

**UNVEILING LIVES OF WOMEN: A CRITICAL
ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM AMONG
MUSLIMS IN THE 20TH CENTURY KERALA**

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University of Calicut
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HISTORY

Submitted by
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2023

DECLARATION

I, Sajna T. A., do hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Unveiling Lives of Women: A Critical Analysis of Socio Religious Reform among Muslims in the 20th Century Kerala**' submitted to the University of Calicut is a bonafide research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Vineeth R., Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Calicut, and it has not previously formed the basis of the award of any Degree or diploma.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled '**Unveiling Lives of Women: A Critical Analysis of Socio Religious Reform among Muslims in the 20th Century Kerala**' is a bonafide record of research work done by **Ms. Sajna T. A**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History and that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Fellowship or other titles and the thesis is a record of independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my guidance.

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UNVEILING LIVES OF WOMEN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM AMONG MUSLIMS IN THE 20TH CENTURY KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The 20th-century Kerala Muslim reform movement was a transformative period for Muslims in Kerala, driven by the need to address colonial influences and modernize religious practices. A key focus of this movement was the education and empowerment of Muslim women. Reformers employed their writings and speeches to challenge superstitions and advocate for a contemporary interpretation of Islam, which, in turn, fostered increased support for women's education and rights.

Prominent figures, such as Haleema Beevi, played a vital role by founding journals and engaging in activities that challenged traditional norms. Early Muslim women writers emerged as influential voices, pushing against patriarchal constraints and striving to assert their identities through impactful language. Nevertheless, male reformers often held ambivalent views on women's issues, endorsing a limited concept of the ideal woman that upheld traditional gender roles.

Despite these advancements, the reform movement's narrow perspective on Islam sometimes hindered broader gender reforms. Women's contributions to Arabi-Malayalam literature, music, and religious education were often overlooked due to societal biases and inadequate documentation.

Subsequent organizations, such as the 'Islahi' movement and Jama'at-e-Islami, introduced new approaches to women's reform but frequently retained patriarchal values. This historical context underscores the ongoing challenge of integrating feminist perspectives within Islamic frameworks, highlighting the need for continued progress toward gender equality while respecting cultural and religious practices.

Keywords: Muslim reform movements, Women empowerment, Gender perspective, Islamic feminism, Reform movements, Arab-Malayalam literature.

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സംഗ്രഹം

1880-കളിൽ ആരംഭിച്ച് അര നൂറ്റാണ്ട് കാലത്തോളം നീണ്ടുനിന്ന കേരളത്തിലെ മുസ്ലീം പരിഷ്കരണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ ഒരേ സമയം ആധുനികത ഉയർത്തിയ വെല്ലുവിളികളെയും യാഥാസ്ഥികതയെയും അഭിമുഖീകരിക്കേണ്ടിവന്നു. മുസ്ലീം സ്ത്രീകളുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും ശാക്തീകരണവുമായിരുന്നു ഈ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാനലക്ഷ്യം. അന്ധവിശ്വാസങ്ങളെ വെല്ലുവിളിക്കാനും ഇസ്ലാമിന്റെ സമകാലിക വ്യാഖ്യാനത്തിനായി വാദിക്കാനും പരിഷ്കർത്താക്കൾ അവരുടെ രചനകളും പ്രസംഗങ്ങളും ഉപയോഗിച്ചു. അതാകട്ടെ, സ്ത്രീകളുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനും അവകാശങ്ങൾക്കുമുള്ള പിന്തുണ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഹലീമ ബീവിയെപ്പോലുള്ള പ്രമുഖ വ്യക്തികൾ ജേണലുകൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ചു പരമ്പരാഗത ആചാരങ്ങളെ വെല്ലുവിളിക്കുന്ന പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ ഏർപ്പെട്ടു ഈ പരിഷ്കരണങ്ങളിൽ നിർണായക പങ്ക് വഹിച്ചു. ആദ്യകാല മുസ്ലീം വനിതാ എഴുത്തുകാർ പുരുഷാധിപത്യ പരിമിതികൾക്കെതിരെ ശക്തമായ ഭാഷയിൽ തങ്ങളുടെ സ്വത്വം സ്ഥാപിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് സ്വാധീനമുള്ള ശബ്ദങ്ങളായി ഉയർന്നുവന്നു. എന്നിരുന്നാലും, പുരുഷ പരിഷ്കർത്താക്കൾ പലപ്പോഴും സ്ത്രീകളുടെ വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ അത്യന്തമായ വീക്ഷണങ്ങൾ പുലർത്തിയിരുന്നു. ഈ മുന്നേറ്റങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നിട്ടും, ഇസ്ലാമിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പരിഷ്കരണ പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ സങ്കീർണ്ണമായ വീക്ഷണം ചിലപ്പോൾ വിശാലമായ ലിംഗ പരിഷ്കാരങ്ങളെ തടസ്സപ്പെടുത്തി. അറബി-മലയാള സാഹിത്യം, മതവിദ്യാഭ്യാസം എന്നിവയിലെ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സംഭാവനകൾ സാമൂഹിക പക്ഷപാതവും അപര്യാപ്തമായ രേഖകളും കാരണം പലപ്പോഴും അവഗണിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. ആധുനികപുർവ്വഘട്ടത്തെ പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന മുസ്ലീം സ്ത്രീകളുടെ ചരിത്രത്തെ അറബി-മലയാള സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ പുനർവായനക്ക് വിധേയമാക്കുകയാണ് ഇവിടെ ചെയ്യുന്നത്. അതുപോലെതന്നെ 1950-കൾക്കുശേഷം ഉയർന്നുവന്ന 'ഇസ്ലാഹി' പ്രസ്ഥാനം, 'ജമാഅത്തെ ഇസ്ലാമി' തുടങ്ങിയ സംഘടനകൾ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ നവീകരണത്തിന് പുതിയ സമീപനങ്ങൾ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചുവെങ്കിലും പലപ്പോഴും പുരുഷാധിപത്യമൂല്യങ്ങൾ നിലനിർത്തി. സാംസ്കാരികവും മതപരവുമായ ആചാരങ്ങളെ മാനിച്ചുകൊണ്ടും ലിംഗസമത്വത്തിലേക്കുള്ള തുടർച്ചയായ പുരോഗതിയുടെ ആവശ്യകത ഉയർത്തിക്കാട്ടിക്കൊണ്ടും ഇസ്ലാമിക ചട്ടങ്ങളുകൾക്കുള്ളിൽ ഫെമിനിസ്റ്റ് വീക്ഷണങ്ങളെ സമന്വയിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള നിരന്തരമായ വെല്ലുവിളികളെ ഈ ചരിത്ര സന്ദർഭം അടിവരയിടുന്നു. ഈ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ കേരളീയ മുസ്ലീം പരിഷ്കരണത്തെയും, സംഘടനകളെയും വിമർശനാത്മകമായി വിലയിരുത്തുകയാണ് ഈ പഠനം.

കീവേർഡ്സ്: മുസ്ലീം പരിഷ്കരണം പ്രസ്ഥാനം, സ്ത്രീ-ശാക്തീകരണം, ലിംഗ വീക്ഷണം, പരിഷ്കരണ പ്രസ്ഥാനം, അറബി-മലയാള സാഹിത്യം, ഇസ്ലാമിക് ഫെമിനിസം.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AR	:	Arabic
AM	:	Arabi Malayalam
GIO	:	Girl's Islamic Organisation
GO	:	Government Order
HE	:	Hijra Era
KE	:	Kollam Era (Malayalam Calendar Year)
KMEA	:	Kerala Muslim Educational Association
KNM	:	Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen.
MAL	:	Malayalam
MES	:	Muslim Educational Society
MGM	:	Mujahid Girls Movement
MSS	:	Muslim Service Society
ISM	:	Islamic Student Organization
RAK	:	Regional Archives Kozhikode
TNA	:	Tamil Nadu Archives.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of concerns regarding women's emancipation in Kerala took place during the mid-nineteenth century. Naturally, historical circumstances paved the way for this, all the new ideas of democracy, equality and freedom influenced the ideological sphere of society, on the other hand, changes in social structure have created some contrasts in status and rights between the genders which were not there before. Women who were left with house servitude and uncivilized started raising voice for education and freedom. The reality is that all historical studies so far have ignored or remained silent about this tradition of women's liberation inherent in Kerala culture. The male bias of the historiography, which follows the incompleteness of Kerala's cultural and historical studies. These distinctions often reinforce the belief that male dominance is the natural order, relegating women to a subordinate role. Kerala society has a remarkable tradition of women's liberation since the Renaissance. Numerous early women's magazines in Kerala, many writings, many women's societies that functioned all over Kerala are indicators of this tradition. The controversies that arose from early writings related to women's life in Kerala, such as, women's education, gender equality, and the denial of women's freedom, are protests against patriarchy and hegemonic values.

The initial phase of the Kerala Renaissance, spanning from the late 19th century to the 1930s. It can be seen that the first phase of the Kerala renaissance, which lasted from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the 1930s, consisted of various attempts to consolidate a vision of life based on modernism. Such a common humanity emerged on religious, literary and various philosophical levels. Criticism of caste and religion was developed accordingly. The energy behind this was the spread of critical consciousness. This sense of criticism arose against the feudal consciousnesses, customs and institutional forms that were emphasized in tradition. During the Renaissance period in Kerala, efforts were made to establish a

new sense of duty through the creation of a new concept known as "community". This led to the growth of various movements such as the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangha and subaltern movements. However, The Renaissance movement witnessed a rise in anti-caste struggles, which were deeply rooted in Kerala's identity and were directed against feudalism. These struggles, led by the national movement, leftists and communists in particular, played a key role in establishing a secular public sphere in Kerala. The critique of caste, the promotion of a secular public sphere, and the advancement of women were central concerns of the Renaissance. The contemporary challenges have exposed the inherent conflicts within the revival movement and the Malayalam society at large. The renaissance was fostered under the dual influence of Brahminical patriarchy and collaboration with the colonial system, resulting in the entrenchment of a deeply misogynistic, individualistic, and ritualistic identity at the core of Kerala's social fabric¹. Similarly the women's movements that aimed to drive the revival are also grappling with their own set of challenges.

A recent social survey conducted in Kerala reveals that Kerala has the lowest female labor force participation rate in India at 13. 2%, this is when the all-India average sits at 26 percent. There are states in India where the rate of women's labor participation is 45%, even after half a century of modernization, Kerala has reached the most backward in this regard². But this happens when the ratio is highest in terms of education. But in the 1940s, the Antarjana Samaj was able to stage the play "Thozhil Kendrathilekk"³(To the job center), as well as Haleema Beevi, a newspaper editor who preached the need for women's organization in the Muslim Women's Association. The attitude of moving from domestic to public life had emerged in that period under the leadership of women. But the entry of women into public life has not been done in Kerala. The domestication of women's life has become one of the biggest problems faced by Kerala women today. The root of the problem is that the existing family system is so male-centric that does not allow democratic and deliberative

¹ Uma Chakravathi, 'conceptualising brahminical Patriarchy in India: Gender, Caste, Class and State': Economic and Political weekly, vol-5, April, 1993, P. 258.

² Kerala Padanam, Shasthrasahitya parishath survey, 2000,

³ Thozhilkendrathilekk, Thrissur, Anderjanam Samajam, 1948.

female life. The renaissance enterprise itself contained the renaissance that gave birth to the ideal woman concept of the aristocratic housewife. Although the renaissance seemed progressive in its opposition to feudal moral relations and family systems, this domestic model affected women's lives in two ways on a long-term basis. That is, the status of women has changed to second-class citizens with no participation in social power. Because of an upper hand on the idealized housewife concept women's labor force participation became a double burden on women over housework and outside work. Women were largely excluded from the sphere of social power even when economic income and thus social status were attained from employment. Actually, out of the framework of domestication, women in Kerala have not been able to participate in public life, and political movements. But such organizations come into action with the support of male authority and give birth to model wives. Although there have been some recent changes in the status of women's participation in local government institutions, it remains bound by patriarchal logic.

In this way, the paradigm of the family is the biggest hideout of orthodoxy in Kerala today. The family is one that transposes modern democratic secular values to the outer world and operates with a highly undemocratic inner world, another important function of the family is to prepare individuals to fit the patriarchal system. As love, marriage and motherhood are relegated to the sphere of private life, a woman's housework, abuse, attacks and exploitation she faces in the family are isolated as private matters. But to maintain such realities, society is very careful to idealize the servile condition of women. Ideological forms such as light of home (Grihalakshmi), Household Goddess (Grihadevata), and Chastity (Pathivritha) perform this task. In this way the ideal wife (*Kudumbani*, and Grihalakshmi) are all bound up in the life of the woman in the family. That is why all the definitions we give of woman end up being in the final analysis that of a family woman.

Over the centuries we have seen that the ideal woman is a wife who can be completely dependent on her husband, submissive, virtuous, Historically, all religions in Kerala have repeatedly affirmed this. A model woman means a model wife. Modern values such as secularism and democracy do not even have little space in the domestic

sphere. For the Malayali "back home" is a return to caste ideology, religious practices and misogyny. Understood at this level, it can be said that the Kerala renaissance contained deep contradictions of gender discrimination. It is by maintaining these contradictions that the lifestyles of modern Kerala have developed in later times.

Kerala Muslim Women and Renaissance

The history of Muslim women in Kerala can be divided into three parts. The first part represents the pre-modern stage and the second part evaluates the participation of Muslim women in the revival activities. The third part generally evaluates the representation of Muslim women in contemporary situations, but to evaluate Muslim women in these three stages, it is not possible to read the subject of "religion" aside because they were more or less religious society. Talal Azad argued that "while discussing the roots of such enigmatic anthropological concepts as religion, objectivity, authorship, cultural pluralism, and cultural evolution, one must study the inherent and contextual meanings of the different subject texts used to analyze each society" is very important when analyzing the Kerala Muslim women's renaissance⁴. Feminist discourse has long been dominated by the conclusion that religious women are not decisive decision-makers in social life. But the social changes that occurred after the 1980s, generally described as the period of the return of religion, gave feminist politics new insights into approaches to religion⁵. The public political presence of religion in Iran and Eastern Europe led to the recognition of women as part of the Islamic and Christian movements of feminist politics. Therefore, many re-readings of the issue of religion and secularism have emerged from within feminist theories. Those readings suggested that secular politics and epistemology demarcate feminist inquiries. These new readings have challenged many secular understandings of religion and demonstrated that a new talk with religion is possible

⁴ Talal Azad, *Genealogy of Religion: discipline and reasons and power in Christianity and Islam*, Landon, 1993, pp. 84-89.

⁵ Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan Van (ed), *the power of Religion in the Public spare*, Columbia, Columbia University Press, 2017, p. 36-39

for feminism. It is in this situation that discussions like biblical feminism and Islamic feminism come into play.

In the 1990s, Fatima Mirnisi, Laila Ahmed, Amina Wadud, etc. criticized gender status in Islam, later it came to be known as Islamic feminism in public/academic discourse. They are re-reading the relationship between Islamic women on many levels. Muslims today live in a very diverse political, social, and cultural environment, unlike the Arabian conditions of the 7th century. The problems and concerns of societies living in diverse situations vary from time to time⁶, despite different cultures and social systems, Muslim women face sex discrimination and inequality in many societies. Such discrimination faced by women is justified on the basis of God's revelation and religious logic. In many Muslim societies, women's political rights and participation are denied as a precautionary measure for social security on the grounds that she is inherently weak. Men and women played equal roles in the historical construct of early Islam's solidarity against slavery and oppression. But masculinity made a comeback as a politics of gender equality and excluded women from the social, political and social spheres of Muslim societies. It was declared in the 10th century that the possibility of interpretation of Islamic law had ceased, and that the possibility of freely reinterpreting Islamic precepts according to the Qur'an and Sunnah had ceased. The justification for anti-women attitudes in Muslim society was given by religious logic and Institutionalized religious orthodoxy. They argue that man has a higher status and superiority than woman and that he is entrusted with her guardianship and rulership. Through the orthodox analysis, physical and psychological imperatives determine the position of women in various spheres. Menstruation, pregnancy and lactation are the tragic nature of women, therefore, female nature is suitable only for child rearing and household chores. Moududhi argues that this division on the basis of gender is a law of nature and that a culture as good as Islam cannot ignore the dictates of nature. This biological

⁶ Ibid., p. 46.

individualism about women denies their intellectual, mental and bodily capacities and their individuality⁷.

Maryam Jamila argues that equality between men and women has no meaning from the Islamic point of view as nature itself has to perform different responsibilities for men and women⁸. As a result of conservative thinking, women are second-class citizens in Muslim societies in such a way that power is vested in men. Although the male-centric structure of the Islamic materialist tradition has made orthodoxy the common model of Qur'anic interpretation, new analytical models that challenge orthodoxy have also emerged in Islamic history. Among such arguments is Islamic feminism: In the latter part of the 20th century, some new movements for gender equality emerged in various Muslim societies, and this trend was described as Islamic feminism. Islamic feminism aims to reclaim the Qur'anic principles of gender justice by questioning Islamic interpretations of male supremacy. Due to the growth of patriarchy in religious tradition Women's scriptural experiences were denied, and femininity was marginalized from the material tradition of the Muslim community.

Thus, Islamic precepts were interpreted only in the light of male experience, Such interpretations ignore the woman and her experiences and define them solely in terms of male perspective, desire, and passion. And consequently, the divine commandment patriarchy explained as natural and moral, became the general pattern of Muslim social behavior. Against this the core of Islamic feminism is to reclaim women's rights by imparting reading of women's side of the Qur'an, the foundation of Islam. The Quranic concepts of Tawheed or oneness of God and Caliphate (mankind's representation on earth) are the basis of the Islamic feminist interpretive paradigm. The Qur'an's revelation that all creatures are created as mates is the revelation of Tawheed. The uncreated is God and He alone, which accepts the authority of the Creator and rejects the system of authority among creatures⁹. The uncreated is God

⁷ Abdul Ala Maududi, *Purdah and Status of Women in Islam*, Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2000, pp. 147-170.

⁸ Marayam Jameela. *The Feminist movement and the Muslim Woman*, <http://www.islam101.com>

⁹ Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam*, Austin, University of Texas press, 2002, p. 7.

and He alone, which accepts the authority of the Creator and rejects the system of authority among creatures. Hierarchy among creatures indicates injustice. Therefore, the gendered power structure that maintains male dominance is against the definition of Tawheed. It is through this theme that Islamic feminism exists.

'The Qur'an regards man and woman as two classes of mankind, which are treated as having equal or similar abilities in Islamic women's theory. Although there are biological differences between men and women, the Qur'an does not limit the abilities of women to the only sphere of biological determination. In other words, the Qur'an does not make a division of labor in which the woman has only the sole responsibility of procreation and the responsibility of the man can only be performed by him. Because the Qur'anic details of the creation of the first man did not mention gender differences. Islamic feminists have taken a completely different stand from general feminists on most issues such as family, motherhood, and child-rearing. Islamic woman is opposed to giving priority to men and rejecting women's freedom on the basis of family, motherhood and childcare. Muslim women's discourse in Kerala can only be read using the tools of Islamic feminism. Here, women are questioning the male authority attached to the religion based on their firm belief in the religion.

For example ,V. S Qasim Bi. Mistress says “Maybe our men think it's enough Girls to be fireplace dolls and with birthing machines, alas, don't they have a little compassion for your sisters and offspring¹⁰? Islam has not prescribed any restrictions on the status and dignity of men and women except for their way of life. It is a fact that a group of women who are constantly struggling with citizenship through these kinds of writings and speeches have gone unnoticed in Kerala Muslim history. These are women who cannot be marked or understood in the dimensions of measuring sticks according to mainstream feminist theories. In this study, we can see women questioning the male authority of religious reform movements and the impositions of religious priesthood.

¹⁰ V S Kasim B Mistruss, Namude Streegal (mal), Muslim Mithram Magazine, Book 1, vol 7, P 214.

Historical records are silent on the activities of Muslim women representing the pre-modern stage. In this study, the importance is given to the investigation of whether the Muslim women who have been downgraded as uneducated and ignorant as those who have spent time in the kitchen really like that?" Formal public education was not widespread for Muslims in the early days but religious education was available to all, and madrasa studies at that time taught songs along with religious subjects. For the Muslim community, songs are not so trivial, they made songs on any subject so these songs can be seen as part of their social interaction. The illiterate Mappila Penn(Muslim Woman) was educated in Arabic Malayalam and she could read and write. Many songs preserved in Arab Malayalam can be found in old houses even today. These books, known as Sabina Edus, were widely popular among Muslim women. Many of Sabina's songs were considered auspicious to keep in homes¹¹

Such songs were important for many ceremonies. There were many singers and songwriters as part of this culture. They used to sing their own songs in various functions, and they are generally known as singers. Such singing women can be found everywhere in Kerala, especially in most parts of Malabar. As part of a 10-member song group in the region, they also sing songs made by women and have passed this word of mouth. In their wedding song, a signature song can also have repetition cues, repeating each line to the listener concepts and practices to hold in discourse repetition is one of these. This repetition will allow the listener to re-enter the lesson even if his attention wanders a little in between. These singers existed as part of oral tradition, the Influence of written on oral entered many oral societies, not as a means of making human-to-human language communication more effective.

But with the arrival of Varamozhi, the history of society can be seen to change in a different way. In the same way, these songs also prove that the presence of women in the public space in the societal system and also not about standing back. It means that there was presence of women in social and cultural fields during that period. In

¹¹ It was believed that reciting Nafeesathumala and Muhyudheenmala would contribute to a trouble-free childbirth. Consequently, women in maternity homes would chant these verses.

these songs, we can see the evidence that women had achieved their place in the home and public space of the pre-modern system and that women continued to be the ones with power and authority there. But the reality is that they ended up being only the subject (object) to be reformed in Renaissance logic. This work tries to say the re-reading of the Kerala Muslim revival through a woman's perspective. Like any other renaissance, all the leaders and advocates of the Muslim revivals movement are men but their main agenda is women. The advocates of revival thought that only through that, community reform would be possible. As a result of this, Muslim women were considered only as a 'subject' that needs to be reformed, therefore, there have not been many efforts to identify the activities of Muslim women. Only investigations that focus on women's performance can properly mark the participation of women in this field. No attempt has been made to discover how women saw and interacted with Renaissance ideas and practices. Women who were a part of the Muslim revival process were left unmarked in history.

In the 1930s these reform efforts became the most powerful mainstream discourse. Organizations, Educational Institutions, News Magazines played an important role in this. Not only that women were involved in all these, but also there were women's newspapers and organizations. These female geniuses of the renaissance were those who stood in the social structure of Kerala in relation to religion and worked for their own rights and for the betterment of the community. Many women like Haleema Beevi, Ayisha Mayeen, Thankama Malik, and P K Subaida, could not leave a mark in this field. At that time women not only played a strong role in the renaissance but It can also be seen that they played a major role in expanding the horizons of renaissance ideas. Later studies that ignored such activities and evaluated the achievements of such women only as the result of revival activities gained much importance.

This study I seek to reclaim the spaces and voices of women who have gone unmarked. When the Muslim community moved to the level of organization in the 1950s, a very different thought scheme emerged. KJU was founded in 1924 but functioned mostly as a sub-organization of the Aikya Sangham. But from 1930 they

started to be active in the field of activities and as a result of their activities mosques, madrasas and Arabic colleges came into existence in Malabar. Mass-participatory Salafi organizations were formed locally to implement and propagate these ideals. In 1947, KJU working committee decided to bring them all under one leadership. Since only scholars could become members of Kju, ordinary people were also included and Kerala Natwatul Mujahideen (KNM) was formed in 1950. The phase of KNM till 1970 can be called the phase of educational progress.

Struggles for women's education, freedom of worship, and debates with traditionalists laid the foundations of the Islahi movement. During this period, it can be seen that women are emerging in the field of education. An example of this is the growth of educational institutions under different associations. This period from 1950s to 70s is called the first phase of Kerala Naduvathul Mujahideen(KNM). But after the 70's the organization became very powerful and the working methods of the organization changed. The organization has got new energy through the decentralization process of the organization. With the formation of sub-organizations like ISM (Islamic Students Movement / MSM (Muslim Students Movements) / MGM (Muslim Girls Movements), a new phase for the Mujahid organization began. Women were given a place in the annual meetings of the KNM, Halima Beevi's speech is relevant here. After the 1950s, women scholars used to lecture at mujahid gatherings. Agenda as part of the women's empowerment plan is to bring women from mere literacy to higher education, and representation in workplaces and social spheres. The fact is that the Mujahideen movement became more organized towards women empowerment projects and women student youth organizations were formed but it was not possible to move forward with the old vigor. This can be understood when the activities of the women's sections of the organization and their publications are evaluated. Although Muslim women have access to Schools and Mosques, it is clear from a close analysis that the freedom granted by Islam in the family and social spheres is still far from Muslim women in Kerala. A comparison of post-seventies press releases and earlier writings shows that women have since regressed from the surge of the Renaissance in literary and intellectual fields. In this second phase, the process of women's advancement can be seen to change significantly, where women

in the organization become more submissive rather than empowered. This work tries to tell a micro-level investigation of the Kerala Muslim renaissance. It is not a linear history of advancement for women that can be seen in the process of Kerala Muslim religious reform movement.

This study is an endeavor to mark the history of a woman through the places she lives, the people around her and the words she speaks. It is a fact that even when Muslim women's lives in modern Kerala are trapped in the ideology of patriarchy, there was a group of women who questioned the priesthood and authority at one time. It is imperative in this era to mark the history of those women's struggles. Propose work attempt to critical re-examine the Muslim reform movement in Kerala with gender perspectives. However, the existing literature of Muslim reform movement tempt us to conclude that woman empowerment by reformers was simply a woman of modesty, chastity and obedient to the patriarchy.

Research Questions

- To examine contradictions in the Muslim reform movement in Kerala.
- To understand the contribution of the reform movement towards the empowerment of Muslim women.
- To explore the response of the domestic world towards the reform.
- To critically evaluate the role of Muslim organizations in reforming women
- To understand the resistance of women towards oppression.
- To critically examine the role of community reformers in bringing home those women in the public space

Study the interaction of women in the community with the pressures of modernity in the public. To study the interaction of women in the community with the pressures of modernity in the public space .

Review of Literature

In the evolving landscape of Islamic feminism, a notable contemporary dialogue between Islam and women has emerged, fostering a diverse range of literature and research on the experiences of Muslim women in Islamic societies. Scholars like Amina Wadud, Saba Mahmood, and Fathima Mernissi have played pivotal roles in articulating feminist discourses within an Islamic paradigm. This intellectual movement, rooted in a long tradition of revival in Islam, seeks to reconcile universal texts with local cultural assimilation. The exploration of Muslim communities, particularly the Mappila Muslims in Kerala, has garnered significant scholarly attention. Roland E. Miller's seminal work, "Mappila Muslims of Kerala," stands as a comprehensive examination of the community's heritage and its encounter with the modern era. Stephen Frederic Dale's, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922* is one of the few works dealing the formation of various organizations among the Muslim community. This work deals with the history of Muslims in Malabar from Portugues period, and the reflection of Sheik Zainudin Makhdoom in the community to the Mappila rebellion of 1921. M. M Abdul Samad's *Islam in Kerala Groups and Movements in the 20th century*, is a work on various organizations among the Muslims. reform movements like Jamaat-e Islami, Mujahid Movements, etc. and their role in the reform community is well analyzed in this work. also deal with the importance and role of education in the improvement of the condition of women.

While numerous historical analyses have documented the trajectory of Muslims in Kerala, a substantial gap exists in addressing the experiences of Muslim women within this social context. Historically, works such as Syed Mohideen Shah's *"Islam in Kerala"* and P. K. Muhammed Kunju's *"Muslimkalum Kerala Samskaravum"* offer insights into the broader history of Muslims in Kerala. However, the focus on women's experiences within the Muslim community has been a relatively recent development.

Scholars like J. Devika, G. Arunima, Pravina Kodoth, and K M Sheeba have played pivotal roles in employing feminist analyses to reevaluate existing literature, challenging accepted historical narratives, and bringing forth a more nuanced

understanding of gendered history in Kerala. G. Arunima's work, *"There Comes Papa: Colonialism and the Transformation of Materiality In Kerala, Malabar, 1850-1940"* critically examines the transformation of matriliney in Kerala during the colonial period, shedding light on legal, familial, and gender changes. J. Devika, in *"Engendering Individuals: the languages of Re-forming in 20th century Kerala"* explores how social reform movements in early modern Kerala were shaped by gender and individuality, challenging the simplistic narrative of women's emancipation. Pravina Kodoth's focus on the relationship between land reform and gender in Kerala offers valuable insights into the complex interplay of property rights, marriage forms, and family organizations. Despite the significant contributions of these scholars to the feminist analysis of women's history in Kerala, there remains a noticeable gap in research concerning the social engagements and historical experiences of Muslim women in the region. While L. R. S. Lakshmi's recent work, *"The Malabar Muslims: A Different Perspective,"* touches on some aspects of women's issues among the Mappilas, it signals the need for more dedicated studies to comprehensively explore the lived experiences and contributions of Muslim women in Kerala's social and cultural fabric. The existing literature, while rich in historical narratives, remains somewhat aloof in detailing the specific experiences of Muslim women, underscoring the importance of future research in this area.

There are few books and many articles in Malayalam discussing the issues of Muslim women in Kerala. Some of the notable Malayalam books include *"Ummamarkkoru Sankada Haraji"* (2008) and *"Pidakozhi Koovaruth"* (2015) written by MN Karassery, *"Keralathile Muslim Streekalude Varthamana Kaalam"* (2013) written by NP Hafiz Muhammad, *"Lingapadavikkum Newnapakshathinuidayil"* (2009) and *"Musleemum Streeyum Allaathaval"* (2015) written by Shamsad Hussain, and *"1921 Charitravarthamanangal"* (2015) written by P. Geetha. These books touch upon various aspects and issues of Muslim women in Kerala, including their socio-cultural engagements and presence in rebellions. However, the common lacuna in all of these works is the lack of historical analysis based on extensive literary and archival sources. While they are excellent in raising the issues, they fail to provide a detailed account of the history of Muslim women and their engagement in the socio-political

arena. Additionally, the majority of these works are monotonous in nature and poor in historical analysis. Moreover, they often represent the predetermined Orientalist depiction of a pitiable state of Muslim women. Hence, there is a need for more scholarly works that analyze the history of Muslim women in Kerala from a feminist perspective, and to bring forth their contributions and engagements in the socio-political arena.

Number of Ph. D theses and M. Phil dissertations has been come out discussing various aspects in connection with Muslim women in Kerala. Mumthas A. L. 's Ph. D. dissertation, "*Muslim Women in Malabar-Study in Social and Cultural Change*" (University of Calicut: 2008), is one of the earliest academic attempts to examine the changing perspectives on Muslim women in Malabar. The study analyzes the role of women in Islam and the genesis of Muslims in Kerala. However, as she herself says, this work is not a study on the gender perspective but approaches the women within the community. It only covers a period of fifty years after independence and does not attempt to locate the history of Muslim women in Kerala deeply or their engagement with their spheres of life. Another Ph. D thesis titled, Colonialism and Community formation in Malabar: A study of Muslims of Malabar. this work analyze the influence of colonialism in the community formation among the Muslims, it also studies the modernity and print media as a factor for spreadly a community feelings among the Mappila of Malabar.

Another Ph. D. dissertation titled "Socio-Economic Determinants of the Continuity of Matrilocal Family System among Mappila Muslims of Malabar" by NP Hafiz Mohamad (University of Calicut, 2010) is a sociological study that assesses the status of women in matrilocal families in Malabar. While these studies provide valuable insights into the lives of Muslim women in Malabar, they do not delve into the historical analysis of the region or provide a comprehensive account of the history of Muslim women and their engagement with the socio-political sphere.

However, the existing literature on Muslim women in Kerala is mainly in Malayalam and is limited in scope. While some works touch upon various aspects and issues faced by Muslim women, the majority of them lack historical analysis based on

extensive literary and archival sources. These writings tend to reinforce the Orientalist depiction of a pitiful state of Muslim women, without providing a nuanced understanding of their agency and experiences. There is a need for more comprehensive and rigorous research on the history of Muslim women in Kerala to provide a more nuanced and accurate portrayal of their lives and struggles. Sherin B. S's work focuses on the complexity of Muslim women's identity in Kerala and how it has been established and distinguished in various discourses. Her Ph. D. thesis titled "The Labyrinth of Dissonance: Islam and Women in Kerala" in questions popular image of Muslim women as victims of their religion and argues that feminist discourse has failed to accommodate Muslim women 's the experience. She believes that Muslim women have agency and can develop them function within system of domination and participate can critically in the construction of their identities.

Sherin's work highlights the politics of inclusion and exclusion that complicates the multiplicity of "Muslim woman" identity. She also notes the importance of considering the ethnic, cultural, and geographical heterogeneity when analyzing Muslim women's experiences. Her work adds a fresh perspective to the ongoing discourse on Muslim women's identity and provides valuable insights into the complexity of their experiences.

Source and Methodology

Based on the available sources scattered in public and private collections, this dissertation attempts to examine and re-read some of the social and cultural changes that Muslim women in Malabar have undergone. The research does not depart from existing literature, but rather builds on it. The study draws on both primary and secondary sources. The majority of the primary sources were collected from a range of institutions and collections, including Regional Archives - Kozhikode, C. H Chair-University of Calicut, Mahakavi Moinkutty Vaidyar Academy-Kondotty, Farook College Library- Farook, Madeenathul Uloom Library- Pulikkal, Sullamussalam Arabic College Library - Areacode, Appan Thampuran Library- Thrissur, Sahithya Academy Thrissur, Central Library of University of Kerala, Centre for Development Studies- Thiruvananthapuram, and personal collections of Abdurahman Mangad,

Kuttu sahib, etc. Personal interviews with numerous personalities who led reformist endeavors provided valuable information for the study. In addition, a large number of secondary sources, including books, journals, dissertations, newspapers, etc.

Apart from these published and unpublished works this study has made use of enormous data available in various online platforms for this study. Furthermore, the research also highlights the significance of information technology in historical research. It is important to note that despite the accumulation and analysis of an enormous amount of data, there is still room for further research to define the trends and historical roots of changes regarding Muslim women.

Organization of the Study

The present study is arranged thematically overlooking the presence of Muslim women in the history of Kerala and trying to analyze the question of reform. Thesis is organized in four chapters apart from introduction and conclusion. A trivial attempt to draw the evolution of Islam and Muslim community in Kerala and its subsequent interaction with the society has been made in the introduction of the thesis. The first chapter of the thesis is titled. "Placing Muslim women in the historical context of Kerala" It highlights the challenges of reconstructing women's presence in historical narratives due to the scarcity of historical evidence, particularly in terms of women's own literary compositions such as autobiographies and diaries. However, the chapter argues that it is still possible to redeem women's life histories through the study of literature and oral tradition, especially in Arab Malayalam literature. This chapter highlights the complex diversity of women within Muslim communities and the many factors that underpin this. Gender in relation to Muslim women since the 19th centuries; we celebrate the presence of women in both the told and untold stories.

This chapter also explores Muslim women's participation in the matrilineal system and the traditional educational system. This chapter also highlights the courageous efforts of Arakkal Beevis to resist colonial rule in Malabar and provides insight into the political and social activities of Muslim women in Kerala. Overall, the first chapter provides an important foundation for the subsequent analysis in the thesis,

highlighting the complexities of Muslim women's experiences in Kerala's history and their contributions to the cultural, social, and political life of the region.

The second chapter of the thesis titled "Revisiting the Muslim Reformers of Kerala: A Critique on the Question of Gender Equality" is an in-depth analysis of the reformist movements in Malabar and their impact on the patriarchy laid within the Muslim society. The purpose of this chapter is to synthesize and critically respond to the works of scholars who have studied Muslim women's issues in Kerala and to provide a critical evaluation of their approaches, methods, views, and results. This chapter delves into the dissemination of reformist ideas and their implementation in society. It presents an analytical narrative of the evolving gender consciousness among Kerala Muslims, detailing their journey towards socio-economic changes and organizational. The chapter seeks to comprehend the reformers' role in reshaping patriarchal thinking within Muslim communities and their endeavors formation to attain gender equality.

The third chapter entitled 'Breaking Thresholds: Changing the Concept of Muslim Women' on the emergence of a new generation of Muslim Women in Kerala during the period from the 1920s to the 1970s. This period signifies the rise of groups of women who played a pivotal role in shaping reform discourses and advocating women's rights. This chapter also explores the review of the writings and speeches of these women, including Haleema Beevi, Aisha Mayeen, Thankamma Malik, and others. And how they were challenges posed to patriarchal norms, delving into their perspectives on gender equality and women's rights. The chapter also highlights the role played by these women in the formation of women's organizations and their contribution to the process of women's empowerment. It examines the ways in which their engagement with traditional Islamic texts and reinterpretation on the women perspective. The chapter also explores the strategies adopted by these women to negotiate with the patriarchal structures and to create a space for themselves in the public sphere.

The fourth chapter entitled 'Revitalizing Patriarchy and Conditioning Muslim Women by Reform Organizations', focuses on the role of Islamic organizations in

defining the status and role of Muslim women in Kerala. This chapter is aimed at exploring the shift in the attitude of Muslim women towards patriarchy, which seemed to be more submissive and accepting, as compared to the earlier phase of reform, where women were more courageous in challenging the traditional values.

