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# Role of SAFI Institute in Building a Research Ecosystem in Islamic Studies: An Analysis of Publications between 2021 and 2025

**Nidha Fathima[1], Jouhara Thasneem NP[2], Shebeeb Khan[3], Semiya PM[4], Hassan Shareef KP[5*]**
[1,2,3,4,5] SAFI Institute of Advanced Study (Autonomous), Kerala, India
[1]nidaafathm2004@gmail.com, [2]jouharathasneem.np1@gmail.com, [3]shebeebkhan@gmail.com,
[4]semiyapm@siasindia.org, [5]drhassan@siasindia.org
*Correspondence

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**Abstract**
This Study examines the role of the Post Graduate Department of Islamic Studies at the SAFI Institute of Advanced Study (SIAS), Vazhayur, Kerala, India, in fostering a research ecosystem through an analysis of over 120 publications produced between 2021 and 2025. Addressing the challenge of cultivating a research culture in underdeveloped regions, this study highlights how the Department integrates traditional Islamic scholarship with contemporary interdisciplinary approaches across ten thematic areas, including COVID 19 impacts, education, gender, social issues, politics, economics, Malabar history, food culture, and religion. Employing qualitative analysis, the research categorizes publications by theme, emphasizing the active involvement of PG students and faculty members in research activities. The department's curriculum, mentorship, financial incentives from the Institute, and collaborative networks contribute significantly to sustained scholarly productivity and academic growth. The findings demonstrate the department's responsiveness to local and global challenges while promoting critical thinking and capacity building among students. This comprehensive thematic mapping offers valuable insights into institutional research strategies and underscores the importance of academic ecosystems in advancing regional scholarship and interdisciplinary scientific discourse in developing countries, such as India.

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## INTRODUCTION

Research is a crucial component of the educational system, especially in the field of higher studies, as it fosters critical thinking, advances knowledge, and prepares students meaningfully for their academic and professional disciplines[1]. University education serves as a training period

[1] Mohsen Mahmoudi-Dehaki and Nasim Nasr-Esfahani, "Rethinking Research in Higher Education: A Scholarly Exploration," in *Advances in Higher Education and Professional Development*, ed. Andile Alfred Mdikana (IGI Global, 2024), 1–38, https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-0806-7.ch001.

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focused on the pursuit[2], discovery, and academic presentation of knowledge[3], in contrast to the exam-centric traditional learning approach[4]. A major challenge confronting global education in the 21st century is the inability of underdeveloped and developing countries to integrate their emerging generations into the research domain holistically. While developed nations prioritize research activities from the school level[5], less developed countries struggle to produce competitive dissertations at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and sometimes at the PhD level, which hampers their academic progress and limits their contribution to global knowledge advancement[6]. Addressing this issue requires targeted investment in research infrastructure, research promotion, and capacity-building programs to equip students and faculty with the necessary skills and resources. Additionally, fostering international collaborations and mentorship opportunities can help bridge the gap, enabling underdeveloped and developing countries to enhance their research quality and global academic participation[7].

The urgent need to create a research culture among postgraduate students in underdeveloped countries should be addressed to overcome systemic barriers and empower them as innovative thinkers and contributors to both national development and the broader knowledge economy[8]. Without a research culture, students remain passive recipients of knowledge rather than active contributors, undermining their ability to address local and global challenges through evidence-based solutions[9]. In addition, establishing research as a core academic practice requires systematic reforms, including curriculum redesign, faculty development, and institutional support that encourages collaboration, resource sharing, and recognition of research achievements[10].

In India, the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant step toward embedding research focus at multiple levels of education, especially at the

[2] K. Vlasenko et al., "A Learner-Centered Syllabus-Based Approach to Engaging Master Students into Research Activity," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* 2288, no. 1 (June 2022): 012019, https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/2288/1/012019.

[3] Ranbir Singh Malik, "EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES IN 21ST CENTURY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT," *Journal of Sustainable Development Education and Research* 2, no. 1 (May 2018): 9, https://doi.org/10.17509/jsder.v2i1.12266.

[4] Christos Papaneophytou and Stella A. Nicolaou, "Promoting Critical Thinking in Biological Sciences in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: The Role of Higher Education," *Trends in Higher Education* 4, no. 2 (May 2025): 24, https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu4020024.

[5] Tim Bell et al., "Co-Building a Patient-Oriented Research Curriculum in Canada," *Research Involvement and Engagement* 5, no. 1 (December 2019): 7, https://doi.org/10.1186/s40900-019-0141-7.

[6] Marya Alsuhaibani et al., "Research Education in an Undergraduate Curriculum: Students Perspective," *International Journal of Health Sciences* 13, no. 2 (2019): 30–34.

[7] Merle Jacob and V. Lynn Meek, "Scientific Mobility and International Research Networks: Trends and Policy Tools for Promoting Research Excellence and Capacity Building," *Studies in Higher Education* 38, no. 3 (April 2013): 331–44, https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.773789.

[8] Fatemah Mohammad AlQhtani, "Knowledge Management for Research Innovation in Universities for Sustainable Development: A Qualitative Approach," *Sustainability* 17, no. 6 (March 2025): 2481, https://doi.org/10.3390/su17062481.

[9] Choto and Remadan, "A Transformative Practice-Based Pedagogical Model for Architectural Design Education."

