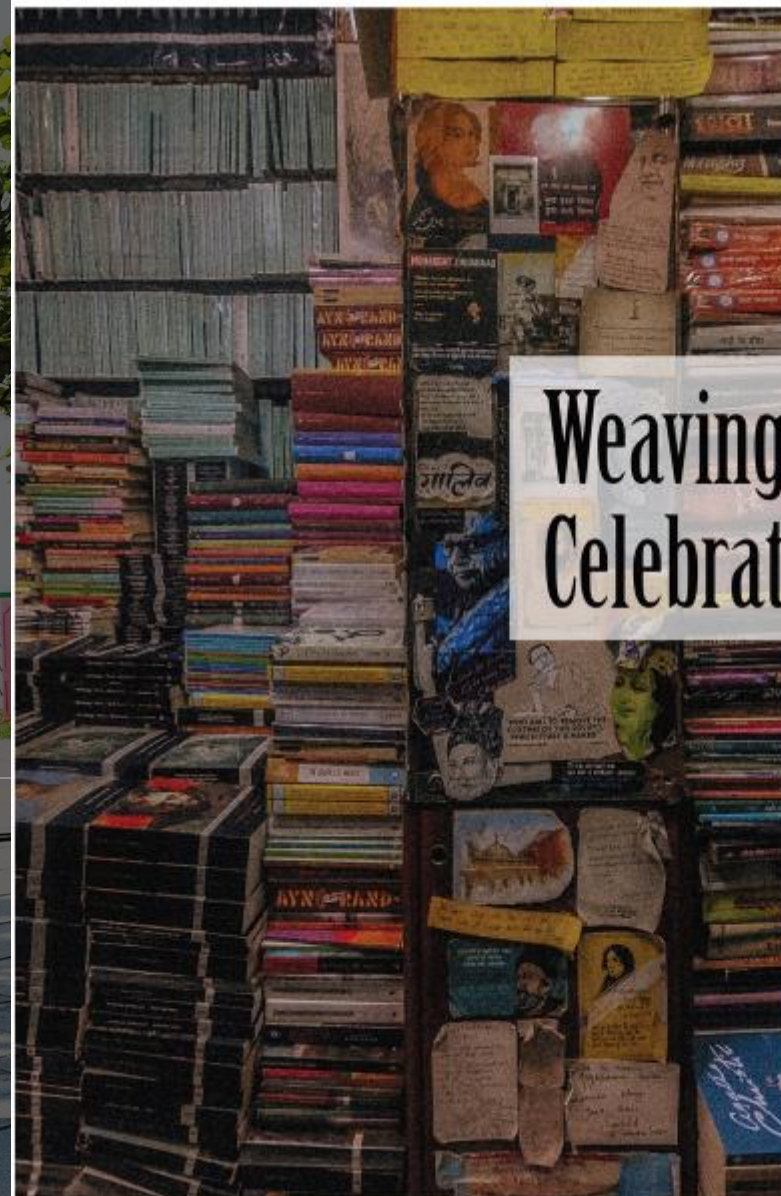


# A Journey from City of Truth to City of Literature

Global lessons from Kozhikode for the  
Okayama City of Literature Meeting, Japan

**Dr. Mohammed Firoz C**

UNESCO City of Literature Kozhikode



## Weaving Words, Celebrating Heritage.

Kozhikode, the first  
UNESCO City of Literature  
in India.

READ ON



# Introduction: Who We Are & Why This Matters

Connecting Heritage to Sustainable Urban Future



## Kozhikode: The Roots



Historically known as the **"City of Truth"** for its honest trade practices and hospitality that attracted global merchants (Arabs, Chinese, Europeans) for centuries.

Now transformed into India's first UNESCO City of Literature, leveraging this legacy of exchange into intellectual and cultural capital.



## Purpose: The Mission

We are here to share a replicable model of how intangible heritage can drive tangible urban development.

Placemaking: Turning public spaces into literary hubs

Creative Economy: Monetizing culture through festivals (KLF) and tourism

Inclusion: Using literature to engage youth, women, and marginalized communities

*"Moving beyond bricks and mortar to build cities with a creative soul—where culture is currency and heritage drives hospitality."*

# From City of Truth to City of Literature

Tracing the evolution of Kozhikode's cultural identity through the centuries

*"The soul of a city lies not just in its bricks and mortar, but in its creative DNA—its art, architecture, and cultural heritage."*



## Centuries of Cultural Exchange

Originally known as the "City of Truth" for its honest trade practices, Kozhikode's historic port welcomed travelers like Vasco da Gama, creating a melting pot of global ideas and narratives.