Similarly try to study of the organizations that emerged in Kerala in the Modern era, especially those that have emerged among women and youth. The rise of women's groups and the abundance of magazines for women have occurred during the period, and this chapter makes an attempt to study it in detail, as well as to see how the position of Muslim organization and women's involvement in the issues of Pardha and personal law was. The chapter tries to analyze how the project of the reform movement, which aimed to empower women, was reversed by the Islamic organizations, and how it affected the perception and self-perception of Muslim women.

CHAPTER I

PLACING MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF KERALA

The studies that evaluate from a feminist point of view are scarce in the ancient and medieval periods of the history of Kerala. But this scarcity has been overcome while assessing the modern period. The history of the new woman and the history of gender are discussed during this period. The formation of the public sphere brought about many changes in the social life of Kerala. The public sphere is formed by a number of associations, including newspapers, discussion forums, community reform groups, social service organizations, and libraries. It is a forum for discussion of issues that affect people in general. In the state of Kerala, India, historical observations reveal significant disparities in the accessibility of public spaces among various social strata, including both upper castes and lower castes. Likewise, gender segregation within these spaces is notably pronounced, with distinct societal realms demarcated for women and men. ¹

Throughout the 21st century, Malayalee women have achieved commendable milestones in diverse domains encompassing education, healthcare, and family planning within the region. They have also made significant inroads into government employment and have actively participated in national movements and labor unions. However, despite these accomplishments and increased visibility, an overarching question pertains to why the perceived value of these achievements remains modest. Addressing this concern became an imperative task during that era. Contrary to the notion that feminist thought in Kerala only emerged in the 1980s, it is critical to recognize that a prior generation of women had already been staunch advocates for women's rights, using assertive language. They were conspicuously engaged in Kerala's public sphere from the 1920s. Their historical contributions persistently hold

¹ J Devika, 'the Esthetic women, re-forming bodies and early 20th century Kerala', *Social Scientist*, Vol, 8, pp. 28-29

relevance today as they engaged in criticism and overt opposition to the entrenched patriarchal attitudes of male intellectuals during their time. In the 19th century, Kerala earned the moniker "Pennarasunadu, " signifying a land governed by women². This nomenclature might suggest certain privileges accorded to women within familial practices, particularly in matrilineal systems. Within the matrilineal framework, property rights were transmitted from one generation to the next through women, thereby conferring them with elevated social status and value. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that not all of Kerala adhered to the matrilineal "marumakkathaya" system, as some followed the patrilineal "makkathaya" system, wherein family lineage was determined through male progeny. . Additionally, there were instances of mixed systems, such as "Makkathayam Marumakkathayam, " practiced by certain communities like the Ezhavas. Despite these nuanced variations, it is noteworthy that women did not wield considerable formal power uniformly across Kerala. Consequently, it would be inaccurate to assert the presence of a cohesive feminist ideology or feminine philosophy applicable uniformly to all women within Malayalee society in Kerala .The caste system in Kerala dictated distinct gender norms and expectations for individuals based on their caste affiliation. These gender standards were not uniform but varied significantly across different communities. Within this context, it is important to note that the prevailing notion of ideal femininity within the Malayalam Brahmin community did not necessarily apply to Nair women and women from lower castes. Each caste group adhered to its own set of regulations and practices concerning gender roles and conduct. However, it was often the Brahmin community that held the authority to shape and modify the legal and societal norms pertaining to women. For instance, historical arguments were made by certain individuals that Shudra women in Kerala were exempt from the obligation of preserving their virginity, drawing upon references from texts like the Kerala Mahatmyam³.

² Ibid., p. 34.

³ The authorship and precise date of composition for the text known as the "Kerala Mahatmyam" remain shrouded in uncertainty. This text exists in both Sanskrit and Malayalam versions, and its origins remain unattributed and undated.

Uma Chakravathi's meticulous analysis delves into the caste system's intricacies and the concomitant restrictions imposed on women within Indian society. This prevailing dominance in Indian society has been termed "Brahminical Patriarchy." Within this framework, women belonging to the upper castes were often perceived as instruments for the perpetuation of the upper caste lineage, while lower caste women were often subjected to servitude for the upper castes, including meeting their sexual needs⁴. This system served the dual purpose of upholding not only patrilineal inheritance but also caste purity. It was believed that the purity of the caste was intricately linked to the purity of women within that caste. The Marumarakkal (those who wear upper garments) or Melmundu agitation constituted a protracted struggle orchestrated by women belonging to lower castes in Kerala, aimed at securing their fundamental right to attire themselves in the manner they desired. This movement can be characterized as a resolute endeavor to assert autonomy over their bodies, encompassing choices regarding clothing, modesty, and expressions of sexuality⁵. In the traditional Hindu caste hierarchy prevalent in Kerala, Channar women were systematically denied the privilege of donning veils. Notably, Christian Channar women were afforded a degree of freedom to wear loose-fitting jackets or blouses, a clothing choice that was introduced and encouraged by missionary women, who were actively engaged in proselytizing efforts within the region. These missionary activities commenced in South Travancore during the early nineteenth century and were accompanied by initiatives aimed at providing educational opportunities to the newly converted community. It is during this phase that young girls belonging to the Channar community gained access to formal education, marking a significant development in their social trajectory⁶.

In 1813, Colonel Monroe issued a directive stipulating that Christian women should wear a specific robe attire, distinct from Hindu women who were advised not

⁴ Uma Chakravathi, 'Conceptualizing Brahminical Patriarchy in India: Gender, Caste, Class and State': Economic and Political weekly, vol-5, April, 1993, p. 579.

⁵ J Devika, *Engendering Individuals, A study of Gender and individualisation in Reform Language in Modern Kerala, 1880-1950*, New Delhi, Orient BlackSwan 1997, p. 22.

⁶ C Abimanyu, *Ayyankali (Mal)*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala state department of culture, 1990, p 34.

to wear upper garments. However, an incident occurred in Kalkulam in 1822 when some Channar women ventured into the marketplace wearing jackets. This action led to confrontations, including instances where Nair women forcibly removed the jackets worn by Channar women. In response, Channar women sought the assistance of Christian missionaries to address their grievances. Reverend Mid, a prominent missionary figure, initiated legal proceedings in the Padmanabhapuram Court, resulting in a verdict in favor of the Channar and Christian women. The court's judgment affirmed that, since the Channers had converted to Christianity, they were entitled to the same rights and privileges accorded to Christians. Consequently, it was deemed legally permissible for Christian Channar women to wear the robe attire. This conversion can be interpreted as a response to racial oppression, reflecting a pursuit of newfound freedoms and a challenge to the oppression previously experienced within their own caste system. The Melmundu (upper garments) struggle serves as a poignant illustration of how women's social mobility can be constrained through the regulation of their clothing choices. This struggle underwent various phases over time, with escalating hostilities directed at women who dared to wear jackets and upper garments, eventually leading to violent riots. The upper-caste patriarchy, in their efforts to retain the converted Channar people within the lower-caste Hindu fold, intensified their suppression. During the period around 1858, the Melamundu agitation reached its zenith, marked by the destruction of Christian churches and a school. Subsequently, in 1859, following the intervention of the Governor of Madras, Maharaja Utradam Thirunal Marthanda Varma issued an edict granting women the unrestricted liberty to clothe themselves in any manner that aligned with their individual values and sensibilities⁷. This edict marked a significant development in the evolution of the struggle for women's autonomy over their attire and bodies.

The body of women in each caste is governed not only by the caste system but also by the patriarchal system. It is important to analyze the nature of the patriarchal system in each period and how its functions affect women at different times. In Kerala in the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, the restrictions and regulations imposed

⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

on women regarding dress were one of the many examples of the apparent and definite nature of feudal patriarchy. It was a condition of caste patriarchy that women of each caste should dress uniquely that their caste can be identified by their dress⁸. These provisions were implemented in various ways among the women belonging to the Hindu caste. Ezhava women, Pulaya women, and women belonging to lower castes were not allowed to wear top garments and dress below the knee. "Women in Kerala used to walk with only a scarf around their waists, or if any woman covers her breasts in an unusual way, she would take off her top garments with the fear that the upper castes would be said to be "arrogantly disguised" when she saw them⁹The dressing conventions during that era served as a constant reminder of the inherent inequalities among women. A striking example of this disparity was evident when Namboothiri women, known as *antherjangangal*, venture outdoors, meticulously concealing their bodies from head to toe. In stark contrast, Nair women, who were often accompanied by Brahmin women, adorned themselves in a manner that left their breasts exposed, foregoing the use of upper garments¹⁰ Such disparities extended to the regulation of female bodies across various castes, thereby shedding light on the differing sexual, moral, and social statuses assigned to each category. Lower caste women, notably, did not harbor the same sense of shame regarding their nudity. This divergence in perception can be attributed to the fact that these women, bound by the strictures and customs of caste-based patriarchy concerning their bodies, nudity, and sexuality, were devoid of personal or societal agency¹¹.

The Brahmin community imposed strict restrictions on Brahmin women within the Malayalee community. Women held limited value in terms of family lineage, and property rights were determined through men. Adult women were prohibited from interacting with men, and they were expected to engage in household

⁸ J Devika, op. cit., p. 34.

⁹ P Baskarunni, Pathonbadham Nootandile Keralam (Mal), Thrissur, Kerala Sahithya Academy 1988, p. 48.

¹⁰ P K Balakrishnan, Jaathivyavasthayum Kerala Charithravum (Mal), Kottayam, Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangam, 1983, p. 34.

¹¹ J Devika, op. cit., pp. 44.

chores from the age of eight. Young unmarried girls were required to observe strict fasting rituals to secure a suitable husband. Namboothiri women were allowed to leave their homes only when fully covered with cloth and a large veil, accompanied by servants¹². The play "Marakkudaykkullile Mahaa Narakam" was staged as part of the Namboothiri Reform Movement in the 1930s, shedding light on the severe injustices endured by women in the traditional Namboothiri way of life. Namboothiri women faced confinement and were restricted from interacting with anyone other than their husbands, fathers, uncles, and brothers after marriage. The patrilineal order followed by the Namboothiri community had a significant impact on women, especially when only the eldest member of the family could marry within their own caste and seek relationships outside the community. As a result, a considerable number of women remained unmarried, often becoming the third or fourth wives of elderly Namboothiri men. These women endured a life of limited freedom and persecution within domestic spaces. The oppressive circumstances prompted some Namboothiri women to revolt against the patriarchal and moral system of their community, leading to a significant upheaval in the social life of Kerala. Kuriyedath Thathri was a prominent figure in this uprising, marking the beginning of a movement to challenge the traditional way of life for Namboothiri women. The emergence of the social reform movement within the Namboothiri community, driven by men, can be attributed to the pressure generated by the influential rebellion initiated by Thatrikutty. During that period, strict laws were imposed on women's sexuality as part of property transfer and the preservation of inheritance purity. Distinct laws were maintained for men and women, and the concept of female virginity was defined within dangerous boundaries. If there were any doubts about a woman's virginity, she would be subjected to a rigorous trial, where mere suspicion was enough ("Shanka mati sangam venda" – doubt is sufficient, no need for intercourse)¹³. The Brahmin woman who became a victim of such doubt was labeled as 'Sadhanam'¹⁴. The custom of "smartha vijaram" was created to exert

¹² Baskarunni, op. cit., p. 45.

¹³ Baskarunni, Op. cit.

¹⁴ Literally means an object denoting in the grammatical sense the object from which a subject could ask questions to the elicit response from.

patriarchal control over women's bodies and sexuality. Kuriyedath Thatri's "smartha vijaram" in 1905 revealed the harsh reality of Namboothiri women's lives in Kerala. Thatri's account, spanning six months and three days from November 11, 1905, to July 14, 1905¹⁵, sheds light on the dependent lives of Namboothiri women and the exploitation of their sexuality due to that dependency.

Devika Narikattiri, Aryapallam, Lalithambika Antharjanam, and Priya Dutt Kallat stand as prominent figures who have played pivotal roles in advocating for transformative change in the lives of women within the Namboothiri community¹⁶. During this era, as an integral part of the reform movement, women who aspired to break free from the constraints of the Namboothiri community made a bold decision to step out from under the metaphorical "marakkuda" (umbrella) and embrace modern attire, thereby taking control of their destinies. In the early 1930s, under the auspices of the Namboothiri Yogakshema Sabha, women made the courageous choice to break free from traditional norms. They actively participated in the reform movement by engaging in acts of protest against practices like second and third marriages, advocating against such unions, and supporting widow remarriage. These actions, although undertaken in the knowledge that they could face excommunication, demonstrated the Namboothiri women's resolve to challenge the entrenched patriarchy within their community, including their participation in inter-caste marriages and communal dining¹⁷. Namboothiri men, who themselves were involved in reformist organizations initiated by women, championed diverse activities and perspectives through their slogans. The play "Thozhil Kendrathilekk¹⁸", authored and staged by the Intuition Society, used powerful language to encourage women to break free from family constraints that undermined their self-esteem, personality, and opinions, and to instead pursue their own work and life paths. The works "Adukkalayil

¹⁵ Cherayi Ramdas, Thatri Vihararekagal (Mal), Samakalika Malayalam Varika, 2006, p. 32.

¹⁶ T K Anandhi, Jenekiya Samarangalil Malabarinte Penpaadhagal (Mal), Thrissur, Kerala Shasthra Sahithiya Parishath, 2006, p. 35.

¹⁷ C S Chandrika, Keralathinte Stree Charithrangal Streemunnettangal (Mal), Kottayam, DC Books, 2016, p. 181.

¹⁸ Thozhilkendrethilekk, Thrissur, Andarjanasamajam, 1948.

Ninnu Arangathekk, "Marakkudaykkullile Mahanaragam," and "Ritumati" all center on the theme of rescuing women through marriage, highlighting the pitfalls Namboothiri women encountered when they ventured onto the stage, only to be drawn back into their homes. These plays, while centered on the idea of saving women's lives through matrimony, fail to address the issue of women's freedom. A comparative analysis of these benevolent plays can be found in "Thozhil Kendrathilekk," which represents the first organized expression of self-determination by Namboothiri women in Kerala. Namboothiri women in the societal sphere recognized that self-sufficiency held greater significance for the empowerment of women than marriage. This reflected the proactive stance adopted by the Namboothiri Women's Society in their pursuit of women's emancipation. The journey of Namboothiri women, transitioning from the confines of their kitchens to the stage, embodies a significant chapter in history. Likewise, the women's movement within each community possesses its own unique narrative and trajectory.

The status of women within the Nayar community was characterized by its distinctiveness and controversial nature. The community adhered to the Marumakkathayam system, a matrilineal mode of inheritance, alongside the Sambandam system, which involved an alliance between a Namboothiri man and a Nayar woman¹⁹. This unique societal structure obligated Nayar women to engage in cohabitation or display the intention to do so, while being unable to attain the position of a traditional wife. Consequently, polyandry became prevalent within the Nayar community, stemming from this customary framework. Despite these dynamics, the social standing of Nair women, specifically within the matrilineal system, was comparatively more favorable. They enjoyed the privilege of selecting their spouses and had the autonomy to terminate relationships according to their own volition²⁰. Nevertheless, Nayar women confronted significant challenges due to their marginalized social position. They were objectified as sexual commodities, primarily catering to the desires of men. A degrading ritual required Nayar women to expose

¹⁹ Renjini, *Nair Women Today, Disintegration of Matrilineal system and the status of Nair women in Kerala*, New Delhi, Classical Publishing House, 2000, p. 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

their breasts and remove their upper garments in the presence of Brahmins, signifying a display of deference. Additionally, customs like Thalikkettukalyanam, Pulappedi, and Mannapedi further perpetuated the objectification of women, reducing them to instruments of male entertainment. These cultural practices exacerbated the hardships endured by Nair women during that era.

Lower caste women played a direct and active role in the anti-caste movements that held a prominent position in the history of the Kerala Renaissance. These women actively engaged in the struggle to liberate themselves from the constraints imposed on their self-esteem and, in many instances, initiated independent movements. Historical records consistently highlight the presence of women in various roles, including those of sacrifice, intellectual contributions, physical labor, and emotional support. However, it becomes apparent that women from the untouchable caste experienced different fortunes. In numerous instances, they engaged in struggles both individually and collectively. Their access to education and liberation from hereditary occupations enabled them to attain improved living conditions, freedom of movement, family life, sartorial choices, and access to material and spiritual resources. The participation of women in local resistance against caste-based discrimination, as evident in the movements led by figures like Ayyankali and Poykayil Appachan, was substantial. Notable women such as Kumarakom Chinnamma, Pachi Amma, and Kuliri, affiliated with the PRDS movement, actively contributed to the Ayyankali movement²¹. Lower-caste individuals constituted an inconspicuous segment in the social sphere, engaging in various occupations across Kerala. Besides performing productive work for the upper-caste landowners, they also undertook domestic tasks in upper-caste households. Tragically, they were often assigned the degrading task of satisfying the sexual desires of upper-caste men. While physical contact was the linchpin of the Kerala caste system, this impurity was not considered applicable in this context, with the belief that it could be cleansed through washing. As lower-caste individuals began transitioning from agricultural labor to employment in workshops during the twentieth century, the arduous efforts of lower-

²¹ Darwin, Nad Unarthiya Porattangal (Mal), Thiruvandapuram, Chindha Publishers, 2008, p. 132.

caste women, who cleared forests in search of farmland, were vividly portrayed in literary narratives. These women effectively undertook tasks traditionally associated with men, while within the family structure, they enjoyed comparatively greater independence, with divorce being a more accessible option. Practices such as widow marriage and remarriage were prevalent, and they had the freedom to relocate from their place of birth to another²². Notably, it was common for them to openly voice disagreements within the family, and decisions were often made with their active participation. Lower-caste women have long experienced a higher degree of equality within their families. Alexander's account underscores their active involvement in agricultural workers' unions and factory organizations, independently of their husbands²³. Nonetheless, the study suggests that Nair and Ezhava women in the cashew sector often awaited the consent of their working husbands. The women in the lower castes were laborers with control over their wages, and they were not restricted from attending public places. This scenario was particularly evident in the 1940s during the zenith of the Left movement, when Dalit women became increasingly visible in public spaces. This marked a transition from their caste-defined roles to a more modern female identity.

Muslim Women in Kerala

It is important to respect and value the diversity within the Islamic community, including the various cultural practices and experience of Muslim women. muslim women kerala have their own unique traditions and experiences that set them apart from other muslim women in India. It is essential to acknowledge and comprehend these distinctions rather than attempting to homogenize or avoid a singular narrative when it comes to the varied experiences of Muslim women. Historically, women in general have often been marginalized or underrepresented in conventional historical accounts, with their roles and contributions relegated to the background. In the case

²² Anna Lindberg, *Experience and Identity, Historical Account of Class, Caste and Gender among the Cashew Workers of Kerala 1930-2000*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 2015, p. 24.

²³ T M Yesudas, *Caste Gender and Knowledge: Towards a Dalit Feminist Perspective*, Delhi, Grassroots Politics Colloquium, 1995, p. 32.

of muslim women, this has been particularly pronounced due to intersecting factors of gender and religious identity. feminist writings emerging after the 1980s have introduced several methodologies to incorporate the narrative of Muslim women into the broader discourses of history. These approaches involve conducting research that develop into previously marginalized sources such as women's diaries, letters, and oral histories, in order to offer a more comprehensive insight into their lived experiences. Additionally, scholarly examination of religious text and theological interpretations has played a pivotal role in illuminating the evolving roles and rights of muslim women within the context of Islamic traditions. Various local variations existed in the culture of muslim women. it was noted by the Governor of Madras, Sir Arthur Lawley in 1907 that mappila women in the region did not traditionally wear veils and enjoyed a certain degree of freedom²⁴. Qadir huzain khan's book "South Indian Musalman"(1910) further observed that Mappila women were more likely to seek divorce and pursue remarriage, possibly due to the influence of Arab traditions and the prevalence of polygamy in their communities²⁵. These observations suggest that Muslim women may have had some sense of independence compared to other communities women in the region.

It is important to recognize and respect the diversity of experiences and traditions within the Islamic community. Since there are many social, geographical, economical and religious differences, it is not possible to generalize the social situations of Muslim women in Kerala. It is also observable that differences between women of urban areas and rural areas, from wealthy families and from poor families, of educated background and uneducated background, professionals and housewives, matrilineal and patrilineal, etc. It is generally alleged that Muslim women were the most marginalized group who availed less access to outside world comparing to women in other community. They were taught to be obedient and homely from childhood and their characters were constructed according to a gender appropriate social system. Generally, proper schooling was not encouraged for Muslim girls but

²⁴ The Fifth tour of H. E the Hon Arthur Lawley, Governor of Madras to Malabar on September 13th to 24th, Madras, 1907, Regional Archives, p. 55, Kozhikode (rak).

²⁵ Kader Huzain Khan, South Indian Musalmans, 1910, p. 123.

given instructions from Madarasa. They had got fewer chances to venture out of community boundaries. Their movements were closely observed and controlled by their families and their communities. At the same time, they were provided their own spaces in ceremonies and customs by which the Muslim women's life never became a life within the ghettos but an 'exclusive female world'. Marriage was considered the first and most desirable goal of a woman's life²⁶. The husband had traditionally accepted and legitimized domestic authority over his wife and family.

Writing an engendered history, or a history that considers the experiences and perspectives of women, can be challenging due to the lack of evidence and representation of certain marginalized groups, such as Muslim Women. However oral History and literary tradition can be used to retrieve the voices of these apparently voiceless individuals and reveal their history²⁷. By using oral history, it is expected to gain a deeper understanding of the personal experiences and perspectives of muslim women and their role in shaping their society. In the case of muslim women, the literary tradition is important to understanding their past. In the context of Kerala, muslim women's early social, cultural and political life can be difficult to collect. However, Arabi-malayalam and Arabic compositions, directly or indirectly, depict the deeds and thoughts of women and thus the early history of muslim women is largely traced in the literary tradition. From the beginning of 17th centuries, a new type of poetical composition developed in Malabar in called arabi-malayalam . around 6000 works have been composed in arabi Malayalam dialect out of this 1000 might have been printed to print. ²⁸ Social life of Malabar muslims had related to Arabic Malayalam literatures, printing culture brought about a revolution in the transmission of knowledge. It transformed the oral transmission in which knowledge was passed in

²⁶ Ajmal Muyeen, A Historical probing in to the life and realm of Muslim women in Malabar (1990-1970), unpublished thesis, Kannur University, 2018.

²⁷ Oral history is a method of collecting and preserving historical information through the use of interviews and other forms of verbal communication. It has a long tradition in many cultures and has been used to or preserve culture knowledge and tradition that may not have been recorded in written form.

²⁸ M. N Karassery, Arabic Malayalam, in Asgar Ali Engineer (ed.), Kerala Muslims: A Historical Perspective, New Delhi, 1995, p. 109.

the middle age, . . muslim ulama groups would have been deeply concern about the introduction of printing. muslim might have come to adopt printing probably when they felt that Islam itself was at stake and print was a necessary weapon in defense of the faith. ²⁹in the first half of 19th centuries Hermen Gundert established the Basel Mission press at Tellichery from where Christian missionaries printed books from here. . Muslims of Malabar could not depend upon them instead they were printed from Bombay Arabic litho press had already been established. one-man Tikukil Kunjaahmed had worked with the basel mission press and later he was established a printing press arabi-malayalam at tellicherry. ³⁰ This made a great opportunity for the people of Ponnani, Tirurangadi, Valapattanam, etc. Printing culture of Malabar became a key agent of transition of Mappila community. The significant role of literature and print culture in shaping and reflecting the social structure of a society. Literary works act as mirrors of contemporary social attitudes, moral ideals, and the psyche of a given society. They offer valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of various social groups, allowing researchers to better understand the social life of a particular time and place. Studying literary production can provide a window into the developments and changes occurring within society, making it a crucial tool for sociocultural analysis. It enables us to trace the evolution of societal norms, values, and ideologies over time. The example of feminist poets Fahmida Riaz and Kishwae Naheed and their poetry in the context of the Islamization of Pakistan highlights the power of contemporary poetry in analyzing the social dynamics of a specific period³¹. Their work can shed light on the challenges and transformations experienced by women in Pakistan during this period and the broader sociopolitical context in which their poetry emerged. Mappilapattu, a form of poetry and song central to the Muslim community in Kerala, serves as another case in point. It plays a crucial role in the daily lives of Muslims, allowing them to express a range of emotions

²⁹ Robin Jeffrey, Testing Concepts about Print, Newspaper and Politics: Kerala, India 1800-2009, Journal Asian Studies, Vol. 68, pp. 468.

³⁰ P. P. Razak, Colonial and Community Formation in Malabar: A Study of Muslim of Malabar, unpublished Ph. D Dissertation, Dept of History University of Calicut, 2000, p. 227.

and convey social aesthetics, cultural representations, and social criticism. This form of cultural expression is deeply intertwined with the Muslim community's way of life and offers an intricate glimpse into their multifaceted nature.

Muslim Women and the Literary Atmosphere

It has been argued that cultural cornerstones of Kerala history are Arabic Malayalam and the Mappila literature based on it. It can be said that the Arabs had contributed significantly to the socio economic and cultural revival efforts of Kerala³². Since ancient times, they have had trading links with Kerala. By maintaining these connections, Islam took root in Kerala society has been enriched by the language and culture of the Arabs in a variety of ways. Such cultural fusion gave rise to Arabic Malayalam and its literature a vast number of poets, writers, and singers have contributed to the cultural discourse of Mappila literature³³. There have been very few authentic studies on the origin, growth and evolution of Arabic Malayalam literature. Arabi-Malayalam was the general writing system of Malayali Muslims, which is a way of writing Malayalam by adding small symbols in Arabic. However, this script allows for the writing of all the letters in both Arabic and Malayalam. However, it is hard to ascertain exactly when the Arabic- Malayalam script system was derived. It is believed to have a history of at least 500 years. This script was popular in Malabar, Kochi, Travancore and Lakshadweep³⁴. Books and newspapers were published in Arabic Malayalam. These works written in Arabic Malayalam are referred to as Arabic Malayalam literature. It has both poetry and prose. Malapattukal (mala songs) are the earliest Arabic Malayalam compositions. One of the earliest malappaattu is Muhiyuddin Mala³⁵. Chants glorifying the virtues, battle songs describing holy wars, Essays containing religious guidelines, quizzes on sacred histories, cases involving love and bravery, letters of love and longing, wedding hymns praising female beauty

³² C. K. Karim, *Keralathinteyum Kerala Muslingaludeyum Charithram* (Mal), Edappally, 1997, pp. 91-92.

³³ M. N. Karessery, *Op. cit.*, p. 110.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³⁵ K K Muhammed Abdul Kareem, C N Ahmed Moulavi, *Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Paryambarayam* (Mal), Tirurangadi, 1975, p. 426.

and grace. . . This genre of poetry has a wide range of variations. it is widely beilived that the muhiuddin maala, which is considered the inception of the Maala song genre, marks the genesis of arabi Malayalam literature the author of this work, as indicated in the text itself, is identified as QAZI Muhammad from Calicut, and the composition date is recorded as 782 (1607AD)³⁶ Muhiuddin Mala is based on the life stories and miraculous deeds of Muhiuddin Shaikh, who was born and brought up in Jeelani, Persia. Other important malas are Badar Mala, Rifai Mala, Nafeesat Mala, Mampurum Mala, Malappuram Mala, etc. Malapat exhibits the highest level of religious devotion.

This time period is distinguished by the popularity of Kissa songs (kissappaatt). Madinatul Kissapat, Ibrahim Nabi Kissa and other writings were an attempt to add colour to the Islamic life of devotion and sacrifice. The 19th century was a time of great spiritual fervour in Mappila art, dealing with an internal struggle for Mappila social survival in the presence of a foreign administration. Their peaceful commercial dominance in the Arabian Sea threatened a close partnership with the Portuguese. At that time, the Muslim community was compelled to take a stance. Similarly, the themes of the struggles were to enable people's lives to contend with the violent political practices of European colonialism and the intense political experiences of radical alienation. All Padappaattukal are composed in Malabar regions with active Mappila agitations, such as Eranad and Valluvanad. The wars and other events of Islamic history were the subjects of these war songs, and they were drawn from the glorious history of the liberation campaigns of their forefathers against the native powers. The early wars of Islamic history, local struggles against foreign powers and some mythical stories were depicted in Padappattu. Many historical events in Islamic history were popularised through padappattu, including the Badr padappattu, Uhdpadappattu, Makkam Fatah padappattu, and Khyber padappattu³⁷The narrative style of Padappat, which includes a detailed analysis of each incident, spread a thorough understanding of history among the Mappila. The heroic history of the indigenous anti-imperialist Mappila movements held in areas like Malappuram,

³⁶ Ibid., p. 428.

³⁷ Prof. Sayyad Mohiyudhin Shah, Arabic Malayalam (Mal), Thallechery, in C. K. Kareem (ed.) O Abdu Smaraka Grandham, O Abdu Smaraka Committee, 1982, p. 12.

Omanur, Cherur, Mannarkkad, Manjeri. In order to link these historical experiences with the passionate experiences of local history, the heroic history of the native anti-imperialist Mappila movements held in places like Malappuram, Omanur, Cherur, Mannarkkad and Manjeri became the theme of padappaattu³⁸.

In the meantime, that these historical events were being narrated, another kind of battle songs were composed that created fictional and romantic characters. Balakrishnan Vallikkunnu addresses these kinds of songs “Such romanticised writing can be interpreted as an act of self-preservation by a conservative priesthood that is passive and constrained against the disgruntled youth. ³⁹”Cherur Padappattu is a unique composition that made padappaattu so well-known. Completed in 1845 (Hijri 1261, Rajab 10), the Cherur Padappattu is a seminal work that displeased both local and international forces. Composed by Muhiudin Muhammad Kutty, native of Cherur, this song narrates the heroic history of the legendary Mappila campaign in 1843 near Tirurangadi. This incident, in which 7 fighters perished in battle against British forces, greatly fueled all subsequent struggles. Therefore, the British authorities banned this Padappatt campaign and the incident of Padappaatt being confiscated by the British authorities has been reported⁴⁰. Mannarkkad Padappatt describes the history of Mappila warriors who fought against the British army at Mannarkkad in 1891.

Among the notable writers of Mappilapat are Kunjai Musliar, the author of Nool Mala and Kappapaat, Abdul Qader Mastan, the master of philosophical songs, Chetuvayi Parikutty, the master of Hutuhushmam, Chakiri Badar by Chakiri Moithinkutty, Mundambra Unni Muhammad, the author of Karbala, and Shujai Moithu Musiyar, the author of Safalamala⁴¹. . Mappila Song is not merely a community's leisure time entertainment. These songs are closely related to the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁹ Balakrishnan Vallikkunnu, Samskarika Aikyavum Mappila Pattukalum, Sukrtham Monthly (Mal), Mappilappattu Special Issue, Vol. 1, Issue 5, April, 1982.

⁴⁰ P K Yaser Arafath, Malapattukal: Charithram Rashtreeyam, Prethirodham (Mal.), Bodhanam, Quarterly Journal, Vol. 15, Issue 13, July-September, 2014, p. 16.

⁴¹ V P Muhamadali, Mappilapattukal Nootandukaliloode (Mal), Kottayam, Current Books, 2007, p. 22.

circumstances of their daily life. They held the opinion that anything novel that could be seen, heard, or felt became the focus of Mappilapat. You can see the comical thengappaatt (coconut song) and mangappaatt (mango song)⁴². You can find a large selection of wedding songs and kissa songs. There are romantic works also among these. Badrul Munir Husnul Jamal kissappaatt, Saubhagya Sundari, Kathuppaatt (letter songs), women songs, lamenting poems, nercha pattukal, wedding songs, etc can also be seen. Songs are sung on the death anniversaries of Sufis and martyrs. Mawlud hymns or songs are seen in connection with events like childbirth, and housewarming, marriage, circumcision and harvest in the country. Malapattukal are the earliest compositions in Arabic Malayalam. Following Muhiudhin Mala, the same century saw the composition of Ahmadul Kabir Rifqi Mala, Izzath Mala, Naseehath Mala, etc. These songs exemplify the devotional attitude that grew in Mappila literature parallel to the devotional writings of the writer Cherusseri. These poems can be characterized as praising the sacrifices of pious men, much like devotional poems. The Muslims used to fervently repeat the mala chants in the expectation of gaining blessings. Such writings are the hymns of the pious souls who have prepared their lives in the path of devotion and attained spiritual ascension. Maalappattukal are compositions that deal with the miraculous events in the lives of such holy souls known as Ouliya. Tasawwal is the term for spiritual wisdom in Islam. Many philosophical sufi's formulated their own theories regarding the many levels of Tasawwuf, and each of their adherents became recognised as a different sect. The paths taken by each section are known to as Thareeqath ⁴³. Each of them came to be known by the name of its founder. Muhidin Mala, Rifaee Maala, Shaduli Maala, and other compositions were led in a similar manner.

Certain compositions were regarded with a sense of sanctity, as it was believed that singing and listening to them would enhance the religious devotion of the common people. In Hindu households in Kerala, works like Thunjath Ezhuttachchan's Ramayana, Poonthanam's Jnanappana, and Cherussery's Krishna Gatha were recited

⁴² M N Karasseri, Op. cit., p. 34.

⁴³ Thareeqth generally refers to the spirital part of Islam, its rectification and purification, come under a branch that call thareeqth.

daily. Similarly, Mala hymns were employed in Muslim households. Malas played a significant role in popularizing the Muslim devotional movement, even though they weren't strict Islamic texts. Just as the Ramayana epics, despite not being classified as religious texts, played a nurturing role in the Hindu devotional movement. In the first half of the 20th century, the reformist trends emerging in the Mappila social sphere led to ideological tensions in the literary representation of the Mappila community. In the first half of the 20th century, the reforming tendencies that grew in the Mappila social field sparked ideological tensions in the literary representation of the Mappilas. The reformers regarded the Malas as wholly anti-religious works, whilst the conservative faction associated them with religion. However, it was impossible to dismiss the notion that Mala was deeply ingrained in the community. New experimental forms like Parishkara mala, Durachara mala, and Kaathukuth mala began to emerge⁴⁴.

Kissappaattukal (Kissa Songs)

Kissa is the Malayalam adaptation of the Arabic word 'Qissa' which means 'stories'. Many passages of the Holy Qur'an make use of narrative cues to illustrate central truths and Islamic consciousness. The stories related to the Prophets, stories of disasters and destruction given to the people who lean on evil ways. . There are several Kissa songs that have little to do with Quranic narrations, such as Malik Dinar Kissa and Timur Kissa, as well as many Kissa songs that are primarily tied to Quranic narrations, such as Balkis Kissa, Nabi Kissa, and Sulaiman Nabi Kissa. The general characteristic of Kissa is a romantic approach, and Kissa songs have brought Mappilapat to the level of human emotion. It is interpreted as an elegy for the expressive freedom of rebellious youth. Saubhagya Sundari (Chetuvai Parikutty) and Badarul Muneer Husunul Jamal (Moinkutty Vaidyar), these are the works that have given expression to the love, lust and longing inherent in men and women⁴⁵. Through such kissa songs, the prohibitions of the priesthood, which had pushed aside the

⁴⁴ O Abu, Op. cit., p. 123.

⁴⁵ Balakrishnan Vallikkunn, *Sthreepakshavayanyude Mappila Padantharangal (Mal)*, Calicut, 2012, p. 37.

expressions of the innate emotions of human nature such as male and female love, were violated to a limited extent. The context of feminist reading in Mappila literature is not formed in the context of the moral principles of Islam, instead, the presence of feminism can be seen only in the context of the Mappila literary tradition. Only a few indications of female characters in literature can be found, like the wafathpattukal of the Prophet;s wives Khadija and Ayesha Beevi, female characters displaying the devotional ideas of Nafisat Mala and Aishat Mala, and female conflicts in wedding songs.

The most well-known renowned poet in Arabic Malayalam, Moyinkutty Vaidyar, was born in Kondotty in 1852, which is now part of the Malappuram district. At the age of 20, he published his first work, Badarul Munir Husunul Jamal, which introduced the concept of love to the Arabic-Malayalam branch. In the works of Moinkutty Vaidyar, it is possible to see the female mentioned in a proper way. Three types of feminine imagery can be identified in Vaidyar;s works. One is the representation of women in human history, such as Kizhavi in Kilthimala,⁴⁶ Muslim housewives in Malappuram Padappaatt, like Badarul Munir Husunul Jamal heroine Husnuljamal. Second comes characters from the level of historical realism or romanticism attributed to history. For example, the prophets sister Atiqabivi in Badar Padappat⁴⁷ and the prophet;s daughter Fatima Beevi in Moola Puran. Thirdly, characters from the realm of romanticism, such as the Jinn category, are encountered in his poetry. These characters are in the spirit of a mysterious illusion.

While its challenging at assert that the women depicted in vaidyar’s poems accurately represent the women of their era, they should be seen as reflections of the poem’s societal values. Take for instance, how the feminine qualities of Prophet’s daughter Fathima are portrayed in “MoolaPuranam” this song centers on the post marriage lives of Fathima and her husband Ali. What vaidyar conveys here is not a strict adherence to the historical background of Fathima as presented in the Quran, but rather an emphasis on the influence of clan and tribal identity stemming from it. The

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 40-44.

context in which Fathima is depicted in MoolaPuranam highlights her admiration for her own femininity over her husband's masculinity. she possesses a self-assuredness that goes beyond mere submission or vanity, acknowledging her beauty and behaving accordingly. this can be interpreted as a form of self-righteousness rooted in a systematic religious moral standard and as a form of protest and rebellion against it. Such defiance may temporality yield to surrender in the face of discipline and divine intervention, but that surrender is a temporary compromise, and the struggle for autonomy remains intrinsic. However, this compromise isa strategic choice, not an indication of weakness in femininity, and it can be regarded as a valuable aspect. In Moolapuranam vaidyar portrays fathima's femininity as a symbol of charity and a triumph of femininity over masculinity.

