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Indigenous Pedagogy and Cultural Continuity: The Role of *Pallidars* in Shaping Malabari Muslim Identity

Hassan Shareef*
SAFI Institute of Advanced Study (Autonomous), India
hassansias@gmail.com
*corresponding author

Abstract

This study primarily aims to investigate *Pallidars*, the traditional Islamic higher education system of Malabar, India, focusing on its role in preserving Islamic heritage and shaping regional Muslim identity. The research framework is based on an indigenous theoretical perspective followed by a qualitative research design. The methods of data collection included the participant observation of *Pallidars* education practices, textual analysis of Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam manuscripts and interviews with stakeholders. The results reveal that the system effectively preserved and transmitted essential Islamic knowledge in the region, creating a unique regional Islamic culture connected to the wider Muslim world and the system provided accessible and affordable education to all sections of society. These findings demonstrate the Pallidars system's adaptability and enduring influence in preserving Islamic heritage and shaping Malabari Muslim identity.

Keywords: Indigenous Islamic pedagogy, *Pallidars* education, Mappila Muslims, heritage preservation.

INTRODUCTION

The Historical investigations into traditional Islamic religious education from indigenous perspectives are crucial for preserving cultural heritage, understanding local adaptations, and overcoming contemporary challenges (Atifnigar et al., 2025). Studies on traditional Islamic education systems in Malabar, India, which rarely took place in recent academia, are of great significance for understanding the historical development and cultural impact of Islam in the region (Panakkal, 2025). As far as the absence of literature on traditional Muslim communities, especially on Malabaris (Muslim Natives of Malabar), regional studies hold significant importance in contemporary research studies when outlined with an indigenous theoretical framework.

The Malabar Coast, located in the present-day Kerala State of independent India, is a geographically advantageous coastal plain that has historically supported trade (Logan, 1995; Salvia et al., 2021). This region has facilitated not only commercial interactions but also significant cultural exchanges. The Mappila Community, the inhabitants of Malabar, have peculiarities that differ from the other parts of the Indian subcontinent. The Mappila Community's unique cultural identity is deeply rooted in their historical interactions with Arab traders and Islamic influences (Raṇṭattāṇi, 2007). Their distinctive script and hybrid language, Arabi-Malayalam, incorporates Arabic and Persian loanwords, reflecting their rich

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maritime heritage. Furthermore, the Mappilas have developed a vibrant knowledge transmission tradition, known *Pallidars* for imparting Islamic higher education.

Despite criticisms that the *Pallidars* learning system lacks progressiveness and modernity, it has played a crucial role in preserving traditional Islam in Malabar in a distinctive manner. Prior to engaging in a detailed analysis, it is essential to introduce the concept of *Pallidars*. The educational system followed in the masjid is known as *Pallidars* (Mohammed, 2007). The system is the first and earliest form of Islamic education in the state. It produced many scholars, theologians and eminent leaders to Kerala society. The term *Pallidars* is the mix of two words. 'Palli', Malayalam term means 'centre for prayer', used as the meaning of mosque, and the term 'Dars' literally means 'class'. Shortly the educational system attached to mosque is known as *Pallidars* (Shafeeque, 2023). The curriculum primarily encompassed Islamic sciences such as Quranic studies, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and the Arabic language. Methodologically, it prioritized memorization, recitation, and interpretation of religious texts. This system ensured knowledge continuity through a chain of scholars, contributing to the maintenance of Arabi-Malayalam literature and local Islamic traditions specific to Malabar (Kooria, 2023). Additionally, it played a significant role in fostering a sense of community and religious identity among Muslims in the region. The *Pallidars* system has demonstrated adaptability over time by incorporating new subjects and teaching approaches while preserving its core Islamic principles. Its lasting influence has been crucial for the sustenance of Islamic scholarship and cultural identity in Malabar, even amidst historical challenges and social changes.

This study, theoretically, based on indigenous framework provides a unique lens through which to examine the complex interplay between social structures and religious identity formation (Denzin et al., 2024; Gareau & Colorado, 2026). More significantly, focusing on the research question, "How did the *Pallidars* system influence the shaping of Muslim identity and religious practices in Malabar over the centuries?" this paper argues that the *Pallidars* education system in Malabar served as a resilient, indigenous framework for transmitting and preserving a distinct Indo-Islamic heritage. Drawing on an indigenous research methodology, this study analyzes the pedagogical and curricular elements of the *Pallidars* system to demonstrate its profound and often-overlooked influence on Malabari Islamic heritage.