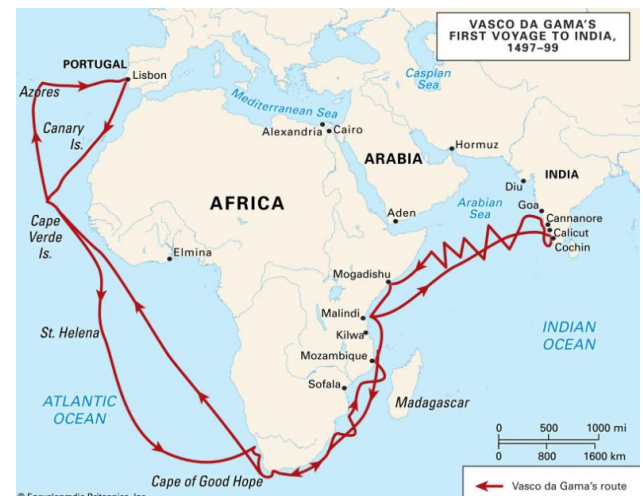
## Robust Publishing Ecosystem

Home to over **70 publishing houses** and **100+ bookstores**, the city boasts a thriving literary economy that anchors the creative sector and supports hundreds of local writers.



## The People's Library Movement

With **62 public libraries** within city limits and **500+ in the district**, the grassroots library movement ensures literacy and reading spaces are accessible to all citizens.



# Why Literature? The Heritage

The people, institutions, and traditions that built Kozhikode's literary soul

## Iconic Writers

● Vaikom M. Basheer

● S. K. Pottekkatt

● M. T. Vasudevan Nair

● Uroob

● Thikkodiyam

● P. Valsala

These legends didn't just write in Kozhikode; they gathered in public spaces like 'Kolaya' and sweet street, making literature a daily public activity.

## Key Institutions

State Public Library (1927): A historic research center.

Mathrubhumi: A media powerhouse born here.



## A Legacy of Storytelling

Kozhikode has been home to Malayalam literature's giants. The "Bey pore Sultan" Vaikom Muhammad Basheer and Jnanpith winner S.K. Pottekkatt didn't just write books; they created a culture where writers are celebrated as public heroes.



## Institutional Backbone

The city's literary infrastructure is historic and robust. From the **State Public Library & Research Centre** (est. 1927) to the **Kerala Bhasha Institute** and **Akashvani Kozhikode**, these institutions have served as incubators for generations of thought leaders.



## Unique Literary Traditions

Our heritage is defined by distinct cultural practices:

**Revathi Pattathanam:** An ancient annual assembly of scholars at Tali Temple Since 10<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Arabi-Malayalam:** A unique literary dialect born from trade exchanges.

**Library Movement:** A grassroots network ensuring every village has a reading room.

# Why Literature? The Heritage



## Literary Legacy

Kozhikode has a rich literary tradition and has produced many notable authors like Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, SK Pottekkatt, M.T. Vasudevan Nair, Uroob, Thikkodiyan, Sukumar Azhikode, P. Valsala and many more who have made significant contributions to Malayalam literature. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1908-1994), known as the Beypore Sultan, revolutionized Malayalam literature with his simple yet profound storytelling, earning the Padma Shri in 1982. These writers have enriched Malayalam literature, making significant contributions to international literature through translations and global recognition of their works.

# Why Literature? The Heritage

## 10 Centuries of Cultural Evolution

● Era of Royals      ● Modern Era

### Zamorin Era

Reign of the Zamorins established Kozhikode as a stable trade hub open to global cultures. Patronage of arts and literature began.

15th C.

### Arabi-Malayalam

Flourishing of unique literary tradition blending Arabic and Malayalam. Mappila songs and war ballads (Vadakkan Pattukal) enriched folklore.

16th-18th C.

1889

### Media & Libraries

Establishment of **Mathrubhumi** (1923) and **Akashvani** (Radio). Rise of the public library movement democratizing reading.

1923-1950

1950s+

10th-14th C.

### Revathi Pattathanam

Annual assembly of scholars and poets at Tali Temple. A prestigious scholastic competition attracting intellectuals from across India.