The next female figure that Vaidyar is presenting is Salikhat Rani excellence in battle. Salikhakat Padappat can be said to be the heroic story of Salikhat, the queen of Bahoot⁴⁸... According to Vaidyar, this Padappat was adapted from a historical Islamic context. However, in the face of the might of the women, Abu Baker, Umar, and Uthman, the immortals of Khulafaul Rashidin, had been reduced to shadows. Even the trio of Muslim soldiers namely Ali, Abdu Sahad and Abdulkarim can be seen startled in front of Salikhat. After seven days of battle, the Queen surrenders. However, their power has not been harmed or diminished. Their benevolence was

⁴⁸ There was a woman who challenged the Prophet and engaged in combat with his companions. She declared her belief in the oneness of God and her expectation of a messenger to follow. However, she expressed doubt about whether the Prophet was indeed the chosen messenger and whether his faith was the true one. She proposed a test, stating that if the Prophet's army emerged victorious in the conflict between their two forces, she would unquestionably accept the superiority of his religion. The Prophet agreed to the queen's request, and both sides prepared for battle. In the ensuing conflict, there were casualties on both sides. The queen's forces scattered, and she fled, while the Prophet gathered reinforcements for the battle. For a considerable period, Rani, the queen, engaged in a fierce battle with Ali, but neither Ali nor Rani could gain the upper hand. Later, Ali, Abdu, and Saa'd simultaneously launched an attack on Salikhat. After a grueling six-hour battle, the trio succeeded in capturing Rani. Rani mocked them, suggesting that it was shameful for these three warriors, who were proud of their invincibility, to join forces to defeat a woman. To the astonishment of the trio, Salikhat suddenly leaped to a height of fifty cubits, breaking free from their grasp, and the queen was liberated. The war continued for seven days, and eventually, Salikhat Rani surrendered herself and embraced Islam.

portrayed as an example of magnanimity. You should not read Salikhat Padappattu in light of an Islamic historical backdrop. Salikhat Padappat should be read on an emotional level of creativity. Such a nature forms when the social, political, and moral aspirations of the period are, on a micro level, realised. That is why Vaidyar's Salikhat Rani becomes the symbol of the greatness and struggle sought within the moral complex of Mappila society. Moinkutty Vaidyar marks Salikhat Rani and her martial prowess as a female icon to be placed in the creative milieu of present-day Mappila society⁴⁹.

The song Badrul Munir Husunul Jamal by Vaidyar is still regarded as a masterpiece. In this poetry, there are two types of women: jinn women and human women. Princess Jamilat of Shadaiyal, Jumailat, (the minister daughter), and Husanul Jamal, the heroine and daughter of King Mahasan are the human women i. e those who are the symbol of humanity⁵⁰. The adversaries are superhuman women from the realm of jinn named Ubais, Bubanatta, Qamar Ban, and Zufairat. The love between the princess and the minister cannot be accepted by society's aristocracy, making this poem what might be described as passionate love poetry. But she decides to flee the city with her lover since she is committed to the path of love. However, under special circumstances, they travel separate routes and get to a point where they cannot meet. Later throughout the story, Badrul Muneer wanders in search of his soul mate. It is a story of a quest in the worlds of man and jinn. Through the strength of their intense love, they finally cross paths and get married. Vaidyar testifies that the original author of this crazy, absurd and romantic story was an Hanafi scholar named Nizamuddin⁵¹. However, it is obvious that it is swooping into the Mappila social framework. Not only does Vaidyar clothe the poetic heroine Husnul Jamal in emerald leather, the leading variant of Pachakachi, a specialty of Mappila women clothing⁵². It is

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 66-68.

⁵⁰ Balakrishnan Vallikkunn, Op. cit., pp. 36-38.

⁵¹ M N Karassery, Moyinkutty Vaidar, Kavyavum Kaalavum, Kottayam, National Books, pp. 16-17.

⁵² Moyinkuuty Vaidar, Badhurul Muneer Huznul Jamam Kissapatt (Mal), in Balakrishnan Vallikkunn, Ummer Tharamel (ed), op. cit., pp. 121-123.

interesting to note that the dress is also decorated with Njedichurulul which is a distinctive element of Malayalam Manka attire. Badrul Munir Husnul Jamal poetry exhibits feminine self-presence and deserves to be re-read more than once. The female characters in this are human maidens and jinn maidens. The characters take the stage as boiling figures of lust. Accordingly, narcissism and ego are treated as the innermost part of their beauty. So their femininity is a blend of beauty and creativity.

What they do is swap out the moral possibility thinking that is patriarchy-centric. The emphasis turns away from the idea of power and toward the symbol of the female in this act of seizing, possessing, and dominating. When Badrul Muneer arrives on the enchanted island of Ubais, one of her maids picks him up and brings him to the mansion. Later, when he appears in Jumana palace in the form of a bird, she changes him into a human and uses him as an instrument in a love conversation. Badrul Munir is also captured by Zufairat during a palace feast, and it can be said that these all are signs of asserting femininity over patriarchy and subjugation. The ethical level of patriarchy in feudal social interactions is nothing more than using women as tools for consumption, while feminism is the opposing level of view. It can also be seen in the character of Husnul Jamal. Vaidyar depicts Husnul Jamal as a burning fireball. Her passion for beauty can be perceived as a daring, adventurous, and vibrant expression. The presence of women in Vaidyar Kavya is especially noteworthy because of the presence of women in the Uhd battlefield. Women had a significant presence in the battle of Uhd, both on the Muslim and anti-Muslim sides. The Prophet's paternal sister-in-law, Swafiyah Bewi, Prophets daughter Fatima Bewi, and on the anti-Muslim side, Qutb daughter Hindu Khusams daughter Hind, and Haris's mother Sulfat are reportedly mentioned. That too, this female presence is not a passive spectacle. Vaidyar paints women as an active class who actively intervene while war and participate alongside men in defense and attack. The women cheering on the heroic men attacking their opponents with song and poetry proclaim their determination and sense of pride. Women who go to war are also highlighted. The Prophet himself testifies that he only saw Nusaybah engaged in combat on his four sides during the Battle of Uhd. The Malabar Mappila community fought for its ethnic survival throughout the second part of the nineteenth century. All three Badar

Padappat, Malappuram Padappat, and Uhd Padappat were created with a battling attitude that forbade surrender in mind. In his Padappat, Vaidyar also shows that women are the ones who stand with the man as a support and shade to encourage the possibilities. Consequently, new meanings must be given to the Mappila sociality notions. Vaidyar identifies the women's maturity in Uhd Padakalam for such a degree of reasoning. The Hoori portrayal in Badar padappat can be seen in this context. You can see the flow of the worldly beauty's Sringara lasya performance in Padappat. The lovely scene of the beautiful ladies arriving dressed to welcome the martyrs is a very romantic description. "The Hoori concept in Chetuvai Parikutty's Saubhagya Sundari Mala was inspired from a familiar surface⁵³" – Chandrabimbham.

Those with a similar complexion and a mane that shines like the midday sun are possessed of exquisite beauty. The costume consists of a green cotton skirt with kontala and an ornately worn green shirt with a shawl on the head. She wore a pearl-studded golden sash on her waist, gold-made bracelets around her wrists, and a glittering necklace on her breast. . . The Mappila ladies are dressed in green khachi, dress, shawl, aranjana, and ellas as a ruse to impart worldly beauty to them⁵⁴. Vaidyar was able to transfer a woman's attractiveness to the Mappila women beauty and the ornaments used in that period. But the Hoori concept originated in a religious context.

Kathu pattu (Letter songs) and Mappila Women

No evidence exists to indicate when Kathu paattu (letter songs) appeared in Arabi- Malayalam literature. It has not yet been possible to establish a connection between the quite popular letter song tradition and the Sandeshkavya (message poetry) tradition that has developed in contemporary Kerala literature. But the tradition of this letter song can claim to be at least a century and a half old. This kind of conclusion is based on seeing the letter songs of Moinkutty Vaidyar and other contemporaries. In such a conclusion, this correspondence of emotion is unfolded as love pleas, accounts of actual events, and the dilemmas of friendship. They are significant enough to serve

⁵³ Chettuva Parikutty, Soubhagyasundari, Kondotty, Moyinkuttyvaider Smarakam, 2012, p. 34.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 136.

as the center of the Mappila culture, where songs are created about anything and everything. But it's clear that Sandeshkavyam (message poems) describes a lot of historical, geographical, and social phenomena of the period of writing. The message poems contain a little bit of imagination. However, the history and culture of the day unfolds in the geographical descriptions that appear in the route description given by the messenger to the hero. But such great literary merit and historical relevance cannot be given to the letter songs in Mappila songs. These songs have nothing to do with the structure of the messages. In the era of social conflicts, when the individual was transplanted to the experiment, the rhythmic letters were given the mantle of 'Mappilappaatt'. An important fact that emerges from this assessment is that letter songs are not emotional expressions of sadness like message poems. Among these, the expressions of the Ernad community during the time stand out. Although the topics of these are love and lust, Ernad society and its social life, including its politics, are more strongly reflected. Popular letter songs include those by Pulikotil Haider⁵⁵. There are eight songs listed under the category Kathu Pattukal (letter songs). These can be classified into two. The theme of Mariakutty letter songs is the goodwill of the Ernad Mappila woman. Here, expression takes the shape of letters from women to men, while other songs are expressed through letters from the poet to his close friends and respected individuals.

Hyder Pulikotils Mariakuttyude kathpatt is a romantic piece of writing. But it can be said that no better work has come out till date to outperform the composition of letter songs. Hassankutty, a local Mappila youth who was imprisoned in Bellary Jail following the Malabar riots, receives a letter that his wife Maryakutty from Hasankutty, who is suspicious of his wife's chastity, writes to Maryakutty's mother that he intends to divorce her by (thwalaq). Maryakkutyude Kathupatt is a letter that Maryakutty writes to her husband as a reply to that letter⁵⁶. Maryakutty openly

⁵⁵ K K Abdul Kareem, C N Ahmed Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 466.

⁵⁶ Pulikkottil Hyder, Mariyakkuttiyude Kathupatt, in M N Karassery (ed), Pulikottil Krithigal (Mal), Manjeri, 1979, p. 12

Jayilil ninnume innolam enna ummakk ayachitt cheett onn kanditt kann
pottum vyasanam theerathe ente dukkha kadalil petta.

expresses her pain. It is her attempt to prove her innocence to her husband, who has suspicions about her past due to someone else's statements. Although her generosity is apparent in this scene, if you look closely you can see that it is in the lines when she lifts her head and addresses her husband. She kept herself sealed up like a gold box since the day her husband left, without letting anyone else open it. . . With this kind of justification, Maryakutty establishes her innocence⁵⁷.

That is her request is an attempt to prove her innocence. Along with this, it also outlines the current scenario of the country. Due to the weather, most of the women in the country are saying that they won't pierce their hands... But the doubt will end when I remember you and am convinced of my own love. . . ⁵⁸. . .” The weather here is the social situation mentioned earlier. Hunger and insecurity infiltrated Mappila women on a physical, mental, and emotional level. It is as a result of this ;killing without stabbing hands;. That depicts the state of Malabar after the Mutiny. . The military rule implemented by the British government with the aim of suppressing the Malabar rebels lasted for about six months. This military rule completely destroyed Malabar, especially the South of Malabar. Hundreds of Mappila women and children had to sacrifice their lives in the brutal military operation. As a result of the riots, almost 60% of men were imprisoned Many families in South Malabar could not find a single man to protect them because they had been killed⁵⁹. ” The songs and writings about Malabar women;s efforts to support their families without men were created in this context. Pulikottil Haider Mariakuttyude kathupatt; is a reflection of the developments in the society in such a situation. Mariakutty then declares with

⁵⁷ “Pedichitt ram kaatti nadannolu alla

Enne oru themmaadi tharavattil janichu onnumalla”. . . In these lines, a voice of protest replaces the flirtatious and forgiving tone. Mariakutty fervently swears that her husband received this as a result of the work done by someone hostile to her. That letter is a revenge for beating with a broom those who pestered her repeatedly. The visitor asked me many times. . . When he was arrogant, he was beaten with a broom. . . That lie is not to be believed. . .”

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵⁹ Shreedevi Vattaparambath, Kalapananthram Malabar (Mal), in K K Abudul Sathar (ed.), Mappila Keezhalapadanam, Moyin Kutty Vaidyar Academy, 2020, pp. 103-104.

great force that she did not go into hiding; m pure even in such a scenario In addition, the poems of Pulikottil Hyder reflect the worries of an isolated woman.

Puthur Amina's Kathupaattu (letter-song)

Amina's letter-song can be observed impacting the societal condition following the Malabar rebellion of 1921. Her father was Puthur Kunjumammed, who was imprisoned by the British after the riots. Amina's letter song expresses her dissatisfaction with the male dominated social community. In addition to imprisoning Mappila rebels, Bellary was a notorious prison in South India for incarcerating criminals. There we meet Amina's father, who later replies strongly to Ahmed who is constantly harassing Amina⁶⁰. Amina's letter-song is a poignant expression of her dissatisfaction with the male-dominated social structure that prevailed during her time. The rebellion, her father's imprisonment, and the broader social context likely played a role in shaping her critique of gender roles and societal norms. The mention of Bellary prison is significant as it was notorious for incarcerating not only political prisoners but also common criminals. Here, Amina introduces Ahmed, who is persistently harassing her. This aspect of the narrative highlights the intersection of political and personal struggles in Amina's life.

It is implied here that the bullying and threats he brought from Bellary should be kept to himself, and that he will not be able to marry Amina. Amina also says that she cannot bear the brunt of criminals like him who lure and trap women with the promise of marriage. This song, in which she fearlessly calls a man criminal who constantly threatens her, a 'dacoit', is the voice of a woman who has the strength to speak her mind without hesitation. She goes on to say that many people will have try to marry her, but that you should not even consider offering those who come with

⁶⁰ *“Bellary Jayilil ninnu varumpol kondu vanne vasathippol nadakkumo
Veruthenthina pinne umaikale bharyayaakkidaan orikkalum kittumo ennei. .
Nalla marare pirapp naarikalum
Parapp naattilund tharam tharam unai
Kazhiliripp athumathi*

Puthur Amina, Kath Patt (Mal), Calicut, In K K Kareem, C N Ahmed Moulavi (eds.), Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Parambaryam, p. 234.

proposals what is carved in that desire⁶¹. Amina's writings reveal how a Muslim woman viewed husband, man, and love at the beginning of the twentieth century. Amina is questioning the very entity of men at the end of the song. These lines strongly criticize the masculine ways in which women are left helpless to get out of the kitchen through emotional means such as motherhood, mother and children⁶². Amina's letter-song offers a strong critique of traditional gender roles and the institution of marriage in her society. She questions the prevailing notion that men are the sole pursuers of desires and that they alone enjoy sexual freedom. Amina's assertion that desire is not exclusive to men but extends to wives challenges deeply entrenched gender norms.

The term "garden" in the Qur'an is the most talked about and misunderstood. Part of stanza 223 depicts a wife as a garden. In the stream of Islamic feminism, it is this expression of the Qur'an that is most criticized by women. Amina defies the stereotype that a man's quest is his only prerogative and that only men have sexual freedom. Desire is not only for men but also for wives⁶³. It may be stated that Amina advanced by destroying many male-centric ones. Criticism of the election stance can be read through this letter song. However, no other writings by Puthur Amina were found.

⁶¹ *Kulukki panichidum ee kattil kandaal*
Evarilum kothivechu koluthina
nagrahikkenda naadake kelikettu
nashavanne parayunnu chenkettu
athilum nalla marare enikkillarum muttu

⁶² *"Mattil kittavarekku maane*
Thene vilikkum
Mattu logiya uttidum
Paale chakkara vaakkum oru pidi
Makkalandu kanenkiladukkalilaakkum..."

⁶³ Here she expresses her concern about the extent of female domestication. It is claimed that love and consideration are synonymous, therefore a man abandons his wife and seeks out a new garden.

Potti porinja enthinaalam
Pori veyilath aavolam
Poyi matoru thopp kandupidikkum
Ayaale purushante poothi
Pathnimaarkk theerum ithenthoru kolaa, Ibid., p. 236.

Amina's letter-song can be viewed as a powerful expression of empowerment and dissent. She refuses to conform to the traditional roles imposed on women, challenging the status quo. Her courage in calling Ahmed a 'dacoit' and critiquing societal norms reflects a woman unafraid to speak her mind. It's worth noting that there are no other known writings by Puthur Amina, making this letter-song a unique and invaluable document. It provides a window into the thoughts and aspirations of a Muslim woman in the early twentieth century, as well as her role in challenging conventional gender norms. Puthur Amina's Kathupaattu is a remarkable piece of historical and literary significance. It reflects the social and political context of her time and her courageous challenge to male dominance and traditional gender roles, contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality and feminism.

Women Compositions in Arabi-Malayalam

Absolutely, here's the same information presented in a feminist style that highlights the significance of women's contributions and empowerment within the context of Mappila songs: In a world where women's voices have often been marginalized, Mappila songs provide us with a unique opportunity to evaluate their representation through a feminist lens. We can approach this evaluation from two tiers, each shedding light on the remarkable impact of women within these songs. In this tier, we celebrate Mappila songs written by authors who may not be women themselves, yet their work resonates with a profound appreciation of the excellence of women. Take, for instance, the beautiful composition "Nafeesath Mala" by Nalakathu Kunjimoithen Kutty. This enchanting piece of art brings to life the legacy of Nafeesath Beevi, a woman of prolific influence in Islamic history. Her story is a testament to the enduring power of a charming identity. Women in the Malabar region have, for generations, sung the "Nafeesath Mala" not only for its melodic beauty but also as a source of inspiration and hope, particularly during childbirth. For these women, "Nafeesath Mala" isn't just a song; it's a sacred mantra, encapsulating the strength and grace embodied by Nafeesathul Misriya, the wife of scholar Isaq Al Mutamin. This work of art, consisting of 20 lines and 56 lines in prayer style, takes on a unique structure within the world of Mala songs. It's not just a composition; it's

a tribute to the enduring spirit of women, with Nalakath Kunji Moitheenkutty rightfully acknowledged as its author, in stark contrast to many other Mala. we encounter Khadeeja Beevi of "Khadeejathul Mala" and Fatima Beevi of "Fatimath Mala. " These women are not mere historical figures; they are sacred idols of feminine charm. Their stories and virtues are celebrated in these songs, adding depth and substance to the Mappila tradition. Khadeejathul Mala and Fatimath Mala are testaments to the enduring legacies of Khadeeja Beevi and Fatima Beevi, two remarkable women who left indelible imprints on Islamic history. These songs serve as platforms through which these women are revered for their contributions and the timeless charm they brought to the world. In a world where the stories of women have often been overlooked or underrepresented, Mappila songs offer a vital channel through which their brilliance is immortalized. These compositions emphasize that women's stories, their strength, and their unique charm deserve to be celebrated and cherished, ensuring that they remain an integral part of our cultural heritage.

Women's writings are the second category in feminist literature. *Chandira Sundari Mala* and *Porutham* by CK Halima, *Raja Mangalam* by B Ayesha and *Mangala Alankara Pudukka Pattu* by K Amina Kutty and other works. Also *Upadesha ratna sangeetha mala* by Naduthoppil Aysha Kutty, *Wafath Mala* by Wafa Beevi, Khadeeja Beevi, and CH Kunji Aysha⁶⁴. It becomes apparent upon careful scrutiny that these poems were on par with the writings by men. Khadeeja Beevi's *Wafath mala* was written by V Ayshakutty. V Ayishakutty is one of the most well-known Mappila poets. The Prophet's first wife Khadeeja's passing is the central theme of the poem. Khadeeja expresses her concerns to her close friend Asma regarding the future of her daughter Fatima. There are a lot of *Wafath Mala around* at this time. What we can see is the grievances of a dying mother to her friend who did not see her daughter Fatima married⁶⁵. A very feminine explanation is given for the pain of being

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 167-168.

⁶⁵ *Santhosh poomole kettu parayunnu*
Parayunnathallathe othu varunnilla
Paakiyum kettulla thalla njananallayo

C H Kunji Ayisha, *Wafath Mala* (Arab Mal.), Tirurangadi, 1973, p. 23.

the unfortunate mother who couldn't see her daughter's marriage. PK Haleema is one of the most significant Arabic Malayalam poets. Halima, who was born in 1909, excelled in both writing and creativity. *Chandirasundarimala*, *Raja Mangalam*, and *Badrul Muneer Oppanappatt* are her major works. *Chandirasundari Mala* is a collection of poems written in praise of the marriage between the Prophet and Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr Siddiq. It was customary to perform *Oppana* at weddings and other special occasions. In this field of art, women were more prominent than men. Popular themes in Mappila songs tend to be either secular or prophetic. These wedding songs are regarded as divine. The Prophet's wedding is a description of it. . The beautifully dressed bride and groom⁶⁶.

These lines describe the bride's beauty: it's a sight that delights the eyes with endearing laughter, and her dark hair is depicted as a blooming flower. Songs played at wedding venues often portray the Mappila backdrop of femininity in a vibrant way. It can be seen as a means of capturing women as an object of display as much as possible in a patriarchal structure. It is from such a social context that the portrayal of the bride in wedding songs is formed. In *Mappilappattu*, the performance takes priority over the bride. Feminism and Islamic philosophy are completely unrelated, as must be understood. There is no change in the bride's attire whether it is the wedding of Prophet Ismail or the Holy Prophet. Each of them is consigned to the domestic Mappila feudal environment in the veiling of the sense of space and time. In other words, don't hold out hope for anything from Saadat Beevi and Ayesha Beevi's bridal jewellery and attire. It might be interpreted as a humanistic narrative of imaginative Chandana. This is what Mappilapat sees as expressing women's innate questions through songs based on religious values. The wedding songs were sung by the women in a circle as a part of the wedding ceremony. There are several songs in this category that were written by women. Amina kutty's song *Mangal alankaaram* is one of them which is endowed with individuality and free imagination. The poetess describes the bride and her bridesmaids singing while seated side by side in the pandal. The bride's

⁶⁶ 'Kalyana Kannan janam thadanje kondulla pole kouthukam erum chiriya chenthamara vidarnna pole minnidum mudi karupp kurungunna pole. P K Haleema, Chandirasundarimala (Arab Mal.), K. K. Kareem, C. N. Ahmed Moulavi (eds.), op. cit.

ornaments are also elaborated with beauty⁶⁷. The presence of singers and songwriters in the culture of Malabar played a significant role in shaping the region's artistic landscape. This cultural phenomenon was inclusive, involving women from diverse backgrounds and social strata. The diverse participation of women in this musical tradition reflects the rich tapestry of Malabar's cultural heritage. The culture of Malabar embraced women from all walks of life, including individuals like Malu Thatha of Kondotty, CP Kunjaisha of Vengara, and Achuma of Tanur. These were ordinary women hailing from regular families. They showcased their talents by performing original songs at various events, contributing to the cultural vibrancy of the region. Interestingly, women from higher caste and social backgrounds also participated in the singing tradition. An example provided is that of Jamila Beevi, who belonged to a higher caste. This demonstrates that the love for music transcended social boundaries, allowing women from diverse backgrounds to engage in artistic expression. The culture of Malabar encouraged women's participation in singing competitions and events. The lyrics,

"Paattu kond choottu ketti,
Mootha kuthu njan,⁶⁸" (I conjured a ball of fire and delivered a punch
to your face)

reveal the competitive nature of these singing events. Women's singing groups competed against each other, showcasing their talents and skills. Through these competitions and performances at weddings, female singers could gain recognition and appreciation for their art. This recognition not only celebrated their talent but also contributed to their social standing and respect within their communities. In addition to local Mappila songs, Tamil choirs and singers played a significant role in Muslim

⁶⁷ *Baalamani manohara puthunari koode
Thozhilukal polethum Chandana alankaram chernnidum paadal aayi
Patu viricha kattilil prabhapoorithamaaya madayil thalamelangalaayi kalyanappatt. .*

Amina Kutty, Mangal Alankaram (Arab Mal), Maha Kavi Moyin Kutty Vayder Mappila Kala Academy, Kondotty, 2001, p. 14.

⁶⁸ Interview with CP Kunjayisha, a professional mappilappattu singer, native of Vengara on 01. 12. 2017 at her residence.

marriages during the earlier centuries⁶⁹. These choirs were a source of entertainment and cultural enrichment during such events. They would sing lyrics that conveyed not only their artistic ideas but also other thoughts, emotions, and cultural expressions. These performances added depth and a unique dimension to the celebration of Muslim weddings. Malabar's cultural richness extended to the participation of poets from different regions, including Eranad, Valluvanad, and Vattapattu choirs. These poets and singers were an integral part of wedding ceremonies and events in every household. Their songs and compositions added a touch of cultural heritage and connected generations through the power of music. The Vattapatt groups of Malabar and the singing tradition played a vital role in preserving and propagating Mappila songs. These songs were highly regarded and became integral to Mappila social life. They served not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a means of cultural identity and communication. Through songs, stories, and poetry, the rich history and heritage of the Malabar region were passed down from generation to generation., the culture of Malabar celebrated the diverse participation of women in the realm of singing and songwriting. This cultural phenomenon transcended social boundaries and added depth to the region's artistic heritage. The singers and poets played a pivotal role in preserving the rich tapestry of Mappila songs, ensuring their continued relevance in the social life of Malabar.

Arabi-Malayalam Kilippaattu

At various points, the folk songs of the Kilippaattu movement have had an impact on Malayalam poetry. One of these is Pakshipaattu (bird song). *Akbar Sadaqa* pakshipaatt by Nadutopil Abdullah, the originator of pakshipaattu, is not a religious poem. The bird is a poetic symbol that Sufi poets frequently use in their works, and they are required to relate it to their faith and the saffron commandments. The bird song (pakshipaattu) method is to adopt a bird as a character. Kasaragod Muslim women used to sing these songs every day after Maghrib prayer⁷⁰, it was melodious

⁶⁹ V M Kutty, Mappilappattu Charitavum Varthamanavum, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Basha Institute, 2002, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁰ Ibrahim Bavincha, Pakshipattum Kurathipattum, Mahakavi Moyinkutty Vaidyar Mappila Kala Academy, Kondotty, p. 65.

and sweet. The story of the bird song is as follows. A female bird who has lived with her male bird for 40 years lays eggs twice a day and her husband becomes suspicious of her. Consequently, the female bird is kicked out. The female bird requests the Prophet to convince her male partner about her chastity. The Prophet replied that the sorrow will be over when the child comes. The prophet inquired about Akbar Sadaka's abode and dispatched his companions to call him after the complaining bird informed him that the male bird Akbar Sadaka wouldn't arrive if she went and called him. But the bird refused to come to him even after the Prophet sent the caliphs Umar and Abu Bakr to bring him. Finally, the Prophet sent Ali, his son-in-law. When he said that he had come on the instructions of the Prophet, the bird said this. . . "I know all the scripts showing 312 pattam's but I am yet to see your Prophet" Ali's reply was that the Prophet has perfected 313 pattam's. The bird questioned why, if such a prophet existed, the fourth Veda is not properly executed⁷¹. When Ali asked for an explanation the bird said, "A sahabii named Ubaidullah's beloved daughter was taken away on the sixty-third day after she was born. Ifrit jinn kidnapped her and has been raising her as a kafir since 1 year. Why is your Prophet unable to save that girl?" Later Ali goes to save the girl and brings the girl back. The male bird appears with Ali in the presence of the Prophet, declaring that he has realised that Ali's Prophet is Nabi himself. He then expresses uncertainty about his female bird. When the Prophet said that it was a miracle of the Creator, Akbar Sadaqa's doubts disappeared. He then apologised to the Prophet and went back to his home with his wife. This is how the story ends.

There are instances in Mappilapattu where the influence of Malayalam poetry and folk songs is evident in different eras. Nadutopil Abdullah, the originator of the *Pakshippaatt* (bird song) may have been well aware of the relationship between *Pakshippaatt* and *Kilippaatt*. In his poems, Thunchathezhuthachan addressed religious topics. Nadutopil's *Pakshippaatt* is a malayalam adaptation of *kilippaattu* in the form of mappila songs. The song makes it clear that virtue exists even among birds and that it is necessary among humans too. In order to refute that point, the poet added the account of the girl who arrived at the fort along with the complaint.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 22.

This song can be categorised as popular poetry, and it was sung in the majority of Malabar homes in the evening. The female bird, who is grieving, seeks the prophet out to clear her name and allay the male bird's doubts about the girl's character. This is the central theme of the story. After assuring her mate of her innocence, the bird departs with him, and the song comes to an end. The female bird conveying her grief to the Prophet⁷². Prophet, I have not done anything wrong. I laid an egg at Subhi, and then laid one again. But when I returned home at Asar, my husband kicked me out saying 'Just make sure whether the egg you laid is halal or haram before entering; if it is not, you are not my mate.' This is the essence of it.

The plot of this song is the worry of the female bird who goes to the prophet to convince the male bird that she is not at fault. The story's central theme is women's chastity. The anxiety of the female bird and the ego of the male bird. Ali is the one who steps in to help the female bird. Although this song has no Islamic historical background, it belongs to a kind of folk song. The societal significance of this song has apparently grown to such an extent that women often sing it out of devotion. This implies that women are deliberately being taught to maintain their chastity as an act of devotion.

Kurathi paattu was also a favorite poetry of Muslim women during a certain period. The creator of the Kurathi song, Kaithakkara C. A. Hanassunkutty Kuzhikkal, was a poisoner. According to the Creator's command, an angel by the name of Jibril descended in the form of a kurathi. That Kurati came with a beautiful color-filled chela, a basket filled with gems, four sides set with rubies, and a stick to hold it... The song begins with what God says to Jibril and his reply.⁷³

⁷² *"Annuthottu innuvarekkum Rasoolulla karuthi oru thettum cheythill khojaave...
En pakkal vannulla van petta kelppin neram subhikk mutta vannitt njan
Dhoonarunnu baharinu aayi mutta onnittu njan
Melma asarinu koottinayi chellumpol
Ente inapakshi aatti purathaakki
Ente inapakshi chodikkunnu ennod
Randum nee cholli thirichu thannillenkil ente inapakshi alla nee nishchayam
Ittulla mutta haraamo halaalo ennu*

⁷³ *"Aadi periyavan naalal oru naalil
Arashar jibrailenna malakinod*

In the world of Kurathippaattu, Fathima Beevi's beauty is more than just skin deep; it's a reflection of her inner purity and strength. Kurathi, the narrator, connects feminine beauty with the body, emphasizing that Fathima Beevi's allure is not merely external but also a manifestation of her inner grace and character⁷⁴. In this narrative, Fathima Beevi embraces her attractiveness with a sense of purity, viewing it as an integral part of her identity. Her perception reflects a feminist perspective that beauty is not a shallow attribute but rather a facet of her being, one that she wears with pride. Kurathi's message to Fathima doesn't merely focus on physical beauty; it encompasses the prospect of a fulfilling future. It's a declaration of not just love but also equality. Fathima's impending marriage to Ali and the prospect of bearing six children together is an acknowledgment of her autonomy and capacity to shape her destiny alongside her partner. The marriage and married life of Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fathima, hold significant importance in the Muslim world. In the context of this society, these verses are not merely verses but a reflection of a cultural narrative. They are a celebration of love, equality, and the role of women in shaping the future of their families and communities. Pakshippattu and Kurathippaattu, which resonate with Muslim women in Kerala, are testaments to the enduring power of art and poetry in capturing the essence of their experiences. Pakshippaattu, credited to CN Ahmad Malavi and KK Karim, serves as a part of the celebrated Mappila literary heritage. This genre not only appreciates the beauty of the written word but also strives to uplift and celebrate the pivotal role of Ali, placing him on a pedestal as one of the best of the Companions. In this feminist writing style, it's crucial to acknowledge that these

*Ponam jibreel
Kurathinte kolathil*

Kuravan are a backward caste in Kerala. They are the ones who can read signs looking at their hands. The angel appeared here as Kurathi (female kuruvan) and traveled to the first mosque in Makkah where he encountered Imam Ali. .

⁷⁴ *“Chachiyilennu chilichiliyennu
Kaal padathintesa
Osha ketti Imam Aliyar pinthirinju nokki...
Nokkunneram kurathi thante varavaliyar kande...
Nillu nillu nikku nikku malankurathi penne...
Kurathi njanum onnu pettaal
Pathu petta meni
Fathimabi pathu pettaal onnu petta meni*

songs and poems carry a profound message. They highlight the multifaceted nature of women's identities and the power of love, equality, and self-determination in shaping their lives. These pieces of art stand as a testament to the strength and agency of women and their enduring influence on the Muslim cultural heritage.

These scenarios were depicted in certain Mappila songs during a period when Shia influence was on the rise in Kerala. Kerala has had historical trade relations with Persians dating back to a time before the advent of Islam. The association of figures like Ali and Fatima with Persians can be attributed to the growing Shia influence in the region. Consequently, Persian words have made their way into the Malayalam language. For example, the term "Mulla" is widely used in Kerala and refers to a scholarly figure who imparts knowledge. The influence of Persian culture is discernible in various aspects of administrative and legal practices, including terminologies like "panchayat, " "district, " "tehsildar, " and even the language used in courts. This influence can also be observed in the context of Masjid Dars studies, where books such as Sancha, Meezan, and Muktar, authored by Persian scholars, are studied. Shia influence has left its mark on the Pakshipaattu and Kurathippaattu, which are sung by women in their homes. These songs often contain references to figures like Imam Ali, who is portrayed as a powerful figure capable of tremendous feats, such as trampling the entire earth like a stone thrown from a catapult or shaking the Sinaa mountain. However, there has been criticism and pushback against Pakshipaattu in the past. Some scholars have cautioned against reciting poetry based on a narrative created in the Prophet's name, arguing that it is un-Islamic and could lead to misconceptions within the community. Despite these criticisms, the allure of poetry remains undeniable, and various renditions of such poems have been sung and passed down among common Muslims. An example within these poems illustrates the theme of safeguarding a woman's honor. For instance, a female bird is cast out of its nest due to doubts about its chastity, reminiscent of a moral dilemma. The suggestion by Akbar Sadaqah to protect O Manka, who is compelled to reside in King Ifrit's castle, also serves as an effort to preserve women's morals. In a similar vein, the complaint of the female bird who came before the Prophet raises concerns about

upholding the purity expected between men and women. These songs convey the notion that a woman's chastity is a principle that even the avian world adheres to.

Muslim woman and religious educational system

Mosques have played an important role in imparting knowledge to the Muslims of Kerala before the advent of modern education systems⁷⁵. Muslims learned the knowledge from the homes of religious scholars and from the Dars. From the Middle Ages onwards, there were systematic practices of teaching and learning in Islam. The Muslims established their residence and established mosques all over the place and the Kazis and Moulavis of the place continued to study and study in the mosque. The knowledge spaces in Muslim mosques was later known as the Dars⁷⁶, which means lessons. In addition to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the students were taught various arts, including the traditional education system centered around the mosques, which contributed to the transmission of internal and external knowledge to generations and created revolutionary movements in the Muslim community. The Dars also played an important role in preparing the Muslim community for a strong struggle against the crises created by British domination and colonialism⁷⁷.

The first Othupalli was a barn built on five or six legs, with only a roof over the earthen floor. The lessons were written and taught by dipping an old-fashioned pen in black ink, which was made of dried mature bamboo pieces rubbed on a wooden board covered with soil⁷⁸. These were the tools needed for the study. A few wooden boards and stones are required to prepare the learning systems, and both ends of the board are placed on top of the stones, this is the bench. Mullaka usually establishes Othupalli in his own house and in the Olappura (house thatched with coconut leaves)

⁷⁵ Robinson, Education, in R Irwin ed, the new Cambridge history of Islam Vol3. Islamic cultures and societies to the end of the 18th century, Cambridge University press 2010. pp. 505-507.

⁷⁶ Literally the Arabic word means class, in Malabar the educational system attached with masjid was known as Dars.

⁷⁷ Huzain Randathani, Mappila Muslims: A study on society and anticolonial struggles, Calicut, Other Books, 2007, p. 10-12.

