Community
 - http://www.lisindia.net/Malayalam/Malay_speech.html
- Malayalam Children's Songs
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTKjlVj9bPo&playnext=1&list=PL506D7A985FFCBBA6>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iggAuqd7I2Q&feature=related>
 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtAoT5_tqC8&feature=related
- Malayalam Nursery Rhyme
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9Kcd2kxx2U&feature=related>



Image retrieved from Google

Research Articles:

Chengappa, S., Daniel, K.E., Bhat, S. (2004). Language mixing and switching in Malayalm-English Bilingual Aphasics. *Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal*, 15, 68-76.

- This article investigates how language mixing and switching affects and individual who has been diagnosed with aphasia and is bilingual, but in the languages of English and Malayalam.

Mohanam, T. (1989). Syllable structure in Malayalam. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 20, 589-625.

- This article describes the facts of Malayalam syllable structure, such as how this language is seen as not having codas in its syllables. This article also factors out domains of syllable well-formedness conditions as an option.

Jeffrey, R., (1997). The day-to-day social life of the people. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32, 18-21.

- This article discusses how spreading throughout India technological change has immersed, particularly the circulation of newspapers in all languages.

McAlpin, D.W., (1998). Coarticulations and coronals in Malayalam. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 118, 401-405.

- This article follows a recent article that pointed out that following alveolars and retroflexes are blocked changes. However, in Malayalam certain cases are unresolved and contradict this. These coarticulations were followed in general phonology.

Mohanam, K.P., & Mohanam, T. (1984). Lexical phonology of the constant system in Malayalam. *The MIT Press*, 15, 575-602.

- This article discusses how the Malayalam consonant system exhibits an unusual seven-place articulation contrast in stops and nasals. This article analyzes this seven-way contrast by investigating the underlying level and the consequences from the theory Lexical Phonology.

Speech-Language Pathologists

For more information or additional SLP's please visit <http://www.asha.org/proserv/> for general information or visit <http://www.aiishmysore.com/en/index.html> for specific information on Malayalam.

Director

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Chief Vigilance Officer

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Professor in Language Pathology
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(Information taken from: http://www.aiishmysore.com/en/contact_us.html)

Alpha Vista Services -provides therapy services to over 500 school throughout the United States and India. Multi-lingual therapists speak several languages including Malayalam. They can be contacted at:

1290 Kifer Road, Ste. 301
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
Toll free: 1-888-331-2181

(Information taken from <http://www.alphavistausa.com/specialeducation>)

Asian Indian Caucus (AIC)

Formed in 1994 at the annual ASHA convention, the AIC is a forum for individuals of Asian Indian origin and those who are interested in service delivery to and research of clients from this origin.

There are several goals for the AIC including motivation, participation, method of resource, and promote exchange of information for individuals of Asian Indian descent.

More information at <http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/opportunities/constituency.htm>

References:

Taken from: <http://www.languageinindia.com/may2005/girishenglishmalayalam1.html>

http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=find&language=malayalam

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/usr/vipin/www/mal.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Kerala

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayali>

http://mylanguages.org/learn_malayalam.php

http://mylanguages.org/malayalam_prepositions.php

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/india-country-profile.html>

<http://www.keralafestivals.com/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadya>

<http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/opportunities/constituency.htm>

http://www.kerala.com/kerala_Celebrities/index.php

Garry, Jane, & Rubino, Carl. (Ed.). (2001). Facts about the world's languages: an encyclopedia of the world's major languages, past and present. New York & Dublin: A New England Publishing Associates Book.