The conceptual framework of this study is structured around four key dimensions. Ontologically, the *Pallidars* system is considered an integral part of Malabar Muslim identity, and Islamic heritage is seen as dynamic and shaped by local practices (Ashraf, 2023; Mondini, 2025). Epistemologically, knowledge is co-created through relationships between teachers, students, texts, and the community. Oral traditions, experiential learning, and Indigenous languages are valued alongside textual knowledge. The framework emphasizes holistic understanding, integrating spiritual, intellectual, and practical dimensions, as the researcher has studied and worked as part of *Pallidars* with more than 15 years of field experience as a student and teacher (Baranski, 2025). Methodologically, the study employs community-based participatory research, observation of *Pallidars* practices, analysis of local texts, and intergenerational dialogue to capture knowledge transmission. Axiologically, this research aims to benefit the local Mappila Muslim community by respecting cultural protocols and sacred knowledge. It emphasizes reciprocity, the preservation of indigenous Islamic knowledge systems, and the recognition of local ways of knowing.

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Previous studies on Muslim education, Islamic intellectual traditions, and cultural development in Malabar have examined the subject from a range of historical, pedagogical, literary, and sociocultural perspectives. Raṇṭattāṇi (2007), in Mappila Muslims: A Study on Society and Anti-Colonial Struggles, situates Mappila Muslim identity within the broader historical development of Muslim society and anti-colonial resistance in Malabar. Similarly, Mohammed (2007), in Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims: A Socio-Historical Perspective, explores the historical trajectory of Muslim education and its contribution to the social empowerment of the community. At the institutional and pedagogical level, Basheer (2016) investigates quality enhancement in madrasa education, while Thajudeen and Noushad (2014) examine the contribution of Arabic colleges to the development of literature and culture in South Kerala. The intellectual and textual dimensions of Mappila Islamic education have also received scholarly attention. Kunnakkadan, Ahmad, and Qaid (2020) examine the relevance of Tafsīr al-Jalālayn among the Muslims of Malabar, demonstrating the continuing significance of classical Islamic texts within local religious life. More recently, KP and P (2025) analyse the traditional Islamic curriculum of Pallidars through Min Nawabigi Ulama'i Malaibar, while Kodasseri and KP (2025) investigate the study of Arabic grammar within the Pallidar tradition, alongside scholarship on Tasawwuf texts and their transmission. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that Mappila Muslim education has developed through a dynamic interaction between traditional Pallidars, Arabic and Islamic textual scholarship, madrasa education, and modern educational institutions. They also reveal the importance of education in shaping religious identity, intellectual traditions, cultural expression, and social transformation in Malabar. However, despite these valuable contributions, the existing literature has largely examined the Pallidars system in terms of its historical development, curriculum, textual traditions, educational practices, or broader sociocultural significance, with limited attention to its specific role in preserving and transmitting Islamic heritage (Kurfi, 2022). In particular, insufficient attention has been given to the mechanisms through which Pallidars function as sites of intergenerational knowledge transmission and contribute to the continuity of Islamic beliefs, practices, texts, values, and cultural traditions among Malabar Muslims. This gap indicates the need for a more focused examination of the Pallidars learning system as a mechanism of Islamic heritage preservation. Accordingly, this study investigates how the Pallidars tradition has contributed to the safeguarding, transmission, and reproduction of Islamic knowledge and cultural heritage in Malabar, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between traditional Islamic education, cultural continuity, and Muslim identity in the region.

Accordingly, the major objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to examine how the Pallidars system preserved and transmitted core Islamic knowledge in Malabar, particularly in the areas of Qur'anic studies, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), and Arabic language; (2) to analyse how the Pallidars system contributed to the formation and reproduction of a distinct Malabari Muslim identity through the interaction between Islamic teachings and local cultural practices; and (3) to assess the contribution of the Pallidars system to community cohesion and social mobility by providing accessible and inclusive forms of Islamic education. Through these objectives, the study seeks to clarify the role of the Pallidars not merely as traditional centres of religious instruction, but also as important institutions for the preservation, transmission, and continuity of Islamic knowledge and heritage in Malabar.