⁷⁸ Abu Jasim, Arabimalayalathile Athulya Prethibhakai, Calicut: Islamic Sahithya Academy, 1999, p. 23.

built on his own land. Muslims did not have a unique payment system. Mollakkas (religious scholars) collected their wages in the ways, one rupee in the time of admission, as an interim relief mukkal rupee ($\frac{3}{4}$ rupee) every Thursday, one rupee at the time of Musaf (Khur an) submission and rice in special day ⁷⁹. The mullah himself would write on each board, and everyone had their own (different) lessons. It took a long time to make them able to read the Qur'an, the boys and girls went to the Othupalli together, but after studying in the Othupalli for ten years, the girls studied under the Mollachis. Mollachis and Mollakas have their own Othupalli or large joining families will set up the system

In the mosque-centered learning system in Kerala, the practice of staying and studying within the mosque premises was prevalent. These educational sessions, known as Dars, covered a wide range of subjects, including the Qur'an, Hadith (the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), as well as fundamental principles of mathematics. The origins of Islamic education and scholarly pursuits in Kerala can be traced back to the advent of Islam in the region. References to the Islamic educational system in Kerala can be found in the travelogues of Arab travelers, with mentions dating back to the 14th century. These travelogues offer insights into the evolution of Islamic education in the region over time. In the early days, one of the main objectives of the mosque-centered education system was to provide religious instruction and guidance to new converts to Islam. This system primarily operated within mosques. However, the first systematic and organized intellectual endeavor in Kerala was initiated by Imam Muhammad bin Abdurrahman Al Qasimi at the Tanur Valiyakulangara Juma Masjid⁸⁰. Before and after this organized effort, Islamic knowledge was disseminated by Sufi scholars who were actively involved in spreading Islam, instructing believers, and nurturing their faith. Scholars like Sheikh Aliyul Kufi from Peringathur in Kannur, Sheikh Fareed Aulia from Erattupetta, Khali Zainuddin, and Ramalan Shaliyathi from Kozhikode played pivotal roles in this regard. They established Dars at various mosques, such as the Kutchira Miskal

⁷⁹ K K Abdul Kareem and C N Ahmed Moulavi, *Op. cit.*, p. 424.

⁸⁰ Muhmmmed Hafiz, *Madrassa Education in Malabar and its impact*, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 4, p. 243.

Mosque, Muchunthi Mosque, and Kutchira Jamaat Mosque.⁸¹ One of the significant figures in this educational movement was Ponnani Zainuddin Makhdoom Kabir. He studied in these Dars and, after traveling extensively, returned to Kerala with a wealth of knowledge and experience, which he used to spearhead an intellectual renaissance. To facilitate this educational resurgence, the Great Juma Masjid in Ponnani was constructed. In this mosque, a comprehensive range of subjects, including natural sciences and mathematics, was taught. Makhdoom emphasized that the primary objective of education was self-purification. His teachings attracted people not only from various parts of Kerala but also from across India and even countries as distant as Egypt, Syria, and Indonesia⁸². Zainuddin Makhdoom is considered the first systematic Islamic educator in Kerala who initiated and implemented reforms in the educational system, and his contributions left a lasting impact on the intellectual and religious landscape of the region. His emphasis on holistic education and self-purification laid the foundation for the development of a robust Islamic educational tradition in Kerala.

Chalilakath Kunjaahmedhaji was a scholar who revolutionized the religious education system in Kerala. After studying at Latifa College in Chalikam, he worked as a teacher for Mosque Dars. Kunhahammadaji played an important role in initiating the modern madrasa movement. In 1913, with the support of Koyapathodi Mainkutty Haji, a syllabus entitled 'School Rules' was prepared and a ten-year curriculum was organized⁸³. This method of study was started at Darul Uloom, Vazhakad. Modern educational ventures began with the rise of the madrasa movement. A fatwa was issued against the madrasa movement which followed a new educational system with modern utilities like board, bench, and desk, due to the opposition of orthodox scholars. They argued that when the Qur'an was erased from the board, the chalk falling to the ground was an insult to the Qur'an. They ruled that the Waqf's property

⁸¹ K K Abdul Karim and C N Ahmed Moulavi, *Op. cit.*, p. 344

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 345.

⁸³ U Muhmmmed, *Educational empowerment of Kerala Muslim: A Socio Historical perspective*, New Delhi, Other Books, 2007, p. 64.

should not be used for such madrassa studies and many poems were published against it. Never on the way to:

Never send children to study in a madrassa,
Undoubtedly, in the madrassa,

the letter 'meem' and the 'meen' in hell " are one and the same ⁸⁴. . . '. Despite facing staunch opposition, innovative approaches to education began to gain traction in various regions. During this period, new madrasas emerged in places like Pulikkal, Valapattanam, and Kodyathoor⁸⁵. A noteworthy aspect of this transformation was the enrollment of girls in madrasas, reflecting a shift in the religious education landscape for Muslim women in Kerala. Traditionally, educational opportunities for women, particularly in religious matters, were severely restricted. Deeply entrenched societal norms and opposition from conservative elements limited their access to formal learning. Gender norms relegated women to domestic roles, prioritizing their responsibilities within the household. This gendered division of labor further hindered women's access to educational institutions, particularly in religious contexts.

Formal education was not widespread in Islam at that time. But religious education was equally available to all. They practiced religion regardless of gender, at a time when literacy was banned in other societies and those expelled from the literate world. Along with religious matters, he studied songs and Bayths in Madrassas. There were also women in religious teaching. There were Othupalli run by women in many places. Today, some of its last links remain. The main purpose was to teach the recitation of the Qur'an, and some songs and stories were narrated by them. They are called Ustad or Mollachi with respectful words. There were such othpalli in all parts of Malabar. Othupalli, named after women, can be found in

⁸⁴ Kamarudeen, Op. cit., 229

La Taj Alun Baneena Madrasa
Vazhiyil yatha alla munna
Meemun lee mandrasathil
Vamee moo jahanna mana. .
Onnana changathi bilatha vahumi:

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 230.

Manjeri, Tirur, Ponnani, Kannur, Thalassery and Valapattanam⁸⁶. Their Othupalli at Kunjai Mathatha in Vengara was known as Kunjayumathatha's - Othupalli. Ustad Nabisatha Othupally of Parappanangadi, it is said that about 100 children studied at Othupally run by Ayesha Thatha in Ponnani⁸⁷. All these women - were socially respected.

There was a significant involvement of women in various aspects of life, such as childbirth, death, maternity, and marriage, as well as their active participation in religious ceremonies. Furthermore, certain women were revered for their perceived possession of divine powers, commonly referred to as "Beavis. " These women held a unique place in their communities, as their abilities were believed to have a supernatural aspect. As a result, their graves became sacred sites and places of worship, drawing devout followers seeking blessings, guidance, and solutions to a range of personal and communal issues. Two remarkable instances stand out to illustrate the impact of these women in the context of Kerala's cultural and religious landscape. Bimapalli in Thiruvananthapuram and the mosque dedicated to Ibrahim Beevi in Ponnani achieved significant renown largely due to the influential role of such women⁸⁸. Bimapalli, situated in Thiruvananthapuram, became a center of spiritual devotion and healing, thanks to the presence of a revered Beavi. Pilgrims and seekers from various walks of life flocked to this sacred place to seek solace, blessings, and remedies for their ailments and life challenges. Similarly, the mosque named after Ibrahim Beevi in Ponnani was notable for its association with a woman of extraordinary spiritual prowess. Her presence and teachings within the mosque served to elevate it as a spiritual hub where people gathered to receive religious guidance and solutions to their problems. This mosque became a symbol of the significant role played by women in religious and community life. The influence of these women, their divine powers, and the recognition of their graves as places of

⁸⁶ Shamshad Huzain, *Lingapathavikkum Noonapakshthinum Edayil*, Thiruvananthapuram, Basha Institute, 2010, p. 24.

⁸⁷ Interview with Fathima Ayisha (mollachi), native of Ponnani on 8. 11. 2016 at residence.

⁸⁸ Sherin, *the labyrinth of dissonance: Islam and Women in Kerala*, Kottayam, Unpublished dissertation, English Department, M G University 2014, p. 112.

worship underline the deep-seated spiritual and cultural significance of women in the region, reflecting the rich tapestry of Kerala's traditions and beliefs.

The wife of a prominent Sunni scholar in Ponnani was renowned for answering religious questions, contributing to the scholarly discourse. Islamic history documents the existence of numerous women who strictly adhered to Islamic law and were well-versed in theology, effectively becoming scholars. A rich tradition of female scholars exists within Islam, with thousands of women dedicating their lives to the study of hadiths. Muhammad Akram Nadvi's book provides a detailed account of over a thousand women hadith scholars. "Women had the same right as men to report hadiths. Women used to organize meetings in their own homes, mosques, madrassas and other places to study and recite the hadith. I have not been able to find any evidence that the teaching of women have been hindered in any way by jurists or traditionalists for centuries.⁸⁹ It's important to note that women had the same rights as men when it came to reporting hadiths. Women used to organize gatherings in their homes, mosques, madrassas, and other places to study and recite the hadiths. There is no evidence to suggest that jurists or traditionalists hindered the education of women throughout the centuries. The book offers detailed descriptions of these scholarly women. In Kerala, the tradition of scholarly women can also be observed, although perhaps on a smaller scale

AK Ayesha Hajumma of Uli's Mahal used to buy books from Makkah for use by the masters in the Dars they conducted. The renowned scholar Mattannur P Abdullah Musliar, one of the founders of the Saadiya Arabic College, Kasaragod, and Kanhangad Samyukta Mahal Khadi - and H A Abdullah, early scholars of Ahmadiyya are studied under Ayesha Hajumma⁹⁰. The spacious veranda of the AK family home had a two-foot-high stone porch that could seat 12 people, and a hall for prayers near the courtyard bathroom. When a high-ranking British official visited the house during the trip, they asked for the local school registry with the help of a translator. In 1912,

⁸⁹ Muhammed Akram Nadwi, *Al Muhaddithat, the women scholars in Islam*, Cairo, Interface Publications, 2013, p. 65.

⁹⁰ Interview with AK family members, relatives of Ayisha Hajjamma (mollachi) on 21. 4. 2019 at Kannur.

the Government Mappila UP School and Registrar's Office were established on their land⁹¹. The school later played a major role in the educational work of Uli. There was also a scholar from the Matai Vengara region who had memorized the Qur'an with its meanings in her handwriting and used it to impart knowledge to his household, Kunjanith, also known as Kunjanille, who had a large number of disciples in the Palangadi, Muttam and Vengara areas, imparted knowledge to many men. In the history of Valapattanam female masters can be found. Nafeesat, who taught women, including Fathul Mueen, in the Syed family of Key patt, she was the one who took care of Hiralal Gandhi, the son of Mahatma Gandhi and taught the religion from his mother's position, when he converted to Islam and became when Abdullah Gandhi⁹². Sayyidat Beevi of Pokkilakath house is just some of them. In Kannur, there are still many dignitaries who have made many disciples for the religious education of the Muslims who have been conducting Othupalli for generations. It can indeed be argued that the growing emphasis on formal education, especially in the age of organizations and the development of modern societies, has had a transformative impact on the role of women in religious studies. This evolution can be examined from the perspective of women's participation in religious education and scholarship in Kerala. Historically, women, often referred to as "Mollachi, " played a significant role in imparting religious knowledge and wisdom in the traditional Othupalli system. However, as the Othupalli system was abolished and replaced by the more formalized Madrasa system, the presence of such female religious educators dwindled. This transition represented a major shift in the way religious education was structured and delivered, with an increasing emphasis on male scholars and religious leaders. Nonetheless, with the advent of modern Islamic thought and reform movements, there was a resurgence of interest in providing systematic religious education for women. Reformers in the region recognized the need to educate women and established new madrassas that offered structured study methods and curricula. This marked the beginning of a shift towards inclusivity in religious education. By the 1950s, women

⁹¹ Nasrin KK, Kannur Muslim Stree Charithra Boomikayiloode, In Ajmal Mueen (ed.), Proceedings of Kannur Muslim Heritage Congress, Kannur.

⁹² Interview with Kuttusahib, a local historian of Thalassery on 06.04.2017 at his residence.

began to emerge as teachers in these reform-oriented madrassas, marking a significant change in the landscape of religious education. These teachers not only facilitated the study of Islamic principles and theology but also empowered women to engage in scholarly pursuits. Moreover, religious institutions specifically designed for women were established, further encouraging their participation in religious studies. These institutions provided a space for women to receive religious education and training, ultimately contributing to their role as scholars and religious leaders within their communities. Despite these positive developments, it's important to note that, even though women were becoming more active in religious education, the Kerala Muslim community faced challenges in fully recognizing and promoting women as religious scholars.

Arakkal Beevi's: The History of female governance

The Arakkal Dynasty stands out as a remarkable historical example of unique governance, as it introduced women as leaders and integrated them into the realm of governance. This distinctive tradition is believed to have its roots in the transition from the Chera Dynasty to the Ali Dynasty, often accompanied by legendary tales. As the Portuguese arrived in Kerala, the Kolathiri family had already achieved significant success in maritime commerce and forged crucial maritime relations. They played a pivotal role in facilitating trade between Arabia and Kerala and had established their influence in the Maldives even before the Portuguese incursion. In the resistance against the Portuguese, the collective strength of the Kolathiri family played a noteworthy role. In 1527, Mammali, the then ruler, passed away, leading to his brother Poker Ali ascending to power. Tragically, Poker Ali was assassinated in 1545 under suspicious circumstances⁹³. Following his demise, his son-in-law Ali Adi assumed the royal title. The Arakkal clan's ascendancy was facilitated by their prowess in maritime commerce and their ownership of a formidable navy. The ongoing rivalry between the Arakkal family and the Kolathiri continued until the British captured the Malabar

⁹³ K K N Kurup, Ali Raja of Cannore, English East India Company and Laccadive Island, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress vol 32, Indian History Congress 1970, pp. 44-46

region. Both the Kolathiri and the Chirakkal Clan likely made efforts to undermine the Arakkal Clan, which had maintained a degree of autonomy from their authority. The Arakkals had distinct symbols of their sovereignty, including a unique flag, an ornate throne, a royal seal, and symbols that were instrumental in propagating Islam throughout their royal history⁹⁴. The Arakkal Dynasty, with its innovative approach to governance and distinctive cultural elements, left an indelible mark on Kerala's history.

The Joint Commissioner of Malabar wrote that "the Qur'anic laws are supposed to have been in force except in matters of commerce and the like, and the Beevi's minister or her husband was appointed as chief justice, and three or four men of jurisprudence were appointed as advisers to give the best judgment⁹⁵. " 2% of the legal trial fee were split between the mosque, Beevi and the rest of the employers. Stretching from Echimala to Dharmadam the land and Lakshadweep and Maldives were under their naval influence. With large navy in their possession, affairs like the war, peace, trade, international exchanges, maintaining law and order, all these were taken care of by the Arakkal women. Being a matriarchal family, the Arakkal clan followed a system in which the oldest member of the family, whether male or female, took over the ruling position.

All the wives who came to rule under the title of ' Adiraja Beevi' led the clan for more than 150 years⁹⁶. Arakkal Clan witnessed the rare continued female rule. Commercial, military and anti-colonial struggles were strengthened under the leadership of women and through their strategic moves. It was mainly Impichi Beevi who helped in the construction of many mosques in North Malabar. This family was also the administrative trust of many mosques like Kannur's Mattool Madaayi. The manager (muthawalli) of the administrative area, which included about forty mosques up to Dharmadam, were appointed by them. All the religious affairs of the Kannur Mahal were conducted under the direct supervision of the Arakkal family. The family

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 47-48

⁹⁵ Duhe Leeja, *Matriliny and Islam*, New Delhi, National Books, p. 76.

⁹⁶ K K N Kurupp, *Op. cit.*, p. 234

owned an excellent library that contained only Arabic texts, dealing with religious and philosophical subjects. The ships that went to Arab countries for trade brought dates to Malabar land along with Arabic books, many of which were from various Islamic centers in countries like Egypt⁹⁷. Families were educated in Arabic and theology, and some of the Beevis were taught Hindustani and Persian. There are records that indicate, the Beevi spoke in Hindustani without the aid of an interpreter to Major Maxiod, who invaded Kannur in the 1750s⁹⁸. Daghini was the language they commonly used and English was often tutored to them.

The self-sacrificing leadership of Arakkal Beevi has been a notable example in the history of Indian women's struggle for recognition. The Beevis ruled most of the period when the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English made constant efforts to usurp the power and prestige of Arakkal by spreading across the seas with superior influence. Beevi's faced colonialism often with the exact bravery and fierceness of that of the male rulers. From Harabichi Kadamoobi Adiraja Beevi, the first female ruler who came to power in 1728, Arakkal Women were the ones who constantly stood together against colonialism. Junuma Adiraja Beevi, who ruled in the first half of the 18th century, is a gem of a woman who had long lives resisting the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English regimes constantly trying to take over⁹⁹. The feud between the Arakkal clan and the East India Company began when she demanded to see the end of sending cardamom and pepper, two of the most abundantly available and expensive spices from Kannur to the Company, to the then ruler of Kannur. Besides selling pepper and cardamom to the Dutch, the Arakkal dynasty sent goods to Surat in their own ships. Letters sent by the English East India Company from Thalassery to Bombay in 1737 asking to intercept and seize Beevi's cargo ships to North India remain even today. It was during the reign of the female ruler that a three-year continuous war was waged against the atrocities committed by the Portuguese on the

⁹⁷ Noushad MK, Muhmmmed Shahid, *The Mappila Raja: The Rise of Arakkal Dynasty in Malabar*.

⁹⁸ K K N Kurup, *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁹⁹ Manaf Kottakunnummal, *Gender and Family in Colonial South India: A Sociological study of Mappila Matriliny in Malabar 1914-1940*, M Phil dissertation, Jewaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2011, p. 34.

Hajis in the Arabian Sea. Beevi's son was killed by pirates on the way to Makkah¹⁰⁰. Beevi sought the help of Sultan Adil Shah to put an end to the Portuguese aggression and he confronted the Portuguese who had come to Goa. Under the leadership of General Tyler, who was then the head of the Thalassery East India Company, the Company's troops attacked Kannur. After the brave resistance of Arakkal Beevi, the company's Bombay sector was requested for help, so the troops from Bombay under the command of General Abercrombie, on December 17, captured the strategic positions and garrisons around Kannur Fort and the city, forcing Beevi to surrender¹⁰¹. The era of Beevi's was also a time of many complex contracts and legal battles that were important in the history. Sultan Imbichi Beevi of King Adi had to surrender Lakshadweep completely after much resistance.

The local kings of Malabar often struggled with financial issues, but the Arakkal family stood apart from this trend. They consistently maintained a robust financial position due to their crucial role in the foreign trade network. At the zenith of their trade operations, seven of their ships, all bearing the clan's distinctive flag, transported goods from the Malabar region and engaged in foreign trade with countries spanning from Bengal to Arabia¹⁰². Even as late as 1850, the family retained ownership of two ships, the Haidros and Samadani. However, the periodic wars and agreements with the English brought an end to their foreign trade endeavors. Subsequently, like many other royal families, the Arakkal family transitioned from rulers to landlords. Their properties were primarily categorized into three types: Pandaram, New Pandikasala, and Pandaravaka, acquired by the family over a long period. The Pandikasala properties were obtained through commerce. The era of the Beevi rulers was marked by intricate treaties and legal battles, representing a distinctive system not commonly found in Islam. Under the matriarchal rule, both men and women ascended to the throne, a practice unknown in traditional Islamic governance. Of the nineteen kings who ruled for nearly three-quarters of the 17th

¹⁰⁰ K K N Kurup, Op. cit., p. 48

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 55.

century, all were men. The Arakkal family's most significant conflicts with the Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial powers occurred during the reign of the Beevis, who at times displayed a more aggressive stance against colonialism than their male counterparts. In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the country was led by a female ruler for four decades, who valiantly resisted the Dutch and the Portuguese. In 1728, the first Arakkal Beevi, Harabichi Kadawubi Adiraja Beevi, who came to power, had to confront colonialism and, after a fierce struggle, eventually signed a treaty with the English. This era brought complexities for the subsequent women who assumed power, involving negotiations, conflicts, and legal battles within the courts. The women who ruled the Arakkal Clan left an indelible mark on its history.

Harabichi Kadavube (1728-1732), Janumbabe 1 (1732-1745), Mariam Beevi (1819-1838) Ayishabi (1838-1867), Impichi Beevi (1907-1911), Ayesha Beevi (1921-1931) Maryumma Beevi (1946-1957), Amina Beevi Thangal (1957-1980)¹⁰³. Among the 37 in line for the throne, 11 were women. The Arakkal Dynasty's history is marked by a remarkable succession of powerful and influential female rulers, each of whom played a significant role in shaping the destiny of the clan and its territory. Notably, 11 out of the 37 rulers in the line for the throne were women. Their rule left a lasting impact on the region and lasted for a considerable period of time, with various Beevis at the helm. The twenty-third crown princess, Janummabi, held power for an impressive 42 years, presiding over the Arakkal Dynasty during a time of great significance. Subsequently, the twenty-fifth crown princess, Ayesha Beevi, reigned for 24 years, contributing to the dynasty's endurance and continuity. The twenty-eighth crown princess, Maryam Beevi, wielded power for 19 years, guiding the dynasty through a period of change and challenges. What makes the Arakkal Dynasty truly unique is its commitment to equality, offering the same opportunities to both men and women. The system of governance, following a matriarchal rule, provided a level playing field for all, irrespective of gender. Women and men could ascend to the throne, highlighting a distinct system not commonly found in traditional Islamic governance. During their rule, the Arakkal Beevis were instrumental in shaping the

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 56-60.

destiny of their land and people. They ruled for a remarkable period of 146 years. Their reign coincided with significant historical movements, including the Khilafat movement and the freedom struggle. In a time when many princely states, led by men, surrendered unconditionally to colonial powers and practiced serfdom, these remarkable women, who ruled for one-third of this era, held steadfast to their ideologies. They stood as a bulwark against colonial forces, maintaining the original integrity and glory of their land. The Arakkal Beevis tirelessly worked to enhance trade, strengthen the military, and improve social life, all while enjoying local support. Their legacy is one of resilience, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to preserving their land's heritage and resisting colonial powers.

Marumakkathayam and muslim women

Marumakkathayam is one of the women-centered family systems practiced in some parts of the world in the absence of Malabar even before the emergence of feminism movements and women's rights movements in the world. Matrilineal are entirely opposite from the patrilineal families that have been followed in the majority of societies in different countries of the world. Marumakkathayam among Muslims in the world has existed only in a few communities. In Lakshadweep and some Mappila Muslim communities in Malabar, Marumakkathayam still exists, albeit with some changes. In a patrilineal family, the elderly son is the head of the family and the Tavazhi(hereditary) is exclusively for men. Men perform family duties. Men also enjoy wealth and social status. The Makkathayi family is such a male-centered system. . marumakkathayam families exist like small clusters standing in the great oceans.

The evolution of Marumakkathayam (In Law system) with an emphasis on female koima(supremacy) has been analyzed in many ways. Morgan observes that the first form of in-laws was the practice of polyandry, the determination of family membership in the female line¹⁰⁴. Engels argues that Makakkathayam arose from Murumakkathayam. It is observed that the male-centered family originated with the

¹⁰⁴ L R S Laxmi, Malabar Muslim, A different perspective, New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 34.

rise of private property rights and the concept of chastity imposed on women. By industrialization, all societies were embracing a male-centered system, only some societies remained in-laws. There are matrilineal societies in India, the Ghazi Gallo tribes of the northeastern regions, the Nairs of Kerala, the Paiyar tribe, the Payyannoor Namboothiris, the Muslims of Lakshadweep, a section of Muslims in Kayalpatnam in Tamil Nadu, and a section of the Mappilas of Malabar belong to the filial communities¹⁰⁵. Even in the early decades of the 20th century, Nair communities followed polygamous marriages to Kerala. K M. Paniker has claimed that the Nayers maintained for centuries the organized and more or less stable family system of female koima(supremacy) in the Nair caste of Hindu communities. After the fourteenth century, Marumakkathaya and Polygamy are the social phenomenons formed among the Nair community in Kerala. By the 18th century, the Nair matrilineal families, which believed in a karanava/karnavati(elder man/woman) and lived together for three or four generations under one roof, had become institutionalized.

But by the 20th century, there had been many changes in the structure of the Nair clans and the practice of dharma. Factors such as education, British-era employment, and migration to cities led to the decline of the Nair joint family and the shift towards monogamy. The Nair Act of 1952 and the Hindu Section Act of 1956 were also intended to provide legal protection to speed up changes.¹⁰⁶ Islam basically represents a male-oriented system. Muslim communities in many parts of the world have formed the Makkathai family system, and Marumakkathaya has always been a rare practice among the Muslims of the world. In India, the two communities that have long followed Marumakkathayam are the Lakshadweep and sections of Mappila Muslims of Malabar in North Kerala, which can be seen in coastal areas such as Kannur, Thalassery, Mahi, Vadakara, and Kozhikode¹⁰⁷. The spread of Islam in

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 43-45.

¹⁰⁶ MSA RAO, Social changes in Malabar, Bombay, popular Book Dept, 1957, p. 35

¹⁰⁷ Dube Leela, Matriliney and Islam: a study of the Laccadive Island, Delhi, National Books, 1969.

Malabar was primarily through intermarriage with women from Arab and indigenous matrilineal communities. Islam and Marumakkathaya are two parallel concepts.

In the ethno-sociological studies of Kathalin Gough, and Leeladumba, women-centered daughter-in-law system, paternal dominance, Islamic family concept, are deemed to be a contrary provision. By citing the rights of women in Islam, such as marriage, divorce, and property rights Everest Phils observes, that the increasing influence of matriarchy—concepts of maternal supremacy that prevailed in Arabia at the time of Islam's origins—existed alongside the concepts of paternal supremacy in Islam. The women of the Mappila Marumakkathayam families in Malabar enjoyed more rights and freedoms than Muslim women in other parts of India. AR Lakshmi also says that till 1935, women were the owners of vast tracts of land and palli bhumi(land of mosque).¹⁰⁸ There were women in Malabar who held positions of responsibility and authority, including the position of muthavalli of the mosque. For half a century, the Matrilineal Muslims of Malabar have been a unique community in which clans determined families and property rights; it was known by the name of the maternal family. Occupation status was determined by females. The right of property is only for women, so long as the last woman is left, the family house cannot be kept separately. Malabar Muslims' labor was trade And family income was utilized for the- needs of the joint family and children were brought up entirely in the maternal family. The husband does not have any rights in the property of the wife's family, but *Puthyapla* is always treated with respect by the wife's family. Although the Mappila Marumakkataya system had many similarities with the Nair Marumakkataya system, it was subtly different in that one of the main arguments against it in the Nair Marumakkataya was Brahmin supremacy or there was no sexual abuse background in Mapila Marumakkathaya. And modern education among the Nair youth, in general, was widespread. Hence the kind of long-distance migration and settlement for government jobs that they had was not common among the Mappilas as the Mappilas were generally not interested in English education during

¹⁰⁸ L R K Laxmi, Op. cit., p. 26.

the early colonial period.¹⁰⁹ They were mostly engaged in trade, the profits of which were added to the patrimonial property, but it was the strong financial base of the patrimony that gave them the ability to invest in extensive commercial ventures. Mapila women generally the family home was the center of property ownership and succession.

But unlike in the Nair system, Mapila women did not have such sexual self-determination. A decentralized system of power prevailed in the Mappila clans where men were never treated as second class and both men and women had equal status and dignity¹¹⁰. It was different from Hindu matriarchal families, in Mapila clans they had a father's position, in Hindu clans, the father is the head of the family but does not perform any social duties. But in Mapila families, the father always stayed at home or took responsibility for the expenses of his wife and children. Matriarchy, which anthropologists have pointed out as its main problem, was a system in which the conflicts between men's responsibilities in everyday life were comparatively less, and men's dignity and authority were kept largely intact.

Moreover, it is clear from the case reports of British judges and detailed legal debates that cases involving Mapila in-laws were more complicated because marriages between matrilineal families were common among the Mappilas. Malabar's in-laws were disturbing and complicated for the British because British notions of the ideal family are associated with Victorian morality. In Malabar they had to deal with their paternal supremacy based on distinct gender roles those naturally assigned to male and female, strict segregation of privates and feminine qualities determined to suit male pleasure and comfort, a system that ran counter to the family concept. Matriarchy was considered by the British to be a sign of an uncivilized society because the theory of evolution, which influenced all fields of knowledge in Europe at the time, also greatly influenced anthropology and social science studies. Thinkers such

¹⁰⁹ Arunima, *There comes papa, colonialism and transformation of matriliney in Malabar*, New Delhi Orient Longman, 2003, p. 29.

¹¹⁰ V I Benaseer, *Tradition versus Text: A study of the Matrilineal system of Malabar with special Reference to Mappila Matriliney, 1871-1931*, m Phil Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 68-69.

as Lewis, Henry Morgan, etc. introduced the family in human life in stages of social evolution - matriarchy as a system followed in natural life and paternal family as a progressive and modern system adopted at the stage of social progress.¹¹¹ Therefore, they saw the necessity of era and evolutionary process to break the system against natural gender roles. Moreover, British views of Oriental societies were based on the logic of Orientalism. They envisioned the matriarchy system of Kerala in that colonial logic that places everything oriental as the direct opposite of the civilized western society. They advocated matriarchy, which was the exact opposite of the Western family system. It is from this British conviction about in-laws that the British court observed the female property lineages that existed among the Mappilas in Malabar. Colonial courts were unwilling to recognize such matriarchy, where the women held assets and the male patrimony had no right of possession or ownership other than cash for expenses. In the view of the courts, such inheritance rights are restricted to women only. This was against the customs prevailing in Malabar. Therefore, cases related to female- inheritance are often decided in favor of male heirs. Hamidali stated that this led to the collapse of such ancestral homes in the early decades of colonial rule. In the context of social value system and economic changes resulting from British-court judgments and colonial modernity, strong criticisms against marumakkathaya (in-laws) emerged from all communities. In the context of the acceptance of this type of patriarchal modern family concept, the changes in Mapila Marumakkathaya started. One of the main objections raised against Mappila Marumakkathayam was that it was un-Islamic and heretical.¹¹² A critique of this kind emerges from the early 20th century Mappila social context against Marumakkathaya.

The Mapila social context of the 20th century was a combination of colonial modernity, modern education, the spread of printing, the resulting awareness of the revivalist activities in other Islamic societies, the anti-Islamicism and harsh criticism of Christian missionaries and the British government, and communal formation efforts to strengthen their own cultural idiosyncrasies formed as a defense. During this

¹¹¹ Kthaleen Gough, Mappila North Kerala, ed David M Schneider and Gough Kathaleen, *Matrilineal Kinship*, Berkely, university of California, 1962, p. 421.

¹¹² L R S Lakshmi, *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

period, the process of Islamization of the Mappila community took place and many traditional customs including Marumakkathaya were questioned because they were not Islamic. Criticism of the Marumakkathayam (in-law system) came more from the younger generation who had a new insight into their own society, who had received modern education as in other communities. Along with this, it can be seen that these arguments were also supported by religious scholars. Kathleen Gough observes that changes in the colonial economy made the matrimonial family system more desirable and acceptable than the consanguineous matriarchal one for a more individualized younger generation who wanted to transfer their acquired property to a family consisting of a wife and children¹¹³. The social outlook based on modern education became the catalyst for self-criticism and contempt for one's own society. Various caste and religious communities have shown eagerness to further strengthen their communal identity and become a distinct community.

This can be understood if we examine the activities of communal social reform movements of that time, it is in this social context that the demand for government-level intervention to Islamize the Mappila Murumakkathaym family structure arose. The first intervention for this was done by the people from Islamic community from Kannur and surrounding areas. They submitted a petition to the Malabar Collector that the right of succession in Muslim families should be according to Islamic Shari'ath law. As part of decision-making, the Collector conducted a detailed collection of opinions for this purpose, the meetings held in areas like Ancharakandi, Azhiekal, Taliparumba, Payyannur Kottayam Kurumbanad were notable for the increased representation of people and unanimous decisions¹¹⁴. Minutes of these meetings reveal that many of the meetings were presided over by Maulavis and Kazis. Declarations were made at these meetings that anyone who followed this tradition against Muhammadan law would become an infidel. The report of the meeting of Kunjayan, the Deputy Collector of Malabar, states that the Mappilas were satisfied only with a complete ban on Marumakkathayam and strict implementation of the

¹¹³ Kathleen Gough, *Op. cit.*, pp. 65-68.

¹¹⁴ Marumakkathayam Report.

Islamic Shari-ath system¹¹⁵. A report from Chirail taluk indicates that no one who attended the meeting had anything to say in favor of Marumakkathayam(in-law system). Most of the reports generally supported the need for legal action against Marumakkathayam(in-law system). It was in the context of such widespread social support that the Mapila Succession Act of 1918 was passed, according to which the self-acquired properties of the Mapilas were allowed to be passed on to their children according to Shari-ath law¹¹⁶. This act was the first of the enactments to Islamize the personal polity of Muslims. This became a hindrance to the economic development of the Mapila clans and ultimately led to the downfall of the Mapila clans. Two other important pieces of legislation are the Osiat Act 1928 and the Mappila Marumakkathayam Act 1939¹¹⁷. Since the family is the basic unit of the community, this lawmaking was an important step towards the Islamization of the Mapila community. This change was made possible by the British colonial administration's efforts to create a modern family system based on the Victorian concept and the family concept that emerged as part of the Renaissance and worked as complements. In the early decades of the 20th century, Mappila marumakkathayam(in-law system) was subjected to changes in the context of the collapse of the family system of marumakkathayam(in-law) in many regions of the world as well as among other communities in Kerala.

The Mappila literary tradition, with its unique blend of Arab-Malayalam, offers a fascinating glimpse into the early socio-cultural and political history of Muslim women in the region, particularly during the 17th century and the subsequent periods. This literary tradition, while not widely printed until the late 19th century, has deep roots in oral transmission, where women played a pivotal role in spreading these texts through song traditions. These songs, often influenced by women and integral to their daily lives, provide valuable insights into the role of celebration and cultural expression among Muslim women. Prominent women poets like PK Haleema

¹¹⁵ Letter by Kunjayyan, Deputy Collector, Calicut dated Sept. 23, 1914.

¹¹⁶ Benaseer V I, Op. cit, p. 121

¹¹⁷ L R K Lakshmi, Op. cit., p. 66

and Maluthatha were not confined to the domestic sphere. They composed numerous songs that reflected their perspectives, experiences, and emotions. The existence of matrilineal systems in the region allowed women to wield authority and recognition within their families, which was a notable feature of their social standing. However, as the period of reform began, male reformers initiated a significant shift in how Muslim women were perceived. Some reformers viewed these women as being immersed in darkness and superstition, and they felt it was their responsibility to bring about change within the community. The next chapter will delve into the perspectives and actions of these male reformers and how their views influenced the status and roles of Muslim women during this transformative period.

CHAPTER II

REVISITING THE EARLY MUSLIM REFORMERS OF KERALA: A CRITIQUE ON THE QUESTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

Since the last decade of the 19th century there has been a powerful wave of social reform movements among various sections of people of India. Initially emerged at the hands of individuals and later which were carried out by different organizations formed under the directive of such individuals. Those movements strive hard to reform the existing social life. Indeed, their efforts helped to improve the social conditions. The main reason for the emergence of reform in India were a new colonial educational system Materialized the British state and Christian missionaries that modernized traditional social perception of people¹. The public sphere that emerged in metropolitan centers was with the development of print culture newspapers and new mode of communication with the intensity of British education the new middle class emerged, they have new ways of thoughts. Protagonists of English education like B. T. Macally argued "English education brought the native youth in contact with a body of thought which openly questioned many of fundamental assumption upon which the fabric of traditional value rested²". Some educated groups of Indians, They start to look at their society through their concept of reason and Justice. This was urged from western thoughts.

Obviously, this group stood for a number of social reforms such as the prohibition of caste taboos, child marriage and enforced widowhood. The main challenge of the Indian reform was to rediscover reason and science in their own

¹ M N Srinivas, *Social Changes in Modern India*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 50.

² Maccully BT, *English Education and Origins of Indian Nationalism*, 1966, P-3 cited in Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *from Plassery to partition*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2004, p. 174

culture, and to reposition modernization projects with a cultural space defined by Indian tradition. What the Indian Renaissance did was a re-examination of the socio-cultural practices that existed with the traditions, and it was revised over time. Debates were constantly held on topics like the role of traditional contribution, the nature of modernity and enlightenment. Such discussions were not new to India's intellectual tradition. Religious discussions under the supervision of the feudal lords were very common before colonization. However, these discussions were limited by the prevailing social environment and technical limitations at the time. The growth of print media in the 19th century and the spread of new ideas encouraged these activities. These reformers created an atmosphere of reform and a perspective that did not reject Indian tradition but sought to change certain 'unreasonable' aspect of Indian society³. Indeed, in the early 19th century a series of social reform movements followed, being mainly reform movements from above mediated through the colonial government and as expected, their reforms remained on paper in most cases, as there was hardly any attempt to develop a modern social consciousness from below. Pamphlets and publications addressing various social and cultural issues that plagued Indian intellectuals were published during the colonial period. The condition of women in society, the development of the religious and other social sectors, a new education program etc. were some of the issues they focused upon that could eventually lead to some social change. The ability to question traditions was seen in the Renaissance and the Reformation. Ram Mohun Roy pointed out that the irrational logic in the practices and the deceitful nature of religion was due to the selfish interests of the priests. Many efforts were taken to free the religious scriptures from their monopoly. Ram Mohan Roy is working to translate the Upanishads into Bengali. Similarly, Swami Dayananda Saraswati added more democratic ideals in the struggle for freedom of religion by asserting that everyone, including women and lower castes, has the freedom to study and interpret the Vedas. But they never questioned the authenticity of the scriptures like their attempts by reformers including Jyotibha Phule

³ KN Panikar, *Culture, Ideology, hegemony: intellectuals and social consciousness in Colonial India*: London, Anthem press, 2001, p. 36.

and Narayana Guru etc. For them, the validity of the Vedas was the cornerstone of the Reformation.