[10] William R. Penuel et al., "Principles of Collaborative Education Research With Stakeholders: Toward Requirements for a New Research and Development Infrastructure," *Review of Educational Research* 90, no. 5 (October 2020): 627–74, https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320938126.

undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as a continuation of previous education policies[11]. However, the strategic alignment between policy and educational practices can only realize its full potential through the establishment of a research echo system in the country by promoting interdisciplinary approaches and innovation-driven education[12]. Interestingly, at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, it is possible to cultivate students and introduce them to research by encouraging them to compose dissertations in accordance with research methodologies[13]. In India, Institutions such as the SAFI Institute of Advanced Study (SIAS), Kerala, India, develop a comprehensive research ecosystem that serves as a benchmark for other institutions aiming to analyze effective strategies for fostering a research culture. The Social Advancement Foundation of India (SAFI) is a non-profit, registered charitable trust established in 2001 by a dedicated group of educationalists, philanthropists, and social activists. Headquartered on an emerging campus in Vazhayur, Malabar, the trust manages premier institutions such as the SAFI Institute of Advanced Study (Autonomous) and PMA HR Institute to serve and empower underprivileged and backward communities through high-quality education and research.

The PG Department of Islamic Studies at the SAFI Institute has established itself as a significant academic center since its inception in 2006, offering a Master of Arts program that bridges classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary academic inquiry. The department's curriculum and research focus on Islamic sciences, civilization, history, jurisprudence, culture, and comparative religions, integrating traditional Islamic sciences with modern disciplines such as Islamic Finance, Sociology, Politics and Language. This interdisciplinary orientation extends to regional cultural studies, notably the history and socio-political-educational dynamics of the Mappila Muslim community in Kerala, as well as anti-colonial literature and socio-cultural transformation in the Malabar region. Such a comprehensive approach situates the department's scholarly activities at the intersection of local relevance and global academic discourse. The department provides training in identifying specific topics in areas related to the syllabus and helps in conducting data collection. Each student studies their favorite areas, connecting them with the field of Islamic Studies in global academia through journals and publications. The studies prepared with the assistance of teachers are sent to various national and international journals. Another important area of encouragement is teaching students how to write abstracts for conferences and training them to write research papers. Students are fully supported to participate in international, national, and regional conferences, thereby providing them with the opportunity to share their findings. In addition to the culture of the Institute, awarding appreciation funds to both faculty and students who engage with publications boosts the department's scholarly activities.

This study attempts to identify the role of SIAS in producing articles and books in Islamic Studies by analyzing the thematic significance of the published works. Surprisingly, the

[11] *Advances in Global Education and Research: Volume 4* (Anahei Publishing, 2021), https://doi.org/10.5038/9781955833042.

[12] Pravin J. Patel, "Research Culture in Indian Universities," *Social Change* 46, no. 2 (June 2016): 238–59, https://doi.org/10.1177/0049085716635398.

[13] Clement Cabral and Rajib Lochan Dhar, "Skill Development Research in India: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda," *Benchmarking: An International Journal* 26, no. 7 (September 2019): 2242–66, https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-07-2018-0211.

Department of Islamic Studies of SIAS has produced over 120 research publications between 2021 and 2025 to foster a research culture among PG students. Although the current publication profile heavily relies on conference proceedings, book chapters, and emerging journals, an analytical study will help students, teachers, colleges, and universities plan to implement research ecosystems among undergraduate and postgraduate levels in backward regions and countries.

Previous studies have analyzed the research culture in Indian universities[14], the current state and future directions[15], critical issues and future research opportunities in India[16], strategic reforms in the higher education research ecosystem in India[17], and the challenges in the research and innovation ecosystem in India[18]. However, no rigorous academic studies have analyzed the department-level research ecosystem of colleges and universities in Kerala. Similarly, there has been no comprehensive analysis that systematically categorizes and evaluates the contributions of the PG Department of Islamic Studies of the SAFI Institute. This lack of consolidation limits our understanding of how the department's work collectively addresses the sociocultural, religious, political, and contemporary challenges specific to the Malabar region and beyond. Addressing this gap is essential for informing future research priorities, enhancing academic collaboration, and strengthening the department's role in regional and global Islamic Studies Scholarships.

This study was guided by the following research questions: First, what are the major thematic areas covered by the research publications of the PG Department of Islamic Studies at SIAS? Second, what emerging research trends can be identified from the department's publications, and how do these inform future academic directions? How does the department integrate MA students into its research activities to foster academic growth and collaboration? The objectives of this study are to categorize and analyze the department's research publications by thematic areas, authorship, and publication types; identify prolific contributors in their research domains; examine the interdisciplinary nature and contemporary relevance of the research portfolio; detect emerging trends and their implications; and explore the role of student involvement in sustaining and enriching the department's scholarly output.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide a comprehensive overview of the department's academic productivity and thematic diversity by offering valuable insights into institutional research strategies and regional scholarship. By mapping research themes and

[14] Pravin J. Patel, "Research Culture in Indian Universities," *Social Change* 46, no. 2 (June 2016): 238–59, https://doi.org/10.1177/0049085716635398.

[15] Naresh Khatri et al., "Management Research in India: Current State and Future Directions," *IIMB Management Review* 24, no. 2 (June 2012): 104–15, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iimb.2012.05.002.

[16] Ashish Malik and Vijay Pereira, "Culture Research in India: Critical Issues and Future Research Opportunities," in *Investigating Cultural Aspects in Indian Organizations*, ed. Vijay Pereira and Ashish Malik, India Studies in Business and Economics (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 185–97, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16098-6_11.

[17] Arindam Chakrabarty and Anil Kumar Singh, "Strategic Reforms in the Higher Education Research Ecosystem in India," *Higher Education for the Future* 10, no. 1 (January 2023): 86–109, https://doi.org/10.1177/23476311231152292.