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METHOD

The work is employed as a qualitative desk-based research methodology. For data collection and analysis, based on an indigenous theoretical framework, this study depended on the following methods (Denzin et al., 2024). The participant observation method involves spending time where *Pallidars* education occurs to observe classes and daily life to see how traditional knowledge is taught and applied. Textual analysis is conducted by documenting written and material evidence of *Pallidars* heritage from Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam manuscripts. In addition, utilizing a library research approach, this study engaged in a comprehensive literature review by thoroughly analyzing existing studies and publications pertinent to the subject. Finally, the study traced the progression of ideas and concepts over time to comprehend the evolution of the *Pallidars* and gain a deeper understanding of the topic, integrating findings from various sources to generate new insights and perspectives on the research question.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that the Pallidars system should not be understood merely as a historical form of mosque-based religious instruction. Rather, it represents a locally embedded educational ecology through which Islamic knowledge has been transmitted, vernacular Muslim identity negotiated, community solidarity sustained, and religious education continually adapted to social change. Four interrelated findings emerged from the observations, teacher interviews, and textual analysis: (1) the preservation and transmission of core Islamic knowledge; (2) the construction of a distinctive Malabari Muslim identity; (3) the strengthening of community cohesion and educational accessibility; and (4) institutional adaptability across historical periods. Taken together, these findings position the Pallidars within a wider global discussion concerning the survival of community-based religious education under conditions of modernization and globalization.

Preserving Islamic Knowledge through Intergenerational Pedagogy

The first major finding demonstrates that the Pallidars function as an enduring educational infrastructure for the intergenerational transmission of Islamic knowledge. Field observations in Ponnani, Kondotty, and Olavattur revealed a pedagogical tradition centered on sustained engagement with authoritative texts through reading, memorization, oral exposition, transcription, and direct teacher–student interaction. Within this structure, the Musliyar occupies a central position as both an instructor and interpreter of classical texts, while senior students frequently assist junior learners. Rather than progressing through standardized age-based grades or fixed periods of study, students advance according to their mastery of particular kitab (Jaleel et al., 2024; Lakshmi, 2012). This structure creates a pedagogical continuum in which knowledge is transmitted not only through texts but also through interpersonal relationships, scholarly authority, and repeated practices of interpretation.

This pedagogical continuity has enabled the Pallidars to preserve a remarkably diverse corpus of Islamic scholarship. Curriculum documents and interviews with teachers indicate sustained engagement with Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith, fiqh, usul al-fiqh, tasawwuf, theology, Arabic grammar, logic, philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy (Syafi'i et al., 2025). Importantly, such continuity should not be interpreted as curricular stagnation. The historical transition from the Fakhriyya and Ma'abari curricula to the Nizamiyya syllabus illustrates

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successive processes of curricular reconstruction through which new texts and intellectual disciplines were incorporated without displacing the Islamic sciences that constituted the system's epistemological foundation. Preservation in the Pallidars tradition, therefore, has operated through selective adaptation rather than resistance to change (Yenprasit & Naknawa, 2025).

This finding acquires broader significance when situated within the global discourse on living heritage and intergenerational knowledge transmission. UNESCO conceptualizes living heritage not as the static preservation of inherited cultural forms but as knowledge, practices, and skills that are continually transmitted and recreated across generations (Smeets, 2022). From this perspective, education particularly learning embedded within communities provides a critical social space through which cultural knowledge remains meaningful to successive generations (Mammadova et al., 2026; Trommsdorff, 2008). The Pallidars exemplify this process: their durability rests not simply on conserving classical texts but on maintaining the pedagogical relationships and interpretive practices through which those texts continue to be read, explained, debated, and socially reproduced.

The significance of the system therefore extends beyond the physical survival of particular manuscripts or classical books. What has endured is an epistemic chain connecting texts, teachers, students, mosques, households, and transregional scholarly networks (Class et al., 2022; Porath, 2013). This distinction is theoretically important because heritage preservation is frequently associated with tangible object, manuscripts, archives, buildings, or artifacts whereas the Pallidars demonstrate that intellectual heritage is equally sustained through social relations and pedagogical practices. In this sense, the mosque operates not merely as a physical site of preservation but as a living knowledge environment in which religious authority, collective memory, and scholarly practice are continually reproduced. This interpretation corresponds with UNESCO's understanding of intangible cultural heritage, which places particular emphasis on the transmission of knowledge and skills rather than solely on the preservation of their material manifestations (Cominelli & Greffe, 2012; Weedon, 2023).