Women's status became the focus of the project of reform in India as part of social change, one of the major criteria was the position of women, and it was here that Indians were increasingly under attack by western missionaries. Indian civilization was worsened because it assigned such a low status to women. This gender question was a key issue for James Mill condemning Indian civilization in the *History of British India*⁴. So Indian intelligentsia also responded to the civilization critique by advocating the supporting reform to improve the status of women in Indian Society. Such reforms, as we have seen, affected only a few women, who remained under male patronage and never became involved in these reformist project as conscious subject of their own history⁵. A close reading of social reformers' activities and the way they depicted women and women's questions were largely debated.

Through the historiographical shift and debates have changed the thoughts of traditional historical writings. In the early 1980's feminist surveys of reform were Initiated, feminists highly criticized modernity of reform. In the name of modernity, the reformers have actually Introduced, a new form of patriarchy. Thus, involved which provided the rationale for reforms not seriously questioning but merely reacting male domination⁶. Tanika Sarkar clarifies reform in two categories as, Liberal reformers who gain social acceptability and demanded legal change, however they sought to provide the women with a status of a legal person. The second category revivalists offered the same kind of changes coming from the hands of male community leader and scriptures⁷. In the case of Sati, as Latamani has argued: "The

⁴ Sekhar Budyopdhaya, *op. cit.*, p. 375

⁵ Geraldine Forbes, *Women in modern India* New Combridge History of India, Cambridge, Vol. 2, 1996, p. 23.

⁶ Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, *Recasting Women Essays in Colonial History*, Rutgers University, 1987, pp. 13-14.

⁷ Sumith Sarkar and Thanika Sarkar, *Women and Social reform in Modern India Vol I*, Ranikhet, Permanent Black., 2007, p. 8-9.

whole debate over Sati was grounded in Scriptures⁸. ” The colonial government decided to prohibit it only when it was convened that the custom was not enjoined by the scriptures. The Indian reformers gave supreme importance to scriptures. In Mani’s words “women are neither subjects nor objects but rather the ground of the discourse on Sati. ”⁹ The same thing can be said of the debate on widow re-marriage. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar stated that he would not support widow remarriage until he was convinced that it was not scriptural. Whether social reform has the acceptance of conservatism was a question that lingered on the minds of Renaissance leaders. Disputes over the abolition of Sati continued. What many of the reformers did was immerse themselves in the textual terms of the Scriptures and their interpretations. This was seen greatly while dealing with many social issues such as child marriage and widow remarriage. Although many reform movements had a stagnant tradition, rooted in the vedas, the argument that uniformity in traditionalism shattered these movements, as the influence of the Renaissance spread to the lower castes. The upper caste leaders like Rammohun, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Dayanand Sarasawathi never approved of the tradition deeply rooted in the vedas. While Jyotibha Phule, Narayana Guru and B R Ambedkar rejected the priestly tradition.

Although as the women Question became a part of the discourses of progress and modernity, movements for female education started as part of the colonized male search for the ‘new women’¹⁰. The agencies for the spread of education lay within three groups of people “The British rulers, Indian male reformers and educated Indian women¹¹. The Initiative was taken in Calcutta by men like Keshub Chandra Sen and Brahma Samaj, in western India by Swami Dayananada and his Aryasamaj and in Madras by Annie Basant and theosophical society¹².

⁸ Latamani, contentions Tradition: The Debate on Sati in Colonial Indian, in, Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, 1993, Op. cit., p. 88.

⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁰ Partha Chatterji, ‘Colonialism Nationalism and Colonialized Women’, Social Scientist, Vol. 22, May 1999, pp. 60-66.

¹¹ Forbes, op. cit., p. 35.

¹² Ibid., pp. 40-45.

Some women also fought for women cause, outstanding women like Panditha Ramabai, Ramabai Ranade, Swarna Kumari Debi, Maharani Tapaswini ¹³etc - contributed significantly towards emancipation of women. Among Muslim women, the outstanding name was Begum Rukaya Sakhawat Hossain. As for the education of Muslim women in other part of the country. That is led by certain families or a few organizations like Anjuma-i - Himayat - Islam, Anjuman - Islam etc¹⁴. There were two types of reform movements among the Indian muslims. One was Islamic revivalism spearheaded by the Ulama, and the other modernization campaign led by the educated middle classes. The first group shared a commitment to revitalize some Islamic legal rights but focused less on those challenged issues (like female rights to inheritance)¹⁵. The second category was modern in nature, for example Sayyid Mumtaz Ali. Who with his wife found a newspaper for women. He gave a keen interest in women's education. He forwarded a more cosmopolitan approach to education, allowing them to read the old persistate tale and epics as well as history, geography and science¹⁶.

The female advocates of social reform like the Bengali woman Rokeya Sakawat Hassain, stood for women education. She argues that women were admittedly weaker and appropriately dependent on their husbands and needed education to fulfill their domestic needs properly. Above all she insisted the extremes of Pardha which she chronicled "both comic and excit (ing) pity' must be ender¹⁷. Her novel Sultana Dream written in 1965 a fantasy of a utopia, where men were kept in seclusion and women ran the country.

In this context there have been Individual efforts for the improvement of women's status, however through education, though a number of women in the middle class were educated, this did not improve their condition and social existence very

¹³ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁴ Barbara P Metcalf, Islam Contestation, Essays on Muslim India and Pakistan, India Walten, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 142.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 146.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 124.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 126.

remarkably. A critical the motivation behind the education movement, which never led to the emancipation of women. But it was for fulfilling the dreams of the educated Indian Middle-class male “the Victorian ideal of companionable marriage”¹⁸. In Bengal the educated budramahila (gentle women) appeared as the Ideal companion to the enlightened badharalok. Education aims far from emancipation, further making women into domestic roles as good wives and better mothers. However, the wrongly educated and over educated women negligent of household chores-or more precisely westernized women, were considered to be threats to the cherished moral order¹⁹. Although there were some differences, among muslim bhadramahila. As the goals of the muslim women educations it wanted “to create women who would be better wives, better mother and better muslims”²⁰ In the words of Partha Chatterji it would reveal the aim of reformers. “The nationalist discourse we have here so far is a discourse about women; women do not speak here. It is a discourse which assigns to women a place to sign an objectified value; women here are not subject with a will and consciousness. Passing through the literature of the reform movement of India, it is understandable one thing that women never were allowed to speak for themselves.”²¹

Anyhow almost all areas of the Indian subcontinent spread the waves of reform educated middle class of Kerala also launched movements to the newly emerged opportunities - Almost, all socio-religious movements of modern Kerala were initially directed in the way towards engagement with modernity. The early days of the 20th century saw the Hindu reform movements - The Rama Krishna Mission, the Theosophical society. The Arya Samaj etc.

As a part of feminist studies, there emerged critical writings of the history of women in Kerala which are trying to re-read the existing literature. That has made

¹⁸ Partha Chatterji, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 45.

¹⁹ Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal*, Princeton, Princeton University, 1984, p. 52.

²⁰ Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars, Women Education and Muslim Reform in Colonial India*, *Social Scientist*, Vol 8., March, 2000.

²¹ Partha Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

women more visible in the social realm. The social reform movement among Hindu communities, different sections gave different forms to the social reform movement that arose among them. The change in land relation reflected in the growing demand for change in property right, forms of marriage and family organization²². Through the concerned organizations, communities became strengthened highly. The SNDP yogam, among Ezhavas, Main and secular education. In the beginning of 20th century the urge for reform of the existing society was visible among the caste groups in Kerala. The objective was to promote and encourage reform.

Muslim Renaissance- Partial Images of Kerala

The first quarter of the 20th century marked the beginning of new thinking in the Islamic world. Although the movements that emerged at that time were not apparently interconnected, there was an undercurrent of coordination. Although it is not possible to conclusively state that one movement influenced the other, an ideological consensus was evident among them. All the organizations that emerged in the Islamic world to revive the decaying Muslim social structure had a political face. It was only natural that the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, which had apparently united the Muslims all over the world, should have prompted the Renaissance drivers to think of a re-creation of some form of political power. It was a time when the colonial powers in the Muslim world were weakening the political will of the Muslims. They nurtured Turkish nationalism on the one hand and Arab nationalism on the other to let them fight amongst themselves. That is how it became part of the resistance movement against the occupying forces along with the internal reform.

Echoes of these movements, which were gaining strength on a global scale, were heard in India and Kerala, which were then a part of the British Raj. The Khilafat movement, led by the Ali brothers and Maulana Azad, took root in Kerala. The Malabar Rebellion of 1921 was part of the Khilafat movement. Renaissance leaders such as Jamaluddin Afghani and Muhammad Abdul Rasheed Ridha, who were the main inspiration for the cultural movements and individuals in Kerala who came out

²² G Arunima There Comes Papa, Colonialism and Transformation of Matriliney in Malabar, New Delhi Orient Longman, 2003, p. 35.

against the religious and ritual obsolescence - can be read as part of the Egyptian Renaissance process. It was an attempt to equip the Muslim community politically, intellectually and socially to face the modern challenges, firmly rooted in faith and divine oneness. The enlightenment thought strongly influenced the socio-political discourse of the entire nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The renaissance phenomenon of the day was the reformation of more religious societies than the creation of secular societies. The most important attribute of the enlightenment is that it has given open thought to personality and given undeniable importance and influence to scientific studies and democratic values. When the storm of Renaissance took over the twentieth century, the Islamic community too were a part of it.

Egypt had the highest rate of renaissance movements among Arab Muslim countries. Jamaluddin Afghani, , Muhammad Abdul Rashidul Ridha were the ones who made it possible for Islam to face Islam in the post - Enlightenment period. It was the work of equipping the Muslim community politically, intellectually and socially to meet the modern challenges, firmly rooted in faith in God and divine oneness. The 'renaissance' action plan in Egypt can be coded as follows:-Restoration of the Islamic Caliphate to colonial rule, Liberation of Islamic community from internal hardships, Propagation of modern education and science, Efforts for the upliftment and liberation of women, Accelerated Islamic research and modernization of institutions, including Jamia Al Azhar²³.

By the influence of European rational thoughts many scholars in Egypt and there published in works, it is visible that a trend of failing to be in the Islamic culture. Qasim Amin's views and works on issues such as individualism and women's emancipation has been criticised as well as Taha Hussein's work on "Al-Marahath al-Jadeeda²⁴". But it was the Islamic thinkers of Egypt, such as Jamaluddin Afghanii, Syed Rashid ridha, and Muhammad Abdu, who sought to consolidate the Islamic position in the era of modernity with a base of logic. As following the footsteps of

²³ Hoda Yousef, *Composing Egypt: Reading, Writing and the Emergence of the Modern Nation, 1870-1930*, Stanford University Press, 2016, pp. 24-25.

²⁴ J K Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: the social history of Islamic education*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 45.

modernity several books questioning, the foundations of Islam was published in French and English in Europe. Muhammad Abdu's works such as “*Risaluthawheed*”, “*Al Islam Vannaswahath*”, “*Fil ilmi Val Madeeniyyah Muhammadi*”, etc addressed this situation during that period²⁵. This is because they claim that there was no such centre of power or thought in Islamic society as the Church, which challenges scientific thought or rationality. On the contrary, they argued that the Abbasid period was marked by great advances in rationality, free thought, and scientific research. Therefore, the term renaissance has a completely different meaning and definition in Islamic history. . *Islah* is a term widely used to describe the renaissance that took place in Muslim communities. Even though the term *Islah* includes thoughts like Enlightenment and (In Arabic *Inara / Thasqeef*) Renaissance (In Arabic *Inbiyas / Rahtwa*) Revival (In Arabic *Inhash / Nasthul Ihyath*) Reformation (In Arabic *Thahsin*), none of them doesn't correspond to the deep meaning of *Islah* as it does. And we cannot consider *Islah* as the term to represent a renaissance. Even though history records the reformation among the Muslims of Kerala as a renaissance, the early reformers called it the *Islahi Act*.

We cannot evaluate their performance without understanding the difference. The scholars mentioned earlier in Egypt were not reforming the religion, but were washing away and purifying the ideological and social obsolescence that had accumulated in the religion. They kept the religion in its original purity and led the society to its light. The aim was to rediscover individuals and communities to the primordial purity of Islam, to purify and validate the unfounded beliefs and practices that later came in the name of religion, and to mold a better society (*Khaimu ummah*) in thought and action. It was Muhammad Abdul Wahab, Muhammad Abdul and Rashid Rida, were sought to lead the Muslim community to the true Islam in modern times. Vakkom Moulavi, the reformer of Kerala, was just following their ideas. Moulavi says this in the first edition of the Arabic Malayalam weekly named “*Al Islam*. ”

²⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

“Purifying the religiously deplorable conditions in the Malayalam Muslim community is the major. The purpose of “Al-Islam “. Explaining the realities of religion and pointing out and wiping out the myths and superstitions rooted in the public is what Al-Islam is devoted to doing²⁶. ” The main aim of Vakkom Moulavi was to transform the Muslim community in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith. It is also visible that different streams of the reform activities in the world on Islam. Among them are the doctrines of Islam put forward by the Egyptian scholars Muhammad Abdu and Riddha, which gave importance to *Akhl* and logic. The doctrines by Muhammad Abdul Wahab were giving significance to the texts and it was called *Thakl* or Saudi manner.

There is an argument that the societies in which these currents operated destroyed the indigenous cultures and heritage and took a harsh approach. To some true extent, as part of the process of clinging to the methodology of Islam, the cultural and traditional changeovers that took place in the society was considered completely forbidden. It completely rejects traditionalism and completely replaces it with rituals and culture based on Islamic scripture. Saudi history bears witness to this. But the 'Islahi' movement in Kerala was not a direct copy of the Islahi movements in Saudi Arabia or Egypt. Early reformers in Kerala sought to equate Muhammed Ibnu Abdul Wahab (nakl) who gave importance to the books and the Egyptian series (Akhl) which gave equal space to logic and wisdom along with the books.

Rashid Rida (1865-1935) was one of the foremost leaders of the Muslim Renaissance in the modern world. He was a link between the ancient and the modern logic of the reform and upliftment of the Islamic society. He was a disciple of Muhammed Abduwahab and published a magazine named *Almanar*. This magazine was the most read at the time. It is a magazine that has introduced Muslims to the modern world. Rasheed Rida's activities were to liberate the community from ideological bondage. There can be no progress except freedom-he believed. Rida, therefore, argued that Islamic educational institutions and methods need to be

²⁶ Vakkam Moulavi (Article title), Al Islam Magazine, Thiruvananthapuram, Vakkam Moulavi Foundation, 1990, p. 67.

reformed, emphasizing the freedom of thought and growth that are the foundation of Islam. It was with that goal in mind that he set out to reform *Al Ashar* with Muhammed Abdu. The ideological stance of Rida's renaissance project was not Western.

Rida adopted ideological and rational approaches while assimilating the high values of Sufism. Through his writings, Rida swears that the way to the Islamic renaissance is to return to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. This is why Sayyid Rida's School of Thought was so special from that of Afghanistan and Muhammed Abdu. He thought and acted about the Afghan political renaissance. Abdu, on the other hand, emphasized the intellectual renaissance. But Rida put these two thoughts together. He established Islamic educational institutions, modernized *Al Asar* and sought to reform the social education landscape. Reading the scholars of the Egyptian stream in the world Muslim Renaissance movements will shed some light on the ideology of the Correctional Movement in Kerala. Because Vakkam Moulavi was inspired by the *Al Manar* movement and Rida's ideas. The *Al Manar* movement was part of the Renaissance process in Egypt. The Renaissance Action Plan in Egypt can be summarized as follows. Restoration of the Islamic Caliphate against colonial rule, The unity of the Islamic community by reconciling the internal divisions., Propagation of modern education and science, Efforts for the emancipation and upliftment of women. Spreading modern science and knowledge. People used this same knowledge as a weapon to destroy atheism and counter rationalism. Muhammed Abdu's "Risalathu Thowheed" and Rasheed Rida's "Al Vahiyyum Muhammedi" are examples of this²⁷.

The Kerala Muslim Renaissance can be read from this light. That is to say, it is not from the lessons of the secular European Enlightenment, but from those of the Egyptian reform journey, the morals upheld by the Renaissance heroes on modernization and reform were learnt. These morals were the basic tenets of Islam. The classification of Islam as Political Islam and Cultural Islam has been actively debated around the world. Cultural Islam is often seen as the inherited religion of Islam, from one's parents, family or community of birth. The religion that is absorbed

²⁷ M Robinson Waldman, "Tradition as a Modality of Change: Islamic Examples", *History of Religion*, Ohio State University Press, 1986, pp. 318-340.

in its whole form and practiced in all walks of life is what is known as political islam²⁸. Renaissance movements played an important role in later changing the way of life of Kerala, which used to be called Popular Islam. The role of renaissance movements in modernizing the Kerala Muslim community is not insignificant. The Muslim renaissance in Kerala was not the contribution of the secular enlightenment in Europe. Rather, it was a social reform that emphasized the fundamental journeys and basic tenets of Islam itself. The Islamic renaissance did not separate God from spirituality and material life, but added the values of God and religion to socio-political life. What they stand for is not just logic but also morals. What they have done is just repair the damage and flakes that contradict the original text

The later half period of the 19th century and early period of the 20th century were very significant while considering Kerala Muslim life. In the same period new ideas and movements have formed and witnessed a lot of change in society. The religious reform movement which started in Malabar by the beginning of 20th century. Kerala Muslim reformers also started to redefine Islam in the context of modernity, especially the reformers like. Maktithangal, Vakkam Abdul Kadar Moulavi, Chalilakath Kunjahmed Haji and Hamdanithangal They embraced the colonial Value and at the same time strongly adhered to Islamic scripture. According to the reformist the practice of Islam by the majority in Malabar was deviant and corrupt. The reformers were hostile to the ‘popular islam’ which is contrary to the mono-thistic foundation of Islam. They opposed all forms of Shirk (attribution of partner to god), Bidaha (Religious Innovation) and also rejected taqleed (blind acceptance of imam)²⁹. Their attempt was to restore Islam to its purity and simplicity. Their main objective was to bring Kerala Muslim in conformity with textual Islam rather than to regulate their life according to the standards of colonial modernity. In such a way the reforms focused on return to the texts or revivalism. Hence the most “reinomous condemnation

²⁸ Imtiaz Ahmed, *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation accommodation and Conflict*, New Delhi, Social science Press, 1998, p. 18.

S. F. Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922: Islamic Society on the South Asia*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980, p. 47.

²⁹ P P Abdul Razak, *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

of such debased Islam in malabar came from large volume of polemical and didactic writings of the reformist and revivalists in 20th century³⁰. ” By the middle of the 20th century the reform movement of Malabar brought about a revolutionary transformation of the religious and cultural self-image of Muslim of Malabar. The reformist launched a sustained attack on the non-Islamic accretions of Malabar Islam and urged muslim to return to the purity of Islam. This forced on the muslims, both Initially and collectively, a growing awareness of what they believed and practiced as muslims. The first motive towards this was supplied by the reform efforts of Sanauulla Makti Thangal who was the pioneer among the muslim reforms of Kerala³¹

Makthi Thangal (1847-1912)

Makthi is an undeniable figure of Kerala Muslim Renaissance movement. It is a known fact that Makthi Thangal has worked hard for the betterment of the Muslim community and has been able to uplift them. It can be observed that all of the reform movements that arose in the nineteenth century gave great importance to gender. Women empowerment was at the forefront of all reformers' agendas. Muslim reformers were no exception. The reformers wanted to enhance the educational system within Muslim community - Muslim reformers experienced a time when women were utterly invisible and disregarded. Therefore, the primary focus of the Renaissance process was on women's education and awareness of their rights. Such awareness was created through publications and speeches. The concepts of scientific and modern educational propaganda, humanization and women's emancipation were prominent in the agenda of the Reform Magazine. Makti Thangal was the first to persuade the Muslim community that without modern education, they could not progress. Makti Thangal outlined the importance of becoming proficient in English and Malayalam in his article 'Muslim People and Education'³². ' Christian missionaries were active in Kerala during this time, publishing several anti-Islamic pamphlets and

³⁰ Ibid., p. 226.

³¹ KK Abdul Kareem and C N Moulavi eds, Op. cit., p. 346.

³² KKM Abdul Kareem, Sayid Sananulla MaktiThangaude Samporna Krithikal (Mal), Tirur, Kerala Islamic Mission, 1981, p. 11.

books. Makthi Thangal utilised rhetoric and publications to retaliate in parallel against the anti-Islamic acts of Christian evangelicals. An example of this is the book *KadoraKoodaaram* published in 1884, which is an authoritative critique of the Christian trinity³³. Makthi Thangal worked diligently for the betterment of the community and raised awareness. He had given talks all throughout Kerala for community reform. Makthi Thangal was engaged in the domain of community reform for 35 years. Women are the ones who are featured as an outcome of Renaissance. It is clear that all of the 19th-century reform movements placed a high value on gender equality. The empowerment of women was the main agenda of all reformers. Women played a significant role in social movements aimed at developing contemporary personalities.

These reformers worked hard to elevate women from the subjugation of orthodoxy to the public sphere through modern education. The renaissance of Muslim women is no exception. Here we can examine the connection between the concept of a Muslim woman and the Kerala Renaissance. Reformers saw the advancement of women as an essential element for the betterment of society. Therefore, most of the articles that can be found are writings that enhance the social space of women. Makthi Thangal and his essays are at the forefront of these. Although his articles appear to justify the status quo of feminism, on closer reading it can be seen to be utterly anti-feminist and completely ignores the woman's presence.

Makthi Thangal's work as a social reformer has been documented in a number of publications and notes. A critical reading would reveal Makthi Thangal approach towards issues like gender relations, gender, women's education, in-laws and polygamy. Despite his resistance to orthodox scholars as a proponent of modernity and as a catalyst for social revolution, it is a presumably paradoxical and element of anti -women view that persists in his ideas.

³³ Ibid., p. 34.

Gender equality and Makthi Thangal

The alternative efforts of the reformers, according to KM Panicker on Kerala Renaissance Attempts, did not lead to a reinterpretation or reconstruction of the past, but to the validation of a new cultural-philosophical state by embracing tradition. It can be said that the socio-cultural progress of the reformers was often superficial. It is apparent that the critics of tradition did not question its theoretical foundation³⁴. Makthi Thangal was no different. 31 works and 5 pamphlets of Makthi thangal have been found and codified Kathorakatharam, Parkaleethahorakkalam, Satyadarshini, Nibanaanayam, Makthi Vilambaram are few of them³⁵. He spent the better part of his life combating Christian propagandists' misrepresentation of Islam. Makthi Thangal left the defensive strategy of assault because he knew that counterattack was the greatest defense. Ideologically, Makthi Thangal, who knew that counterattack was the best defense, confronted the critics of Islam with a defensive style of resistance. However, Makthi Thangal's articles on gender are blatantly anti-feminine. He sought social reform in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith, but completely rejects the claim of equality as claimed to have advocated by Islam. Makthi Thangal, it could be said, saw gender relations in a way that entirely defies modern patriarchal tendencies. Far intense sections on gender equality and women's independence in his article *Narinarabhichari*³⁶. Similarly, Makthi Thangal himself expresses a distinct opinion in an article criticising women's education and modern European thought. Makthi Thangal's article begins by denying the interconnected relationship between men and women in terms of what kind of education and life women should have. The text goes on to debunk the following seven claims made through Western social reformers.

Women and men are equal: He says men and women are not equal. So, for women if men are equal, then it is reasonable to see God as both feminine and masculine. God is referred to as masculine. We do not refer to as 'her', instead 'him'.

³⁴ K. N Panikar, Op. cit., p. 27.

³⁵ KKM Kareem, Op. cit., p. 37.

³⁶ Makthi Thangal, *Nareenarabhichar* (Mal), in K K Abdul Karim (ed), *Makthitangalude Sampoorna Krithikal*, Kozhikode, Vachana Books, 1997, pp. 924-925.

Thus it is known that human origin is determined by the fact that men and women are not equal and are as different as the upside down.

Makthi Thangal's ideas are aligned with the arguments of medieval European Christians. Catholic women's ideas were challenged by European innovation. Despite the fact that they promoted women's education and considered them as individuals, it is fair to claim that they pushed women towards mere family life. Consider a husband to be God, despite being educated and informed, act like a child, naïve, and foolish. Similarly, the masculine God may be said to have shifted from places of worship to homes³⁷. Despite his outspoken opposition of Christian arguments, Makthi Thangal might be said to have co-opted modern patriarchal tendencies on the subject of women.

Thangal is openly critical of the Renaissance's Eurocentric argument. The Egyptian Mesopotamian roots of Greek knowledge and the fruit of the Arabs can easily be seen here in Europeans who have been refined in the sophisticated efforts of the Islamic people since the rise of Islam. But he does not even consider women as human beings, leaving aside the equality that Islam puts forward in the arguments regarding women. *“The king of reform Islam Orders That women is the supporter (backborn) of man. Man and women are naturally husband and wife, Among men and women those who were produced (born to) satisfy, for his safety. . . . she has to live even without the sign of male and to cover herself. Under his dependently she has to live worshipping him³⁸”*. Here Makthi Thangal puts forward the very lesson of slavery

Women education and Makthi Thangal

It can be observed that Makthi Thangal promotes women's education. Makthi Thangal was a staunch believer in educating both boys and girls. However, it can be seen that he also set boundaries to women's education. He went on to say, "Depending

³⁷ Toril Moi, *Sex Gender and Body*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 72-74.

³⁸ Makthi Thangal, *Op. Cit.*, p. 456.

on the situation, divine-secular studies should be learned from parents or gurus³⁹. " (It is preferable for a girl to attend a special girls educational institution and pursue a career as a teacher...). The husband is responsible for teaching the women everything they need. A woman who does not study even with her husband's discipline should be abandoned. Thangal had no other opinion than that education is compulsory for women. But he criticizes men for trying to make women equal to men in education. These people are referred to as reformed beauties. Historian KK Kareem discusses Makthi Thangal's article debunking the claims of Travancore's social reformer Moosakutty. An article entitled, 'moosakutty kk orutharam'(An answer to Musakkutti). But unfortunately, it was not found⁴⁰. Although Makthi Thangal recognises the value of female education, he ensures that it is kept distinct from male education. We can see him insulting western statements like 'Women require more education than men. . . ' He rejects modern arguments by using Christian history. Women who obey God's word are encouraged to adorn themselves with good deeds rather than writings (B. A exams), according to the Bible. The goal is to draw their attention to the need for women's education by taking examples from the Christian Word and the Bible. Despite appearing to be modern, Makthi Thangal's purpose, like that of other reformers, was to entirely redesign tradition and traditional religious awareness in a way that was in line with modernity. Gender Equality Thangal dismisses the premise that men and women are equal, stating instead that women are weak in general. There is no need for a woman to be like a man because nature rituals make women the object of man's desire, they were intended to carry male sperm, and one of Adam's ribs was taken and made into a woman⁴¹. Makthi Thangal then continues. . . The distinction between men and women can be seen in the words like women are not treated equally to men and do not have the right to be as independent and influential as men. Women are being evaluated on the basis of sexuality. Man is regarded as a perpetual sower. . . It is natural for a pregnant woman to conceive and

³⁹ Makthi Thangal, muslim janavum vidhayabasavum (Mal), in KK Muhmmmed Abdul Kareem (ed.), Makthi Thangalude Sampooranakrithikal, op. cit., p. 436.

⁴⁰ KKM Abdul Karim, Op. cit., p. 23.

⁴¹ Makthithangal, Op. cit., pp. 566.

deliver as if she had never been sown or washed. This destroys equality and so on. . The woman is evaluated on the basis of her physical self. Expressions of femininity become a cause for her to become enslaved to the greatness of man. The woman is considered to be the field in which the seed is sown, and the dynamic seed of the man gives it prominence. As a result, Simon de Bua observes, feminine experiences such as female sexuality, fertility, and motherhood are fully dependent on male dominance⁴². Thangal confirms that women are weak by using the Bible and the Vedas throughout his article. The causes of this weakness are said to be due to race, pregnancy, childbirth and breast milk - which are said to be harmful rays from which men are protected. From a patriarchal standpoint, the renaissance heroes stepped ahead by slamming the woman's fixed form.

Makthi Thangal can be interpreted as the most tangible evidence of it. It can be seen that the movement for women's liberation has taken place in the world by rejecting the premise that women become women owing to a lack of certain characteristics. . In modern times, women's liberation movements have questioned many philosophies and reclaimed women's space. However, in reality, such waves of feminism did not even enter the thoughts of Keralites once. Makthi Thangal measures a woman's intellect in the same way that he assesses her rear brain. He makes it clear from the story of the first sin itself. He says Adam, the first father, is deceived by Havva's stupidity. Courage is the basis of intellect, courage is the basis of physical strength and comfort, and the principle of these is blood. Menstrual blood, postpartum blood, etc. cannot stimulate a woman's intellectual development. . . Fear of men is developed even before women are enabled, because women were created with weak features that allow them to pleasure and satisfy men. . . In itself, childcare takes longer than male care, concentration and enlightenment meditation are impossible⁴³. This is the reason he argues why there are no divinities like *Brahmachari* and *Maharshi* from women. Such writings can be seen in the periodicals published in Kerala at that time. A man named N. R. V. wrote an article on female education in *Vidyavinodini* in 1897

⁴² Simon De Beauvoir, *the second sex*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 234.

⁴³ Makthi Thngal, *Op. Cit.*, p. 663.

- He claims that women do not require formal education in the form of letters because it is utilized to manage the affairs of the Kingdom. How can things be done in order when women are born weak and appointed to positions that are only achievable by powerful men? Especially when a portion of the blood leaves the body that can't be avoided⁴⁴.... Even though N. A. Amma replied to this article. But, in reality, no woman was capable of responding to Makthithangal's article.

Motherhood and Makthi thangal

It can be seen that all societies and religions glorify women's motherhood. The position of a mother is considered as extremely important. Thangal's article on mother being the first school seeks to clarify what the role of the mother is. 'Margadarshi' means guide - its purpose is to cultivate righteousness - But the claim that the first school is the mother is not entirely correct. The mother is the one who is entitled to the misfortunes that should befall her child. Does the mother have any authority over the sons? Just as the wife has no authority over her husband, so the mother has no authority over her sons. She must care for and love the elderly. Mothers are only given the role of a slave in caring for the elderly. The position of the mother is likened to the position of the maid. Therefore, it is argued that the right of the sons belongs to the father. During this period, Makthi thangal can be seen standing up against marumakkathayam customs. It's part of the reason why the role of female mother is seen so lightly. He opposes this practice, emphasizing the rights of children. It was argued that there is no such practice among Muslims. Then he says that adding the name of the mother without adding the name of the father is against Islamic norms⁴⁵. Makthi, who argues that the main agenda is the reform of Islam, however, views the role of woman as mother in a way that is incompatible with Islam. Without even mentioning Muhammad's words, "Heaven is under his mother's feet⁴⁶, " and the

⁴⁴ N. K. Ravindran, *Keralathile Sthree Vimochana Rashtriya Charitra Paramaya Anveshanam (Mal)*, in Sachithanathan (ed.), *Sthree Padanangal*, Kozhikode, Bodhi Publication, 1998, p. 68.

⁴⁵ Makthi Thangal, *Muslimgalum Marumakathayavum*, in KK Abdul Kareem, *Op. Cit.*, p. 51

⁴⁶ Prophet Muhmmmed Hadith

importance given to the mother by the Qur'an, the denial of women's status as mother can be observed.

This article by Makthi should be read as a way of opposing female authority in marriage. Makthi argues that 'Marumakkathayam' is anti-religious, that religion does not allow female authority, and that it is the law for a man to be sovereign. After Jushi, Maharshi and Rajni, even if all the ranks belong to a woman, according to the law of the Creator, she has to depend on a man. This is the reason that he argues why the almighty and omnipotent God did not appoint anything in the female lineage, such as Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, or the Prophets from Adam to Muhammad. Because, in contrast to the immense power indicated earlier, the situation is vicarious. Makthi is convinced that women are weak. At all times, women are considered as a category that encompasses primarily feminine characteristics. Makthi also emphasizes the importance of being obedient to men and to give birth and raise children. Later other reformers also adhered to the same idea.

Vakkam Moulavi (1873-1932)

By the end of the 19th century, the social circumstances of the Muslims of Kerala turned out to be pitiable due to the political and financial situations. Kerala Muslims who had successful trade relations in the middle centuries and served as promising naval warriors suddenly fell into slavery and ignorance after the advent of the imperial powers in the state. It was in this context that the sense of reformation developed in the community leaders of Kerala due to the Western connection and the national awakening throughout India. Vakkom Moulavi was in the forefront of this historic mission to open the closed doors of orthodoxy and spread the innovative message of liberation and prosperity through education among Kerala Muslims. Vakkam Abdul Khadar Moulavi (1873-1932) was born into a well-known prosperous family in Vadakkulla Chirayinkeezh Taluk, Trivandrum⁴⁷His parents are Ayithoor Kayippurath Muhammad Kunjayi and Hashoobi. Moulavi was lucky enough to earn an education from teachers from various regions of Kerala. The logic Science was

⁴⁷ Muhmmmed Abda (ed.), 'Vakkam Moulaviyude Thiranjadutha Krithikal, (Mal.) Thiruvandapuram, Vakkom Foundation, 1976, p. 158.

taught to Moulavi by Andathos Kunjipokkar Muslyar from Malabar. Malayalam and Sanskrit were taught by Kesava Pillai, a native of Ambalapuzha and a Malayalam Munshi. Tamil scholars from Kayalpattanam and Keezhakkara also taught Tamil to Moulavi. Along with these, he studied Arabic and various Islamic scriptures such as the Qur'an and Hadith from scholars.

Thus, by adolescence, Abdul Khadar had mastered the languages such as Malayalam, Tamil, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Urdu, and English, as well as modern science. Thus, by adolescence, Abdul Qadir had mastered the sciences of Malayalam, Tamil, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Urdu, and English, as well as religious principles⁴⁸. One of the main aspects that inspired Abdul Qadir's ideological development and future career was his communication with Sree Narayana Guru at Chempazhanthi village in Chirayinkeezhu taluk. Abdul Qadir was able to take part in Sree Narayana Guru's discussions on Dharma Shastras and rituals. Abdul Kader's contact with Father Samuel Daniel, a missionary who was one of the other visitors to Poonthravilakam, allowed him to learn about the Christian religious tradition. Vakkom Moulavi's vision and interest touched all spheres of life, social, cultural, economic and political, like those of the other great Renaissance heroes. But what naturally persuaded and affected him the most was the miserable condition of the community he belonged to at the time. He realized that the cause of this condition was immorality, superstition, and educational backwardness that had been ingrained in religion for many years. Conservatives and the clergy, as in all other communities, were fiercely opposed to the reforms and efforts in these areas. Vakkom Moulavi's acts of the revolution were also a fight against these barriers. It is said that Vakkom Moulavi got acquainted with the knowledge about the lives and works of Muslim reformers and renaissance heroes in the history of India and other parts of the world and such literature were provided by Arakkal Mohammad, a progressive scholar from Edavanna in Malappuram district, with the necessary knowledge and books⁴⁹. Moulavi has enlightened with the history and thoughts of various icons around the globe, Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905) of

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 166.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

Egypt Rashid Rida (1865-1935), Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi (1563-1624) Jamal al-Din Afghani (1839-1897) Shah Waliullah (1702-1763) of Delhi, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab (1703-1792) are few of them.

Misir in Egypt particularly influenced Vakkam Moulavi more than the Saudis. At the same time, the renaissance movements which were enthusiastically waved in other communities in Kerala have been the inspirational stages of the Muslim renaissance. However, it is possible to see the actions against the exploitative practices of the religions. These are the things that Vakkom Moulavi writes about in *Al Islam* writes. He writes, "Explaining the true tenets of religion and pointing out the superstitions and superstitious practices that are entrenched among the general public and the things that promote community development⁵⁰. "

There is no doubt that the Islamic renaissance models represented was what was followed by Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Vakkam Mowlavi of Kerala have much to share in common. Colonial Government's modernization policies has been widely appraised by muslim reformers and they used advance the conditions of the community and modernizing it. One of the first examples for this was the Aligarh movement, which strengthened the intellectual upliftment of Indian Muslims to a greater extent. This policy was followed in Kerala as well. Through the recognition gained by the renaissance leaders in the last phase of the Malabar rebellion, the Muslim community was redirected from the blind and emotional confrontation to the path of education and renaissance.

Vakkam Moulavi and Periodicals

Vakkam Moulavi spent his life publishing journals and spreading new ideas with a sincere intention of empowering the Muslim community of modern Kerala. Along with liberating oneself from the filth of religion, the aim was to acquire knowledge and wisdom for individuals through timely education and to find success in life without losing spiritual values as a true believer. The idea of Enlightening people of other religions can be seen in Moulavi's work. "Religion, community,

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

education, history and literature will be “Deepika”’s main topics. We want “Deepika “ to be read not only by Muslims but also by non-Muslims⁵¹, " . Moulavi used various methods to carry out his mission like Sree Narayana Guru Moulavi called on the people, especially Muslims, to become educated and organized and empowered like. Vakkam Moulavi published numerous magazines and books for unraveling the mission and ideology. “Swadeshbhimani” was started in Malayalam and Arabic-Malayalam in 1906 under his ownership from Vakkom. Ramakrishna Pillai was invited to take over editorship and became known as the Editor. After earning freedom the newspaper later, with Moulavi's knowledge, moved the editor's pen against corruption and nepotism. Moulavi commences the ideals of the newspaper in his first Editorial / introductory speech of “Deepika”.