### First Novel

**Publication of Indulekha by O. Chandu Menon. Marked the birth of the modern Malayalam novel and social reform through literature.**

### 'Kolaya' Culture

Era of writer circles. Iconic authors like Basheer and Pottekkatt hosted informal 'Kolaya' gatherings, shaping modern literary discourse.

# Why Literature? The Heritage

MALABAR MAHOTSAVAM	Month of <b>JAN</b>	<b>04</b> Days 5 lakh participation		A grand celebration of North Kerala's soul, where timeless rhythms, vibrant art forms, and coastal flavors come alive under Kozhikode's starlit skies, organized by the Kozhikode District Tourism Promotion Council.
KERALA LITERATURE FESTIVAL	Month of <b>FEB</b>	<b>04</b> Days 3 lakh participation		
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL	Month of <b>FEB</b>	<b>07</b> Days 5,000 participation		
BASHEER FEST, BEYPORE	Month of <b>JUL</b>	<b>04</b> Days 5,000 participation		
REVATHI PATTATHANAM	Month of <b>NOV</b>	<b>07</b> Days 1,000 participation		Held at the majestic Tali Mahadeva Temple, is a timeless confluence of wisdom and worship—where Kerala's scholarly heritage, rooted in the Zamorin era, continues to shine in sacred debate and reverence.

## Literary Events

# The Creative Economy: Concept & Relevance

Transforming Culture into Sustainable Development



## The "Orange Economy"



### UNESCO Defined

An evolving concept based on creative assets potentially generating economic growth and development.

**Core Drivers:** Individual creativity, skill, and talent.

**Outputs:** Jobs, revenue, intellectual property (IP), and cultural engagement.

**Inclusion:** Employs ~30 million globally, offering opportunities for women, youth, and marginalized groups often excluded from traditional



## Why Creative Cities?

In an urbanizing world, culture is currency. Moving from functional infrastructure to creative ecosystems creates competitive advantage.

**Tourism Magnet:** Cultural heritage drives sustainable tourism (e.g., KLF's 500k visitors).

**Global Branding:** Distinguishes cities like Kozhikode (Literature), Mumbai (Film), and Varanasi (Music) on the world stage.

**Resilience:** Fosters social cohesion and local enterprise beyond traditional manufacturing.

# Economic Impact – By the Numbers

Measurable indicators of the creative economy ecosystem



## 500,000

### KLF Visitors

Annual attendees over 5 days at Kerala Literature Festival, driving tourism and local spending.



## 500+

### Global Speakers

International authors, thinkers, and artists converging in Kozhikode annually.



## 62

### City Libraries

Public libraries within corporation limits; part of a district network of 545+ libraries.



## 500+

### Bookstores

Thriving retail ecosystem clustered near transit hubs and educational centers.



## 70

### Publishing Houses

Strong production base including major media groups like Mathrubhumi.



## 1.8 km

### Access Radius

Maximum distance for most residents to reach the nearest public library.



📷 Kozhikode Beach during KLF



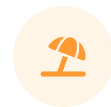
# Kerala Literature Festival (KLF)

## The Game Changer



### World-Class Integration

Asia's largest literature festival integrating literature, cinema, music, art, and ideas into a seamless cultural experience.



### Open Waterfront Venues

Unique open-air stages along the Arabian Sea coast, creating a non-elitist, accessible atmosphere for all citizens.



### High Public Engagement

Massive community participation transforming the city into a living library where readers meet authors directly.

500K+

Annual Visitors

500+

Global Speakers

5

Festival Days

# KLF: Impact

## Quantifying the Cultural Transformation



# 500K

### Total Footfall

Record attendance over 5 festival days



# 500+

### Global Speakers

Thought leaders from 15+ countries



# 6

### Venues

Parallel sessions across beachside stages



### Economic Multiplier

Significant boost in hospitality occupancy (95%+), local retail sales, transport usage, and F&B revenue during festival week.



### Youth Engagement

Dedicated student programs engaging 50+ schools; "Young Literature Festival" integration fostering next-gen readership.



### Literary Ecosystem

Direct surge in book sales for participating authors; launchpad for 50+ new titles annually; revitalization of local bookstores.



Asia's Second Largest Literature Festival



### International Brand

partnerships with nations (e.g., Turkey, Spain, UK) establishing Kozhikode as a global cultural destination on the world map.

 **KLF**  
KERALA LITERATURE FESTIVAL



WELCOME  
TO KLF 2026!

