



# **VMFT**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### 2024 – 25



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### MAIN ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACTS

In 2024–25, VMFT delivered a powerful portfolio of programs that combined intellectual depth with grassroots reach. The Trust organized thought-provoking public seminars, conducted cutting-edge research on education reform, and implemented high-impact training workshops on digital literacy, and climate education. With more than 1,000 individuals directly engaged—from senior scholars and public leaders to rural women and farmers—VMFT’s footprint stretches across disciplines and communities and reflects its mission to promote inclusive development, educational transformation, and public discourse in Kerala and beyond.

Our work is organized around four strategic pillars:



**Inclusive governance  
and women’s  
leadership**



**Education  
for the future**



**Science and  
technology for social  
transformation**



**Preserving the heritage  
of Vakkom Moulavi and  
Kerala’s intellectual legacy**

We successfully convened national and international experts, collaborated with institutions like Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), FLAME University, and Shanghai Normal University (UNESCO Teacher Education Centre), and partnered with grassroots organizations to deliver field-based programs with real impact.

VMFT conducted over a dozen programs this year, organized around four key strategic areas—(1) inclusive governance (2) education reform and research (3) science and technology for social transformation, and (4) preserving the heritage of Vakkom Moulavi and Kerala's intellectual legacy.


These included:

- An international seminar positioning Vakkom Moulavi and Kerala on the global stage of Islamic reform and intellectual history. Speakers came from international universities such as the **University of the Witwatersrand** (South Africa), **Georg-August-Universität Göttingen** (Germany), **University of Pennsylvania** (USA), **College of William & Mary** (USA), **University of Sheffield** (UK), **University of Manchester** (UK), and **University of Edinburgh** (UK), as well as from various research institutions across India
- Participation in the Belt and Road Exchange Program for STEM teachers organized by the **Shanghai Normal University** (UNESCO Teacher Education Centre), which included a visit to China by a delegation of teachers from Kerala
- Public seminars and workshops on education policy, bilingualism, climate change, and AI in classrooms
- A state-wide climate education training in partnership with **FLAME University, Pune**
- The **EmpowerHer** training and mentoring program for young women postgraduates
- Community digital literacy programs for women and farmers in Trivandrum and Palakkad

Participation numbers were impressive: over **250 people** attended the inauguration of the Vakkom Moulavi seminar, with about **100 participating** in the entire program. Approximately **600 individuals** engaged in education-related events, and around **120 attended** digital literacy sessions. VMFT reached over **1,000 individuals** in face-to-face events and many more through its online outreach.

Our audience has expanded to include students, teachers, researchers, rural citizens, and the general public. Ongoing collaborations were deepened, while new partnerships were initiated with several Indian and international institutions and NGOs.

VMFT has demonstrated that it is uniquely positioned to be a bridge between ideas and implementation, and between global expertise and local realities. It brought together leaders from across disciplines—teachers, scholars, policymakers, and community members—demonstrating its unique strength as a convener and catalyst for impactful change. With continued support from donors and the spirit of voluntarism that has characterized our organization, we aim to deepen our reach, sustain our initiatives, and amplify Kerala's role as a beacon of progressive thought and practice.



Over the past year, much of our energy went into extending and deepening our local, national and international partnerships on knowledge and research as well as taking the ideas and legacy of Vakkom Moulavi beyond borders. Through the Vakkom Moulavi International Seminar and public forums, seminars and publications on education in particular, we connected with global audiences, opened up space for thoughtful exchange, and brought wider perspectives to inform our work.

We continued our capacity building and training for local communities , women and teachers, on practical skills, reaching more groups than before .







## INTRODUCTION

The Vakkom Moulavi Foundation Trust (VMFT) continues its mission to promote progressive values, social development, and public education through research, training, seminars, and grassroots engagement. This report provides an overview of our activities, achievements, financials, and key learnings over the year.



## OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR

VMFT has four focus areas: (i) inclusive governance (ii) education for the future (iii) science and technology for social transformation, and (iv) preserving the heritage of Vakkom Moulavi and Kerala's intellectual legacy. It works in these areas through generating new ideas, undertaking research and conducting workshops, training and field projects.

During this year, VMFT focused on the following:

- Developing leadership among young women as part of our inclusive governance agenda
- Enhancing public knowledge and research on education to foster public debate and policy development
- Initiating digital literacy for marginalized communities
- Taking the legacy of Vakkom Moulavi and Kerala's heritage of social reform to a global audience
- Strengthening external communications, internal governance and resource mobilization



## PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### 3.1 Inclusive Governance

#### EmpowerHer Leadership Training

The EmpowerHer program, developed by VMFT and led by trustees Prof. Jameela Begum and Dr. Sajitha Bashir, is a leadership training initiative designed for young women from disadvantaged backgrounds who have recently completed their postgraduate education. The goal is to equip them with the skills and confidence to enter the workforce and participate actively in society.