"Of course, we do not hide public grievances for fear of any danger to us⁵². " Finally, on 10th September 1910, the government banned the newspaper, deported its editors, and confiscated printing materials. He had also started a magazine named “Muslim” (1906), which served as a beacon for Vakkom Moulavi's renaissance work, and was able to publish only up to 9 editions. However, it can be said that it was an effort for the transformation of the community.

In 1918, he also published the magazine "Al-Islam" in Arabi- Malayalam. Five issues were published, but they were also a stimulus to reform at the time. He has written many excellent articles in Arabic and Malayalam. Compilation of articles in periodicals such as *The Prophets*, *Interpretations on the Qur'an*, *Talimul Qur'an* and *Imutajjiweed. Eu- Swabhah* (Dawn) is a response to the criticisms of conservative scholars against Muhammed Ibnu Abdul Wahab and Ibnu Thaimiya. Vakkom Moulavi's works have been read for the upliftment of the Muslim community. Periodicals such as Moulavi's *Muslim* (1906) *Al Islam* (1918) and *Deepika* (1931) were reflections of his fundamental thinking. Moulavi wielded his pen for the strong struggle against the orthodox reactionary forces in the community and traveled all

⁵¹ Vokkam Moulavi, *Deepika Ottavoliyathil*, Tiruvanandapuram, Vakkam Moulavi Foundation, 1992, p. 12.

⁵² Vakkam Moulavi, *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

over Kerala to spread the message of the Muslim renaissance. His work focused on *Tawheed* (monotheism), *Ijtihad* (free thought), Shareehath (religious law) and women's rights. The very basic structure of Moulavi's methodology is based on Tawheed and *Ijtihad*. It proclaims the freedom of the religious scholar to develop rational rules and interpretations from the Qur'an and Hadith. This is what Vakkom Moulavi says with utmost importance. Vakkom Moulavi's observations on Islamic law (Shareehath) are both fundamental and periodically relevant. Moulavi's thoughts created a storm among the Muslim community, which believed Sharihath should not be changed in any situation. He wrote in Moulavi's "Islamic Manifesto", a collection of Islamic doctrines⁵³.

Spiritual matters can never be changed, so judgments about them do not need to be changed. Earthly matters, on the other hand, are not confined to a limited range, as they may vary from country to country and new topics may arise. Understanding the pros and cons of those issues and rejecting the harms is what to do in those situations.

Islam has established certain general rules. Based on these rules, scholars with the right knowledge of religion are free to make appropriate judgments for each particular matter.

Vakkom Moulavi also took seriously the issue of Muslim women. Vakkom Moulavi thwarted the propaganda that the status of women in Islam was very low and that women were not given any rights equal to those of men. Moulavi solidified his ideas by the right interpretation of the Qur'an that men and women are of the same race. In his view, this ruling, which gave women equal rights with men at a time when women were not allowed any rights in other countries, as in Arabia, was a source of agitation not only in Arabia but around the world.

It can be said that Moulavi tried hard to find the idea of gender equality in the perspective of Islam. He was concerned with the thought that Westerners are

⁵³ Muhammed Kammu, Vakkam Moulavi, Probodhana Smaranaga (Mal), Trivandram, Arafa Publications, 1988, p. 14.

spreading rumors about women in Islam. Moulavi also lamented that Muslims were not doing their duty to convince the people of the true principles of equality, refuting their allegations. He attributed this to the lack of Muslims among Muslim scholars associated with the New World. Moulavi said many conceptions on issues like polygamy and divorce were wrong. He says "Islam generally teaches that monogamy is the norm and that Islam has only opened a narrow door to polygamy, for specific occasions where men are socially compelled to marry more than one woman. People who urge to do polygamy should keep in mind that Islam supports polygamy only for those kinds of crucial situations⁵⁴.

Similarly, Vakkom Moulavi pointed out that religion severely harms those who abuse their divorce permission. Moulavi defended the hadith, citing the hadith that those who divorce their wives for no clear reason are just against religion. In a statement to Al-Islam magazine, Moulavi explains why his magazine is in Arabic Malayalam. *"If it is an Arabic Malayalam alphabet, there is nothing wrong with reading anything written in it, and most people, especially women, are accustomed to reading it"*⁵⁵. "It is convincing that the upliftment of the community is not possible without women. Moulavi says in his article "Our Women". Moulavi goes on to say that he is happy that awareness has arisen among us about the need to improve the status of women. *"The status of men does not rise. The status of women does not arise when the status of men rises. The status of women will always be the same as that of men in any situation.*

*The essence of saying was that women should be elevated in the world is by giving the lessons they need about religion and worldly affairs*⁵⁶. "Here Moulavi emphasizes the need for formal education for the upliftment of women. Moulavi wrote in Al-Islam, completely rejecting the claims of traditional ulama that women should not be taught the alphabet. "Should women be taught to write by hand?" Moulavi goes on to say that it is a Zaheef (false) hadith that says *"Do not let women stay in the rooms*

⁵⁴ Vakkam Moulavi, Op. Cit., p. 36.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁶ Vakkam Moulavi, 'Nammude Sthreekal', p. 36.

of the palace and do not teach them handwriting"⁵⁷, corrects it with the Swaheeh (correct) hadith through a careful analysis of the hadiths. Moulavi argues that "*after learning the handwriting or literacy, women will be empowered as it will be like a sword sharpened with jute to cut off any object that strikes a woman - after learning how to write, a woman will be qualified to do whatever she is asked to do*"⁵⁸ . "

It can be seen that Moulavi questions the authenticity of the arguments of the traditional ulama by interpreting the same hadith. Moulavi points out the need to teach women to write, explaining the hadith that Prophet says " *I should teach Hafsa the manuscript as well as the mantra of goodness*"⁵⁹. "He says that the hadiths which are said to forbid the teaching of handwriting to women are weak and the hadith that there is no objection to teaching are strong.

Vakkom Moulavi brought the slogan of women's advancement through education and all the reformers who came after he engaged in activities to accelerate it. During this period many articles, histories and stories about women can be found in Moulavi's magazines. The ultimate goal is the "liberation" of women - such a call can have a limit - Mary Alice Victers speaks of such limits in this age.

"Women are being replaced as symbols of dignity. Victorian morality and patriarchal framework were maintained"⁶⁰. "Muslim women are no different. The article says, "Islam and women. " All the rules of the abyss are meant to keep them away from the worst part of the world and to leave in them all the virtues that women have. In the section on Anthapuravasam (Indoor space), the emphasis is on the ideal place for women. But Moulavi has tried to convince women of their rights, as opposed to the occult. Teaching manuscripts can also be seen as engaging in intense debate. The fact that he has taken the upliftment of women as his main agenda as part of his

⁵⁷ Vakkom Moulavi, Moulavi Yude Thiranjedutha Krithikal (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Vakkom Moulavi Foundation, 1985, p. 32.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶⁰ Griselda Pollock, *Feminism and Modernism* In Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (ed.) *Framing Feminism: The art of Women's movement 1970-1985*, London, Pandora press, 1987, p. 159.

work. Then the scales of female space are categorized. “Characterization: Home” is an article on “*Deepika* “that came where the influence of women on the character formation of children is discussed. “It is in the quiet solitude of the home that they extend their power so that civilized and virtuous women can achieve greatness and excellence⁶¹. ”- Moulavi says.

Moulavi considered women empowerment an important matter of reform, and education was suggested as a panacea to solve their problems. At the same time Moulavi suspected the European model of reform and education. Always trying to differentiate European culture from that of the culture of Muslim women. In another article Moulavi, recalls:” Among the Muslims some reformists, those who were interested in European customs began to claim that Muslim women have to be trained as European women in mingling with men. There is an argument that only this way can community attain progress. this position has now been very popular in many places and even malayalanadu is not an exception”⁶². Here reformers wanted to change women for the benefit of the community but not according to her will or wish.

K. M. Moulavi (1886-1964)

Muhammadkutty was a prominent Muslim scholar in Kerala during the twentieth century and was popularly known as KM Moulavi. He was born in 1886, as the son of Thayil Kunjalan Sahib of Kakkat, near Tirurangadi, and Ayesha of Kannadil, Palamadam. As a child, he completed his studies at madrasa and school. Later, he learned the books from the Dars of Kodanchery Mammadkutty Musliar in Tirurangadi's central masjid. Many scholars in Kerala are going with the flow of the community's rhythm. But KM Moulavi is one of the rare scholars who came to the conclusion that religion has to be reformed. They were part of a movement to rid religion of the immoralities that had accrued. In the Shafi'i Madhhab, the books of jurisprudence (Karma Shastra) have adopted the method of gradually questioning the additions to religion through analysis. We can see that they tried to substantiate their

⁶¹ Vakkam Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 45.

⁶² Ibid., p. 34.

arguments through speech and action. Once in the mosque at Kootayi (This mosque followed a devout system) when KM Moulavi was leading prayers as Imam, he corrected the way the Ma'moom (those who follow the imam in the prayer pronounced Amen and promptly moved away. This was an extraordinary event in the area. It became a topic of discussion among the devout muslims there⁶³. Actions that go along with the idea can be seen from Moulavi's side.

1909- The Koyappathodi Muslims, a prominent Muslim family in Malabar, gave land to Madrassa and Dars from their Waqf holdings and thus established the Darul Uloom Arabic College. When chalilakath took control of these madrassa and dars it reached a new height and thus inaugurated a new phase of the madrassa system in 1909. Chalilakath began to teach new subject unfamiliar to traditional scholars and tried to reform the system of religious inculcations. KM Moulavi was assigned the charge of writing and editing Fatwas, textbooks and letters on behalf of chalilakath. thus Moulavi was the authorized writer(Katib)of Chalilakath. He began to be popular with the title Katib. Chalilakath's (1910) Khadiyan refutation and Qibla argument sparked a strong controversy among scholars⁶⁴. The scholars turned to be two groups, one is orthodox Sunni sect and another new reformers under chalilakath. The society wrote the verdict that Chalilakam and his disciples were deviants from the tradition. There were disciples who went forward embracing all the ideas of Chalilakam- E. K. Moulavi, Moosa Moulavi and others. Vazhakkad which was the centre of these reformers and their madrassa witnessed rejuvenation of Islamic beliefs and practices chalilakath and his disciples were not acceptable to the traditionalist thus chalilakam and his desciples left vazhakad Dars. K. M. Moulavi left Vazhakad, Maulana began Dars at Jummaath Masjid in Mannarkkad⁶⁵. M. C. C. Ahmed Moulavi, M. C. C. Abdurrahman Moulavi, C. A. Mohammad Moulavi etc. studied in this dars at

⁶³ K Moidu Moulavi, Ormakurippukal (Mal), Calicut, IPH, 2001, p. 56.

⁶⁴ Razaksullami, Mujahid Presthanathinte Vallarcha, (Mal), Mujahid Conference Souvenir, 1998, p. 27.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

Mannarkkad. Later K. M. Moulavi continued his service as a madrasa teacher and mudarris in Valapattanam, Kottummam and Paravanna.

K. M. Moulavi has been associated with the National Movement since the days of the Home Rule movement. E. Moidu Moulavi says It was during the Home Rule movement that I first met Sri Madhavan and listened to his sermons. My classmate the late K. M. Moulavi was also present. It was at that time that I first heard Sri Madhavan Nair, the keynote speaker, speak. Hindus and Muslims were encouraged to work together for the betterment of the country. Subsequently Shri. K. M. Moulavi also delivered a heartfelt speech on community unity. I did not have the ability to preach at that time. I was just a listener⁶⁶. In 1920, K. M. Moulavi emerged as the leader of the Khilafat Congress. He was the Secretary of the Khilafat committee of Ernad Taluk. The Khilafat-committee Joint Conference was held at Kozhikode on January 15, 1921. Hasankoyamulla, Chekkumulla, E. Moidhu Moulavi, KM Moulavi Sahib, etc., took the initiative to organize the conference. In this summit, the man who preached about the absoluteness of Hindu-Muslim unity. Collector Thomas of Malabar issued a restraining order in Ernad and Valluvanada taluks in February 1921. As a result, a riot broke out in Tirur BT. K. M. Moulavi had gone into hiding to avoid the soldiers. He came to Kodungallur as it was a princely state and there was no need to fear British invasion. In 1922- During his time in Kodungallur, Moulavi greatly contributed to the religious and moral upliftment of Kerala's Muslims.

KM Moulavi and Aikya Sangam

After the Malabar rebellion ended, many community members and thinkers brainstormed ways to protect Kerala Muslims from future difficulties. The Muslim leaders felt that personal effort was wholly inadequate and that collective action was required. K. M. Moulavi, EK Moulavi, Manapattu P. Kunjumammaduhaji, etc. thought of a way to end this division and forge unity and brotherhood among the members of the community. In 1922, an unbiased body was formed to help Muslims resolve their differences. Kottapuram Seethi Muhammad Sahib, Manappatta brothers,

⁶⁶ K Madhavan Nair, Janmashathapthi Smaranika (Mal), Calicut, Mathurbhumi Publication 1987, pp. 23-24.

Puthenveetil K. M. Kunji Muhammad Sahib, and others were involved in the early stages. The neutral group could not end the Muslim family disputes in Kodungallur. However, the organization's members were steadily growing. In the meantime, the unbiased group's scope of work had expanded. In 1933, the first annual meeting of the Kerala Muslim AikyaSangam was held in Eriyad⁶⁷. Vakkom M. Muhammad Abdul Qadir Maulvi presided over the meeting. This assembly determined that ulama from all over Kerala should band together and form a group. At that meeting, a resolution was unanimously passed that Muslims should not perform rituals such as waving flags and preparing sandal pots(chandana Kudam). In the meantime, Aikya Sangam activists began printing Muslim Aikyam and Al Irshad magazines in Arabic Malayalam script. Both magazines have been instrumental in spreading the message of the community reformation movement. The Muslim Aikyam malayalam magazine was represented by PK Muhammadunni, while Al Irshad was represented by EK Moulavi. The fatwa (religious ruling) on religious matters in Al Irshad magazine was written by K. M. Moulavi. In 1924, the Second Annual Meeting of the AikyaSangam was held in Aluva. E. Maulana Abdul Jabbar Habrat, Principal of Vellore Bakhayath Salihath Arabic College, presided over the Conference. The resolution was introduced by E-Moidu Moulavi. Kerala Jamiyutul Ulema was constituted at this conference. C. K. Moideenkutty Moulavi served as the secretary and P. N. Mohammad Moulavi, P. P. Muhyuddin Kutty, P. M. Abdul Qadir Moulavi, B. V. Koyakutty Thangal, and C. Abdullakutty Moulavi were the members. The Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulama's work is focused on five primary points.

1. Bring together and unite the scattered ulama.
2. Resolve and adjudicate conflicts between Muslims in their respective panchayats.
3. Establish Darul Iftat (judge).

⁶⁷ N K Ahmed Moulavi, "Aikya Sangham Kerala Muslimkalum (Mal)", Shabab Seminar Issue, Calicut, 1997, p. 114.

4. Strengthen Muslims' true religious beliefs. Also, get rid of any potentially dangerous anti-religious practices.
5. Take the necessary actions to further the cause of Islam⁶⁸.

The Third Annual Conference of the AikyaSangam was held in 1925 in response to the protests. Resolution of this Conference - In 1926 the 4th Annual Conference of the AikyaSangam was convened at Thalassery. Muhammad Marmaduke Pictal, a European neo-Muslim scholar, preached on the subject of Islamic culture⁶⁹. The South Indian Muslim Education Conference was also held in connection with that conference. In 1927- its fifth anniversary was celebrated in Kannur. In 1928, the Sixth Annual Meeting was held in Tirur under the chairmanship of Dr. Abdul Haq. In 1928 the Seventh Conference was convened at Ernakulam. The Kerala Muslim Youth Conference was also held at the same venue. K. M. Seethi, Mohammad Abdurahman K. Muhammadali A. Muhammad Kannu and others participated in this conference. In 1930, the 8th Congress of the AikyaSangam was held at Thiruvananthapuram. Khan Bahadur Meen Zainuddin Sahib was the presiding judge. The group had its 11th Annual Conference in Eriyad in 1933. At this meeting the Kerala Muslim Majlis was convened. Although K. M. Moulavi was not able to attend most of the conferences of the Kerala United Front in public, Moulavi was instrumental in organizing and making all the conferences a success. Women were not directly involved in the activities of the neutrals and the United Association. No woman's name can be found on the organizing committee or the members. But the theme of the 4th Annual Conference was Women's Education. The discussions were sparked by a focus on working for the betterment of women's education. The agenda of these sections was to establish more schools by convincing the government and to assist girls to get modern education by sending them to schools. K. M. Moulawi has written numerous fatwas on a number of issues worth studying. Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdoom Ma'bashi II published *al-Tahfat alMujahideen fi Aqbar al-Burtugaliyin* in

⁶⁸ E K Moulavi, "Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangavum Navothanavum" (Mal) in PA Said Mohammed (ed.), Kerala Muslim Directory, Cochin, 1960, p. 47.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

Al-Murshid⁷⁰. K. M. Moulavi wrote commentary notes on Malana Abdul Kalam's Tarjumanul Quran - He published numerous essays and fatwas in leading Arabic and Arabic Malayalam publications including Al-Irshad and Al-Islah. His manuscript Arabic translation of Al Irshad established that Friday Khutba should be performed in the mother tongue. It is possible to see the manner in which the rituals are incorporated into the religion. K. M. Moulavi, in writing, critiqued those unspoken gray beliefs, such the calling of the departed and published a book in Arabic-Malayalam Al-hidaya and Ilamahkhil Bidaivaddyalala.

In the first issue of Al-Manar, K. M. Moulavi has written many articles. His writings about women related topics can be found. As a reformer, he can be seen emphasizing women's education. K. M. Moulavi's wife and sisters were literate. Conservative scholars passed a resolution declaring that teaching women to write is Madhuroh and should not be done at all. The resolution was presented at the fourth annual conference of Samastha at Mannarkkad. However, the Kerala Jamiat Ulema strongly opposed the resolution and worked for girls' education.

Renaissance heroes often idealized women who possessed a combination of intelligence and virtues. The emphasis was women who demonstrated not only education but also discipline in their conduct. It is clear from K. M Moulavi's writings that one should oppose non-Islamic vices such as 'marumakkathayam' and 'kathukuth. ' It is apparent how a woman's education should be structured. We need to think about the disciplines of study that are required in girls' schools. Let's again talk about why she needs to be educated. *Education will help her cultivate her spirit, cultivate her character, take care of property, manage the house so that the family as a whole prospers and raise and train her children in good manners*⁷¹. The ultimate purpose of education, according to Moulavi, is to empower women to stay at home while knowing what is beneficial for society. Tadbir alManzil (Housekeeping) is

⁷⁰ KM Moulavi, Al Murshid Magazine (Arab Mal.), Vol. 4, March 1932, p. 26.

⁷¹ KK Muhmed Abdul Kareem (Mal), KM Moulavi Jeeva Charithram, Calicut, Yuvatha Books, 1985, p. 44.

Moulavi's series of articles in the magazine *Nisahul Islam*⁷². He mentions housekeeping to be a woman's responsibility. A woman is the one who governs her husband's house implies she's the one who decides and maintains the order of life at home in accordance with her husband's orders. In her husband's absence, she oversees his affairs, entertains guests, and cares for her children, her wealth, and her own body⁷³. Similarly, Moulavi says that in the historical context of Islam, housekeeping is better suited for women. Prophet Muhammad himself had told daughter Fatima. It was decided that Fatima would be in charge of all interior household activities, while Ali would be in charge of all external chores. Then the article concludes: These narratives well illustrate how our Salafi women assisted their husbands in housekeeping⁷⁴. In this manner, Moulavi explains topics concerning women. The article concludes that the narratives effectively depict how Salafi women, particularly during the prophets period assisted their husbands in household tasks. It conveys the idea that being a good wife holds significance rather than social status.

In this way the life of a woman is bound up in the family as the ideal housewife. Therefore, in the final analysis, all the definitions we give about women become those of a family. All religions confirm this. In the Hindu tradition, the Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads have never given women an independent femininity. Prati Mukherjee contributes to this article. For centuries we have seen that the exemplary wife is the one who is dependent on her husband. An ideal woman means an ideal wife. It can be observed that the idea of an obedient woman is created utilizing the Islamic code of religion. It is the duty of men to strive for the upliftment of *Nisahul Islam*. The Qur'an says that men are in authority over women. Therefore, men have the majority of women's authority, and women only have the freedom that is granted to them. The measure of women's freedom is in the hands of men. This is an example from the Qur'an. The aim of reform does not include empowering women for social interaction, but rather adapting women to the demands of the household and beyond.

⁷² KM Moulavi, *Thabdhirul Manzil*, *Nisahul Islam*, journal (Arabi Mal.) Published by Komukutty Moulavi, 1922, Vol. 2, p. 23.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 24.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Through the Qur'an and Hadith, women are established as housewives in the Muslim community.

E. K. Moulavi (1879-1974)

EK Moulavi was born in Kadavathur, Thalassery Taluk, as the son of Abdulla Sahib. Moulavi's primary education was from masjid. He studied Dars at the Panoor Juma Masjid for twenty years. His main mentors were Kunhubi Muhammad Muslyar and Kallara Moosa Musliyar. In 1909, he joined the Dars under Chalilakam at Darul Uloom, Vazhakad. It was during this period that significant turning points were made in EK's life. He settled in Kodungallur as a teacher in 1918 and remained in Kodungallur for about thirty years from then till 1947. During this period, modern religious education systems and madrasah's were established in and around Kodungallur. There he gave strong leadership to the Islahi work. E. K. Moulavi was a crucial figure in formation of Aikya Sangam in 1920⁷⁵. A scholarly conference was held in 1924 to address the opposition and criticism of the Conservatives. E. K. Moulavi headed a delegation of scholars from all over Kerala to attend the conference. All those scholars eventually banded together to form an association. The Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulama. In 1947, E. K. returned to Malabar and served at Tirurangadi Orphanage and later at Thalassery Darussalam Orphanage for a few years. He has written articles in Arabi- Malayalam and Malayalam magazines published during that time period, in addition to his great works such as *Al-Islam*, *Sheikh Jilani*, *Seeti Muhammad of Kottapuram*, and *Islam and Communism*⁷⁶. He was actively involved in preparing textbooks on fiqh and Islamic history for madrassas under Nadvathul Mujahideen. EK's writing style is a blend of high thinking and foresight. In the article Islam and Tolerance, he points out the tolerance that Islamic thought puts towards other religions. The criterion for measuring the religious tolerance of any religion should be its main principle. He claims that the behaviour of followers of that faith

⁷⁵ M Abdu Samad, "Muslim Reformist Journals in Kerala", Journal of Kerala Studies, Vol. XVII, Trivandrum, 1990, p. 131.

⁷⁶ E K Ahmed Kutty, The Mujahid Movement and Its role in the Islamic Revival in Kerala, In Asgar Ali Engineer ed, Kerala Muslim a Historical Perspective, New Delhi, 1995, p. 48

should not be regarded as a criterion. . . He argues that individuals who believe in the universal values of all religions only may progress toward tolerance.

An article can be found in Al Murshid Magazine entitled "Women of Islam"⁷⁷. Articles that beautifully describe women's freedom and survival in Islam describe how women are treated differently in other religions in the context of world history. It was later published as a pamphlet entitled Islam and Women. Similarly, EK Moulavi authored a follow-up piece on childcare in the first edition of Nisaul Islam, a women's magazine⁷⁸. These are articles that help women focus on raising children and persuade them of their responsibility. Women, according to Moulavi, have a lot of obligations in addition to men. Cooking, nursing, housekeeping, and childcare should all be done by women. The article describes different strategies of childcare. Moulavi is not addressing about issues related to social awareness of women. His attempts are to mark her status as a mother in a very authentic way. There is no need to say the latter if they are not given sufficient spiritual training. They will then be the ones to ruin the land and the people. In other words, the good and ill of a community are dependent on its upkeep. The article, which begins as "It's a woman's duty to raise children for the good of the community"⁷⁹, outlines in detail how women should pay attention from pregnancy onwards. The diet for pregnant women is very clear and straightforward, from hygiene to exercise to baby care. For Moulavi, giving milk may appear weird. According to him, the practice of breastfeeding in some places today needs to be changed drastically. That is, the habit of the mother sleeping peacefully while the kid is breastfed by someone else is never correct. In fact, such a culture can be found among the Muslims of Malabar. Moidu Moulavi's memoir tells of drinking breast milk of a non-Muslim woman.⁸⁰ It can be seen that Moulavi discourages this practice. However, the narrative of the women who should be assigned for breastfeeding is told in the second half of this essay. The age of those breastfeeding should be at least twenty years and not more than thirty years. The breastfeeding

⁷⁷ E K Moulavi, Islamum Sthreekalum (Mal), Al Ithihad Vol. 3, Tirurangadi, 1923, p. 23

⁷⁸ Komutty Moulavi, Nisahul Islam (Arab Mal.), Manjeri, Irumbuliyam Press, 1923

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁸⁰ Moidu Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 26-27.

woman should not be too fat or thin. If she is very thin, the milk will be less. If they are too fat, the milk may run out suddenly⁸¹. . . It goes on to describe the nature of a woman's body as well as her nature. Special care should be taken in selecting those who have the qualities of virtue, intellect, decency, and vitality, and should not be stupid.

E. K. Moulavi's writing style is distinct from that of K. M. Moulavi. Despite their commonalities as religious scholars, their writing skills on the subject of women are vastly different. In a long article on child care, he tries to be very authoritative about how women should raise their babies from pregnancy onwards. However, EK Moulavi thinks that motherhood, the epitome of holiness, is the best of the various facets of women. . (Paripava natha)was enjoined in the Indian notion of motherhood. In the sense of giving birth to heroes, mothers were regarded as Veeraprasam and Janani. A mother is compared to a farmer by the Moulavi. The seedlings germinate when the cultivator ploughs and shovels the land and adds the required amount of fertiliser and water. After germination, weeds that are harmful to the plant's growth are eliminated, and any twists or turns are straightened. This is the role of a mother. While glorifying motherhood in this way, it can be seen to greatly promote the social life of women. Since the beginning of Islam till now there have been many educated women and *mahathis* (glorious women) among the Muslims. In our Malayalam country, Kannur Arakkal Rajdhani is presently decked with a women's diamond. What a source of pride for Muslim women in Kerala it is The necessity to rise through education is mentioned in each of Moulavi's publications today. In Moulavi's writings you can see him write that education and employment are essential for women. This can be seen as a unique perspective from others.

M. C. C. Brothers

M. C. C. Abdul Rahman Moulavi, MCC Hasan Moulavi, MCC Ahmed Moulavi were the sons of Chalilakath Kunhahammad Haji. They were Literary known as MCC brothers. Abdurahman was prominent religious scholar and reformer among

⁸¹ E K Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 32.

the founders of Jamiatul Ulama and Madinatul Ulum. The Kerala-Jamiyyathul Ulama, which was formed in 1924, has been led by M. C. C since its inception until his death, he was the General Secretary of the organization. Following in the footsteps of his father, who pioneered systematic efforts to make exemplary textbooks and other religious publications available to Kerala Muslims, M. C. C. also focused on publishing. During his tenure under the Kozhikode Islamia Company, a magazine called *Markadershanam* was published for two years. He was an active participant in the Qur'an exam initiative of the Muslim Literary Society of Kozhikode in the 1930s. He was a regular contributor to Muslim magazines of the time. It is worth noting that M. C. C. 's work left an indelible impression on the history of the Madinathul ulum Arabic College's founding. In the history of Kerala Muslim, M. C. C. has fought hard to maintain the idea of a structured Islamic college. During the heyday of educational reform in northern India, many updates were made on the content and appearance in the religious studies of Deobandh Darul Uloom, Nadvathul Ulema in Lucknow, Lathifiya Arabic College in Tamil Nadu and others.

Darul Uloom was closed on September 31, 1946⁸². Soon after, M. C. C. Abdurahman Moulavi shifted his classes to his father Dars' mosque in Tirurangadi. M. C. C. Abdurahman was offered a helping hand by the Kawaki Bunnayira group of Pulikkal to run a high-ranking religious institution according to his ambitions. In July of 1947, Pulikkal Madinatul Uloom Arabic College opened. The Kawaki Bunnayira group handed over the property and building worth around Rs 3, 000 to the college.⁸³ An endeavour that had been stalled due to hurdles was restarted at Darul Uloom under a new name and form. He was accepted to Uloom as a result of his efforts. The

⁸² Chalilakam's work was guided by the motto 'Modernization in Religious Education,' with Chalilakath and Darul Ulum focusing on reforming Kerala's religious education system in light of great reform initiatives in India and beyond. Conservative scholars were reluctant to accept the teaching method, which consisted of classrooms with benches, desks, and desks, as well as chalk and textbooks. However, as a result of constant action, Darul Uloom's clear influence can be seen among the Muslims of Malabar. Many Islahi leaders, including its own forebears M. C. C, Abdur Rahman, Ahmed, KM Moulavi, EK Moulavi, and Moosa Moulavi, gained insight from Vazhakadu under the tutelage of Chalilakam, which enabled them to head many movements and institutions.

⁸³ Kavakibunayara Sangam bialo, Pulikkal, 1960.

enrollment of girls was a hallmark of Madinah al-Uloom. Despite the opposition of the Conservatives, in the early days, five girls came to college as students. M. C. C. Abdurrahman is primarily responsible for this. P. K. Subaida, Amina, Sainaba, and Juwairia were among the first students to attend⁸⁴. They continued their studies despite being ridiculed by conservative people on their way to college. Continuing the tradition of Chalilakam of sending his daughters to school, M. C. C. attempted to get the girls to go to an Arabic college.

During this time, M. C. C. published numerous pieces in various periodicals. Writings on the subject of logic and fiqh in religious matters can often be found. However, his views on the subject of women are examined here. Like all reformers, Moulavi's writings are also dedicated to women's education. "If we, through Nisaul Islam, established for the upliftment of Muslim women, were able to make our women aware of the issues and essential for their progress, making them strong and enthusiastic for community upliftment, then surely our society's disorder would end that day⁸⁵, " Moulavi writes in the introduction to his article, Tahdibul Akhlaq. It's about women who need to be replaced in order for civilization to progress. In this article about self-improvement, we address the necessity of self-improvement regardless of gender. Qurayshi women used to say that Khalifa 'Umar, who was a man of the Prophet's time, was immature in his speech. These Qurayshi women had the courage to criticize him, that is, to discern between good and bad, and to know that they had acted according to knowledge. Our women should try to follow those virtues too⁸⁶. It can be seen that a very different example is given in the subject related to the self-development of women. In his writings, he encourages women to emulate the Quraish women, who are capable of correcting Umar when he makes a mistake. In contrast to how a man corrects a woman's character, it is apparent that women play a significant part in shaping the character of others.

⁸⁴ Interview with P K Subaida, a teacher and an Islahi leader, residing at Pukikkal on 12.03.2018.

⁸⁵ MCC Abdurrahman Moulavii, T Hahadilum Aklaq (Arabi Mal.), Nisahul Islam Magazine, Malappuram, 1929, p. 28.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 29.

Hasan Moulavi, another son of Chalilakath, had contributed articles to Almanar magazine on the subject of progressive religious ideas. The reformers themselves have expressed a variety of views on progressive ideas. There are many things in the Qur'an that support the rights of women. However, these are being used against women. As a result, both modernists and conservatives disagreed with Moulavi's theories. M. C. C Moulavi's discussions on the admittance of Muslim women into mosques since the 1930s have raged in Kerala's public realm. The argument between conservatives and reformers was never ceasing. It can be seen that both the parties constantly stand firm in their arguments through writings and speeches in the light of the Hadith and the Qur'an on this subject. On Fridays, social prayers (Jamaat prayers) are held in mosques, where the Muslim community meets. Conservative scholars say that such meetings are only permitted for men, and that women should pray in their homes. In their magazine, the Reformers, on the other hand, sought to dispute their arguments by insisting for women's access to mosques. This eventually caused serious issues in several locations.

The first-time women entered the mosque is recorded in history in Othai in the district of Malappuram⁸⁷. Later, they started going to mosques in nearby areas like Edavanna and Mambad for prayers. The conservative faction continued to oppose this. Yusuf Musliyar said as follows to refute the speech of Maulvi VT Abdullah Haji in the debate held in Mambad. "There are now a number of Wahhabi women in the Edavanna and Othai areas near this Mampad; They go to mosques on Fridays like other men, don't they? Twenty-five unmarried women have become pregnant so; My dear sisters! Do not be one of those Wahhabis who go to mosque. . .⁸⁸ . . ." M. C. C. Ahmed Moulavi wrote and published a lengthy book on the subject of women entering the mosque in the face of such vile abuses against women. Ahmed Moulavi wrote that responding to a question of P. V. Mohammad Haji, a resident of Othai, about the entry of a few women into the mosque. Do Muslim women have rights? He is micro-analysis of the rights of women here. He ridicules religious fanatics on the

⁸⁷ First Women Mosque Entry Revolution in Malabar.

⁸⁸ MCC Ahmed Miulavi, Muslim Streegalkk Avakasham undo? (Mal), South Malabar, P V Muhmmmed Haji, 1952, p. 3.

subject of women in his writings. There was a desire among leaders to confine women. The Prophet did not compel women to live in cramped rooms that were not exposed to light and air, or to remain illiterate men's toys. On the contrary, they have been obliged to teach and educate at the mosque.

Here all these points differentiate him from other male reformers. This means that women enjoy the same religious freedom as men. There is clearly no objection in the *Shariah* to men and women coming together. Moreover, it is evident that men and women acted together in a reasonable manner. In the time of the Holy Prophet, water was put in a bowl to make *wudhu*, from which men and women made *wudhu* together⁸⁹. It is a well-established fact that this was the practice and that Moulavi makes very progressive claims. Since the Reformation movement became active, women in the mosques began to attend Jumu'ah and other prayers. There are provisions in place for them (women) to mix with men, pray, and separate. In short, the mosque has allowed women to enter through separate doors. In addition to this, the mosque has allowed women to completely cover their bodies, without having to flaunt their beauty, elegance, gaudy clothing, scent, etc. From a patriarchal point of view, a woman is created from man or after man. Hence patriarchy is the law of nature. They contend that man has a higher status and superiority over woman and that he is commanded to be her guardian, master and warlord. Gender equality is said to increase the visibility of women in public spaces, thereby paving the way for unrestrained sexual attraction between men and women. The woman's entry into the public space is assessed in terms of her body.

The practice of male reformers interpreting women in Islam out of a broad understanding that they are women and should hide from society. But Ahmed Moulavi, on the other hand, sees things differently. Do not reveal the body properly. There is no such rule in the *Shariah*. Do not come to the mosque unless your body is well covered, If such a commandment exists, it should not be limited to women. It should apply to men as well. .⁹⁰. . In the discussion on how women should dress to

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

⁹⁰ MCC Ahmed Moulavi, Islam (Mal), Chindhakan, Vol 2, January, 1934.

enter the mosque, Moulavi refutes the argument that women should dress in a covered manner to protect themselves from men's fitnah. These are ideas which Hassan Moulavi raised at the time that are in line with the motto of the gender equality movement that emerged in various Muslim communities in the last phase of the 20th century. Due to the growth of patriarchy in the religious tradition, the biblical tradition of women was denied and women were completely marginalized from the intellectual tradition of the Muslim community. As a result, the Islamic teachings were solely interpreted through the eyes of men. Such interpretations disregard the woman and her views, basing them only on the man's perspective, desire, and intent. With the evidence of the documents, Hasan Moulavi very clearly corrects the man's thought plans.

Moulavi totally refutes conservative thinkers' claim that women should not wear jewellery to mosques. Put on jewelery. The argument that one should not go to a mosque wearing that is simply baseless. It is a fact that in the past many women used to come to the mosque wearing jewelery. It can be seen in the authentic *Hadiths* that they used to take things from their ears, neck and hands and put them in his Prophet's hands. Most of the writings in this book are pro-women. However, the book was opposed by conservatives and reformers. Hasan Moulavi himself expresses his disapproval. "I have handed over my article (Fatvah) to K. M. Moulavi for examination. About 20 places, he said, need to be evaluated and fixed. I double-checked. I was convinced that none of them needed to be edited, so I printed it in Malayalam". .⁹¹ Of course, if K. M. Moulavi, a reformer at the time, asked to rethink 20 positions, he would have been hard-pressed to agree with his notion. It would undoubtedly be a challenging writing style to cope with. Even so, Hasan Moulavi stands firm in his arguments. The conservative viewpoint that women should be restricted to their homes prevents women from participating in public settings. This establishes a power structure that dictates that the woman should submit herself to the man and serve the man who is the head of the system. The patriarchy, which holds that women are mere objects, is being re-established in the Islamic context. Rarely

⁹¹ MCC Ahmed Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 24.

have there been new models of analysis in Islamic history that challenge orthodoxy. Similarly, within a broader Islamic framework, the Egyptian-born women's movement fought for their rights. Rarely have women worked so hard to rise into the public sphere. Ahmed Moulavi was among those who stood in front of it. Perhaps that is why he faced criticism from conservatives and reformers.

