

Research contribution of University of Kerala in the field of Tamil: A Study

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Abstract

A research university is an academic institution that is committed to research as a central part of its mission. The beginning of research activities in the University of Kerala dates back to 1937. This paper aims to investigate research in the field of Tamil from University of Kerala during the last decade.

Keywords: Research, University of Kerala, Tamil, Ph.D. Theses and Bibliometrics.

Introduction

Universities furnish two valuable assets to society: skills and new ideas. First, universities perform basic research, creating new knowledge. Second, universities disseminate this new knowledge and create human capital through their teaching. Research performance is the primary factor that regulates university status. With all the focus falling on science and technology, there is insufficient attention given to the social sciences and the broader role of creative and interpretative scholarship, including work in the humanities and the arts.

Sharma finds that the research output of the University needs to be effectively disseminated and distributed for its acceptance and timely application for social benefits. The research productivity of a University is usually indicated through the research publications that emanate from the various teaching and research departments. Scholarliness is revealed through many ways academic publication is one of the major tools to evaluate the scholarliness.

The beginning of research activities at the University of Kerala dates back to the institution of the Department of Research in 1937 under the auspices of the University of Travancore founded in the same year. The research programs in various disciplines are undertaken presently by the departments and centers of teaching and research of the University and also by other research centers recognized by the University. This paper aims to investigate research in the field of Tamil from the University of Kerala. The study is based on an analysis of 132 doctoral dissertations from the University till the last decade. University research and innovation encourages investment, exports, and a more balanced economy.

Review of Related Literature

Maheshwaran described the usefulness of Bibliometric application for the analysis of Sri Lankan Tamil Publications. The article tried to provide an account on authors, publishers, geographical areas of publishers, and editor in the literary field. The study also evaluates the length, size, price and pagination of published Tamil publications in Sri Lanka. It will urge the scholars and researchers to start to analyze of Bibliometric study on Tamil literature in Sri Lanka.

Pandita made a study on doctoral dissertations in humanities in Indian universities during 2010-2014. Based on the bibliographic data about 5229 doctoral dissertations produced in humanities by 127 institutions from 2010 to 2014, leading institutions, subject areas, states, etc., have been identified. The dissertations belonged to 45 different subject disciplines, at an average of 116.2 doctoral dissertations in each subject field. About 1046 doctoral dissertations were produced each year at an average of about 8 dissertations from each institution. Languages & literature is the leading subject field, in which 3611 dissertations were produced. In his study, he found that Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, produced the maximum number of doctoral dissertations.

Okahana and Kinoshita investigated how well a Humanities Ph.D. prepared them in a career. The vast majority of humanities PhDs still work in fields related to their doctoral education and are satisfied with their jobs. 92% of humanities PhDs working in 2015 held jobs that are closely or somewhat related to their PhDs. Furthermore, 85% of humanities PhDs who are employed are satisfied or very satisfied with their current work. Though these national data tell us about humanities PhDs in the workforce and their satisfaction with their current jobs, little is known about their views on their Ph.D. training. Using survey data, this brief provides new insight into how humanities PhDs apply their doctoral training in the workforce.

Need and Significance of the Study

The research output of the Universities has to necessarily be evaluated as it is one of the important criteria to evaluate the standard of the institution. Doctoral Research is one of the major quantitative measures of the basic research activity in a country or an institution.

Definition of Key Terms

Research Contribution: A researcher should make a project, i.e., it should contribute towards the advancement of human knowledge by adding something new. The concept of research contribution means different things to different people. For some scholars, the idea of contributing to research can

be a source of pride, particularly if their efforts to publish their work are rewarded by an institution that explicitly recognizes the value of their work and its contribution to knowledge (Gendron).

University of Kerala: The University of Travancore, which eventually became the University of Kerala was established in 1937 by a promulgation of the Maharaja of Travancore, Sri Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma who was also the first Chancellor of the University.

Tamil: Tamil is a Dravidian language predominantly spoken by the Tamil people of India and Sri Lanka. Tamil is an official language in three countries: India, Sri Lanka, and Singapore.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The number of doctoral degrees produced is widely used as an indicator of the growth of any area. Characteristics of dissertations like research guides, type of reference style, year, number of chapters, etc have been studied to identify the basic features of the scholarly communication process.

Most Productive Guides in Tamil

The research supervisor is the key person in the research program. The principal role of the supervisor is to help students achieve their scholastic potential. The Supervisor will provide reasonable commitment, accessibility, stimulation, guidance, respect, and consistent encouragement to the student.

Supervisors should be available to help their graduate students at every stage, from the formulation of their research projects through establishing methodologies and discussing results, to presentation and possible publication of dissertations. Guides must also ensure that their students' work meets the standards of the University and the academic discipline. The Table gives the list of most productive guides in Tamil. Here, only the names of those who were instrumental in the production of more than 5 theses alone are given.

Table 1: Most Productive Guides in Tamil

S. No.	Name of Guide	Number of Thesis
1	K.Nachimuthu	16
2	C.Subraminia pillai	15
3	V.I. Subramoniam	12

4	P.Doctor Nazeemdeen	10
5	S.V.Subramanian	9
6	K.Subramani	9
7	K.Kuttalam Pillai	7
8	C.Jesudasan	7

Decade- wise Distribution of Theses

Universities promote high-level learning and research in Tamil literature and culture. The main objective is to organize advanced studies and research programs based on a deep understanding of the trends in Tamil Literature. Decade-wise distribution of Ph.D. theses in Tamil Language and Literature is presented in Table. Year-wise analysis of theses indicates the progress of research in a field.

