

## Malayalam

### 1.

#### Origin of the system

The United Nations recommended system was approved in 1972 (II/11) and amended in 1977 (III/12), based on a report prepared by D. N. Sharma. The tables and their corrections were published in volume II of the conference reports<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.

#### Implementation

There is no evidence of the use of the system either in India or in international cartographic products.

### 3.

#### Brief characterization

Malayalam (Malayālam) uses an alphasyllabic script whereby each character represents a syllable rather than one sound. Vowels and diphthongs are marked in two ways: as independent characters (used syllable-initially) and in an abbreviated form, to denote vowels after consonants. The romanization table is unambiguous but now outdated because since the 1980's a new orthography has been introduced and the use of many character combinations and ligatures has been simplified. Nevertheless the user of the romanization table would have to recognize many ligatures not given in the original table. The system is mostly reversible but there exist some ambiguities in the romanization of vowels (independent vs. abbreviated characters) and consonants (ligatures vs. character sequences), particularly in the case of older orthography.

### 4.

#### Romanization

The romanization system below is based on the new orthography, with notes where appropriate on the older spelling. The table of ligatures has been added.

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<sup>1</sup> *Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names*. London, 10-31 May 1972. Vol. II. *Technical papers*. United Nations. New York 1974, pp. 149-150; *Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names*. Athens, 17 August - 7 September 1977. Vol. II, *Technical papers*, pp. 393 etc.

## Independent vowel characters

അ a	ഇ i	ഉ u	ഋ ṛ	എ e	ഒ ഓ	ഔ au
ആ ā	ഈ ī	ഊ ū	എ ̣ ě	ഐ ai	ഓ o	

## Abbreviated vowel characters (• stands for any consonant character)

• a	• i	• u <sup>1</sup>	• ṛ <sup>3</sup>	• e	• ഓ	• ഔ au <sup>4</sup>
• ā	• ī	• ū <sup>2</sup>	• ě	• ai	• o	

<sup>1</sup> traditional script form: • - ഖ khu, മു mu, etc. Exceptions in the older spelling: ക ku (കക kku, ക റ്റ ku), ഗ gu, ച chhu, ജ ju, ണ nu, ത tu, ന nu (ന്ന nnu), ഭ bhu, ര ru, ശ shu, ഹ hu

<sup>2</sup> traditional script form: • - ഖ khū, മു mū, etc. Exceptions in the older spelling: ക kū, ഗ gū, ച chhū, ജ jū, ണ nū, ത tū, ന nū, ഭ bhū, ര rū, ശ shū, ഹ hū

<sup>3</sup> traditionally written in conjunction with the consonant character: കൃ kṛ

<sup>4</sup> in the older spelling: ഔ

## Other symbols

•◌ ṁ •◌ ḥ •◌ (1)

<sup>1</sup> indicates absence of the inherent short [a] vowel: ക k , സ s. Special forms of consonants with that symbol:

ൺ ṅ	ര ṛ	ശ (ഝ) ṣ
ൻ n	ൽ l	

## Consonant characters

ക ka	ച cha	ട ṭa	ത ta	പ pa	യ ya	സ sa
ഖ kha	ഛ chha	ഠ ṭha	ഥ tha	ഫ pha	ര ra	ഹ ha
ഗ ga	ജ ja	ഢ ḍa	ദ da	ബ ba	ല la	ക്ഷ kṣha
ഘ gha	ജ്ഞ jha	ഢ ḍha	ധ dha	ഭ bha	വ va	ള la
ങ ṅa	ഞ ña	ണ ṇa	ന na	മ ma	ശ sha	ഴ ṣa
					ഷ ṣha	റ ra <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> special ligature: റ്റ ṛ

## Ligatures

Adscript forms of some consonants

	Example
•	r-      ് rgga (in modern usage it is substituted: ര്ഗ rgga)
•	-r      ക്ര kra (older style: ക്ര)
•	-y      ത്യ tya
•	-v      സ്വ sva

Other ligatures

ക	കൃ	കത	കഷ	കൃ	ഗ്ഗ	ഗ	ഗല	ഗ	ഗ	ഗ്ഗ	ക
kka	kṛa	kta	kṣha	kla	gga	gda	gddha*	gna	gma	gla	ṅka
ഞ	ച	ച	ജ	ജ	ജ	ജ	ജ	ജ	ട	ഡ	ണ
ṅṅa	chcha	chchha	jja	jña	ñcha	ñchha*	ñja*	ñña	ṭṭa	ḍḍa	ṇṇa
ണ	ണ	ണ്ണ	ഞ്ച	ഞ	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത
nṭha*	ṇḍa	ṇṇa	ṇma	tta	ttha	tna*	tbha	tma	tsa	dda	ddha
ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത	ന്ത
nta	ntha	nda	ndha	nna	nma	nra	pta*	pna*	ppa	pla	psa*
ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	മ	മ്പ	മ്മ	മ	യ	യ	യ	യ
bda	bdha	bba	bla	mna*	mpa	mma	m̐la	yka*	y̐kka	yt̐a*	yt̐ta*
യ	യ	യ	യ	ല	ല	ല	ല	വ	യ	ശ	ശ
ypa*	yma*	yya	lka*	lkka*	lpa	lma*	lla	vva	shcha	shla	shsha
ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ
ṣhka*	ṣhṭa	ṣhṭha*	ṣhṇa*	ṣhpa*	ṣhpha*	ṣhma*	ska*	sṭa	sta*	stha	sna*
സ	സ	സ	സ	സ	ഹ	ഹ	ഹ	ള	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ
spa*	spha*	sma*	sla	ssa	hna	hma	hla	ḷa	ḷka*	ḷcha*	ḷtta*
ഈ	ഈ										
lma*	lpa*										

Ligatures marked with an asterisk are thought to be obsolete since the introduction of the new spelling.

5.

Other systems of romanization

For differences between the UN system and the ISO transliteration draft ISO CD15919 see the section on the romanization of Hindi.

The State of Kerala seems to use for rendering their geographical names a regular pattern. At least the following correspondences may be noted:

UN	State of Kerala
ḷ	= zh
sh	= s
t	= th
ṭ	= t or d