

## Malayalam

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>.

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

Malayalam (Malayāḷam) 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 The romanization table is unambiguous but now outdated because since the 1970's a new orthography has been introduced and the use of many character combinations and ligatures has been simplified.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.

### 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.

#### I. Independent vowel characters

1 അ a	3 ഇ i	5 ഉ u	7 ഋ ṛ	9 ഌ e	11 ഒ ഓ	13 ഔ au
2 ആ ā	4 ഇറ ī	6 ഉറ ū	8 ഏ ē	10 ഐ ai	12 ഔ o	

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

1 • a	3 •ി i	5 •ു u <sup>A</sup>	7 •ൃ ṛ <sup>C</sup>	9 •േ e	11 •ൊ ഓ	13 •ൗ au <sup>D</sup>
2 •ാ ā	4 •ി̄ ī	6 •ൂ ū <sup>B</sup>	8 •െ ē	10 •ൈ ai	12 •ോ o	

<sup>A</sup> Traditional script form: ് - ഖു khu, മു mu, etc. Exceptions in the older spelling: ക ku (കക kku, കറു kṛu), ഗ gu, ചു chhu, ജു ju, ണു ṇu, തു tu, നു nu (ന്നു nnu), ഭു bhū, രു ru, ശു shu, ഹു hu.

<sup>B</sup> Traditional script form: ് - ഖു khū, മു mū, etc. Exceptions in the older spelling: കൂ kū, ഗൂ gū, ചൂ chhū, ജൂ jū, ണൂ ṇū, തൂ tū, നൂ nū, ഭൂ bhū, രൂ rū, ശൂ shū, ഹൂ hū.

<sup>C</sup> Traditionally written in conjunction with the consonant character: കൃ kṛ.

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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.

<sup>D</sup> In the older spelling: െഊ.

### III. Other symbols

1 •o m̄ 2 •8 ḥ 3 ̣ (A)

<sup>A</sup> Indicates absence of the inherent short [a] vowel, e.g. ക്ക ḳ, സ̣ ṣ. Special forms of consonants with that symbol: ണ̣ ṇ, ന̣ n, ര̣ r, ശ̣ l, ശ̣ (ഌ) ḷ.

### IV. Consonant characters

1 ക ka	6 ച cha	11 ട ṭa	16 ത ta	21 പ pa	26 യ ya	32 സ sa
2 ഖ kha	7 ഛ chha	12 ള ḷa	17 ഡ tha	22 ഫ pha	27 ര ra	33 ഹ ha
3 ഗ ga	8 ജ ja	13 ഡ ḍa	18 റ da	23 ബ ba	28 ല la	34 ക്ഷ kṣha
4 ഘ gha	9 ഞ jha	14 ഡ ḍha	19 ഡ dha	24 ഭ bha	29 വ va	35 ള ḷa
5 ണ ña	10 ണ ña	15 ണ ṇa	20 ന na	25 മ ma	30 ശ sha	36 ഴ ḷa
					31 ഷ ṣha	37 റ̣ ra <sup>A</sup>

<sup>A</sup> Special ligature: റ̣ ṛ.

### V. Ligatures

Adscript forms of some consonants

	Example
•	r-      റ്റ rgga (in modern usage it is substituted by രറ്റ rgga)
•	-r      ക്ര kra (older style: ക്ര)
•	-y      ത്യ tya
•	-v      സവ sva

Other ligatures (the list is not complete)

കക	കൃ	കത	ക്ഷ	കൃ	ഗൃ	ഗ	ഗവ	ഗ	ഗ	ഗ	ക
kka	kṛa	kta	kṣha	kla	gga	gda	gddha*	gna	gma	gla	ṅka
ങ	ച	ച്	ജ	ജത	ഞ്ച	ഞ്ചര	ഞ്ജ	ഞത	ട	ഡ	ണ്ട
ṅṅa	chcha	chchha	jja	jña	ñcha	ñchha*	ñja*	ñña	ṭṭa	ḍḍa	ṇṇa
ണ	ണ	ണ്ണ	ഞ്ച	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ഭ
ṇṇa*	ṇḍa	ṇṇa	ṇma	tta	ttha	tna*	tbha	tma	tsa	dda	ddha
ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത	ത
nta	ntha	nda	ndha	nna	nma	nra	pta*	pna*	ppa	pla	psa*
ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ	ബ
bda	bdha	bba	bla	mna*	mpa	mma	mna	yka*	yka	yta*	yta*
ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ	ഡ
ypa*	yma*	yya	lka*	lkka*	lpa	lma*	lla	vva	shcha	shla	shsha
ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ	ഷ
ṣṣa*	ṣṭa	ṣṭha*	ṣṇa*	ṣṣa*	ṣṣha*	ṣṣma*	ska*	sṭa	sta*	stha	sna*
സ	സ	സ	സ	സ	ഹ	ഹ	ഹ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ
spa*	spha*	sma*	sla	ssa	hna	hma	hla	lla	lka*	lcha*	lta*
ഘ	ഘ										
lma*	lpa*										

Many of the ligatures, especially those marked with the asterisk are thought to be obsolete since the introduction of the new spelling and have been replaced by a combination of two consonant

characters, the first of which bears the ˘ diacritic, e.g. traditional ഏ, modern ഏന *pna*. However, the usage of ligatures in different sources varies greatly.

### ***Other systems of romanization***

For differences between the UN system and the **ISO transliteration standard ISO 15919: 2001** see the section on the romanization of Hindi.

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

UN	State of Kerala
ḷ	= zh
sh	= s
t	= th
ṭ	= t <i>or</i> d