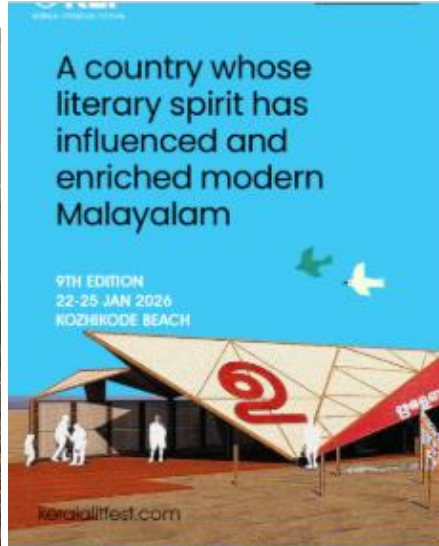
**SUNITA  
WILLIAMS**

[keralaliffest.com](http://keralaliffest.com)

 **DCBOOKS**



9TH EDITION  
22-25 JAN 2026  
KOZHIKODE BEACH





Foot Fall of 500, 000 ( ½ Million People) for 5 days with 500 plus speakers in multiple venue

Multiplier Effect in Local Economic development

Asia's **LARGEST**  
Literature Festival



**50** DC  
BOOKS  
GOLDEN JUBILEE

# KERALA LITERATURE FESTIVAL



TH  
EDITION

**11-14**  
**January**  
**2024**

@

**Kozhikode**  
**Beach**



Events for Children- Budding literary enthusiastic

Social Inclusion

DC BOOKS PRESENTS

**CKL f**

11, 12, 13, 14 JANUARY 2024  
KOZHIKODE BEACH

Organized by  
DC Elizabethan  
Foundation

30  
YEARS  
OF  
CELEBRATION

ASIA'S LARGEST  
LITERATURE FESTIVAL

**CHILDREN'S OWN KLF**

16

# International Collaboration (with the French and German Embassy)



INSTITUT FRANÇAIS  
India



## WHAT BEING A CREATIVE CITY MEANS

LYON | ANGOULÊME | KOZHIKODE

Step into the worlds of Angoulême, Kozhikode and Lyon, three remarkable cities designated as Creative Cities in Literature by UNESCO. Explore their rich literary heritage, vibrant storytelling traditions and cultural journeys.



23<sup>RD</sup> - 26<sup>TH</sup> JAN 2025, 10 AM - 7PM  
DESIGN ASHRAM, GUJARATI ST, CALICUT



# International Collaboration

Connecting Kozhikode to the world through literary exchange and partnership

*"Literature transcends borders. By linking Kozhikode with global creative hubs, we turn local stories into universal conversations."*



## UCCN Knowledge Exchange

Active participation in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to share best practices, develop joint programming, and foster cross-cultural dialogue with fellow literary cities.



## Residencies & Festivals

Hosting international writers for creative residencies and inviting global literary voices to the Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) to enrich the local cultural landscape.



## Strategic Partnerships

Collaborating with diplomatic missions, such as the French and German Embassy, to co-create content, facilitate translation projects, and organize touring literary showcases.



# Assets and Infrastructure Today

A Strong Foundation for a Literary Ecosystem



## Libraries & Readers

62

Public Libraries (City)

545+

Libraries (District)

**Kozhikode boasts a robust public library network integrated into community life.**

**Digital Innovation:** First in India to loan E-Readers; 2 Lakh+ digital books database.

**Youth Engagement:** Strong children's readership indicating future growth potential.

**Policy Shift:** New initiative to open school libraries to the public after hours.

*"Libraries are not just book repositories but active community centers for debate and learning."*

## Market & Accessibility

100+

Active Bookstores

70

Publishing Houses



High Density: Most residents are within 1.8km of a library

**Transit Clusters:** Bookstores concentrated near transit hubs (Bus Stands) for maximum footfall.

**Publishing Hub:** Home to major houses like Mathrubhumi, Poorna, and Mulberry.

**Proximity:** 95% of the city population lives within a 1.8 km radius of a public library.

# Phase 1 (2023–2025): Ignite & Organize

Foundational Years



## Re-establishing 'Kolaya'

Reviving traditional writer circles at authors' residences. Quarterly forums fostering intergenerational dialogue between established legends and emerging voices.