The Malabar experience consequently contributes to a wider debate in Islamic education concerning the relationship between tradition, continuity, and educational change. Contemporary scholarship increasingly suggests that the sustainability of Islamic educational institutions depends on their capacity to negotiate inherited religious knowledge alongside changing intellectual and social demands (Moosa, 2026). Studies of madrasas and other Islamic educational institutions, including those in Indonesia, similarly indicate that institutional resilience does not necessarily require choosing between tradition and modernity; rather, it may depend on the ability to integrate new knowledge while maintaining a recognizable epistemological core (Syukron et al., 2026; Wedi & Mardiana, 2025). The historical experience of the Pallidars, however, adds an important dimension to this discussion. It suggests that such negotiation is not simply a contemporary response to globalization. Curricular adaptation has long constituted an internal mechanism through which Islamic educational traditions have maintained their intellectual vitality.

Theoretically, the Pallidars therefore challenge a binary understanding of preservation versus transformation. Their historical trajectory indicates that the preservation of religious knowledge may depend precisely on its capacity for controlled transformation. What persists across generations is not an entirely unchanged curriculum but an epistemic tradition capable of incorporating new intellectual resources without severing its relationship with foundational texts, pedagogical authority, and community structures(Widodo et al., 2026).

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The case thus demonstrates a form of adaptive continuity, in which change becomes a mechanism of preservation rather than evidence of the erosion of tradition. This offers a significant contribution to global discussions of heritage-based education: sustainable knowledge traditions endure not because they remain unchanged, but because communities continuously reinterpret and reproduce them in response to changing historical circumstances.

Vernacularization of Islam and the Construction of Malabari Muslim Identity

The second finding concerns identity formation. The evidence suggests that Pallidars did not merely reproduce Islamic knowledge originating elsewhere; they participated in its localization within Malabar. The integration of Malayalam alongside Arabic, the development of locally embedded religious practices, the preservation of Arabic calligraphic traditions, and sustained scholarly exchanges with centers such as Makkah, Madinah, and Egypt generated a Muslim identity that was simultaneously local and transregional (Panakkal, 2025; Yasser Arafath, 2020). The resulting Malabari Muslim identity therefore cannot adequately be characterized as either a replication of Arab Islam or an autonomous regional culture (Farook & Haskerali, 2026; Mondini, 2025). It emerged through continuous interaction between the two.

This finding speaks directly to a wider debate concerning the vernacularization and localization of global religious traditions. Muslim communities historically participate in a transnational religious field through Arabic texts, scholarly mobility, pilgrimage, and intellectual networks, yet Islamic knowledge is inevitably interpreted through local languages and social environments (Taufiq & Said, 2025). The Pallidars provide an instructive example of this process. Arabic maintained its status as a language of authoritative scholarship, while Malayalam enabled religious knowledge to circulate more effectively within the surrounding community.

The result is better understood as vernacular Islamic cosmopolitanism than as a simple opposition between the "local" and the "global" (Trinh & Anaf, 2026). Students and scholars could remain rooted in Malabar while intellectually connected to a wider Muslim world. Comparable processes have been identified elsewhere in Asian Islamic education. Scholarship on Southeast Asian Islamic educational traditions, for example, demonstrates how localized intellectual traditions developed distinctive identities without abandoning their broader Islamic epistemological foundations (Sijamhodžić-Nadarević, 2024; Widodo et al., 2026). More recent comparative work on Indonesia and Malaysia similarly identifies adaptation and negotiation between normative Islamic teaching and local Muslim cultures as central to the construction of contextual religious identities (Nur et al., 2025; Samsul Hady et al., 2025; Sohrah et al., 2023).

The Malabar case therefore challenges assumptions that globalization necessarily produces cultural homogenization. Pallidars demonstrate a different trajectory: transregional religious connectivity may actually stimulate local intellectual production. Scholars returning from centers of learning abroad introduced new books and ideas, but these were incorporated into an already existing Malabari educational ecology rather than simply displacing it. The local and the global consequently became mutually constitutive (Mathew, 2019).

This interpretation also provides a broader explanation for the durability of Malabari Muslim identity. UNESCO's conceptualization of intangible cultural heritage emphasizes that living traditions simultaneously provide continuity and evolve in response to changing

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environments, thereby producing a sense of identity and belonging (Weedon, 2023). The Pallidars exemplify precisely this dynamic. Their significance is not that they insulated Malabari Muslims from external influence, but that they provided an institutional space through which external Islamic knowledge could be translated, negotiated, and localized.