[18] Sandeep Goyal, Sumedha Chauhan, and Amit Kapoor, "Understanding the Challenges in the Research and Innovation Ecosystem in India," in *The 21st Century from the Positions of Modern Science: Intellectual, Digital and Innovative Aspects*, vol. 91, ed. Elena G. Popkova and Bruno S. Sergi, Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 680–90, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-32015-7_76.

contributors, this study highlights the department's responsiveness to urgent social, cultural, and political issues through an interdisciplinary lens. It also underscores the importance of academic membership and collaborative research in higher education, particularly for fostering student engagement and scholarly communication skills. Moreover, the findings can inform future research agendas that strengthen the department's academic profile and societal impact.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach to systematically review and categorize the research output of the PG department of Islamic studies at the SAFI Institute of Advanced Study (SIAS). This study focused on understanding thematic concentrations, authorship patterns, and emerging trends within the department's scholarly publications. The dataset comprised over 120 research publications, including journal articles, conference papers, and book chapters, produced between 2021 and 2025. Publication titles, abstracts, and available metadata were collected and organized into databases. Each publication was examined to identify its primary research focus, enabling its classification into thematic groups. Authorship details were recorded to analyze the collaboration patterns and identify prolific contributors.

A thematic categorization framework was developed inductively by reviewing titles and abstracts, resulting in eight major thematic groups: COVID-19 impacts, education, politics and history, gender and social issues, food and culture, religion and Islamic studies, and migration and youth studies. Quantitative counts of papers per theme and authorship were tabulated to detect patterns and trends over the defined timeframe.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Postgraduate Department of Islamic Studies at SIAS produced over 120 research publications between 2021 and 2025, comprising journal articles, conference papers, and book chapters. These outputs are categorized into eight key thematic areas based on their titles and abstracts, as listed in Table 1.

It is noted that, among the publications, one of the major study areas of the works is the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic and religious life of Malabar. Approximately 16 papers focused on the pandemic's multifaceted effects, including educational disruptions, the digitalization of Islamic institutions, mental health challenges, changes in religious practices, and migration dynamics during the pandemic. These studies address both the immediate impacts and adaptive strategies within local and regional contexts. Another large thematic area, with approximately 20 publications, is food and culture, emphasizing interdisciplinary research on traditional culinary practices, health implications, cultural identity, and nutrition. Topics include documentation of wedding foods, seasonal diets, communal feasting traditions, indigenous foods, and nutritional interventions for deficiencies. Interestingly, 12 papers examine colonial and post-colonial narratives, sectarianism, political mobilization, and youth participation in historic moments such as the Quit India Movement and Malabar rebellion. The search extends to transnational political-religious dynamics, including the Iranian revolution and Rohingya Muslim issues.

**Table 1. ISSN and ISBN Publications of the Department of Islamic Studies between 2021-2025**

| Area | | Authors | Year(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Covid-19 | 16 | Shahna K M, Aysha Abdul Nazir, Dr. Hassan Shereef KP, Adila Jafar PP, Aysha Shameema P, Mohammed Fasil P, Shamna PK, Shimaa Binth Mohd Shouli, Fathima K K, Rahna Asmi VP, Semiya PM, Najiya V, Nidal PV, and Noorjahan P | 2022 |
| Education | 22 | Adil TP, Rahshad TP, Dr. Hassan Shareef KP, Muhammed Harshad K, Nabeela PK, Fathimath Zahra B, Ajwa Azeez, Nafeesath Jusaira, Dr. Shebeeb Khan P, and Dania Abdul Naser JM | 2021, 2022, 2024, & 2025 |
| Gender | 6 | Shabana SMT, Ashifa K C, Fathima Gaza, Salima NK, Dr. Shebeeb Khan P, Fida Fathima P, Ayisha Rishada, Semiya PM | 2021, 2022, 2024, & 2025 |
| Social | 10 | Aysha Atta, Dr. Shebeeb Khan P, Ayisha Afreen, Rishad T, Fathima Sherin PT, Razeen K, Fahmitha Sherin PT, Dr. Hassan Shareef KP, Nabeela PK, Fathimath Zahra B, Muhammad Kamil TP, and Dania Abdul Naser JM | 2021 & 2025 |
| Politics | 11 | Muhammed Salih K, Mishal A L, Mohammed Anas KM, Mohammed Faizal N, Hussain Kattil, Salmanul Faris TK, Danish TP, Fahmida PP, Safna VP, and Hady S | 2021& 2025 |
| Economic | 6 | Adheeba Tariq, Adil TP, Razeen K, Hassan Shareef KP, Dr Shebeeb Khan P, and Dania Abdul Naser JM | 2021, 2024 & 2025 |
| Malabar History | 9 | Muhammed Arshad K, Ibrahim Khaleel, Muhammed Shafi A.K, Hassan Shareef KP, Jafar Paramboor, Nabeela PK, Mohammad Savad K.K, Dr Shebeeb Khan P, Dania Abdul Naser JM, and Muhammad Kamil TP | 2021 & 2025 |
| Food | 23 | Muhammed Ajmal K, Gayathri K, Jaseela Fathimak K, Nasreen P, Noushiba Jahan P, Shahana M, Shaniba PB, Thoyyiba Shavin KP, Aisha Abdul Nazir, Fathima Niha V, Haleema Hannath, Najiya V, Safwan Baramy CV, Semiya PM, Shimaa Binth Mohd Shouli, Muhammed TC, Amitha NM, Ayisha Irfana N, Fida Jabin VC, Hanna Fathima TK, Dr Hassan Shereef KP, and Dr Shebeeb Khan P | 2023 |
| Culture | 7 | Nasreen P, Haleema Hannath, Noorjahan P, Muhammed TC, Amitha NM, Semiya PM, Fida Jabin VC, Jubairia KK, Hiba K, Safna VP, Dr. Jafar Paramboor, Dr. Hassan Shareef KP, and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P | 2023 & 2025 |
| Religion/ Faith /Sufism | 10 | Najiya V, Dr. Hassan Shereef KP, Nidal PV, Salmanul Faris PP, Hasna Sheri, Naurin, Nafeesath Jusaira, Fathima Gaza, and Ayisha Rishada | 2022 & 2025 |