The training successfully empowered participants in three key areas: personal development, professional readiness, and social and ecological awareness. Sessions focused on communication, critical thinking, financial literacy, stress management, AI and job skills, environmental issues, and gender laws. Participants showed measurable improvements in confidence and self-awareness, as evidenced in pre- and post-training assessments. Field visits to Ernst & Young and personalized aptitude assessments added a real-world dimension to the program. Participant feedback indicated a shift from uncertainty to hope and from passivity to agency, with many discovering new career paths and developing a more empowered mindset.

VMFT plans to continue the program, expand its reach, and institutionalize its structure through CSR partnerships and potential participant contributions.

### 3.2 Education for the Future

Education programs encompassed multiple initiatives throughout the year. Notably, VMFT undertook and published research on Kerala's education system and organized a second education research seminar. Public meetings were organized with guest speakers who addressed critical topics such as education in China and Finland, brain and language development, and generative AI. VMFT was invited for a study visit to China, for which two teachers were sponsored. These efforts generated two major reports and substantial insights for influencing education policy.

#### Publication of Landmark Report: 'Separate and Unequal?'

VMFT published a significant research report titled '*Separate and Unequal? Language, Curriculum and Management in Kerala's School Education System*', with comparative lessons from Finland. The report is based on analyses of several large datasets and highlights the increasing segmentation of Kerala's school system by type of school, language of instruction, and socio-economic background. The report emphasizes the need for an equitable bilingual education policy and reforms in curriculum, teacher training, and assessments. Researchers from the University of Jyväskylä (Finland) contributed with the analysis of the Finnish school education system. The report was launched by Dr. Heidi Layne, a senior lecturer at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland), at a public event in Trivandrum, attracting educators, researchers, and media.



### **Seminar on Education Research: Language and Culture in a Changing Society**

Held in January 2025, this seminar addressed the urgent need to align Kerala's education policy with evolving linguistic and cultural dynamics. The seminar brought together research to highlight the implications of the shift towards English medium education, the marginalization of Malayalam in formal schooling, and the resulting socio-economic segregation. Discussions included multilingualism, translanguaging, and inclusive teaching practices. The seminar highlighted gaps in current research and proposed a coordinated framework for teacher education, learning materials, and assessment reforms. It also aimed to create a research agenda to inform future curriculum development and policy reform.

### **Sponsorship of Teachers to attend the Belt and Road STEM Education Conference**

At the invitation of the UNESCO Teacher Education Centre at Shanghai Normal University, VMFT sponsored two teachers from Kerala to participate in the prestigious Shanghai Belt and Road Autumn Exchange Project, 2024. The program focused on national policies and practices in STEM education across different countries. A field visit to Chengdu province was organized by the Chengdu Academy of Education Sciences. The teachers from Kerala were the first from India to participate in this exchange project.

## Meetings on Education Systems in Other Countries to Stimulate Public Debate

VMFT organized a series of expert-led public meetings in 2024 to encourage informed discussion on pressing issues in education. These events brought together educators, policymakers, researchers, and the general public for meaningful dialogue. These included talks by local and national experts, as well as speakers from the World Bank, Shanghai Normal University, University of Jyväskylä and National Institute of Education, Singapore. The talks covered topics such as brain and language learning, bilingualism, teacher research groups in China, the Finnish teacher education system and using generative AI in the classroom. Hundreds of people participated in these public meetings.

## Climate Change in Your Classroom – Teacher Training in Partnership with FLAME University

VMFT collaborated with the Centre for Sustainability, Environment and Climate Change (CSECC) at FLAME University and the international TROP ICSU project to organize a two-day state-wide teacher training workshop titled “*Climate Change in Your Classroom.*” Participants came from 14 districts in Kerala and comprised lecturers from training colleges and teachers from primary to higher secondary levels.

The workshop’s goal was to help teachers embed climate science in their day-to-day subject teaching using digital tools, interdisciplinary content, and practical lesson plans. Teachers designed and presented their own lesson plans on climate topics using inquiry-based, interdisciplinary approaches. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and the program is considered a model for future rollouts. The success of the program has strengthened VMFT’s focus on integrating sustainability and climate education into its broader education initiatives and expanding teacher professional development in Kerala.







### 3.3 Science and Technology for Social Transformation

During the year, the focus was on developing a scalable model for training rural communities in digital skills. Short-term resource persons and volunteers conducted one-day workshops with practical, hands-on training. They were carried out in partnership with local organizations, who also helped to identify needs of the communities. Held in Trivandrum and Palakkad, these sessions equipped women in coastal areas and farmers with essential digital tools to support their livelihoods and access information more effectively.