In Progress



## Institutional Engagement

Launching annual literary magazines, exhibitions, and cosplay events across educational institutions to engage student populations.

Active



## Weekend Reads

Public mentorship sessions at Mananchira Square. Open discussions, storytelling workshops, and poetry readings in public spaces.

Planned Q3 2024



## Int'l Residency Program

Collaborative 3-month exchanges inviting global writers to Kozhikode for cross-cultural production and community workshops.

Launching 2025



## Affordable Bookfairs

Pilot program for neighborhood-level affordable book markets, partnering with local publishers and second-hand exchanges.

Pilot Phase



## City Branding & Digital

Unified "City of Literature" visual identity contest and launch of dedicated web portal ([kozhikodecityoflit.wixsite.com](http://kozhikodecityoflit.wixsite.com)).

Completed

# Phase 1 (2023–2025): Ignite & Organize

## STORYSCAPES: Where people gather, stories bloom.



Mananchira Square

Freedom Square



S.M. Street



Kuttichira



Tali Temple



Sarovaram Biopark

Lions Park



Ansari Literary Children's Park

# Phase 1 (2023–2025): Ignite & Organize

## Building Kozhikode's Literary Future

### Children's Parliament

On July 14, 2023, Kozhikode hosted its first Children's Parliament, that empowered young voices to actively shape the city's literary future through debate, imagination, and inclusive dialogue.



### KoCo Folk Fest

From December 20-24, 2023, the KoCo Folk Fest in Kozhikode brought Kerala's rich folk heritage to life through vibrant performances and interactive sessions, celebrating traditional artforms as living expressions of history, identity, and community.

### KoCo Film Festival

Held from January 5-11, 2023, the KoCo Film Festival at Sree Theatre celebrated the deep bond between literature and cinema through 42 curated films and tributes, offering an inclusive, immersive experience that reflected Kozhikode's evolving literary spirit.



### Grand Declaration Ceremony

On June 23, 2024, Kozhikode celebrated its UNESCO City of Literature designation with the launch of its official logo and website, the declaration of City of Literature Day, and the introduction of six annual literary awards, with a tribute to M.T. Vasudevan Nair.

### Saabhimanam Sahithyanagaram

On December 19, 2023, the event brought together writers, scholars, and policymakers at Jubilee Hall to celebrate Kozhikode's journey as India's first UNESCO City of Literature and to chart an inclusive, creative literary future rooted in collective pride and storytelling.



### Strengthening Libraries

On March 22, 2025, the Corporation celebrated its investment in modernising Library Council-accredited libraries and cultural centres - transforming them into vibrant, reader-friendly spaces that reflect the city's deep commitment to a thriving culture of reading and community engagement.



## Strategic Implementation

# Phase 1 (2023–2025): Ignite & Organize

## Collaborations with Local Institutions

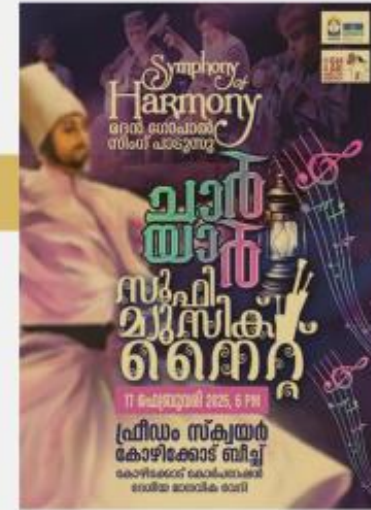


### Arivu Reading Lounge

Launched on October 14, 2024, Arivu—a public reading lounge by IIM Kozhikode and the Municipal Corporation—transformed the Corporation lobby into an accessible literary space with over 600 books, reflecting Kozhikode's vision of integrating reading into everyday public life.

Inspired by the success of IIM-K's earlier 'Gyan Pankh' lounge at the Calicut International Airport, Arivu stands as a symbol of accessible public reading spaces. Inaugurated by Mayor Dr. Beena Philip and IIM-K Director Prof. Debashish Chatterjee, the initiative ensures that reading becomes not just an activity but an experience woven into everyday life.

### Sufi Musical Evening



On February 17, 2025, the tranquil shores of Kozhikode resonated with the soulful Sufi melodies of Chaar Yaar, as a unique musical evening—organised by Desheeya Manavika Vedhi and the Kozhikode Municipal Corporation—brought together poetry, devotion, and cultural harmony. Blending mysticism with music, the event transcended barriers of language and faith, reaffirming Kozhikode's commitment to inclusivity and diverse cultural expression within its literary journey.