Notably, ten publications focused on Islamic and traditional education, curriculum transformation, and the integration of classical texts with modern pedagogical frameworks. This section includes studies on Madrasas, *Othupalli* and *Pallidars* traditional systems, and digital education initiatives. Another ten papers explored youth social behavior, media influence, gender dynamics, educational mobility, and health outcomes among Malabar youth. Moreover, ten other studies cover Islamic theology, jurisprudence, Sufism, ethics, and religious practices, often intersecting with other themes such as education. To address gender-related issues, eight publications analyzed gender justice, social equity, and women's roles within Muslim communities, focusing on socio-cultural transformations and ethical perspectives. Similarly, eight papers investigated gulf migration, refugee crises, migration ethics, and cultural impacts, situating local experiences within global migration frameworks.

**Thematic Distribution of Publications**

Initially, to conduct a theme-wise analysis, the study focused only on the key areas of the 120 studies without elaborating on their contents. Readers can browse the studies using the links provided in the footnotes and references. For the initial review, each study was categorized into 10 different areas as follows.

***Educational Research and Curriculum Integration***

The articles on education highlight diverse efforts to integrate classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary pedagogical approaches, addressing both historical preservation and modern educational challenges. Kodasseri and Shareef KP (2025) evaluated the instructional theories of two classical scholars, Imam al-Ghazali, and Ibn Jama'ah[19]. Adil TP (2022) highlights the transformative impact of development initiatives on educational frameworks in Malabar, which is further supported by Rahshad TP (2021), who identifies key challenges faced by Muslim education in Kerala, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies. Additionally, Shareef KP (2021) demonstrates the critical role of orphanage institutions in supporting educational inclusivity in Malabar[20], while Harshad K et al. (2025) provide comprehensive insights into integrating classical Islamic educational thought with contemporary pedagogy[21] and another study about the educational thought of Ibn Jama'ah[22]. Furthermore, Nabeela PK et al. (2025) explored migration-driven educational empowerment among backward communities, underscoring social mobility. Kodasseri and Shareef KP (2025) analyzed traditional Arabic grammar texts, reflecting the preservation of linguistic heritage in education[23]. Hassan Shareef KP and Shebeeb Khan P (2025) examined the Islamic curriculum's evolution in Malabar, revealing its adaptation to modern educational needs[24], and Fathimath Zahra B and Dr. Hassan Shareef KP (2025) discussed the synergy between social factors and education in youth development. Another study by Dr. Hassan Shareef KP (2025) charts the twentieth-century evolution of local, community-run *Othupallis* into modern, structured *Primary Madrasas*[25]. Moreover Dania Abdul Naser JM and Dr Shebeeb Khan

[19] Muhammed Harshad K and Hassan Shareef Kp, "Integration of Classical Educational Thought into Modern Teaching: Lessons from 'Ihya Uloom al-Deen' and 'Tadhkirat al-Sami' Wal-Mutakallim'," *Afkaruna: International Journal of Islamic Studies (AIJIS)* 3, no. 1 (September 2025): 49–63, https://doi.org/10.38073/aijis.v3i1.3423.

[20] Anas. E and Dr. Hassan Shareef KP, "Anecdotes, Doting the Other People," paper presented at MESMAC International Conference, *What Next? Paradigms Practices Fault-Lines*, 2021, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wvsKWDVYmbsRz2CWi0ZVF3711FZ7QFuf.

[21] Muhammed Harshad K et al., "Formation of Students' Ethics: Insights from Tadkirat al-Sami' Wa al-Mutakallim and Its Relevance to Contemporary Educational Theories," *Adabuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran* 5, no. 1 (December 2025): 38–57, https://doi.org/10.38073/adabuna.v5i1.3662.

[22] Muhammed Harshad K et al., "Concept and Development of Educational Management in Badr Al-Din Ibn Jama'ah's Educational Thought," *Jurnal Inovatif Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 1 (March 2026): 144–56, https://doi.org/10.38073/jimpi.v5i1.4317.

[23] Muhammed Harshad Kodasseri and Hassan Shareef Kp, "Characteristics of Traditional Arabic Grammar Texts in the Curriculum of Pallidars Education in Malabar," *Lahjatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 1 (October 2025): 67–91, https://doi.org/10.38073/lahjatuna.v5i1.3495.

[24] Hassan Shareef KP and Shebeeb Khan P, "The Traditional Islamic Curriculum of Pallidars in Malabar: A Content Analysis of 'Min Nawabigi Ulama'i Malaibar,'" *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 5, no. 1 (September 2025): 17–28, https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.3316.

[25] Hassan Shareef Kp (Author), "The Transformation of Islamic Education in Malabar: From Othupalli to Primary Madrasa," *Journal of Islamic Education* 11, no. 2 (December 2025): 13–20, https://doi.org/10.22452/jier.vol11no2.2.

P investigates the relationship between constitutional values and educational curricula by focusing on Jamia Millia Islamia's contribution to realising the vision of mahatma Gandhi and Dr Zakir Husain's concerning basic education. They further reviewed the importance of Islamic ethics in educational institutions (2024) and observed the neuroplastic effects of sacred text memorization in cognitive development (2025), emphasizing holistic and value-based learning. Lastly, Nafeesath Jusaira (2025) investigates the influence of migration on Islamic education, highlighting faith-based educational transformations, while Muhammed Harshad K et al. (2025) emphasize the formation of students' ethics through classical texts, bridging tradition and modernity.