K. C. Komukutty Moulavi

He was a contemporary of M. C. C. Abdurrahman Moulavi and Hassan Malavi. He was also a disciple of Chalilakath kunjaahmed haji. Since 1920, K. C. Komukutty became the ideologue of the Khilafat committees. Moulavi became a Khilafath campaigner during the 1920-21 time period. During the riots, however, Moulavi arrived at Kodungallur. It was around this time that Moulavi learned the Urdu language. Moulavi also authored pieces for *Navalokam*, *Al Irshad*, and *Al Islah* magazines during this time. In 1923, K. C. set up *Yuvalokam* Company and Book Stall at Palayam Street, Kozhikode⁹². Abdul Qadir Moulavi, EK Moulavi, KM Moulavi, KM Seethi Sahib and E. Moithumaulavi were prominent writers among Muslim youth. Moulavi had translated and published several scholarly and thought-provoking pieces written in Arabic and Urdu. Hyder Vaidyar, a community reformer and physician, founded a lithopress called Irimpiliyath Hyderiya, in their hometown. Nisahul Islam magazine was the first Muslim women's magazine in Kerala. After the closure of *Yuvalokam* and *Nisa ul Islam* magazines, Moulavi became a prolific writer and later contributed significantly to the running of *Ansari Magazine*, published by Majid Marakkar from Perumbavoor. Similarly, inspired by P. K. Moosamoulavi M. Kunhoi Vaidyar, he became the leading author of *AlManar* journal and worked for two years. Moulavi has written for periodicals such as *Mathrubhumi*, *Al-Amin*, *Chandrika*, *Yuvalokam*, *Al-Hidaya*, *Al-Murshid*, *Ansari*, *Al-Manar* and *Chintdakan*⁹³.

⁹² Abu Majitha, Kerala Muslingalum Pathra prevarthanavum, Prebodhanam special Issue, Calicut, Islamic Service Trust, 1998, p. 105.

⁹³ Ishak Ali Kallikandi, Mujahid Presthanam Sangashakthiyude Charithram Ayavirakkumbol (Mal), Mujahid State Conference Souvenir, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 213.

He has published numerous books on Islamic history. The book *Tariqul Ummah* has been published in three volumes. His four books are *Imamukal*, *Najd Sultanukal*, *Swatantra turki*, *Sultan Salahuddin* (Historical Drama), *Mathavum Rashtravum*(Religion and Nation). He should be recorded as an unavoidable reformer in the history of Muslim women in Kerala. A magazine for women called Nisahul Islam. It seems to be a new awakening. Moulavi says in a press release that the rise of women lies in the awakening of community-loving men. Therefore, it is the duty of men to strive for the upliftment of Nisahul Islam (women of Islam). . . During this period, a woman named Pathavumma also wrote in this magazine. Good articles on women's characterization, childcare and marriage can be found.

Moulavi evaluates the freedom of women based on the interpretations of the scriptures. In *Nisaul Islam*, along with the relevance of modern education, it was important for women to raise their religious consciousness. It is said in the Qur'an that men are in authority over women. Therefore, the power of women is mostly in the hands of men and the only freedom that women have is the freedom they are granted. Moulavi uses the same authoritarian terms of modern times. But ijthihad practiced by Islamic feminists within the framework of the basic tenets of Islam rejects such practices. The revelation of the Qur'an that all creation is created in pairs is the revelation of Tawheed. Because God is the only one who was not created, and He is the only one who rejects the system of authority between creation. The hierarchy of authority between creation signifies injustice. Therefore, the gender power structure that maintains male dominance is contrary to Tawheed's definition. The goodness of the home and the characterization of women are considered to be the responsibility of man. Moulavi says in his article 'Muslim Woman and the Kitchen', "Oh dear Muslim sisters! No matter how rich you are, no matter how privileged or educated you are, you have to take over the cooking yourself. For your husband and children to stay healthy, their food must be clean. Housewives should prioritize caring for their child and husband. No matter how educated they are, their first duty is to their family and home⁹⁴. " The upliftment of the community through women is more essential than

⁹⁴ Komukutty Moulavi, *Sthreegalum Adukalayum* (Arab Mal.), Nisahil Islam, Maneri, 1929, p. 56.

social reform. From the women's point of view, the Qur'an treats man and woman as two categories of human beings who are given equal ability and consideration. Although there are biological differences between men and women, it does not confine a woman's abilities to a single biologically determined field. In other words, the woman only has one responsibility for reproduction and that a man alone can fulfill the responsibility of the man.

CN Ahmed Moulavi is honored for his contribution to Islam as Scholar, Social Reformer, Qur'an Translator, and strong believer secular in thoughts. He was a scholar who made a sincere effort to modernize Islam. C N Ahmed moulavi was born in Cherur, Tirur taluk, Malappuram district in 1905⁹⁵. He was unable to complete his primary education due to unpropitious family circumstances. He later joined Jamalia College, Madras. It was also during this time that he met Mr. Muhammad Abdurahman, one of the most popular a freedom fighter from Malabar⁹⁶. C N Ahmed Moulavi came forward with the Malayalam translation of the Qur'an in front of the Muslim community where the superstitious Muslims live. It was the biggest intellectual explosion in that society. The translation of the Qur'an was also a revolt against the orthodox tradition. Religious scholars believed that the translation of the Qur'an was a forbidden and blasphemous sin. The Malayalam translation of the Qur'an was written over a century ago by Moinkutty Eliyav from Kannur. But he could not complete his mission. Instead, he was compelled to throw his translation into the sea for fear of the clergy. Maulvi came up with the translation of the Qur'an, marking the beginning of a wide range of reforms in the face of such strong restrictions. It wasn't merely a translation. He logically interpreted the Scriptures with the help of commentaries and emphasized the need for rationality and a scientific basis for his presentation. He adopted an approach that can strengthen his belief, the Qur'an is not something that is built on imaginary ideas. A later statement by him may be based on

⁹⁵ C N Ahmed Moulavi, *Ante Kadha*, C N Smaranika, Edathanattukara (ed.), M N Karasseri, 2005, p. 267.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

this scientific approach to the Qur'an itself. Fifty percent of the beliefs held by Muslims today are contrary to the authentic truth⁹⁷, C N said.

He was a very good religious person along with being a social reforming and progressive plaintiff. C N has strongly condemned discrimination against women in the name of religion. He found that Muslim women were being discriminated against in all the stages of life, like marriage, divorce, education, social life and family life. He insisted himself by exhibiting religious doctrines that this is against the religious essence of Islam. Moreover, he condemned unjust Talaq-divorce and unjust polygamy. CN spoke and wrote about the importance of educating women at that time. In the preface to his translation of the Qur'an, he wrote, "The Qur'an's doctrine is that no one should be discriminated against based on gender⁹⁸. " If the Qur'an is the foremost of the foundations of Islamic life, then the words of the Prophet's are the next most important. Another important contribution of Moulavi was the translation of Sahih al-Bukhari. The Moulavi strongly rejected the scriptures and their interpretations used by orthodox scholars as justifications for the obsolescence of society. The lengthy introduction to the translation of the Qur'an and the translation of Bukhari is worth mentioning. It has been claimed that Moulavi used the scientific method of combating the obsolescence which had taken place in the name of the Qur'an and the words of the Prophet/Nabi with his own books with great enthusiasm. Contrary to traditional understanding That prophet muhmmmed was illiterate and was not able to read and write, He declared that the Prophet Muhammad knew how to read and write.

Ahmad Moulavi could make a significant contribution to secular thoughts. He was a religious thinker in the Congress party who believed in nationalism, secularism, and democracy. He was inspired by Abdul Kalam Azad, one of the leaders of the National Movement. He considered love and kindness toward other religions as his duty. He sought to read and study doctrines of other religions, including Hinduism

⁹⁷ K Umer Moulavi, CN Moulaviyum Njanum, Op. cit., p. 74.

⁹⁸ Shihabudeen Arimbra, C N Ahmed Moulavi (Mal), Prebodhanam Navodhanam Special Edition, Kozhikode, 1998, p. 97.

faithfully and without prejudice. In its context, he interpreted the tenets of Islam for Keralites. CN analyzed ideas of modern thinkers and presented his religious thoughts in a comprehensive study of Islam. Moulavi had published a book named “Financial system of Islam⁹⁹”. Moulavi argued that Islam had a better economic outlook than the economic ideology of communism. Zakat, compulsory alms giving in Islam, can help bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots, and he believed that it would eliminate extreme inequality. But Moulavi's view that alms giving (zakat) is obligatory for all kinds of harvests has made scholars here angry.

Writings against Moulavi can be found even in the so called progressive magazines like Al-Manar, *What about Moulavi?* K. Umar criticizes Moulavi in his article. “Moulavi Sahib has a pen that can do a lot for the community. But with that pen he is doing very terrible things, I see a constant encroachment on the holy religion¹⁰⁰” Moulavi had raised clear religious criticisms. He Criticizes the method of religious teachings and emphasizes modern scientific education. A religious student is taught for at least three months during the entire study period what the water used for the wudhu(ritual washing performed by Muslims before prayer) should be. In fact, it was enough to teach a single sentence. "It must be clean water. Do Muslim parents think about what will happen in the end?" The Muslim generation is getting nowhere. Do not become religious scholars, do not become scientists, do not become historians. Such generations are being molded, knowingly or unknowingly¹⁰¹. ”

Moulavi argued that a new method of religious education should be part of the awakening of the Muslim community. Moulavi had published two magazines under the title 'Ansari' from Kochi and Kozhikode at two different times. There were many female writers frequently contributing to these magazines. It can be said that it was with his encouragement women were able to write progressive in those time. He criticizes many of the superstitions perpetuated by the Muslim community, in his

⁹⁹ Dr. N K Kareem, *Kerathile Muslim Navodhanathinte Randam Thalamura Nayakan (Mal)*, C N Smaranika, Kozhikode, 2005, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰ K M Umer Moulavi, *Moulavikk Endhu Patti (Mal)*, Almanar, Vol. 4, 1965, p. 22.

¹⁰¹ C N Ahmed Moulavi, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

commentary on the Qur'an. Moulavi has argued that marriage has an age and child marriage is wrong, based on the words "Give them the property of the orphans when they reach the age of marriage¹⁰²" mentioned in Qur'an 4. 6. His comment has caused a great annoyance to shariah defenders who raise objections to the Law of regulating the age of marriage, who argue that the government's law setting the age of marriage at 18 for women and 21 for men is against the Shariah and that religion allows marriage in infancy. He had taken a clear stand on the Shabano case in 1985. Moulavi upheld the view that personal laws should be subject to common law and public justice, and led the formation of a Shariah Board called the Islamic Shariah Board.

K K M Jamaluddin Moulavi

Jamaluddin Moulavi's writings are read, as a religious scholar, preacher, and reformer. He had written two similar novels, "Kilr Nabiye Kanda Nafisa" and "Hiyalilakath Zainaba¹⁰³" in these novels he argues for the eradication of superstitions and im moralities, these novels, written in Arab-Malayalam, were read as womanly writings and as a perfect example of social reform. Maulvi's articles have also appeared in publications such as Al-Manar, Al-Murshid, Al-Ittihad and Ansari. These two novels critically describe the living circumstances of a Muslim. Moulavi was writing against the superstitions and immoralities in society by marking the lives of two women. Hiyalilakath Zainaba is the story of Zainab, who pursues a religious education alongside modern education. The intelligent and beautiful girl can be seen questioning the religious scholar about the superstitions in religion. It symbolizes the girl who marries the man she is in love with. Although it seems that Moulavi is referring to a woman who belongs to a very progressive modern society, he is actually trying to mark a woman who emphasizes the values of an ideal woman with all the virtues. In this novel, he talks about what a woman should be for the betterment of religion and community who have persuaded religious education along with modern education. moreover introducing new type of man, he was part of public domain same time a valuable religious qualities. "Hiyalilakath Zainaba" is the love story of Musa

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁰³ The First Arab Malayalam Novels written by Jamaluddin Moulavi.

Moulavi who helps Abdul Kareem, who is studying in Madras, and Zainaba, daughter of the orthodox Ahmad. He tells through this love story what a woman's behavior should be. The conversation between Moulavi and Kareem emphasizes the need for religion and modernity to go hand in hand. By the time Kareem was educated, he no longer needed religion, I have seen so many. It has sometimes even seemed that the anti-modern propaganda campaign by some Scholars against modern education would help. How many people in our class do not pray. Moulavi: It is not the fault of education, lack of religious education. There are many people like that. It is the lack of religious education and vicious association that actually destroys the religious respondent¹⁰⁴.

The novel goes on to emphasize religious education. Religion must be manifested in the regular feminine behaviour and dress. The character Moosa Moulavi tells how Zainab, a teenager, should dress. It is in this youth that special attention should be paid to the character control of a girl. Needless to say, it's so necessary. 'Today we see so many Muslim students hating the Islamic hijab. It seems that she has realized/understood that wearing a head covering or wearing a makkana is not suitable for modern reform. It is clear how the dress should be. Education is compulsory for women, but their dress code should be such that religion allows. Education is compulsory for women but their dress code should be religious, this is the attitude of the reformist man. The reformist man argued that women should be educated, not out of a desire to transform a woman's life into a greater possibility of women's liberty, rights, or social life beyond his powers and controls.

People like V T Bhattaraipad demanded that Namboothiri women wear modern dresses based on the attitude and that namboothiri women need to modify their attire to attract men in the community. The argument that the amendment in the women's dress code was one of the most important requirements formulated for Namboothiri men to marry from their own community and obtain property rights¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁴ Jamludeen Moulavi, Hiler Nebhiye Kanda Nafeesa, Hilalikath Zainaba, Kozhikode, Yuvatha Book, 1932, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ J Devika, Op. cit., p. 37.

When it comes to getting married from one's own community, the concern of Namboothiri men who have achieved education and reform, that Namboothiri women, who are illiterate and outmoded in dress would not be suitable, was relevant. This is exactly what Muslim reformers have tried to do with women. Bringing women into the framework of religion, especially in dress, promotes religious dressing style with modern concepts of women.

But the women activists who fought to change the living conditions of women in the Namboothiri community, could not accept the masculine concept of being "fit" for men. It has been argued by educated Namboothiri women that women should not dress the way men in the community demand/wish, Men and women do not need to be different in dress and the women can have true freedom and femininity only if they work and work. They put forward perspectives on femininity and personality that should emerge from women's independence and strongly opposed feminine clothing that is provocative and seductive to attract men. But the attainment of modern education was a great revolution within the Muslim community. The reality is that they have not been able to raise their perspective on their personalities. A large number of women are involved in the adoption and propagation of the concept of "ideal woman" and ideal "homemaker".

Along with the character of Zainab who is put forward as a good woman, there is also another female character in the story. The protagonist of the story, Abdul Kareem, attends Zainab's school. When asked about a girl named Maryam Beevi, her teacher Moosa Moulavi says, "I know Maryam Beevi, " her only virtue is her beauty, bad in learning, shameless, most talkative, naughty behavior, no religion loyalty¹⁰⁶". Here it is said that a girl who is shameless and most talkative is not fit for marriage. The words of the Prophet "shame is half of faith"¹⁰⁷ can be found in most of the scriptures. The best woman here is Zainab, who bows her head in shame. The girl who could not even open up about her love to Abdul Keeram. It is said here that having

¹⁰⁶ Jamaludeen Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁰⁷ Hadith

“*adab*” is the adornment of a woman. The author describes even the romantic scenes with great care.

“They had an open-hearted conversation for a few hours, Handed over their wishes and aspirations. The chaplains we read about as having happened between girlfriends and boyfriends do not seem to have happened between them. It can not be seen, the immature things happening between girlfriend and boyfriend today, does not seem to have happened between them. And they did not even touch each other when giving or receiving the bottle of perfume. The love between them did not stem from physical feelings. It was resurrected from the spiritual spirit¹⁰⁸. ” Here love is marked on a spiritual level.

The spiritual concept of love can be seen emerging in the Kerala context. Models of nobility are another misogyny. It completely suppresses the lustful life of women. An expression of divine love without lust. The girlfriend waited patiently and by holding her religious beliefs closely. the text like *induleka* for instance was involved not only in the affirmation of new woman but also of new man

Abdurrahman Moulavi, the protagonist of the story "Nafisa meets the Hiler Nabi(Prophet), as a young man who is constantly at odds with orthodox scholars after completing his modern education. During his journey, he rescues a girl who is about to drown in a pool - and the heroine falls in love with him. His father objected to Abdurrahman's claim that it was anti-religious to raise the grave, then he leaves his house because of it. Nafisa was rescued by the protagonist but it is widely believed that she was rescued by the Khirl Nabhi. The handkerchief of the protagonist got from the pond was believed to be a blessing from kiler Nabi¹⁰⁹. Later it was used to treat patients, to relieve labor pains in women, etc. Here Nafisa is a very progressive minded girl who turned her face on such superstitions. An "aristocratic" woman who quarrels with her father over religious matters and does not express her innermost desires. The two women depicted in these two novels are part of modernity. Women who opposed orthodoxy and persuaded a school education. But both wait patiently to

¹⁰⁸ Jamaludeen Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

marry their beloved ones without breaking the boundaries of religion. In a closer look it marks a woman who was changed consciously.

The Renaissance in Kerala gave birth to the concept of a model woman belonging to the aristocratic housewife. While this may seem like a progressive one, especially in the face of Nair-Namboothiri marriage, in the long run these "housewife", "model woman" have negatively affected women's lives in two ways. On the one hand, it was able to put the status of women in modern public life limited to that of housewives, second one, the status of women became second-class citizens without having any rights in social power. Due to the dominance of the idealized housewife concept, women were doubly burdened, that is, with housework and outdoor work. Ultimately, this was done to further strengthen the domestic status of women. Women were largely excluded from the realm of social power, even when economic income from employment and the consequent social status became available. In fact, feminism and the family concept are shaped by the reform movement and colonial liberal values in the context of the reformist movement, the ideal woman was presented as one who exemplifies modesty and adheres to patriarchal norms and is dedicated to the betterment of the community. Nevertheless, there was a contingent of female reformers who sought to advance the Cause of women through their own agency and activism. These women, who leveraged the limited resources and opportunities available to them, made significant contributions to the growth of women's writing and played a crucial role in the emergence of the modern feminist movement.

CHAPTER III

BREAKING THRESHOLDS: CHANGING THE CONCEPT OF MUSLIM WOMEN

The development of feminist advocacy has resulted in the creation of a new field of study called women's studies. This has led to the establishment of research institutes and study centers around the world. As a result of the women's liberation movement, there has been rethinking and reconstruction of various fields such as science, history, philosophy and social sciences. Feminist literary criticism examines literary discourses and history to highlight the dominance of patriarchal ideas and to shed light on the contributions of women. Mainstream literature is often male-centric, and this has been criticized for perpetuating patriarchal ideas and perpetuating male power. In her work, Kate Millet says that, 'it is from the same mould that these mainstream female figures are cast, created in accordance with the interests and views as that of a man as a section of power'¹. The conventional patriarchal interpretation systems of the past were unable to unearth the subtleties of feminine discourses and symbols, which could only be found in the writings of women and were often unfamiliar to male writers. The emergence of women's writing as a separate field of knowledge came from the comparison of mainstream literature with women's writing. In the latter half of the 1970s, female writers and feminist writing flourished, including the works of Helen Pierce and Xavier Gothia. The patriarchal style of writing has been the target of criticism since the 1950s, and writers such as Lalithambika Antharjanam, K. Saraswathi Amma, and Rajalakshmi provide thought-provoking perspectives on existence and contribute to the discourse.

The feminist liberating tradition in Malayalam literature can be traced through early Malayalam magazines and is evident in the works of women writers. Lalithambika Antharjanam, a trailblazer in the field, highlights the marginalization of

¹ Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*, USA, Doubleday, 1970, p. 59.

women in the literary world, she says “ Women have always been marginalized in the literary world. They were forbidden to approach and literature was untouchable for them. The voice of a woman belonging to a dignified and noble family was not to be heard, it was the verdict of the society²”. However there were a large number of publications during the early 20th century. These magazines had given visibility to many women. They held the role of both contributions of their magazines and their publishers such as 1887 *Keraliya Sugunabodhini*, 1904 *Sharda*, 1905 *Lakshmbai*, 1916 *Mahilaratnam*, 1921 *Mahila*, 1933 *Stree*. “ It cannot be said that these magazines have a definite stance. They saw women's education as a tool to improve their domestic status. Their declared goal was to make women the perfect companions of educated men³. ”

It was when the culture and economy underwent a tremendous amount of transformation during the Renaissance, Keralites discovered themselves. Therefore it comes as no surprise that this, the age of comprehensive and far-reaching transformation, was also the age that paved the way for women liberation by raising the issues of women. It was a historical necessity. This needs to be assessed in relation to the ideological changes and also that of the internal structure of the society. The internal structure of the society also underwent changes as part of the changes in the economy of Kerala in the nineteenth century. Efforts for industrialization were seen in Malabar, Travancore and Cochin. Successful development of capitalist modes of production and relations in Kerala. A variety of industries developed, including banking, commerce, joint stock companies, and transportation. As a result of all these transformations, new jobs were created in Kerala and innumerable people of all castes and religions were attracted to them. A new economic class took birth in Kerala, the one within which educated and uneducated workers worked hard for their wages. Feudal system too was an economic unit in which the production and labor was family centered. When Kerala became an industrial and commercial society, work which was

² Lathimbhika Andherjanam, *Athmakadhak Oru Amugham* (Mal), Kottayam, Sahithya Preverthaka Sahagarana Sangam, 1974, p. 98.

³ M Krishnakumari, *Vanitha Pathraprevarthanam Charithravum Varthamanavum* (Mal), Thrissur, Kerala Sahitya Academy, 2010, p. 34.

once a part of family life, separated itself from it. It was also during this period; many people were forced to go to distant lands in search of work. A division between home and workplace occurred and family became a place to go away from and come back to after work.

European colonialism and the spread of capitalism along with the spread of instrumental rationality played a vital role in the social formation of Kerala. In this context English Education and the Renaissance philosophy began to influence the changing paradigms of Malayali socio-cultural life. Through English education a new worldview and a new outlook on gender relations were born. As a result of such transformations, a new class has emerged in Kerala which has acquired new perspectives, values and independent consciousness. The main agenda of the educated men was to get rid of the vulgarity and ignorance in the women around them. Veena Majumdar talks about the emergence of women's liberation issues in India “ Women's issues arose from the identity crisis faced by the educated middle class, the first products of colonial education. Many of those who tried to follow the lifestyle of colonists found the condition of their women an obstacle⁴. ” Traditional and superstitious women could not bring up their children in a modern way and carry out their family responsibilities as expected by the men. Thus the need to uplift women arose from the realization that an educated woman is a necessity for the family and society.

The ideal picture of woman, provided by these rapid changes, was that of a meek housewife. Renaissance activities that seemed to be highly progressive in the face of feudal moral relations and family systems actually affected this housewife model woman's life in negative ways in the long run. The status of women became a second class citizenship without participation in power. All these created many problems in the life of women in Kerala. Women prior to this, did not have to depend upon their men. But as women became dependent housewives in new families,

⁴ Vina Majumdar, Emergence of Women Question in India and role of Women's Development studies. Occasional Paper No. 7, New Delhi, Centre for Women's Development Studies, 1985, p. 5.

ideologies and moral rules regarding half-employment, motherhood, ideal wife were created. The idealization of the family by the capitalist powers as part of the Industrial Revolution was widespread. The idea of a home, a sweet home⁵, can be seen in the heartfelt spread of the 1870s, when new content and values began to be established for family life. In Kerala, we saw a shift in responsibilities, the field of economics, politics, culture, literature etc were seen as the dominion of men and household that of women. Due to their need to restrict women to household alone, in the patriarchal society then, there saw the spread of ideologies idealising families in the nineteenth century. Looking closely to it, we find that the world they have build was a free and vast one for men and it is shared by women, who are left to slave. This situation has led to the unavailability of social power and critical capacity to women in public life and in political movements.

It was during this period that problems related to female liberation arose widely across Kerala. Early women's publications led debates, raised the issues and helped spread awareness on this. All these trained women to express their views and demands freely, and stand up for their rights fearlessly. While going through these magazines we see women questioning social justice, fightpatriarchy and house slavery that existed and revealing the fakeness the male population exhibited. Female education alone was not their goal. Almost all the magazines of the time discussed issues related to female education and their freedom and led debates on it, but the tangible and truthful writings on women's liberation were mainly seen in Women's magazines.

'Sugunabodhini' published in 1887 from Thiruvananthapuram is the first ng against the magazine which wrote for women until then there were no such publications specifically catering for women. . "In Kerala, many newspapers and magazines in Malayalam are being run in a commendable manner. But the fact remains that all of these are being written for men⁶. There were barely no newspapers, magazines or books in Kerala that serves for the purpose of increasing the knowledge

⁵ Michele Marrett and Mary Mc Intosh, *The Anti- Social Family*, London, Verso, 1982, p. 36

⁶ M Krishna Kumari, *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

and entertainment of women. 1885 A monthly journal by the name '*Keraliya Sugunabodhini*' is being published in this category intended for Keralite women⁷. ” The publication included content ranging from philosophy, physiology, feminism, cooking, history of women who changed the world and also lectures on various topics, in prose and at times inverse forms. .

However, It was very crucial that None of the writers in this magazine were women. Going through, this magazine can be considered as a literary magazine rather than a women’s magazine. ‘Sharda’ was the second Malayalam women's magazine to be published in November 1904 from Tripunithura⁸. K Narayana Menon was the owner and manager of the magazine. Apart from him, all the others who worked for the publication were women. Rani Sethulakshmi Bai, Rani Parvati Bai and Ikkavamma Thampuran were the trustees and TC Kalyani Amma and T Ammukutty Amma from Ernakulam and V Kalyani Amma from Thiruvananthapuram were the publishers⁹. Throughout this period, we see a surge in the number of women’s magazines. Magazines like Mahila, Mahilaratnam, Sumangala, Muslim Mahila, were discontinued at various stages. It was Mahila and Lakshmibhai that lasted as long as 35 years. In the initial editions of Mahilaratnam editors sought to increase mental reform in women of Kerala, banishing darkness in which they live in and making them deserving of their ranks. ” The main agenda of these magazines have advanced from guiding women through the darkness of ignorance to the light of education, to demanding their rights to education and so forth. At a time when the press was all male-dominated, women could be seen as putting forward opinions and criticisms through the parallel media.

There were writers by both men and women on the subjects related to women. The first step to empowering the Muslims of Kerala, through the upliftment of women. Such a reform was made possible by the reformers through speeches and publications

⁷ N K Raveendran, Pennezhuthunna Jeevitham (Mal), Thiruvananthapuram, Chintha Publishers, 2017, p. 10.

⁸ M Krishna Kumari, Op. cit., p. 46.

⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

as part of their awareness of women's education and women's rights. The promotion of scientific and modern education, religious reforms and women emancipation, all these were the main goals of the reformers, and what they walked towards. they begin to educate women and offer them support to empower them through education. Their journals provide women with opportunities to write and express their thoughts

Debate about muslim women education

Reformers had undertaken women's education as one of their main agendas. Makthi thangal promoted women's education through the article "*Rajabhakti and Deshabhimanam*"¹⁰. The reformer Chalilakath kunjahmed Haji set an example for the public by sending two daughters from their family to school, one his own and the other his uncle's daughter. when nobody dared to do so¹¹. All reformers gave education a great deal of importance. through the journals these leaders fought for the educational empowerment of women. 'Al-murshid' the magazine acted a light house of their propagation. through many magazines were published for the propagation of Islamic ideology and upliftment of community they can't sustain much. but Al-Murshid firstly became the organ of Kerala Jamathul ulama and continued also the organ of Kerala Naduvathul Mujahideen, made revolution among muslim community. the first editorial itself explain us the nature of magazine as:

“instead of producing Al-murshid in Malayalam language and letters we were produced it in Arabic –Malayalam, the reason behind this decision is that, when comparing Malayalam literature were innumerable among kerala Muslims, especially Muslim women also reads as men does”¹²

A long line of element Muslim scholars used to write in Al Murshid from the first edition onwards was the translation of Saheehul Bukhari (hadeeth book)and its interpretation was done by M. C. C Ahmed moulavi. the translation of modern Muslim

¹⁰ Makthithangal, Rajabhakthiyum Deshabhimanam, cited in K K Abdul Karim ed, Makthi Thangalude samboorna Krithigal, Calicut, Vachana Books, 1970, p. 7.

¹¹ K K Abdul Karim and C N Ahmed Moulavi, Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Parambharayam, Tirur, 1970, p. 112.

¹² Al Murshid (Arab Mal.) Magazine, Vol. 1, 1936, p. 3.

Scholars writing also appeared in this magazine. But the education then provided had its limitations. In 'Almanar's editorial page it said, " It has becomes common for a muslim girl to go to school. They have found jobs and places in universities. But they do not have enough provisions for religious education. The result of which is clearly evident. The change first visible in a girl after her high school, is in her dress. Covering the face and ones arms have become a thing of the past. This has now become the religion of the reformed women¹³. " In this article, the editor raises his concern and conveys the message that religious education should be given to prevent the reformation of Muslim women. Similarly, Jamaluddin Moulavi's article explains what a woman's duty should be "The goal of education is to acquire the ability to perform home duties correctly. In the drama of life, women are expected to excel in the roles of obedient children, loving wives, in childcare, and as family overseers. Apart from these qualities, she must also excel in teachings of the religion¹⁴. " Here, the main agenda expressed is to maintain the honour of the family and uphold her title as wife and mother. But, during this period, the article written by Kasim P Mistress on women's education provided a different outlook on things. She writes " Men must be thinking of women as machines to cook and give birth. How unfortunate that they cannot look at these sisters and daughters of theirs with a bit of empathy. For a man to be a man, a woman should rise as a woman. But Islam does not prescribe any inferiority to the status of men and women, except that it commands a different way of life. ¹⁵"This is how women saw education, as an analysis of social structure and as a means to maintain their dignity.

Although education was the main agenda of the Renaissance, it is clear that women and men were not seen as deserving equally. There was a fear in society that when women got education and freedom, they would give up all the duties, responsibilities and morals that were vested in them, that is why the patriarchy needed

¹³ Al Manar Mgazine (Mal), Vol4, 1942, Editorial, p. 4.

¹⁴ Jamaludheen Moulavi, Muslim Sthreeyum Avakashavum, Al Farook, Vol. 3, Calicut, 1935, p. 22.

¹⁵ V S Kasim B Mistruss, Namude Streegal (Mal.), Muslim Mithram Magazine, Book 1, Vol. 7, p. 214.

to control them in their existing positions. This thought was strong in the Muslim community. This was not done through any sorts of oppression or bodily harm but rather by creating ideologies that were conducive to the maturation of women. Ideological forms such as femininity, chastity and motherhood began to spread in Kerala during this period. “The ideal female figures of historical purity and tolerant devotion were recreated The ideal female figures of historical purity and tolerant devotion, inspired from mythology to suit the needs of a society. But these moves were rightly dealt with by those who stood for women emancipation and wrote strongly against them. All these can be understood while going through the articles in magazines such as Sharadha and Mahilaratnam. If taking care of the husband is the duty of the wife, then there is no doubt that the duty of taking care of his wife befalls upon him¹⁶. . ”. This article concludes by reminding women of the justice they deserve in the family.

Within the muslim community, religious ideology was utilized for the education of women. Some sects of the community preached that it was against Islam to learn even alphabets. Religious rulings(Fatwas) were issued against the study of alphabets. This must be the reason why the necessity to educate oneself was abundantly written upon in Women’s magazines. they raised serious questions to the community like “What is the status of Muslim women in Kerala according to the words of the Prophet that every Muslim woman should be compulsorily educated? How many women have studied the verses and prophecies of the Qur'an about women? How many women know the Qur'an, Islamic history and the teachings of the Prophet? These knowledge alone would have sufficed¹⁷...” By this, Haleema Beevi tries to point out that there is no clear study even in the field of religion. In this period, rise of women who gave importance to religious education can be seen. It is not to confine oneself to further boundaries but rather to understand the rights and freedom religion allows for the women to have. This is what religious education meant. KM Moulavi's article on 'Women's Education' emphasizes the importance of education.

¹⁶ Editorial, Sharadha Magazine(mal), Book 1, Vol. 7, 1925, p. 9.

¹⁷ M Haleema Beevi, Navoathanapadhathil Streegal Poruthanam (Mal), Almanar Magazine, Vol. 4, 1951, p. 15.

The Hadith and the Qur'an emphasize that Islam is as obligatory for women as it is for men. Moulavi explains a verse from Qur'an. "Do not desire that which Allah has bestowed on some of you more than others. Men shall have a share according to what they have earned, and women shall have a share according to what they have earned. Do ask of Allah His bounty. Allah has full knowledge of everything (4:32¹⁸)". He further explains " I will by no means be against educating women of such a religion that provides them equal rights, responsibilities and blessings as it to men¹⁹"

Moulavi makes it clear that "certainly, it's important to pay attention to specific consideration for Muslim Women. providing special schools and hiring female teachers, if possible, for those of age is crucial. A woman's ultimate virtues lie in being internally and externally clean and chaste. ²⁰" Here Moulavi clearly demarcates the boundaries of education and emphasizes the need to keep women as women without losing their inner virtue. They mainly focus on improving the condition of women for the sake of community. But from the writings of women of this period, we can see ideas quite different from this. Haleema Beevi argues that education is compulsory for both men and women. She does not blame women or religion for not getting educated. She instead questions the so-called scholars who interpreted these rulings. She examined their arguments thoroughly and exposed its limitations. She also calls on women to recognize education as a right within religion.

The article "On the upliftment of the weaker sections", PK Subaida focuses mostly on women's education. "Only the Muslim community, which we all represent, is enveloped by darkness and conservatism. We are unable to uphold the dignity of our community. Unlike all other communities, we have become accustomed to living only as their mockery. We had no choice except to take a ludicrous stance. ²¹. . " They

¹⁸ Quranic verses sura 4 verse 32, K M Moulavi, Streeyum Vidhabhasavum, Al Murshid Magazine, Vol. 5, 1934, p. 32.

¹⁹ K M Moulavi, Streeyum Vidhabhasavum, Al Murshid Magazine, Vol. 5, 1934, p. 32.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

²¹ P K Subaida, Sthreegalkk Oru Sangadanavenam (Mal), Ansari Megazine, Calicut, 1961, Vol. 4, p. 23.

also argue that education is the key to social progress and that the lack of individuals ready to work for it is what makes the community absurd today.

While male reformers publish articles at a level where men set the bounds for women's freedom, women's writings can be seen as respecting women's autonomy and their very existence. The actuality is that the Islamic social structure is designed to provide women with total independence in a way that adds change and glory to her nobility, dignity, and femininity. . ” In light of religious views on women, such arguments are being questioned. The author continues in the article “Over the last two to three years major women's conferences have been held in Perumbavoor, Kayamkulam, Kochi and Kozhikode in Kerala. Today, Kerala has a significant population of educated residents and officials... They must, however, work for themselves in order to prosper and advance²². ” We're evaluating the changes that have occurred in Kerala in terms of education and social relations here. They are convincing others that the social system in Islam gives women complete freedom. The author concludes that they must work for the freedom that is denied to them.

Women's writings are all based on the idea of education as a means of liberation. Mariam bivi Marakkar emphasizes the necessity of educating girls who receive government assistance “Muslims had fallen far behind in terms of education and are just now beginning to catch up. To this day, they still do not send their children, especially girls, to school. However, it is gratifying to see at least one Muslim student in most schools. To encourage them, the government has set up facilities for Arabic education in schools with more Muslim children. In addition, the government also provides scholarships to low-income Muslim girls until they complete high school. It is a great misfortune if Muslims are unaware of this fact. Community organisations and leaders must take necessary measures in this regard...²³” According to B S Syeda's article, the Prophet's brilliance is found in the prominence he gave to education. "He axed the roots of hatred and animosity, and

²² Ibid., p. 25.

²³ Mariyam Beevi Marakar, Islam Streegalkk Nalgunna Swadhandrayam (Mal), Ansari Megazine, Book 8, Vol. 1, 1961, p. 10.

brought in a profound shift in the world that made the acquisition and distribution of knowledge compulsory for both men and women²⁴".

Here the author emphasizes that education is mandatory for both men and women. In addition, Fatima Kutty Madani's article on Islam and Women also clarifies the rights of women in Islam. There is, however, a need for self-effort in order to achieve them. Similarly, in women's publications, we find women writing about their place in Islam during the early history of Islam. Their article makes it clear that in the early days of Islam, women fought in the struggles alongside men. "Umaiba Beevi, a Companion who went to war to avenge her husband's murder before the novelty and sweetness of their honeymoon faded, cannot be forgotten or erased.... We have such a heritage before us²⁵. " The article goes on to state that by disregarding all of this, women are denied the natural blessings that are bestowed on all human beings, such as sunlight and pure air, in the name of women's rights violations.

The author is questioning men citing the example of Muslim women who have thrived in social and wartime situations. Women are modelled as heroic women who came to the battlefield, in contrast to men's writing style in which women are shown as the support and shade of men.

However, in KM Moulavi's article 'Tadbirul Manzil', he explains the responsibility of women in housekeeping by quoting a hadith narrated by the Prophet. "A lady is in charge of her husband's house and is responsible for her people. ²⁶" -The woman in command of her husband's house means she establishes and maintains the order of life in the house in accordance with her husband's orders. When her husband is away, she is responsible for managing his affairs, entertaining guests, and caring for her children, finances, and body. It is the duty of a woman to help her husband by

²⁴ B S Saidha, Sthithi Samathvathinuveni Jeevitham Samarppicha Maharathan (Mal), Ansari Nabhidina Visheshal Pathip, 1953, p. 14.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

²⁶ K M Moulavi, Thadbirul Manzil (Arab Mal.), Nisahuul Islam Magazine, 1928, Vol. 5, p. 23.

performing all these duties regularly, gracefully and faithfully. This is how Moulavi explains the hadith.