### Kozhikode's Postal Salute



A special postal cover was released in Kozhikode to commemorate its designation as a UNESCO City of Literature, marking a proud moment in the city's cultural journey. The release took place during the inaugural session of the 37th All India Postal Cultural Meet, adding a philatelic tribute to this literary milestone.

# Phase 1 (2023–2025): Ignite & Organize



## Creative Cities Exhibition with France

As part of the Kerala Literature Festival 2025, Kozhikode partnered with French Cities of Literature—Lyon and Angoulême—to host the Creative Cities Exhibition, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and literary diplomacy through panels, public showcases, and international collaboration under UNESCO's creative network.



## 20-Minute Cities with Melbourne

To mark the 10th anniversary of Melbourne's City of Literature office, Kozhikode joined the global relaunch of 20-Minute Cities by nominating emerging writer Mrs. Ananya G. Her unedited 20-minute literary walk through Kozhikode was featured on the Emerging Writers' Festival's digital platforms, showcasing the city's literary spirit to a global audience.



## International Collaborations

### Toponymy Project with Heidelberg

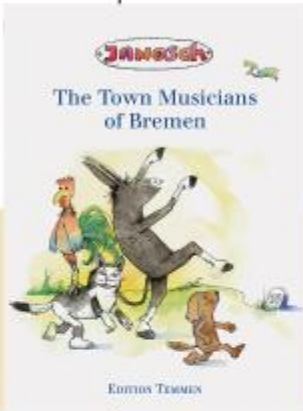
For Heidelberg's 10th anniversary celebrations, Kozhikode contributed to the Toponymy Project with a bilingual poetic reflection on the city's name by Sri. A P Kunhamu. Featuring visuals of M.T. Vasudevan Nair and traditional Uru boats by Sri. P Musthafa, the submission showcased Kozhikode's cultural and literary heritage in an international exhibition.



### Heart on Platform with Tukums

In the Latvian poetry event 'Heart on Platform', Kozhikode hosted a local adaptation on September 13, 2024, at the city's beach, aligning with the theme "Ticket to the Station: Roots." Featuring performances by poet Sri. O. P. Suresh and a local singer, and despite being scaled down due to the passing of Sri. Sitaram Yechury, Kozhikode's participation—including a promo clip From Roots to Bloom—was broadcast live globally, blending poetry with local emotion.

# Phase 1 (2023–2025): Ignite & Organize



## Bremen Town Language Musicians

Utharapattanam News

The speakers of the Silver Hills School



Utharapattanam News



Utharapattanam News

For the Bremen's initiative to create a Town Musicians' and Literature House, Kozhikode contributed a Malayalam audio rendition of The Bremen Town Musicians. Selected through a high school competition, students from Silver Hills School recorded the version, which was sent to be featured on a global platform. Their voices will be part of listening stations and exhibitions at Bremen's new literary centre, highlighting storytelling as a shared global tradition.

## International Collaborations

### The Roads that Lead to Edinburgh

To mark the 20th anniversary of Edinburgh as a UNESCO City of Literature, Kozhikode joined Melbourne's global poetry initiative by commissioning poet Sri. O. P. Suresh to write To Edinburgh via Fergusson. The bilingual poem, celebrating Edinburgh's cultural legacy, was published with subtitles on October 21, 2024, through Kozhikode's YouTube channel—bridging cities through poetry and shared heritage.



### Video Tribute to Heidelberg

To celebrate Heidelberg's 10th anniversary as a UNESCO City of Literature, Kozhikode joined a global video series with a 10-second message in Malayalam by Mayor Dr. Beena Philip, recorded from her chamber. Submitted on August 2, 2024, and featured during the final event on November 29, the gesture reflected Kozhikode's literary solidarity on the world stage.



### Page Against the Machine

Kozhikode UNESCO City of Literature hosted Page Against the Machine, a global reading challenge encouraging people to unplug from screens and reconnect with books. Held on May 24 at Mananchira Square, the event invited participants to share their reading moments both in person and online using the hashtag #PageAgainsttheMachine.

# Phase 2 (2025–2027): Activate Public Space & Markets

Expansion Years



## Remembrance Walks

Monthly guided literary walks connecting citizens and tourists with the city's rich literary history through physical landmarks.