The workshops provided valuable lessons in organizing broader training programs on digital literacy. First, they revealed an enormous range in digital skills. Hence, tailored content for varying skills levels was essential and resonated with participants. Second, digital literacy programs required engagement with real-world needs and applications. For instance, the farmers' workshop focused on agriculture-specific applications, digital tools for finances, weather updates, crop diagnostics and marketing. Third, generic content such as online safety, protection from fraud, and risks to children was also essential.

## 3.4 Vakkom Moulavi Memorial Activities

### Vakkom Moulavi on the World Stage – International Seminar Held in Trivandrum

This historic seminar, held between January 8-10, 2025 in Trivandrum, reaffirmed VMFT's mission to revive Kerala's intellectual legacy and sparked global academic interest in the state's social history. It not only honored Vakkom Moulavi's contributions but also positioned Kerala as a vibrant hub of thought leadership and inclusive reform.

Titled *"Tradition, Dialogue and Dissent in the Princely States: Vakkom Moulavi and His Contemporaries,"* the seminar marked a major intellectual event that placed Vakkom Moulavi and Kerala's reformist heritage at the center of global academic discourse. VMFT organized this event in partnership with the University of Kerala's Department of Islamic and West Asian Studies. The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament, and the keynote address was made by Dr. Rakhshanda Jalil, a well-known literary historian, highlighting Moulavi's far-reaching legacy.

Curated by Prof. Dilip Menon (University of Witwatersrand, South Africa), the conference drew leading scholars from across India and the world. The sessions offered fresh perspectives on Islamic modernism, the role of the princely states in reform movements, and the evolution of Kerala's progressive identity. Vakkom Moulavi was presented not only as a Muslim reformer but also as a visionary figure in journalism, interfaith dialogue, and democratic thought. His engagement with the Cairo-based journal 'al-Manar' and its editor, the renowned Islamic reformer Rashid Rida, his use of Arabi-Malayalam, and his advocacy for female literacy were themes that resonated across many discussions.

Panel sessions explored a range of themes from Islamic reformism in Travancore and Malabar to women's agency in princely states, transregional Islamic networks, and debates on modernity. A key highlight was the roundtable discussion on Kerala's socio-religious reformers—including Ayyankali, Narayana Guru, Makti Thangal, and Poikayil Yohannan—which brought to light Kerala's plural and inclusive traditions.

### Digitization of Vakkom Moulavi's works

This ongoing heritage preservation project aims to digitize the original works of Vakkom Moulavi and related literature. These works are being captured digitally and catalogued. Once completed, they will be made publicly accessible via a new website, contributing to research and public awareness of Kerala's modern intellectual history.





## 4 COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

In a bid to increase its online presence, VMFT has developed a new website and is expanding its social media outreach to engage with the youth. With the high quality of its research, meetings and field projects, and increasing national and global connections, VMFT's communication outreach is an important aspect of its work. Despite our success in program delivery, VMFT faces communication challenges: social media presence is limited, media contacts are inconsistent, and digital content (photos, videos) lacks systematic archiving. We recognize the urgent need for a dedicated communication strategy.



## 5 STRENGTHENING INTERNAL GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The governance structure of VMFT was further strengthened with the formal approval of a governance document which updated the earlier rules and procedures. The Board of Trustees constituted an Executive Committee to review progress of activities, guide implementation and facilitate decision making. Board members play an active role in leading various programs.

Financial contribution from the Department of Culture, Government of Kerala, has continued during the year, although the fiscal problems of the state government meant that the full grant was not received. The work of VMFT has been sustained by private contributions, as well as the voluntary work by Board members and other well-wishers of the Foundation.

VMFT has also secured Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) registration, enabling broader fundraising efforts. Board members initiated outreach to various funding organizations.

# ANNEXURE 1

## List of Activities of VMFT (2024-2025)

### I. Inclusive Governance

#### Svadesabhimani Media Study Centre (SMSC) Activities

##### **EmpowerHer: Leadership Training Program for Young Women**

Five-day leadership training program organized on August 05-09, 2024 at VMFT Hall. Sessions were conducted by the following experts: Ms. Suma Devi (Program Manager, K -Disc), Ms. Ruby Ismail (Personality Development Professional, Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission), Ms. Indiramani K.V (Master Trainer of ASAP), Prof. Gopalakrishnan (Former Chairman & Faculty, Amrita Civil Service Academy), Dr. Rajoo Krishna (Former Deputy Director of Collegiate Education, Govt. of Kerala), Ms. Uma Kalyani (Dietitian and Yoga Trainer, Founder & Director of Uma's Nutriyoga), Mr. Nithin Lal & Ms. Ahana Balan (Research Scholars, Institute of English), Dr. Gita Gopal (Former Lead Evaluation Specialist, World Bank).

