

Panel Discussion on
“*Lingua Franca of Love: The Stories of Kerala*”

India Arab Cultural Centre (IACC), Jamia Millia Islamia in association with Muziris 2026, the ninth edition of the annual cultural festival hosted a Panel Discussion titled “*Lingua Franca of Love: The Stories of Kerala*”. The session drew gathering of students, scholars, journalists and cultural enthusiasts, reaffirming the festival’s reputation as a distinguished platform for intellectual exchange and cultural reflection. The Panel Discussion started with the opening remarks by Dr. Md. Aftab Ahmad, Director, India Arab Cultural Centre, JMI who explored the themes of love in Indo-Arab cultural and civilizational links and offered an insight into the topic. Dr. Ahmad also welcomed the collaboration of Muziris and IACC has started and affirmed his commitment to continue it.

Dr. Sayyid Sameer, Assistant Professor at the India Arab Cultural Centre presented his reflection titled “*Structures of Coexistence*” and traced how Kerala’s enduring “lingua franca of love” has been shaped over centuries through shared public spaces, and underlined the pedagogical power of art and education in nurturing a collective social consciousness. With his opening remarks, Dr. Sameer began with lines of Sree Narayan Guru’s poetry of *Anukampa Dashkam*, which he used as a devotional prayer for his followers, where he brings up lord, Krishna, Buddha, Adi Shankara, Christ and Muhammad in a poem is an extra-ordinary act of spirit in defining the Idea of Keralam. He also discussed the book “*Litanies of Dutch battery*” written by Madhavan, where he discusses the layered history of Kochi neighbourhood, Jewish- Dutch- Syrian- Christian- Muslim- Hindu. Kochi is a city where every stone has a previous owner of different faith. Referring to the work of Ayappa Panicker, he also pointed out the, how Malayalam language has borrowed from Arabic, Syriac, Sanskrit and many other languages, which proves that Malayalam as a language has been shaped different languages and cultures over the years. Another important aspect of his lecture was the political economy of welcoming Muslim traders by Zamorin, who welcomed Muslims

from different parts of Arabia, gave them land and security, allow them to build the mosques, and settle families, which in return, Calicut became the first open port for the entire network of Indian ocean trade network. His appointment of Ibrahim as Shah Bander, Facilitating Matrimonial alliances and the appointment of Muslim Marakkar as naval commission head.

Acclaimed author and journalist **Ms. RevatiLaul**, spoke next on “The Mechanics of Narrative Resistance.” Drawing upon her extensive fieldwork and writing, she offered thoughtful insights into how pluralistic societies can respond to exclusionary rhetoric through stories of empathy, and emphasised the quiet yet powerful role of literature and art in nurturing understanding.

The concluding presentation was delivered by **Dr. Muhsina K.K.**, Research Scholar at the Indian Institute of Technology, Indore, whose talk “From Cinematic Narrative to Public Truth” explored how cinematic storytelling shapes collective perception. She highlighted the significance of research-driven media literacy in enabling audiences to engage critically and responsibly with visual media.

The representatives of the Muziris-2026 extended their heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Md. Aftab Ahmad, Director IACC for his wholehearted support and gracious encouragement in making Muziris 2026 a resounding success. His vision, warmth and unwavering commitment to fostering meaningful cultural and academic dialogue have been truly inspiring. Under his able leadership, the India Arab Cultural Centre has continued to open its doors to enriching conversations that celebrate the shared heritage of diverse communities, and Smriti places on record its deep appreciation for his generosity and guidance.

Smriti -Malayali Students’ Fraternity of Jamia Millia Islamia also thanked the faculties of the centre Prof. Nasir Raza Khan, Dr. Zulfikar Ali Ansari, Dr. Ahsan Raza and Dr. Abdullah NC, staffs, students and media friends whose presence and cooperation contributed to the success of the event.

The discussion closed with an engaging interactive session, during which members of the audience shared reflections and questions, extending the spirit of dialogue that has become a defining feature of Muziris.



In collaboration with
India-Arab Cultural Centre,
Jamia Millia Islamia



STAYNGO
**MUZIRIS
KERALAM
FESTIVAL**

Panel Discussion on
**Lingua Franca of Love:
The Stories of Keralam**

Inauguration:



Dr. Aftab Ahmed
(Director - India Arab
Cultural Centre, JMI)



Ashlin Mathew
(Journalist)

Moderator



**Dr. Sayyid
Sameer**
(Asst. Professor,
India Arab Cultural
Centre, JMI)



Revati Laul
(Writer & Author)



Dr. Muhsina K K
(Research Scholar,
IIT Indore)

**21st April
2026**

**10:30
AM**

**India Arab
Cultural Centre,
Jamia Millia Islamia**