***Gender Studies and Social Equity***

Studies focusing on gender reveal the evolving roles and challenges of Muslim women in education, media, and cultural expression, emphasizing both progress and systemic barriers. Shabana (2022) documents the pioneering role of the first Keralite Muslim women journalists, reflecting gender progress in the media, while Fatima Gaza (2021) addresses the challenges faced by Muslim women in higher education, emphasizing systematic barriers. In addition, Salima NK and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2025) analyse educational pursuits of Malabar Muslim girls outside Kerala, indicating broader access trends, and Fida Fatima P (2025) examines contemporary beautification practices among young women, linking cultural identity and gender expression. Moreover, Ayisha Rishada and Semiya PM (2025) explore women's role in the migration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), highlighting historical gender contributions, and the intersectional study by Fatima Gaza (2021) and others underscores the intertwined nature of gender and education in social empowerment.

***Social Dynamics and Community Well-being***

In the social domain, research publications underscore the intricate connections between community structures, cultural traditions, and youth well-being within Muslim societies in Malabar. Aysha Atta and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2021) provide an overview of matriarchal structures in Malabar emphasising social dynamics within Muslim communities, while Rishad T and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2025) analyse the impact of marriage on youth mental health, Linking social institutions and wellbeing. Furthermore, Razeen K and Semiya PM (2025) investigated the role of Hijra in integrating Muslim communities economically and socially, illustrating social cohesion mechanisms, complemented by Fatima Sherin PT (2025), who highlighted the family's role in youth growth within Islamic contexts, underlining social support systems. Zahara B and Shereef KP (2025) discuss the social dimensions of the educational environment, reflecting community development, while Farsana KV (2025) and Sharin (2025) explore migration's intellectual and social cartography, revealing evolving community identities. Additionally, Fatima Sherin PT and Fatima Shifa OK (2025) examine multireligious governance models, offering frameworks for social harmony, while Aysha Afreen and Dr. Shebeeb Khan (2021) analyze Muslim cultural legacies in Thekkepruam, Calicut, emphasizing the preservation of social heritage. Also, the study by Dr Shebeeb Khan P and Ayisha Abdul Nazir explores the marriage function of Thekkeppuram (2024), documenting the socio-cultural customs and community traditions of Malabar. Finally, Salman (2025) studied the influence of social media on college youth, reflecting contemporary

social change, and Faris (2025) discussed the impact of gaming culture on youth, highlighting new forms of social interaction.

***Political Movements and Regional Identity*:**

Correspondingly, Political analyses examine regional and global events impacting Muslim communities, linking historical movements, activism, and identity formation. Mohammed Salih K and Dr. Shabeeb Khan P (2021) analyse post-Jasmine political shifts in Tunisia, contributing to understanding regional political transformation, while Mishal AL and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2021) examine Rohingya Muslim crisis, highlighting political marginalization issues. Mohammad Anas KM (2021) addressed Islamophobia's political discourse, elucidating contemporary challenges, and Mohammed Faisal N and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2021) explored the Iranian revolution's impact on Muslim sectarianism, linking political upheavals to religious dynamics. Salmanul Faris and Danish (2021) assessed the 'War on Terror' effects on Muslim community survival, reflecting geopolitical influences, while Hady and Khan (2025) interpreted displacement narratives through literary symbolism, linking politics and identity. Fahmida PP (2025) studied Syrian diaspora political changes, illustrating migration-politics interrelations, while Safna VP (2025) and Fatima Shifa OK (2025) examined youth political resistance in Malabar, highlighting grassroots activism. Moreover, Mohammad Shafi AK (2021) contextualizes Muslim revivalism during colonial times, connecting historical politics and identity, and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P and Salmanul Faris TK analyze British colonial resistance literature, contributing to political historiography.

***Economic Perspectives within Islamic Contexts***

Interestingly, economic studies explore the intersection of Islamic financial principles, migration, and sustainable development within Muslim contexts. Tariq and Shereef KP (2021) discuss the challenges of implementing Islamic banking in India, revealing economic integration issues, while Adil TP (2021) critiques interest-based economics and proposes alternative financial solutions. Razeen and Anaz TV (2025) present zakat and microfinance as sustainable development models, linking religion and economics. Shafna and Fatima (2025) analyzed the economic consequences of forced migration, highlighting the challenges for host communities. Additionally, Khan and Naser (2024) evaluate Dubai's clean energy strategy and its roadmap towards 2050, while Shareef KP (2025) explores frugality principles from Risale-i-Nur, offering insights into economic contentment.

***Malabar Regional History and Heritage***

Furthermore, Historical investigations enrich understanding of Malabar's socio-political and cultural heritage through analyses of key figures, migrations, and colonial resistance. Mohammad Arshad K and documents Umar kazi's contributions to nation and religion, enriching Malabar's historical narrative, while Ibrahim Khaleel and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2021) investigate the Chairman Perumal and Malik Dinar controversy, clarifying historical debates. Shafi AK (2021) links Muslim revivalism in Malabar to colonial contexts, providing socio-political historical insights. Hassan Sharif KP and Shebeeb Khan P (2025) focus on preserving hybrid scripts, highlighting cultural-historical continuity. Nabeela PK and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2025) study Abyssinian Muslim migration, expanding the understanding of historical diasporas, and Mohammed Savad KK and Dr. Hassan Shareef KP (2025) analyze Malabar migration to Andaman,

revealing lesser non-historical movements. Razeen K (2025) emphasise Arabic role in documenting Mappila history, linking language and historiography[26]. Additionally, the study by Dr Shebeeb Khan P and Dania Abdul Naser JM analyzed Malabar's heritage with a focus on Calicut's historical prominence from the spice trade to the UNESCO Laurels recognition (2025). Similarly, Khan and Muhammad Kamil TP outlined insights from Tahrid and Tuhfathul Mujahideen (2024), highlighting Kunjali Marakkar's anti-colonial resistance and its relevance to Kerala's maritime history. Lastly, Hassan Shareef KP and Jafar Paramboor (2025) traced the connections between Ottupalli and Kuttab, highlighting their educational history[27].

