



مالی تعاون قومی کونسل برائے فروغ اردو زبان  
حکومت ہند، نئی دہلی

دیپارٹمنٹ آف عربک، جامعہ کیرالا، کیرالا

# VAKKOM MOULAVI MEMORIAL LECTURE -V

Funded by: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) , MHRD

**on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 10.30 am**  
Seminar Hall, Department of Arabic, University of Kerala

**Prof. M.H. Ilias**

(Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences &  
Ex. Director, School of Gandhian Thought and  
Development Studies, MG University, Kottayam)

Topic :

**Ambivalence of 'Islamic Modernity' in Kerala**



The Department of Arabic, University of Kerala has immense joy to invite you to the Fifth Annual Vakkom Moulavi Memorial Lecture jointly organized with NCPUL (National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language), MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development) - New Delhi. The programme will be held at **Seminar Hall, Department of Arabic, University of Kerala at 10.30 am on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021**. The topic of the lecture is 'Ambivalence of 'Islamic Modernity' in Kerala'. Prof. M.H. Ilias, Director, School of Gandhian Thought and Development Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam will deliver the keynote address. We the staff and students of the Department of Arabic welcome you all for the lecture.

**The Head, Staff & Students  
Department of Arabic**

**A** This paper makes an attempt to understand the trends and movements that are articulated against many of the concepts, sensibilities, and practices associated with the idea of Islamic modernity in Kerala. Many aspects of Islamic reform are problematized by these movements; key among them is the conceptual relationship 'reform' has with modernity. Another effort of this paper is to explore the ambivalence of reform/tradition binary that the Muslim society in Kerala faced right from the beginning.

**b**  
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**c**  
**t** The question who is a reformist or who is a traditionalist becomes a meaningless one as both shifting the role and the public debate, making distinction between them, produces shifts. The conflict over modernity has become more intense now with the spread of Gulf Salafism and Jinnu Vivādhān or the contention over Jinn that exacerbated tensions associated with the relationship between

Prayer & Dept Anthem :  
Welcome Address : Sri. Noushad V (Assistant Professor)  
Presidential Address : Dr. Thajudeen A.S. (Head of the Department)  
Inauguration : **Prof. (Dr.) R. Vasanthagopal**  
(Director, School of Distance Education, UoK)  
Introduce the Theme  
& Speaker : Ashraf Kadakkal  
5<sup>th</sup> Vakkom Moulavi  
Memorial Lecture : **Prof. M.H. Ilias**  
(Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences & Ex. Director, School of Gandhian Thought and Development Studies, MG University, Kottayam)  
Felicitation : Prof. (Dr.) A. M. Unnikrishnan  
(School of Distance Education, UoK)  
Dr. Suhail E. (Assistant Professor)  
Sri. Suhair (Chairman & Managing Trustee, VMFT)  
Dr. Kayamkulam Yoonus (Secretary, VMFT)  
Vote of Thanks : Muhammad Aslam K (MA Student)

religion and modernity. With that what it is to be modern and progressive in the Kerala Islamic context has been vigorously contested.

This paper also looks at the manners in which the identity of a 'progressive Muslim' in the specific context of Kerala is constituted. The progressive Muslims, unlike in the secular imaginations, should not necessarily be understood as the expression of Muslim modernity. Contrary to that purogama asayakkar were used by the non-Salafi groups as a term of denigration because of former's alleged deviations from the 'tradition.' The chain of equivalence-Salafi-modern-progressive-reformist has also been increasingly questioned by a number of works by non-Salafi scholars who argue that there is little point in distinguishing between progressive and traditionalist.