Community-Based Education, Social Cohesion, and Educational Accessibility

The third finding reveals that the social significance of Pallidars extended beyond formal religious instruction. Their organization embedded education within community life. Education was largely accessible without formal tuition, mosques simultaneously functioned as learning spaces, senior students assisted junior learners, and neighboring households contributed food and accommodation. Students could also move between Pallidars and study without a predetermined period of enrollment (Gilchrist, 2004).

These arrangements effectively distributed the costs and responsibilities of education across the community. The household was therefore not external to the educational institution; it constituted part of its social infrastructure. The practice of assigning students to local households for food and support also created regular interaction between learners and community members (Weisbrod, 2016). According to the evidence, this relationship enabled knowledge to circulate beyond the immediate classroom, including through informal religious exchanges between students and households.

This finding broadens the interpretation of Pallidars from an educational institution to a form of community-based knowledge commons. Access to religious knowledge was supported collectively through mosques, teachers, students, charitable resources, zakah, and household participation (Utami & Kusakabe, 2026). Consequently, the social reproduction of Islamic knowledge did not depend entirely on either the state or the market. This community-based model resonates strongly with contemporary global debates surrounding inclusive and culturally responsive education. UNESCO emphasizes that integrating living heritage with education can strengthen relationships between educational institutions and local communities while fostering belonging, cultural diversity, resilience, and social inclusion (Lira & Thibaut, 2022). Its global work on heritage transmission similarly recognizes non-formal and community-based educational spaces as important mechanisms for sustaining locally valued knowledge.

The implications extend to debates about educational equity. Because Pallidars reduced financial and geographic barriers to participation, they enabled individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to access advanced religious learning. This did not necessarily eliminate broader social inequalities, and the present evidence cannot establish the magnitude of upward socioeconomic mobility generated by the system (Báez et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the institutional arrangements indicate a mechanism through which educational participation could generate religious authority, intellectual status, and respected community roles. The extensive production of scholars associated with Pallidars provides historical evidence of this mechanism. From the fourteenth century onward, these institutions produced generations of religious intellectuals who shaped Malabar's scholarly and religious landscape (Mondini, 2025). Educational accessibility thus contributed not only to individual learning but also to the reproduction of a local scholarly class capable of sustaining Islamic intellectual traditions.

This dimension is particularly relevant to current international debates on SDG 4 and inclusive quality education (Masyhud et al., 2026). While it would be anachronistic to portray the historical Pallidars as institutions designed around contemporary Sustainable

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Development Goals, their community-financed and socially embedded educational model illustrates how locally governed institutions can broaden access to learning. UNESCO explicitly connects the integration of community-based living heritage with SDG 4, particularly the objectives of inclusive education, cultural diversity, and lifelong learning. The Malabar experience therefore offers historical evidence that educational inclusion can emerge not only through centralized systems but also through locally sustained infrastructures of knowledge.

Adaptability, Tradition, and the Problem of Educational Modernization

The fourth finding is perhaps the most consequential for contemporary debates: the longevity of Pallidars has depended on their capacity to adapt without entirely abandoning their epistemological foundations. Curriculum transformation occurred repeatedly as scholars traveled to major Islamic centers and returned with new intellectual resources. The incorporation of logic, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and other disciplines demonstrates that the distinction between "religious" and "secular" knowledge was historically less rigid than contemporary representations of traditional Islamic education sometimes suggest. The curriculum itself provides particularly compelling evidence. Astronomy, geography, mathematics, medicine, and logic were incorporated alongside Qur'anic studies, Hadith, jurisprudence, theology, and Sufism (Gündüz, 2023). These subjects had both intellectual and practical functions, including applications related to construction, navigation, health, and community life. The historical Pallidars curriculum therefore complicates the conventional binary between "traditional Islamic education" and "modern useful knowledge."

This issue is central to the global discourse surrounding contemporary Islamic education. Globalization, technological change, and shifting labor markets increasingly pressure religious educational institutions to incorporate new competencies while preserving their normative and cultural foundations (Genç & Uddin, 2023). Recent research describes curriculum reform, interdisciplinary learning, digital pedagogy, and global competencies as increasingly prominent concerns in Islamic education (Khalfaoui, 2026). Other studies similarly emphasize the need to negotiate global knowledge within an Islamic framework rather than simply replacing traditional curricula.

The historical evidence from Pallidars suggests that the central challenge is therefore not whether Islamic educational institutions should "modernize," but how modernization is epistemically negotiated. If reform simply replaces locally rooted educational practices with standardized external models, modernization can become a process of epistemic displacement (Zhao, 2020). Conversely, if institutions reject all external knowledge in the name of authenticity, they risk intellectual isolation. The Pallidars point toward a third possibility: adaptive continuity, in which external knowledge is selectively incorporated through existing religious and cultural frameworks.