***Interdisciplinary Research on Food and Culture***

In the area of food culture, publications highlight culinary traditions as expressions of cultural identity, historical influences, and community sustenance in Malabar. Ajmal K and Khan analyzed the Persian influences on Malabar biryani, reflecting culinary syncretism, while Nasreen P and Semiya PM (2023) analyzed Kerala's s*adhya* food culture, emphasizing the traditional culinary identity of the same. Noorjahan P (2022 & 2023) studies home bakers and *nercha choru*, linking food practices to community sustenance. Sharin KP (2023) investigated foods addressing iron deficiency, integrating nutrition and traditional knowledge, while Niha V and Hassan Shareef KP (2023) examined traditional Thekkepuram foods, preserving regional gastronomy. Baramy and Khan P (2023) highlighted Malabar food culture in historical songs, linking oral traditions and cuisine, while Irfana N and Shareef KP (2023) depicted culinary diversity and hospitality, emphasizing cultural richness. Fida Jabin CV (2023) studied the influence of Arab food culture, illustrating cross-cultural culinary exchange, and Hanna Fatima TK (2023) documented the Prophet's favorite foods, connecting religious history and diet.

***Cultural Identity and Migration Studies***

Likewise, Cultural studies reveal the dynamic interplay between migration, language, and heritage preservation shaping Malabar's Muslim identity. Semiya PM (2025) unveils the cultural significance of Kuttichira and matriarchal legacies, emphasizing heritage preservation[28], while Jubaira KK and Semiya PM (2025) analyze the influence of gulf migration on the *kathu-pattu* tradition, reflecting cultural adaptation. Hiba K and Safna VP (2025) unpack Arabic-Malayalam lexical exchanges, highlighting linguistic-cultural conduct, while Dr Jafar Paramboor, Dr Hassan Shareef KP, and Dr. Shebeeb Khan P (2025) trace the Malayness identity of Malabaris in Malaysia, illustrating diasporic cultural continuity. Additionally, Anshad Anwar K (2025) explores film as a resistance tool, linking culture and political expression, with Nasreen P, Haleema Hannath, and Noorjahan P (2023) documenting food related cultural practices, emphasizing regional identity.

[26] Hady S et al., "A Pedagogical Comparative Analysis of Naḥw Al-Wāḍiḥ and Durūs al-Lughah al-ʿArabīyah in Non-Native Arabic Learning Contexts," *Nidhomiyyah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (January 2026): 92–104, https://doi.org/10.38073/nidhomiyyah.v7i1.4031.

[27] Hassan Shareef Kp and Jafar Paramboor, "Tracing the Connections between Othupalli of Malabar and Kuttab of the Muslim World," *Adabuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran* 5, no. 1 (December 2025): 15–26, https://doi.org/10.38073/adabuna.v5i1.3468.

[28] Semiya P. M and Sukesh Kumaradas, "Matriarchs of Malabar: A Cultural Study of The Matrilineal Legacy of The Muslim Community In Kuttichira," *Batuthah: Jurnal Sejarah Padaban Islam* 5, no. 1 (March 2026): 57–69, https://doi.org/10.38073/batuthah.v5i1.3842.

Fatima Sharin and Sulfiya Farsana KV (2025) studied migration's cultural cartography, revealing evolving identities. Dr. Hassan Shareef KP (2025) analyses how digitalization, archival research, and policy interventions can protect Arabic Malayalam, which preserves centuries of Mappila Muslim heritage[29].

***Religion, Faith, and Sufism in Contemporary Context***

Faith-centered studies focus on the adaptation and continuity of religious practices, ethical education, and spiritual transformations among Muslim communities including Mappila communities of Malabar. Najiya V and Dr. Hassan Shareef KP (2022) analyzed religious sermon transformations during the pandemic, reflecting adaptive spirituality, while Nidal PV and Dr. Hassan Shareef KP (2022) reviewed religious ceremonies, highlighting ritual continuity amid crises. Fariz (2025) highlights the transformative power of prophetic migration, linking faith and history[30]. Sheri (2025) examines Hijra's theological significance, emphasizing faith and community transformation, while Naurin and Shareef KP (2025) study migration's role in Shadily Sufism development, connecting spirituality and history. Jusaira (2025) narrates prophet Ibrahim's migration, reflecting faith journeys, while Fatima Gaza (2021) and Ayisha Rishada (2025) explore gendered religious contributions, illustrating women's roles in faith traditions. Moreover, Hiba K (2025) discusses Islamic ethics and youth behaviour, linking moral education and the religion.