- All India Radio & Mananchira
- S.M. Street (Mittayi Theruvu)
- Vaikom Muhammad Basheer Residence
  
- S.K. Pottekkatt Cultural Centre

Launch Q1 2025



## Library Gatherings

Transforming S.M. Street into a spontaneous literary hub. Activating public spaces for democratic dialogue and cultural exchange.

- Spontaneous poetry readings
- Public debates on contemporary topics
  
- Pop-up reading corners
- Author meet-and-greets

Planning Stage



## City-Scale Book Fairs

Expanding access to literature through large-scale, affordable book markets involving the entire publishing ecosystem.

- Major & independent publishers
- Local bookstore network
- Community library associations
- Second-hand book exchanges

Scaling Up



Community Literary Gathering

# Innovations: Kolaya, Mentorship, Residency

## Revitalizing Literary Traditions



### Kolaya (Veranda) Forums

Quarterly interactive sessions held at authors' residences, reviving the traditional 'Kolaya' culture to foster cross-generational dialogue between established writers and youth.



### Mentorship Weekends

Public workshops at Mananchira Square focusing on storytelling, poetry, and creative writing skills, turning open spaces into active learning hubs.



### International Residencies

3-month cultural exchange programs hosting global writers to produce new works and lead community workshops, strengthening Kozhikode's global literary ties.

Quarterly

Kolaya Forums

Weekly

Mentorships

3 Months

Residency



# Reading Street & Book Fairs

## Public Spaces for Literature



### Reading Street Initiative

Transforming the area near stadium bookstores into a safe pedestrian spine with kiosks, benches, and micro-events to encourage public reading.



### Affordable Book Fairs

Regular fairs featuring book previews, discounted sales, and second-hand exchanges to ensure literature remains accessible to all citizens.



### Inclusive Partnerships

Collaborating with publishers and *Kudumbashree* (women's collective) to facilitate community-led book collection and sales.



Promoting Public Access to Literature

Stadium

Key Location

Inclusive

Access Policy

Daily

Engagement



# Inclusion & Youth Engagement

Empowering Future Generations



## Young Literature Festival

Engaging 269 schools in writing competitions, poetry recitation, storytelling, quizzes, and 'Meet the Author' sessions to spark creative expression.



## Open School Libraries

Transforming school libraries into community hubs by extending hours for public access, maximizing the utility of existing educational infrastructure.



## Inclusive Outreach

Targeted programs centering women, youth, and marginalized readers, including home-library visits and book review sessions.



Fostering the Next Generation of Readers

269

Schools Engaged

Youth

Primary Focus

100%

Accessible

# Phase 3 (2027–2029): Extend Reach & Mobility



## Mobile Library & Traveling Exhibition

Access for All

"Literature on Wheels" initiative to democratize access, ensuring books reach rural communities, remote neighborhoods, and underserved populations beyond the city center.

- ✓ **Traveling Collection:** Rotating curation of books visiting neighborhoods weekly.
- ✓ **Kudumbashree Partnership:** Collaborating with women's self-help groups for second-hand book collection and exchange.
- ✓ **Neighborhood Stops:** Scheduled halts at reading rooms and community centers.

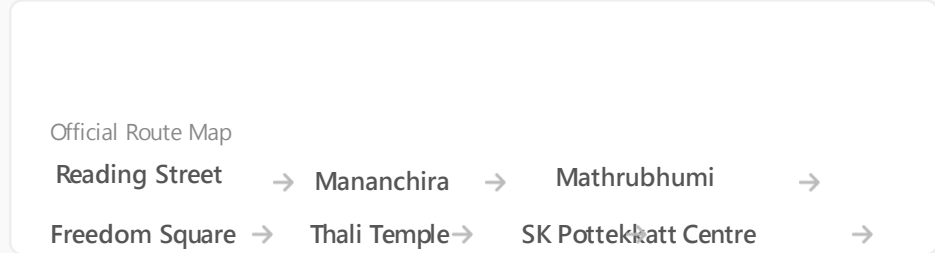
Planned Launch 2027



## Literary Circuit (NMT Route)

Heritage & Tourism

A dedicated Non-Motorized Transport (walkable/cyclable) heritage route connecting Kozhikode's most significant literary landmarks into a cohesive visitor experience.