This argument has implications beyond Kerala. Across the Global South, community-based and religious educational systems face similar tensions between standardization and cultural specificity, global competencies and inherited knowledge, institutional modernization and community authority. UNESCO has warned that traditional knowledge transmission can be weakened when formal educational systems devalue local knowledge or when migration, urbanization, and changing social relations reduce intergenerational interaction (Paksi, 2019; Vermunt, 2015). At the same time, UNESCO's recent documentation

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of 200 educational practices across 15 Latin American and Caribbean countries demonstrates growing international recognition that living heritage can enrich formal and non-formal learning rather than merely survive outside modern education (Jiang et al., 2025). Viewed against this global landscape, Pallidars offer a historically grounded alternative to the assumption that tradition and modernization are mutually exclusive. Their longevity appears to derive precisely from the capacity to maintain a recognizable Islamic epistemic core while permitting curricular and institutional change.

From a Local Educational Tradition to a Global Debate on Knowledge Sustainability

Taken together, the four findings reveal that the significance of Pallidars extends beyond the history of Islamic education in Kerala. The system illuminates a broader problem confronting educational communities worldwide: how can inherited systems of knowledge remain intellectually alive under conditions of globalization without becoming either museumized traditions or standardized replicas of dominant educational models? The evidence from Malabar suggests that knowledge sustainability depends on four interconnected mechanisms: intergenerational transmission, localization, community participation, and adaptive curriculum (Vineetha et al., 2023; Wilbanks & Wilbanks, 2010). Remove transmission, and knowledge becomes archival rather than living. Remove localization, and education may lose cultural legitimacy. Remove community participation, and the institution becomes detached from the social environment sustaining it. Remove adaptability, and tradition risks losing relevance.

This four-dimensional interpretation constitutes the broader contribution of the study. Existing global discussions frequently address heritage preservation, educational inclusion, religious identity, and curriculum modernization as separate concerns. The Pallidars case demonstrates that these processes may instead form a single educational ecology. Knowledge is preserved precisely because communities use it; identity is reproduced because knowledge is localized; access is sustained because communities materially support learning; and tradition survives because its curriculum remains capable of adaptation (M A et al., 2026).

The findings therefore challenge modernization narratives that equate educational progress with the replacement of traditional institutions (Wu & Lin, 2026). They also challenge romantic accounts of heritage that conceptualize preservation as maintaining an unchanged past. The Pallidars demonstrate that continuity is produced through change. Their historical resilience derives not from institutional immobility but from the capacity to negotiate change without severing the pedagogical, textual, communal, and transregional relationships through which Islamic knowledge acquires meaning.

In this respect, the Malabar experience contributes to a genuinely global discourse on educational sustainability. At a time when globalization simultaneously expands access to knowledge and threatens the diversity of local knowledge systems, Pallidars show that community-based religious education can function as a site where global intellectual connections and local cultural continuity are negotiated rather than treated as mutually exclusive. The theoretical significance of the case therefore lies not only in what Pallidars preserved, but in how they made preservation compatible with adaptation.

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that the *Pallidars* system has been instrumental in preserving and transmitting core Islamic knowledge in Malabar which the fact is ignored or overlooked by the contemporary research and academia on Islamic educational empowerment of

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Malabari Muslims of South India. The system effectively sustained Quranic studies, Hadith, jurisprudence, and Arabic language education which are the primary subjects of Islamic education. It has fostered a distinct Malabari identity by harmonizing and integrating local language and culture with Islamic education. Furthermore, the system has promoted social cohesion and upward mobility by providing accessible and inclusive education for the inhabitants. The system's adoptability over centuries underscores its enduring influence on Malabar's religious, cultural, and intellectual landscape. Therefore, as the study is grounded in an indigenous theoretical perspective that emphasizes the resilience, adaptability, and localization of the Pallidars system in preserving Islamic heritage in Malabar, it has tried to integrate historical, pedagogical, and cultural dimensions of the system in an extent. The study has opened future research opportunities in relevant areas such as, Comparative studies of Pallidars with other traditional Islamic education systems to highlight its unique features, detailed analyses of curricula and pedagogical methods across various Pallidars institution and investigations into how Pallidars have adapted to modernization and formal education changes.

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