***COVID-19 Impact Studies in Malabar***

Finally, Articles published in the context of COVID-19 document its multifaceted impact on education, mental health, and social resilience within Malabar's Muslim population. Shahna (2022) investigates the pandemic's impact on Malabar education, highlighting disruptions that necessitate adaptive strategies, while Nazir and Shareef (2022) analyze the digitalization of madrasas, reflecting educational adaptation during the crisis[31]. Jafar PP (2022) studied the social dynamics of Malabar amid COVID-19, emphasizing community resilience, and Shameema P (2 022) examined mental health challenges, underscoring psychosocial impacts. Mohammad Fasil P (2022) addressed the crisis faced by children, highlighting vulnerabilities intensified by the pandemic, while Shamna PK (2022) explored the role of old age homes, emphasizing care during health emergencies. Shimaa binth Mohammad Shouli (2022) documents physical health trends contributing to public health understanding, and Fatima KK (2022) focuses on women's experiences, reflecting gendered pandemic effects. Rehna Asmi VP (2022) investigated suicide attempts, highlighting the mental health crisis, and Semiya PM (2022) studied Gulf migration shifts, linking pandemic and migration patterns. Thus, the studies themselves are the preservation of the live history of Malabar during the pandemic.

**Research Ecosystem of the Department**

[29] Hassan Shareef Kp and Shebeeb Khan, "Preservation and Revitalization of Hybrid Scripts of Traditional Muslim Communities: A Study of Arabi-Malayalam," *Pelita: Jurnal Studi Islam Mahasiswa UII Dalwa* 3, no. 1 (November 2025): 43–55, https://doi.org/10.38073/pelita.v3i1.3589.

[30] Dr. Sabique. MK, "History from Below," paper presented at MESMAC International Conferences, Mampad, 2025.

[31] Dr. Manzur Ali PP, "Sustainability : Power, People, Politics," paper presented at MESMAC International Confrences, 2022, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wvsKWDVYmbsRz2CWi0ZVF3711FZ7QFuf.

The creation of a research ecosystem among PG students in the Department of Islamic Studies at SIAS is driven by several interrelated factors that collectively foster academic development, such as the integration of a well-structured curriculum that aligns with contemporary research trends, the provision of incentives like appreciation funds and recognition awards to encourage scholarly excellence, and the facilitation of interdisciplinary collaboration both within and beyond the department. These components work synergistically to strengthen the research capabilities of PG students, ensuring their academic growth is both comprehensive and sustained. By embedding these factors into the academic framework, the department cultivates a dynamic and motivating research environment.

***Integration of Research with Curriculum***

The MA Islamic Studies syllabus of SIAS is structured to transition students from passive learners to independent researchers by merging classical Islamic texts with modern interpretations of them. This includes training in textual criticism, analytical methodologies, and engagement with socio-political realities, enabling students to produce scholarly articles and evaluate policies. The interdisciplinary curriculum framework combines Islamic sciences with contemporary fields such as Islamic Finance, Economics. Sociology, Politics, Functional Arabic, and regional cultural studies, which naturally encourage diverse research interests and collaboration. This includes training in textual criticism, analytical methodologies, and engagement with socio-political realities, enabling students to produce scholarly work.

The course paper 'Understanding Islam and Islamic Studies' has much further research scope, such as studies of modern branches of Islam in the Indian subcontinent and in Kerala. Additionally, students research skills can be developed by integrating critical thinking field research, primary sources, and interdisciplinary learning into the curriculum. The paper 'Early history of Arab culture' has much further research scope in socio-economic conditions or structure in the Jahiliyya period, governance of the Prophet in Madina and the Madina Charter, models of political-administrative systems of the caliphates, and socio-economic reformation of the caliphates. These areas can be researched through a comparative study of contemporary governance, social justice, and political leadership. Importantly, 'Introduction to Major Muslim Dynasties' provides several options for further research on administrative systems, political policies, and socio-cultural contributions of major Muslim dynasties such as Umayyads, Abbasids, Ottomans, Safavids, and Muslim dynasties in India such as Mughals and Delhi Sultanate. A comparative study of their administration or socioeconomic impacts also provides a wide scope for further research. The audit course of the first semester is 'Basics of Research and Community Linkage Programs which helps students with research training and community engagement. The main focus of this part is to develop the methodological and analytical skills of postgraduate students. This is a milestone for students to open the gate of the research field.

The paper 'Major Themes and Works in Islamic Studies' provides a wide scope for future research in the fields of Quranic sciences, Hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism, Islamic philosophy, Ilmul kalam, Muslim historiography, and historiographers. It also has scope for critical and comparative studies of classical texts versus modern texts, interfaith dialogues, and their approaches. Similarly, the chapter 'Islam in West Asia' opens a broad space for future research on Arab nationalism, the

Ottoman legacy, modern state formation, the Arab spring, the Israel-Palestine issue, and contemporary conflict through historical approaches. The paper 'Muslim Culture in South and Central Asia' opens a future scope for research in the areas of regional contributions to Islamic civilization and socio-economic changes in Muslim societies.

The subject of 'Social Teachings of Islam' has many contemporary areas for future research, especially in the areas of Islamic social teachings, contemporary concepts of human rights, and gender studies. When moving through the paper, Islamic Economics, ' there is a huge scope in new financial systems of Islam, New possibilities of Islamic banking, and possibilities of Islamic finance in India. The paper 'Islam in India' opens a scope for the Influence between Islam and Indian culture, contributions of Islamic education institutions in India, and social participation of Muslim women. Similarly, African contributions to Islamic civilization, cultural interaction between Islam and the West, and Islamophobia are future research topics provided by the paper Islam in Africa and Europe.

The paper 'Law of Inheritance in Islam' provides a wide scope for further research on the sources of law of inheritance in Islam, Share determination, and special circumstances. Especially in Islamic inheritance law, contemporary family law issues, and the rights of Muslim women in inheritance. Moving through the paper 'Scientific legacy of the Muslim world' has opened a wide range of scope for future research studies on the contributions of Muslims to medicine, science, mathematics, geography, and environmental sciences. Especially on the relationship or comparison between the Muslim scientific tradition and modern scientific development and the translation of scientific works of Muslims. The paper 'Islam in the Modern World provides an opportunity to study historical incidents in relation to contemporary socio-political changes. Moreover, the paper 'Muslim Historiography' opens research scopes through the study of the origin and sources of Islamic historical writing, major Muslim historians, the philosophy of Ibn Khaldun in history, and Indo-Arab historiography.