Table 2: Decade- wise Distribution of Theses

S. No.	Period	Number	Percentage
1	1961-70	8	6
2	1971-80	17	13
3	1981-90	29	22
4	1991-00	27	20
5	2001-10	51	39
Total		132	100

During 1961 – 70, only eight theses were produced in the field of Tamil. In the next decade, it doubled. UGC regulations on minimum qualifications for the selection of teachers and other academic staff in Universities and Colleges bring forth the measures for the maintenance of standards in Higher Education. This is seen in Table 2.

Gender-wise Distribution of Research Subjects

To find out if there is any correlation between research and gender, an analysis was carried out. Table 3 presents the gender-wise distribution of researchers.

Table 3: Gender-wise Distribution of Researchers

Subject	Male	Female	Total
Tamil Language & Literature	92 (70%)	40(30%)	132(100%)

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of the Sample According to Pages

Subject	<=200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	601-700	>700	Total
Tamil	2 (2%)	23 (17%)	26 (20%)	31 (23%)	17 (13%)	12 (9%)	21 (16%)	132 (100%)

From the study, it is clear that Tamil has more number of male researchers (70%). Though women today are earning college degrees at the same rate as men, the average women still make less entering the research work than men. The issue still needs to be addressed in Kerala.

Chapters of Ph. D. Theses in the field of Humanities

The 5 important chapters of a thesis are the introduction, review of related literature, design and methodology, findings, and conclusion. Based on the topic of the study, the researcher needs to change the specific format of the thesis. For example, in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the researcher will be expected to devote a significant portion of the thesis to their philosophical context. Structures vary from discipline to discipline. Theses in Tamil have mainly 6-8 chapters. This is represented in table 4.

Table 4: Number of Chapters in Theses

Subject	<5	6-8	9-11	12-14	>14	Total
Tamil	15	79	33	3	2	132

From the study, it is found that the thesis titled “Grammatical notes on Sangam Literature” by M. Elayaperumal from Kerala University has the maximum number of 36 chapters. This is followed by the thesis produced by M. Palanisamy titled “Folklore of Urali tribes in Kerala” with 20 chapters.

Length of Ph. D. Theses

Though the length of a thesis does not necessarily demonstrate the quality of research, it often reveals the comprehensive and elaborate efforts made by the scholar on a specific piece of research carried out on the subject. Table 5 reflects the percentage distribution of the sample according to the number of pages.

Out of the total number of theses, about 23 percent have a length of 401 to 500 pages. Only 2% of the theses have less than 200 pages. The thesis entitled “Descriptive analysis of Villi Paaratham.” Submitted by Kuttalam Pillai, was found to have the maximum number of pages (1165).

There is a large difference in the size of the theses in Tamil. It is found that no University regulation exists governing the length of theses during the periods, although several Faculties and departments have established guidelines. Where these are not available, the student should consult the supervisor as to the length of the thesis appropriate to his/her particular topic of research.

Method of Referencing

In the Natural and Social Sciences, the use of parenthetical references and a Chapter end reference list (end note) is generally preferred. Foot notes style is preferred generally in the theses of Humanities. Choosing between the two styles often depends on the subject matter, as each system is favored by different groups of scholars. Table 6 gives the pattern followed in giving references in Tamil language and literature.

Table 6: Method of Referencing

Subject of Research	No references	Endnote	Footnote	Total
Tamil	22 (17%)	82 (62%)	28 (21%)	132 (100%)

From the study, it is clear that 62 percent of theses in Tamil have chapter references. 21 percent of theses in Tamil have footnotes. 17 percent of theses have not given any references.

Distribution of Numbered Bibliographical Reference

References used in chapters are listed in order as a bibliography at the end of the research document. Table 7 presents the distribution of numbered bibliographical references.

Table 7: Distribution of Numbered Bibliographical Reference

Subject of research	Not Numbered	Numbered
Tamil	50 (38%)	82 (62%)

From the study, it is found that the majority (62%) of theses Tamil given importance to numbered bibliography.

Most Commonly Used Citation Style in Ph.D. Thesis

A citation is a form of giving credit to individuals for their creative and intellectual works that are utilized to support the research and can also be used to locate particular sources and combat plagiarism. DeRusso (2017) says that a citation can include the author’s name, date, location of the publishing company, journal title, or Digital Object Identifier. The most common citation style for an academic thesis is APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, Oxford, etc. The citation way researchers choose will largely be dictated by the discipline in which they were writing, and for greatest assignments, their lecturer will assign a style to them. For example:

- APA (American Psychological Association) is used by Education and Sciences.
- MLA (Modern Language Association) style is used by the Humanities.
- Chicago / Turabian style is generally used by Business, History, etc.

Citations let the reader that reads the research work and find the best in research. The humanities emphasize authorship and interpreting primary sources in a historical context. Table 8 presents the most commonly used citation style in Ph.D. theses.

Table 8: Most Commonly Used Citation Style in Ph. D. Thesis

S. No.	Style	Count	Percent
1	No style	12	9
2	APA	30	23
3	Chicago	60	45
4	MLA	30	23
Total		132	100

From the research, it is evident that Chicago (45%) is the most commonly used citation style in Ph.D. theses in the field of Tamil, followed by both MLA and APA style (23%). 9% of the theses do not follow any of the styles.

Conclusion

Most of the South Indian universities are demanding a doctoral degree in the field of Tamil, and due to this, there is an increase in Ph.D. theses year by year. Research in Tamil is wide-ranging and well-respected internationally, making Kerala a

strong option for Ph.D. studies. The study evaluates the research output in the form of Ph.D. thesis in Tamil from the University of Kerala.

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