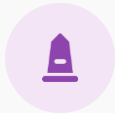
State Library → Town Hall → SM Street

- ✓ **Physical signage and wayfinding installed along route.**
- ✓ **Integration with digital guided tours and QR codes.**

Infrastructure Works 2027-28

# Phase 4 (2029–2031): Anchor & Institutionalize

 Legacy Infrastructure



## Literature Museum

Establishment of a permanent cultural landmark on the beachfront dedicated to Kozhikode's literary heritage.

- 
- 
- **Major Capital Project**



## Reading Street

Transformation of the bookstore district into a pedestrian-first literary corridor with urban design interventions.

- 
- **Urban Regeneration**



## Annual Calendar

Full institutionalization of a year-round literary ecosystem ensuring continuous engagement beyond major festivals.

- 
- **Ecosystem Sustainability**
-

# The Creative Economy Multiplier

How literature catalyzes growth across sectors and promotes sustainable development

*"Creativity is the new currency. When we invest in literature, we are investing in tourism, hospitality, and the next generation of thinkers."*

— Dr. Beena Philip, Mayor of Kozhikode

## SDG Alignment

4  
Quality  
Education

8  
Decent Work &  
Growth

10  
Reduced  
Inequalities

11  
Sustainable  
Cities



### Visitor Spend & Sectoral Growth

The 500,000+ KLF visitors drive significant revenue across hospitality, retail, local transport, and publishing sectors, creating a ripple effect that benefits the entire regional economy.



### Diverse Job Creation

Beyond authors and editors, the ecosystem employs event producers, bookstore staff, designers, literary guides, translators, and digital content creators, diversifying the local job market.



### Balanced Tourism Seasonality

A year-round calendar of literary events, residencies, and festivals ensures steady tourism flow, mitigating the seasonal dips often faced by traditional tourist destinations.








### Global Branding & Investment

UNESCO status elevates Kozhikode's global profile, attracting international partnerships, cultural investment, and positioning the city as a premier destination for intellectual tourism.







# Global lessons and practices for Cities of Literature

## *Universal Strategies*

-  **Anchor Festivals as Economic Flywheels**  
Measure impacts beyond culture: track footfall, hotel occupancy, sales, and job creation.
-  **Build Inclusive Infrastructure**  
Prioritize Braille sections, gender-focused libraries, and child-friendly literary spaces.
-  **Tripartite Alliances**  
Strengthen publisher–media–city partnerships (e.g., DC Books + Municipal Corp + Broadcasters).
-  **Activate Public Commons**  
Transform beaches and riverfronts into open cultural venues and year-round micro-fests.
-  **Heritage & Translation**  
Invest in translation labs and celebrate minority/multilingual heritage to bridge cultures.

## *For Okayama Collaboration*

-  **Waterfront Lit Zone**  
Replicate the beach model to activate Okayama's river/waterfront areas as literary zones.
-  **Heritage Debate Revival**  
Revive historical debate formats inspired by Kozhikode's *Revathi Pattathanam* for modern discourse.
-  **Japan–Kerala Translation Lab**  
Establish a bilateral translation initiative to exchange contemporary works and authors.
-  **Student & Library Twinning**  
Launch a student literary carnival and twin libraries for resource and cultural exchange.



# Key Takeaways & Next Steps

## ✔ The Kozhikode Model

- **Ethos to Economy:** Successfully translated historical 'City of Truth' values into a modern, thriving creative economy.
- **The Catalyst:** Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) proves that cultural events can drive massive tourism and economic spikes.
- **Inclusive Infrastructure:** A network of 545 libraries and public spaces ensures literature is accessible to all demographics.

## 🔄 Proposal for Okayama



### Exchange Program

Authors-in-residence exchange to foster cross-cultural writing.



### Translation Project

Joint initiative to translate key literary works between Malayalam and Japanese.





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## Kozhikode — A City that Breathes Literature

Recognized by UNESCO's Creative Cities Network



**Dr. Mohammed Firoz C**

**UNESCO City of Literature Kozhikode**

[firoz@nitc.ac.in](mailto:firoz@nitc.ac.in), +919895254353

Conclusion

# Thank You

*Arigato Gozaimasu*



Website

[kozhikodecityofliterature.in](http://kozhikodecityofliterature.in)



Social Media

[@kozhikode.cityoflit](https://www.instagram.com/kozhikode.cityoflit)

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Contact Office

**Kozhikode City of Literature  
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Okayama City of Literature Meeting 2026  
Global Lessons from Kozhikode Session