### II. Education for the Future

#### School Outreach Programs

##### **Teacher Monthly Workshop**

Faculty Development Program cum Workshop on *"Climate Change in your Classroom-A workshop for teachers of all disciplines"* organized in collaboration with FLAME University on January 17-18, 2025 at Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram.

Workshop on *"Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom - Possibilities and Perils: A View from Singapore"* organized in collaboration with IT for Change on November 09, 2024 at VMFT Hall.

Workshop on *"Education in Finland: Enhancing Student Learning through Professionalization of Teachers"* organized on September 28, 2025 at VMFT Hall.

Workshop on *"Language Learning: The Science of the Brain and Education Practice"* organized on August 24, 2024 at VMFT Hall.

Workshop on *"Teacher Research Groups to Improve Student Learning Experiences from China and Tanzania"* organized on July 24, 2024 at VMFT Hall.



### Seminar Series of Education Research in Kerala

Seminar on “*Language and Culture in a Changing Society – Research to Support Kerala’s School Education System*” jointly organized with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), and Centre for Development Studies (CDS) on January 14-15, 2025 at CDS, Thiruvananthapuram.

### Education Research/Reports

Published a significant research report titled “*Separate and Unequal? Language, Curriculum and Management in Kerala’s School Education System*”, with comparative lessons from Finland on September 28, 2025.

## III. Science and Technology for Social Transformation

Organized community digital literacy workshop for local people of Madanvila village in collaboration with Perumathura Sneehatheeram Penma, on August 20, 2024 at Madanvila S.I.U.P. Hall, Thiruvananthapuram.

Organized community digital literacy workshop for farmers and farm labourers of the Alathur Farmer Producing Co-operative Society (AFPMCS) in collaboration with Simplify Agri Private Limited (Simplify Agri) on December 11, 2024 at Alathur Block Panchayath Hall, Palakkad.

## IV. Preserving the Heritage of Vakkom Moulavi and Kerala’s Intellectual Legacy

### Renaissance Study Centre Activities

#### Digitization Project

Digitization of *Al-Islam, Muslim (Vol 5)* and other works related to Vakkom Moulavi, ongoing from April 2024.

#### Other Meetings/Lectures/Seminars

International Seminar titled “*Tradition, Dialogue and Dissent in the Princely States – Vakkom Moulavi and his Contemporaries*” was organized in association with Dept. of Islamic and West Asian Studies, University of Kerala. The inaugural session of the International Seminar was held on January 08, 2025 at KTDC Mascot Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram. The academic sessions (January 09-10, 2025) were held at CV Raman Hall (CLIF), Kariavattom Campus, University of Kerala.

## ANNEXURE 2

### Collaborations



Centre for  
Development  
Studies (CDS),  
Thiruvananthapuram



Tata Institute of  
Social Sciences,  
Mumbai



FLAME  
University,  
Pune



Mar Theophilus  
Training College,  
Thiruvananthapuram



Dept. of Islamic and  
West Asian Studies,  
University of Kerala



IT FOR  
CHANGE



Education and  
Technology  
Research Interest  
Group (CESI)





## EmpowerHer



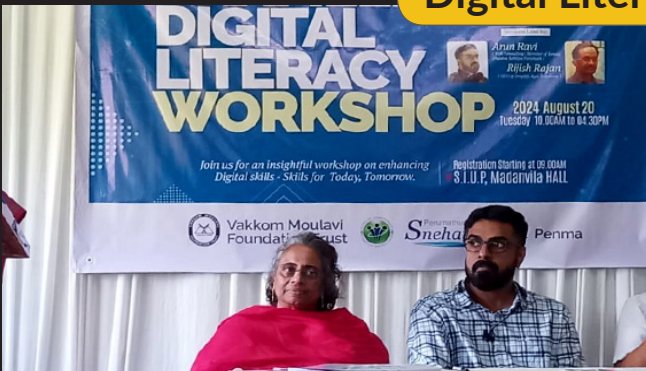
## Language and Culture Seminar



## Tradition, Dialogue and Dissent



## Digital Literacy Workshop





## About VMFT

Constituted in the year 1986, Vakkom Moulavi Foundation Trust (VMFT) has been a powerful presence in the social and cultural landscape of Kerala. With the goal of advancing Kerala's overall development, it focuses on three broad thematic areas: Education for the Future, Inclusive Governance, and Science and Technology for Sustainable Development. As a memorial to Vakkom Muhammad Abdul Khader Moulavi (1879-1932), the Foundation publishes his works and promotes research on his contributions, to shed light on the historical forces that shaped Kerala's development in the early 20th century.

### Core areas of work:

- Education for the Future
- Inclusive Governance
- Science and Technology for Sustainable Development
- Memorial of Vakkom Moulavi's Contributions

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