The paper 'Islamic Political Thought' provides scope for further research through the Islamic states, khilafat, *shurah* system, shariah, Ba'ath, citizenship, rights of non-Muslims, democracy, and modern Muslim thoughts. And through the paper 'The Revivalist Movements in Islam', it opens research scopes on the concepts on *Tajdid* and Mujaddid, Islamic Revivalist Movements, modern Muslim thinkers, Sufi revivalism, and religious and social movements. The major paper, 'Islam in Kerala, ' opens broad research scopes through the historical, social, cultural, and educational development of Muslims in Kerala, Arabic Malayalam literature, the Mappila community, struggles against colonialism, and Gulf migration.

The paper 'Introduction to Major World Religions' opens up a wide research scope for interfaith dialogues. This opens up opportunities for extensive comparative studies on different beliefs, practices, pluralism, and relationships between major world religions. The paper Muslims and Indian Freedom Struggle provides scope on Contributions of Muslim scholars, educational reformers, political organizations, the Khilafat movement, and participation of Kerala Muslims in the Indian freedom struggle. 'The Arab world after world war-1' is a paper which emphasizing the research scopes through the collapse of Ottomans, European mandate systems, Arab nationalism,

discovery of oil, Arab- Israel issues, the formation of gulf states, and organisations such as the Arab league, GCC, and OIC.

Additionally, the curriculum mandates a core dissertation and viva voce, requiring systematic literature reviews, the definition of research methods, and data-driven argumentation. This rigorous methodological grounding ensures the development of students' critical research skills. Additionally, focused workshops on academic writing and abstract preparation equip students to communicate their research effectively, facilitating participation in conferences and publications in the future. The department encourages research through the curriculum on pressing socio-cultural, political, and religious challenges relevant to the Malabar region and in broader global contexts.

***Mentorship, Financial Assistance, and Collaborative Culture***

In addition to co-curricular activities, faculty members actively mentor PG Students, involving them as co-authors and contributors in research projects. This mentorship model promotes skill development, scholarly communication and academic confidence. Collaborative research activities, including seminars and workshops, foster a supportive environment in which students share ideas and receive interactive feedback, thereby enhancing research quality. They guide students in selecting appropriate publication venues, understanding submission protocols, and navigating the peer review process. This structured support streamlines the transition from research to publication and reinforces a culture of scholarly output.

Notably, the SAFI Institute announced special incentives and an appreciation fund for both faculty and students who publish scholarly articles to promote the research culture on campus. This policy boosts the publication culture of the Department of Islamic Studies. This research promotion policy of the SAFI Institute, like its leadership initiatives, reflects the Institute's commitment to fostering academic excellence and research innovation. By encouraging scholarly contributions, the Institute not only enhances its reputation but also creates a vibrant environment for intellectual growth among students and faculty.

Through several MoUs and linkage programs, such as MoUs with MES Mampad College, Malappuram, Zaitoon International Girls Campus, and Maha Kavi Moyin Kutty Vaidyar Academy, the Department conducts conferences and symposiums collaboratively. This collaboration helped produce books and book chapters for the faculty's students. These initiatives foster strong academic networks and enhance resource sharing among the institutions involved. More importantly, collaboration with Universitas Islam International Darullugha Wadda'wa, Indonesia, University of Malaya, IIUM, Malaysia, opened avenues for scholarly publications in their reputed peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Islamic Educational Research, Adabuna, Afkaruna, Pelita, Dalwa, Lahjatuna, and AL-Jadwa.. Notably, the four volumes of 'An Anthology of Research Papers in Islamic History, Published by MESMAC International conferences cover a huge number of works from the Dept. of Islamic Studies, SIAS, that underline the impact of institutional collaboration between SIAS and MES Mampad College in developing a research ecosystem among students.

## CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the PG Department of Islamic Studies at SAFI Institute of Advanced Study has developed a rich and diverse research portfolio of 120 research articles in five years spanning multiple thematic areas, including COVID 19 impacts in Malabar, education, gender, social issues, politics, economics, Malabar history, food culture, and religion. The analysis highlights the department's interdisciplinary approach, integrating traditional Islamic scholarship with contemporary academic inquiry, and its responsiveness to local and global challenges. The involvement of MA students in research activities emerges as a key strength, fostering academic growth, collaboration, and capacity building in the department. The findings demonstrate sustained scholarly productivity, thematic diversity, and commitment to addressing urgent sociocultural and political issues through evidence-based research. This study contributes to the development of Islamic Studies as a science by emphasizing the importance of cultivating a research culture, interdisciplinary methodologies, and student engagement in higher education, thereby enhancing critical thinking, knowledge advancement, and the practical application of research to societal challenges. This study has two main limitations: it only considered research articles published from 2021 to 2025, so earlier important studies were not included, and it only presented the main topics of the research without going into detailed explanations or reviews of each individual study. Specifically, the absence of bibliometric or citation impact assessments in the present study opens further study to measure the scholarly influence and interdisciplinary reach of the publications of the department. Future research can be addressed by comprehensive thematic mapping and evaluation of other colleges and departments' research works. Such studies can provide valuable insights into institutional research strategies and academic ecosystems in advancing both regional scholarship and broader scientific discourse among students in developing countries, such as India.

## DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

In the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) partially utilized Paperpal AI only to assist with refining the language and grammar to enhance clarity and logic. All outputs were subsequently reviewed and revised by the author(s), who assumed full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

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