Most of their writings portray the history of an obedient wife. The men's narratives feature articles highlighting the life of Asma Bivi and Fatima Bivi's obligations to her husband. Articles emphasizing the lives and activities of brave women in Islam are frequently referred to as the work of exemplary women in most women's writings. It is noteworthy that they are role models, not because they are traditionally submissive or obedient to men. Mariam Biwi Marakkar's article aims to dispel additional misconceptions about Islam, such as that it denies women any independence and that they are mere objects of contempt in the face of Islam. For this, the rights and status of women in Islam are highlighted and compared to the Bible, Manusmriti and Gita. These were topics commonly addressed at the time.

On the same subject, there are sequels and men's writings. When it comes to advocating for women's education, we see that their agenda is a little different. The family's primary role is to prepare individuals to adapt to the patriarchal system. What can be noticed in male literature is a need to modify women in such a way that they become part of such a demand. According to Jamaluddin Moulavi's paper, "Women must have firm religious beliefs. Reformers who transcend the boundaries of religion and live without restraint, creating evidence of hostility to women's education, are a danger to society. The community of such women will be a non-muslim community... If the crop is harmed as a result of addition of manure, it is better to forgo the manure.²⁷ . . ."

Women's education is viewed as a means of ensuring a man's domination in all areas. He believes that if education deviates from this and begins to become sophisticated, it should be discontinued. Moulavi AB Mohammad Kunju, who is optimistic that women will start entering into education and government jobs, forbids walking into the field of education. The formation of female character is emphasised in MCC Abdurrahman Moulavi's article on Character Culture. "Children learn by

²⁷ Jamaludhin Moulavi, Muslim Streegalude Vidhabhasa Lekshayam Endhayirikkanam (Mai), Ansari Megazine, Calicut, Vol. 3, 1961, p. 12.

observing the actions of their parents. It is very difficult to change the habit that is practiced at a young age. Children spend the majority of their time with their mothers and learn from them. Therefore, when it comes to improving their character, the responsibility of a woman is much greater than that of a man. Only if every woman improves her character will the community benefit from their children²⁸. . .

Here the emphasis is on the character formation of the woman in order to bring up children who will contribute to the community's upliftment. In Islam, men and women are equal, like twins²⁹, according to Ayesha Mayeen. Racial discrimination is strongly opposed in women's writings. Education and employment, according to women, should provide instruction and role models for quoting subordinates. In these articles, which are rooted in religion, it is acknowledged that women need to be willing to adhere to the restrictions imposed by religion. But it also reaffirms that these restrictions are not limited to women. Moreover, compared to the male writings of the time, it can be seen that educational attainment itself was received differently by the two groups.

KM Moulavi writes, "The ultimate virtue of a woman is that she is pure and chaste internally and externally. And she must be the one who upholds the rights of her husband. This is the most important and virtuous quality that a woman should have. We must keep this fact in mind as we consider the subjects that are taught in girls' schools³⁰. " The ideas expressed in this are completely different from women's writings. The emphasis in their articles is different and the perspective of religion itself is given a new dimension. Among them are writings that use forceful language to deny patriarchy and the clergy.

The terms "kitchen dolls, " "delivery machines, " and "oven dolls" are all negative connotations of men's concept of femininity. Women see education as a path

²⁸ MCC Abdurahman Moulavi, Stree Vidhabasam, Nisahul Islam Magazine, Vol. 2, 1926, p. 12.

²⁹ Ayisha Mayin, Our duty, in J Devika (ed.), *Herself: Gender and Early Writings of Malayali Women 1898-1938*, Kolkata, Stree, 2005, p. 165.

³⁰ KM Moulavi, Op. cit., p. 27.

to freedom and social action. The brave women who exemplify women in writing are the ones who have proven themselves in the public sphere. In doing so, they broke the prejudices against Islam by highlighting their courageous deeds and their rights in Islam. The Renaissance movement promoted the premise that women's education was a step toward societal advancement. Women's freedom and their chosen identity, on the other hand, are valued in women's writings. But according to Reformers, the idea of "modernizing the home environment through women's education and thereby enabling spiritual revival was a direct outcome of the economic and political challenges encountered by middle-class Muslims in the twentieth century³¹. " observes Gail Minhalt. When women's education was revamped as part of modernisation, it could be seen as imposing agendas on the ideology of male power in such a way that it was for the betterment of women. When male reformers attempted to consciously integrate women in the standards of religious doctrine, they were met with resistance. Women are attempting to re-read education through the perspective of religious ideology. This can be interpreted as a clear indicator of Muslim women's growth in Kerala. It is an undeniable fact that these women's paths led to the empowerment of Muslim women later.

Muslim Women and Polygamy

By emphasising the conventions around the Malayalee woman's sexual morality and an ideal 'family woman' notion, community reform organisations idealised modern family patterns and demanded and expected the same from women. Women's rights to education and freedom were pioneered in response to the requirements of female dharma, which contemporary men appropriated and modified to fit these contexts. Women's and men's roles, obligations, and duties were shaped and constructed in accordance with male interests within the frameworks of femininity and masculinity, respectively. Strong perceptions were established that the first and foremost place of a woman was the family, that femininity was dependent, fragile, devoid of personality, and that she had to submit to men's protection and obedience.

³¹ Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India*, Delhi, OuP, 1998, p. 156.

Modern perspectives on the female body, sexuality and marriage were shaped by these values. The transition from the elderly authority of the old family concept to modern male dominance was shaping the new constructs of masculinity.

In the tactics of contemporary patriarchy, instead of using direct coercion on women, they were persuaded to obtain an education based on their own wishes, taught on how to raise their children well, and attempted to develop and cultivate a culture of reform and the ethic of taking good care of the home and husband. This is how the image of the nobleman as a protection reformer preaching about women's plight first appeared in Kerala's history. According to J. Devika, "the reform movement demanded women's involvement in its activities since their participation in the reformation showed they were intellectually and physically capable of displaying allegiance and obedience to male leadership³². " Marriage in Islam is a covenant. When it is an agreement, it will have equal rights for men and women. She can impose conditions on it, and when the conditions are violated, it becomes a violation of rights, and the marriage is declared illegitimate. To emphasize the seriousness of marriage, the Qur'an describes it as "Mizagan Galeed", or a firm covenant³³. Marriage is a bond between two people that includes a spiritual connection. The agreement cannot be broken for trivial issues. Marriage cannot be finalized without the consent of both parties. Without the daughter's approval, the father may not consent to her marriage. Her consent must be obtained in the presence of two trustworthy witnesses. These two witnesses may testify before the Khazi and validate the conditions for her, including Mehr. She can condition that her husband shouldn't take another wife. If her husband violates her terms, she has the power to annul the marriage.

Polygamy has long been a topic of discussion in Islam. It has been argued that A man is allowed to have as many as four wives. It is said to have been a privilege accorded not to all men. This is only allowed subjected to strict circumstances on rare instances. Its verse was revealed after the battle of Uhud. Scholars say that when many

³² J Devika, *Engendering Individuals, A Study of Gender and Individualisation in Reform Language in Modern Kerala, 1880-1950*, New Delhi, Orient BlackSwan 1997, p. 143

³³ Asgar Ali Engineer, *Rethinking Issues in Islam*, Delhi, 2020, p. 91.

men were killed in war, four wives were allowed to help orphans and widows. The verse commands “If you fear that you will not do justice to the orphans, then, marry the women you like, in twos, in threes and in fours. If you fear that you will not be able to do justice between your wives by marrying more than one, then marry only one wife, or accept your female captives. It is better so that you don't go beyond the limits...³⁴. ” Here, the emphasis is on justice. The Qur'an has defined essential heed and convinces men of the difficulties of doing justice among their wives. “You will not be able to treat your wives with absolute justice not even when you keenly desire to do so³⁵. ” (4:129) Equal justice is trying as described in the Qur'an. It is in this context that we must assess the discussions on polygamy in Kerala. Marriage and polygamy are being discussed with utmost importance in the ongoing discussions on the subject related to early women. “Marriage is positively associated with a large number of outcomes including reproduction or societal growth...” "Marry women who are more likely to give birth and adore their husbands more. .³⁶. " The importance of marriage is emphasised through hadiths like these. To the simple question of what a woman is, the basic response is "She is a womb. " In the early days, a woman's position in society used to be determined on her capacity to reproduce. As a result, the uterus is the sole representation of womanhood. Marriage and family are defined in terms of reproduction. “Similarly, one advantage is that the woman may relieve the husband of some of his responsibilities, such as housework and cooking. Because if a man does not marry, he will be required to do housekeeping, which will squander his other endeavours. As a result, they will be unable to obtain an education or participate in communal activities. Therefore, a wife who is competent in the matter of good housekeeping will be very helpful to him in all matters³⁷. ” Here the author is attempting to convince man that the support of a woman is required to maintain his

³⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

³⁵ Quran Verses, Chapter 4, Verses 129.

³⁶ Abdul Ghani, Islamile Bhahubharyatham, Almnar Magazine, Calicut, Vol. 5, 1962, p. 25.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

family via marriage and to maintain the outer world without having to labour indoors. Here you can see that the inside is very clearly separated from the outside world.

▪ The mental condition of a woman, that of a 'girl child, ' is not born. Instead of becoming a human, a person who is born a woman is formed by the feminine ideals. For this, she is primed to be a beautiful, humble and obedient lady who is appealing to men. It is the duty of a woman to live as a role model wife, exemplary mother, and good lady dedicated to her family. When society continues reiterating that all women are created and destined for marriage and motherhood, the woman mentally prepares for that acknowledgment. The reality is that women are also partaking in the exploitation by such a feudal heritage system. We can see articles written by men in publications on marriage and family in which women are portrayed as excellent wives and mothers for the welfare of men's society. Rukia Sakawat K Hussain's story 'Sultana's Dream' was featured in the Muslim Mitram magazine. This story is one that questions the very notion of man and woman. It was heard that in the faraway land of Pennarasu, women rule the country and control community affairs while men cook, raise children and take care of all household chores. "I said to the lovers of my homeland that the wonderful God will not be confused. ³⁸. . . " Through Sultana's dream about the land of Pennarasu, the narrator is attempting to convince the issues of women's social structures. This isn't a dream about an educated woman who is unjust to her family. Instead, it is a land of Pennarasu capable of ruling the country and managing communal issues. Male reformers, on the other hand, do not even mention the woman's place in the family. A follow-up article can be found in Almanar magazine of this period. "Polygamy in Islam" acknowledges and explains polygamy in Islam. The article goes on to say, "Men's and women's physical abilities are differentiated and women are far behind. There isn't much to say regarding the evolution of these two species' cognitive skills. The periodic reduction in blood circulation to the brain of women prevents their opportunity to develop like men. ³⁹. . . " The woman is depicted as weak in the article, whereas the man is depicted as a

³⁸ R S Huzain, Sulthanayude Swapnam, Muslim Mithram Magazine, 1934, Vol. 3, p. 42.

³⁹ Abdul Ghani, Op. cit., p. 23.

beacon of strength and intelligence. For that reason, the article concludes that he may be polygamous.

The glorification of marriage's institutionalization can easily be observed. "The institution of marriage makes the woman pious and reliant. After rendering her unsuitable for life, damaging her, and weakening her strength, it puts its own protection on her. And that is, in fact, a trap."⁴⁰ This is Emma Goldman's observation about marriage. Transferring the woman's authority from her father to her husband, put her into domestic slavery, help the male to conquer her labor capacity, sexuality and reproductive ability are the important functions of marriage. But marriage can erase these virtues from the eyes of the woman and present it as an ideal form. Women are subjected to slavery through marriage with their consent. It's cruel and inhumane, according to Sheila Kitzinger. All cultural forms and media are careful to convey the ideal environment of marriage. It is difficult to envision a society without marriage⁴¹. In the Muslim community, marriage is described in terms of religion. "Allah has cursed the celibate men who declare they will not marry and the women who say the same thing⁴². . . ." Scholars make marriage obligatory by quoting this hadith. Then they go on to say that marriage is part of the Prophet's *Sunnah*. It is against the *Sunnah*, according to the Blessed Prophet, not to engage in it while one can do so. They emphasize that the primary goal of marriage is reproduction. "A mat sitting in a corner of the house is better than a lady who does not bear children⁴³", "The best of your women are the women who are more capable of giving birth", "A black ugly woman who can give birth is preferable than a beautiful woman who can't⁴⁴." It is apparent that these texts are an attempt to mold the ideal woman to sustain the family with the context of the Qur'an and the hadith. The home rule of a woman with good knowledge and culture would be commendable. Keep the house and surroundings clean, maintain

⁴⁰ Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, New York, 1962

⁴¹ Sheila Kitzinger, *Women Experience of Sex*, New York, 1983, p. 17.

⁴² Hammudah Abdal Ati, *the Family Structure in Islam*, Malaysia, Other Books, 2008, p. 50.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

remarkable unity and harmony among the family members, and provide peace and joy to the husband. Such women are honored in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. Articles justifying polygamy can be found during this period itself. "In most parts of the world, women outnumber men. With that, accidental deaths are more common in men than women. Hence, women are more likely than their husbands to be abandoned in the community... Marriage is required to keep people from squandering their dignity and honor by engaging in adultery. .⁴⁵. " Here polygamy is being considered to be necessary to minimize social inequity since women are overrepresented in the population. At the same time, we can see explanations on why polygamy is vital for women to maintain their dignity and pride and to avoid becoming adulterers.

"Man, without a doubt, surpasses women in terms of physical strength and brains. Because they have the power to work and sort out dangers, man is to be a woman's guardian. .⁴⁶. " Second marriages are considered to be possible for them since women are inferior to men in terms of physical strength. The article goes on to say, "A woman is only productive until she reaches the half of her life. The ability of a woman to become pregnant declines as she grows older. The goal of marriage itself is reproduction. Hence if a man is not permitted to have more than one wife, he will be barred from reproducing for half of his life. .⁴⁷. " These are the kind of texts that the male reformers published. In recent times, women's interventions on matters like marriage and divorce are significantly different. The male writings are mocked by re-reading the Qur'an and Hadith itself, which the men have provided as evidence. You can see the female writer writing in the Yuva Kesari Stree Pakti " If men are said to be physically strong in all their good actions, then women are intellectually stronger. Let women make men's brains better⁴⁸. " The article mocks the male body's supremacy in a very funny manner. Women have better intellectual capacity than males. That is why they say that women should improve men's brains. And then there is the widespread perception that the husband is the wife's master or owner. But Islam does

⁴⁵ Abdul Ghani, Op. cit., p. 34.

⁴⁶ KM Moulavi, in Nisahul Islam Magazine, Op. cit., p. 23.

⁴⁷ Abdul Gani, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴⁸ Stree Pakthi, Yuvakeseri Magazine, Vol. 4, Calicut, 1934, p. 23.

not allow women to always be inferior and men to be superior. If you observe their way, it appears that man is commanding and woman is always obeying them⁴⁹. However, as evidenced by the numerous female publications, a woman is never subordinate to a man. In discussions on polygamy, rather than applying polygamy under particular context in light of the Qur'an and Hadith, attempts are often made to portray polygamy as a law of Islam. By laying down evidence for this and connecting power and sovereignty with man in the face of women's physical vulnerability, you can see long articles claiming that women hold a low status and therefore men can be polygamous.

It is through their writings during the 1930-60, we get to know the influence of women in the society of that period. A group of women who received education and entered the world of writing as a result of modernisation. In around ten magazines of the period, female writings were frequently seen. Standing within the framework of religion, they made very conscious demands about their rights. The strong voices of these independent Muslim women of Kerala were recorded in the pages of these magazines. Women like P. K Sainaba, Subaida, Kasimbi Mintress, Mariyam Beevi Marakkar, Thankamma malik Ayisha Mayin, TC Kunjachu, are definitely to be recorded in the long pages of history. Even amongst these, there are a few names that are to be especially noted. The Editor Haleema Beevi, T. C Kunjachumma are an undeniable presence in the history of Thalassery, The ' Thalassery Sisters' Ayisha Mayin and Thankamma Malik, who was known for her short stories.

Haleema Beevi (1918-2000)

Early women writings of Kerala clearly mark the female presence in its literature. The time period from 1930 to 1960 saw a rise in the popularity of Muslim magazines like "*Nisa-ul Islam*", "*Ansari*", "*Al-Manar*", "*Mishkath-ul-Huda*", "*Muslim-review*" etc, in which the majority of the writings were produced by women. During this period, many women wrote articles in such magazines. Their writings focused not just on a single subject. All they discussed in these articles, were generally

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

issues related to one of the prominent among these are the works of M Haleema Beevi. Born in Adoor district of Pathanamthitta, to Pir Muhamed and Maideen Beevi, in 1918, Haleema Beevi lost her father at a very young age. Since then, her mother arose as the force of strength that drove Haleema. She was a strong, courageous and intelligent woman. She possessed high linguistic ability and broad thinking in the strength of her good reading habits. Haleema Beevi grew talented, with her roots deep in the values her mother instilled in her. This was during the time when educating a girl, especially one from the Muslim community, was considered strictly prohibited by the priesthood which was growing stronger than ever. Haleema Beevi remembers a part of a sermon she heard as a fourth grader. “Do not teach a Muslim woman to write. Do not let them live upstairs. It is enough for them to learn Surah-Al-Noor. This is the ruling of Islam and those who go against these are expelled from Islam. Those who act as infidels, by disobeying the commandments of Islam and going to school to learn will surely belong to hellfire. They will neither receive the shafa’ath(blessings) of Fathumma beevi nor will they enter the heavens⁵⁰...”. Despite all these Maideen Beevi still chose to educate her daughters, moving strongly forward without paying attention to the naysayers. Haleema Beevi, too, swam across the rough waters of life, with people protesting against her right to get educated. She lived through these protests and completed her seventh grade. It was in this period, Snehabhaaram, a book by a group called Edava Barakathul Muslimeen was published. In it was an article written by Moulavi on the Education for Women. After reading this particular article, Haleema Beevi realized the need for educating women. Also the various groups and communities formed, like those by her classmates belonging to the Nair community and the NSS, the meetings they called and the groups they formed, all aroused interest in her. She talks about how she felt that such communities were essential for the upliftment of the Muslim women at the time. Even in her school days, Haleema Beevi was a good reader and had a great interest for literature. She wrote about being able to read an Arabi-Malayalam magazine for a whole month in her childhood, in the article “A Glimpse into the Experiences in the magazine.

⁵⁰ Noora Noorjahan, Pathradhipa, Kottakkal, Bukkafe Publisher, 2020, p. 24.

Haleema Beevi, at the age of sixteen, got married to a scholar, Mr. K. M Muhammed. He was able to make a clear impact on her life, after 1935. The ideas of renaissance of Vakkam Moulavi have been deep rooted in him. He served as the editor for the “Ansari” magazine which was popular in the religious and social spheres. K. M Moulavi’s works and expertise was able to awake the inner journalist in Haleema Beevi. Moulavi desired to begin a magazine solely for the upliftment of women. Hence in the year 1938, “Muslim Vanitha” began to be published from Thiruvalla, with Haleema Beevi as its editor. From then on Kerala watched her work as the editor in publications like” *Vanitha*”, “*Bharatha Chandrika*”, “*Adhunika Vanitha*” etc. She organized several women's conferences and engaged in political activities. In the very field that was forbidden for Muslim women to work in, Haleema Beevi built her own throne and ruled. This life she led was unusual for Muslim women and was very difficult. The first magazine “Musli-Woman” faced harsh criticism and created a huge financial burden. In the efforts to create a press for their own, in 1964, they had to sell their house and the lands they owned. During these difficult times they had to shift from one rented house to another. Haleema Beevi was not in the least hesitant to travel all the way to Thalassery for the promotion of her magazine, even with a baby in her arms⁵¹. Her endless desire for the upliftment of the Muslim women had left her in financial instability and in a state of constant wandering. All this time, Haleema Beevi who had long stopped her religious studies, restarted the studies through K. M Moulavi. The financial burden incurred by the Bharatha Chandrika Press kept Haleema Beevi away from the field of publishing for a while. She made a comeback, stronger than ever, with the magazine “Adhunika Vanitha”. Her husband’s illness and her oldage illness bound her home. She breathed her last while living with daughter Nafeesa in Perumbavoor.

Her publications starting from Muslim Vanitha(1938) discussed everything from religion to politics, art, lifestyle and cinema. She did not try to hide her political and religious opinions either. Prophetic hymns, political critiques, and movie reviews

⁵¹ Interview with Ansar Beegam daughter of Haleema Beevi at Tirur.

all appeared in the journal. Their publication adapted a tone of being pluralistic and at the same time worked for the betterment of Muslim community.

Muslim Vanitha (1938)

The first edition of “Muslim Vanitha” was published in 1938, for which Haleema Beevi carried the role as the managing director. She paid a great attention everything including the ones related to printing as well. She frequently reviewed and spoke about the situation of the Muslim woman at that time including about the need for their religious and social progress. There were no publications that aimed particularly for the upliftment of the Muslim women. It came as a general surprise to many that the only magazine that was published for the Muslim women was under the leadership of a Muslim woman. “Muslim Vanitha” stood out because of its aim and its leader. Its unique style and the topics discussed sparked an interest in its readers. “Muslim Vanitha” moved forward constantly engaging and challenging the harsh orthodox society that then existed. In her welcome speech she reminds us on the necessity of women’s education by saying “Dear Sisters!, You should never be reluctant to send our little girls to school. This is the only request I pose in this society formation programme. Neither did our religion nor did our Rasool Kareem have seen women as degraded beings”⁵². She tried to talk about the extreme backwardness Muslim women face through the “Musim Vanitha’. As a result of all this, strong challenges and opposition came from the orthodox Muslims themselves. It was difficult to maintain a publishing house and be responsible for it without strong financial support. Haleema Beevi talks about her struggles saying “ By the time the sixth edition had come out, the criticisms against it had reached at its peak. It was then esteemed Mr K. M Moulavi came to the office and during his two day stay, suggested a few policy changes in the forward running of the magazine. “Muslim Vanitha” thus evaded the religious controversies. Through the ‘Muslim Vanitha’ I have felt the emergence of a revolutionary ideology among Muslim women in Travancore” ⁵³.

⁵² Haleema Beevi, in Ansari Megazine, Op. cit., p. 35.

⁵³ Basheer Randathani, Oru Pathrathiparude Ormagal, Calicut, Chandrika Weekly, 1995, p. 12.

Lack of cooperation from the community and many other pressures forced them to suspend publishing due to the extreme economic collapse.

Bharathachandrika

Haleema Beevi re-enters the field of journalism with the magazine '*Bharathachandrika*' in 1944. It was a weekly that dealt with the literature in addition to the various socio-political issues and had a different approach when compared to '*Muslim Vanitha*'. The magazine took birth in January of 1944 and was rich in content all backed by a handful of expert writers. Along with the role as the Managing Director, Haleema Beevi also took care of the majority of the editorial too. But we find in a few issues the name of Mr. Vakkam Abdul Khader as the editor. The presence Vaikom Mohammad Basheer and Vakkom Abdul Khadar enriched the editorial board of '*Bharatachandrika*'. In an interview with her, Haleema Beevi says '*Bharathachandrika*' was a space full of new and able writers. Eminent writers like Thakazhi, G. Shankarakuripp, M. P Appan, Guptan Nayar, Balamani Amma frequently wrote for the magazine⁵⁴.

The main topic of discussion of '*Bharathachandrika*' used to be politics. The influence of Muslim League was clearly visible in its pages. It gave various discussions on both the Second World War as well as the Independence Movement of India. It also has a lot of discussions that preceded the Indo-Pak partition. According to Haleema Beevi, the main objective of *Bharathachandrika* is to inform the government and the public about the interests of Muslims. The cost of the magazine back then used to be two anna. Haleema Beevi worked hard to keep the magazine alive and ran it with confidence. Her daughter Ansar Beegum remembers her mother and grandmother walking long distances seeking money⁵⁵. In the 26th February 1945 issue of the magazine they published a request for financial assistance for the magazine. The request was filled with the hope that very soon they will be able to start printing from their own press.

⁵⁴ M Haleema Beevi, Shidhilachindakal, MES Souvenir, 1965, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Interview with Ansar Beegam daughter of Haleema Beevi at Tirur, 20. 11. 2020

In 1948, the weekly became a daily newspaper. The fact that there were lesser number of newspapers circulated among the Muslim community was the biggest motivation behind it. It was around this period, Majeed Marakkar from Perumbavoor took over Bharathachandrika and started to run it, because of which Haleema Beevi decided to move to Perumbavoor from Thiruvalla. Even then they were not able to overcome the financial crisis, as a result of which they had to end the publication of the newspaper in 1952. Despite the troubles, she tried to continue to work hard but was generally in vain. She overtook the responsibility of bringing the Muslim community to the mainstream and involving herself in various socio-political discussions. Even though she could not carry on the work for a long period, whatever she did in the short span of time was widely known and was regarded as successful.

Adhunika Vanitha

At the age of fifty two, after a long break, in the year 1970, Haleema Beevi made a comeback with the magazine “Adhunikavanitha”. Alongside Haleema Beevi, who worked as the managing director, in the editorial board she had women like, Philomina Kurian, Baby Vargees, B Sadhu, M. Rahma Beegum, B. S Saramma Kurian, B. S Shantha Kumari⁵⁶. With the unwavering confidence built over the years working in ‘Bharathavanitha’ and ‘Muslim Vanitha’, is what Haleema Beevi said about the latest advent. This confidence and experience is clearly reflected in quality works produced in ‘Adunika Vanitha’. They sought to discuss issues related to women, especially those related to the lives they lead and deep socio-cultural issues. Apart from the article ‘Purusha shabdham’ written by K. M. M Ashraf published, the rest of the writings were all done by women. A students wing was formed under the name ‘Vidarunna Mottukal’ (Blooming Buds). They also conducted competitions for young poets and writers who wrote stories and articles. We can also see the column “Charchavedi” for discussions on various issues, “Vellithira” for movie reviews and “Adunika Vanithayude Doctor” for answering health related queries of the readers. There was pages dedicated to topics like body, hair and clothes by the name ‘Sindooracheppu’. Even though this magazine too was started in all seriousness, did

⁵⁶ M Haleema Beevi, Editorial, Adhunika Vanitha, Thiruvalla, 1952, p. 3.

not last long. Due to heavy financial burdens, 'Adhunika vanitha' too met its end. The curtain thus fell over the career of Haleema Beevi, who strived her very best to bring the Muslim community to the forefront through her publications. Despite the failure, Haleema Beevi was able to mark her space in the history through the magazines were read even after her life⁵⁷ Upholding the motto 'Empowerment of Muslim women through modern education', Haleema Beevi gave rise to a literary revolution and strived hard for it. Her works gave her an unavoidable place in the print history.

Apart from being a journalist, public service too was a part of her life. She involved herself in Women's conferences, lectures and political activities. Right from a very young age, we can see Haleema Beevi questioned the facts and sought for its answers. There is an incident Haleema Beevi mentions in her writing "A Scholar from the Malabar Region gave a religious sermon. On its fourth day, he made claims that were totally against women⁵⁸. Before walking with other women out of the venue in protest, she boldly stood in front of the stage and asked them to get a person can speak better on Islam for the next day. Her demands were heard and immediately put to effect. They then brought speakers like KM Maulavi, Aslam Maulavi to speak⁵⁹." These incidents show her courage to speak up for the things that matter.

J Devika considers Haleema Beevi as one of the major forerunners of Islamic feminism, it is clear that this does not seem to be an exaggeration. She constantly wrote and preached that it was essential for a Muslim woman to have a religious and material education for her upliftment and tried to convince the community. She views the Muslim women of Kerala through the mirror of the heroic role models of historical women like Ayisha Beevi. Without education, these women will forever have to live tangled amidst the traditions and superstitions, believing them blindly forever. She strongly believed that only educated women can help build a strong society. For this she took part in women conferences, forming of women organizations and so on. She kept her voice heard through the media in forms of letters and articles. Tactical and

⁵⁷ Time in bookstalls, thanks to the various initiatives Azad Memorial Press (1963).

⁵⁸ M Haleema Beevi, In MES Souvenir, Op. cit., p. 23.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 25.

fearless, she sought to correct the world in which the priesthood dominated. The Islamic way of life is the basis of Haleema Beevi's social achievements. According to her, the very Islam that granted every freedom to women was used as a tool to oppress those days, due to the ignorance of women. It is during this period Haleema Beevi stood up against the injustices presenting the words written in the Holy Qur'an, Hadiths and the history itself, and how Islam teaches to respect women⁶⁰.

Women Conferences and Groups

Bringing women out from the kitchen where she has been forced to spend all the time in, to the public to listen and speak face to face felt like the perfect idea to Haleema Beevi. She worked to conduct women's conferences like never seen before, for they had women who took care of everything from organizing to speaking in these events. The first muslim women conference in Kerala was conducted in the year 1938 under the leadership of Haleema Beevi. In a youth conference presided by Khan Bahadur Attakoya Thangal, he even requested for a womens' conference to be called and wrote a letter to Haleema Beevi regarding the matter. Within two weeks Haleema Beevi called a conference and many women from different parts of Travancore gathered for the event. She asked in her welcoming address "How can society evolve when women are the cause of all the myths in the world and are the infamous ones who wear the notoriety of being weak? How can there be improvements?⁶¹". Every discussion that happened on the day stunned the people. "Women and Celebration of the Prophet's Birthday" by V G Khadeeja, "Muslim Women and Modern Life" by Maideen Beevi to name a few. Increase in the educational facilities for women, scholarships for Muslim female students, job opportunities for the educated were some of the important points passed by the conference that day. More than 200 female delegates from various parts of Travancore were present at the conference. In her speech, Haleema Beevi made it clear about the kind of woman she wants us to be. She rejected the idea of the existence of a woman who should only be able to worship the

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

⁶¹ M Haleema Beevi, Nammude Rektham Kuthichuyarnvatti Minnitheliyombol (Mal), thiruvalla, Barathachandrika Press, 1938, p. 32.

men and look after her children. Such women will never have a place in history and will always be excluded. Haleema Beevi knows this fact and tries to warn others of it. Hence, Haleema Beevi reminds us that women should be working too. She knew what it means to be educated. "Introducing schools alone is not enough to enlighten our brilliant action plans and ideas. We have the right to express our needs and to assert our rights! And, women cannot be satisfied with education alone"⁶². "She also declares the need for women to be organized to articulate their needs and achieve their rights. "There is no greater event than a conference. What I have to say is that this conference was held in recognition of the self-esteem we need to build for the downtrodden who have been crippled for various reasons"⁶³"With this conference, they began a new society called the 'All Travancore Muslim Women Society' and started spreading out to different parts of the state with branches. With the activities conducted over the time span of mere three years reaped a lot of gains. Most important of all was the motivation, inspiration and funding provided by the organization and conference for women's education. The organization was able to motivate girls to go to school and arrange scholarships facilities by talking to institutions to help needy students. Political awareness and clarity in ideals arose in women as a consequence of the conferences.

The Thiruvalla Taluq branch of State Muslim League, in the year 1946 saw emergence of strong female After Haleema Beevi's duty centre became in Perumbavoor, a large women's conference was convened there, in 1956. Abdul Majeed Marikkal, a political activist and social activist from Perumbavoor, extended his services and support to this conference. Haleema Beevi went from house to house inviting women to the conference. As a result, more women came than expected and the conference was a success to give more impetus to Haleema Beevi's work. Soon after, a women's conference was convened in Kayamkulam under the leadership of Mrs PK Kunju and many women from different parts of the state attended it. The Cochin Women's Conference was one of the conferences chaired by Haleema Beevi.

⁶² M Haleema Beevi, Speech in Kochin Muslim Women Conference, Almanar Magazine, Calicut, 1959, p. 25.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 26.

She sees the conference as a milestone in the social and communal progress of Kerala Muslim women. The conference was organized by Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen. Haleema describes her experiences with the conference in 'Almanar'. Haleema Beevi wrote letters daily to the conference officials for the two weeks leading up to the conference. To inform them of her concerns and opinions about the success of the conference and the progress of the organization was the aim behind this. They were concerned about the participation of women. But on the day, there were women even miles away in roadside watching this event, women in all dresses, sarees, the traditional ones, in burka etc⁶⁴. Haleema Beevi said that watching women in their various socio economic conditions gather and spend their time was a blessing. In her presidential address she talks about women interference over the patriarchy- " Those women who realized that they too are humans and deserves human rights despite the priests constantly reminding them that women are to learn Qur'an without their meaning and other books are to be truly appreciated. They are role models to all of Kerala⁶⁵. " The event which started at 7 in the evening lasted till midnight. At the end of it, the formation of a women's organization based in Kerala was announced. The group consisting of women from all over Kerala, had to have a president, secretary, treasurer etc. Even though Haleema Beevi and secretary Mrs. Muhammed Ali worked hard for its success, but all struggles were in vain as their mission failed. ⁶⁶

During this period she also got herself actively involved in politics. She had printed work pamphlets and notices to those who were against Sir CP. Since she wrote articles on the freedom struggle in daily newspapers, she was noted by him. Once she was called by him, and she was asked to stop her political activities, for if she did so, he would give her job. "I did not agree because it seemed to sacrifice our freedom⁶⁷". Haleema Beevi was not able to hold on to the dictatorship of the Sir C. P for long but she was not ready to eat her self-esteem and submit herself to the Diwan. Frequent

⁶⁴ M Haleema Beevi, Sthriye Kurichulla chindha, Almanar Magazine, Calicut, 1960, p. 23.

⁶⁵ J Devika, Oru swagatha Pressangam, Madhayamam Weekly, Calicut, 2005, p. 10.

⁶⁶ M Haleema Beevi, in Almanar Magazine, Op. cit., p. 25.

⁶⁷ Basheer Randathani, Op. cit., p. 14.

police raids and threats followed her. They cancelled Mohammad Moulavi's teaching license and the result of all these were extreme poverty.

Haleema Beevi served as the Thiruvalla Taluk Committee Secretary of the State Muslim League, which came into force in Travancore in 1966. Just like how Haleema Beevi was the first woman publisher, she was also the first woman municipal councilor in Travancore. Haleema Beevi, who was closely associated with the Congress at the time, took an active part in the liberation struggle. "During the communist regime, protests erupted across the country against the alleged shooting death of a pregnant woman and her two children in Angamaly. The effect of these were also seen in Perumbavoor. People picketed the taluk and police station. The protest that started from the Ashram highschool went on till the Subhash park"⁶⁸ her memories of the liberation struggle. Later she became an active Congress member. She served posts like the Ernakulam DCC member. In Perumbavoor, the Mahima Samaj under their leadership engaged in many socio-political activities.

There are many ideologies that has influenced Haleema Beevi. She stood as a progressive Muslim and advocated gender within religion and worked as an open social worker. They constantly talked about the need for women to have an education using the facts from religion. ⁶⁹. All of this must be read in conjunction with Islamic feminism. It is difficult to say that they were influenced by western theories they had western influences. Instead what we find is that she read heavily and carefully on the Qur'an the Hadeeths and the Sunnah, which instilled in her the thought for the need of a new revolution. The influence of these ideas can be seen in their writings as well as in their works. She also talked about the need for education and the socio-cultural participation of Muslim women in this period. Some of her writings begin by addressing a specific category. Sometimes they wrote to scholars, sometimes to women and at times also in response to lectures or writings. She discussed various issues related to the upliftment of Muslim women and presented it in front of the

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁹ M Haleema Beevi, Muslim Streeyum Samoohika Sevenavum, Al Manar Special Issue, Calicut, 1960, p. 27.

society through in-depth articles. “Although the titles of my articles were varied, the subject was almost always the same. Or it will be dealing with two sides to the same subject⁷⁰”

She attempted to view these subjects from different perspectives. For instance while assessing the woman's relatively poor condition, they looked at it and wrote on it from many angles. For example, she looked at it from the perspective of a woman herself, Islamic perspective, the priesthood bending words of the religion, the misunderstanding of the religion etc. Therefore, she often led a sharp critique against the existing patriarchy within the framework of the religious and social environment. She tried to correct the male readings of the Qur'an and Hadith. She also criticized the women who silently endured all this.

But the press releases in their publications were covering matters outside of religion. All of the editorials in *Adunika Vanitha* were generally socially relevant issues related to women. They were more than able to make accurate observations through these. Education, employment and even parliamentary politics were covered. In short, all of the themes in her writing paved way to women empowerment.

“Although the service of Muslim women in all fields is necessary for the betterment of mankind and is an essential requirement for the progress of their community, the term social service I use in this article has a very limited meaning”.⁷¹ We can see her creating a perfect background as well as the perfection in her thoughts in this paragraph. She used the method of writing any subject along with the information from the texts according to the limits or thinking of the readers in a rational manner using meticulously authentic references. While criticizing and analyzing the terms of Fatima Beevi's article in *Al Bayan* magazine opposing women's education, she wrote “Fatima Beevi has quoted her own opinion and the hadith of Bukhari above, so I am literally accepting the opinion of that sister and the hadith of Bukhari- There are a wide range of social scenarios in which Muslim women should

⁷⁰ M Haleema Beevi, *Muslim Sthreekal Samskarika Rangath*, Ansari Megazine, Vol. 5, 1936, p. 43.

⁷¹ M Haleema Beevi, *Almanar Magazine*, Op. cit., p. 25.

be bound by responsibilities but for the time being let's limit it to the husbands house- Considering the meaning of the hadith that a woman should be responsible for governing her husband's house and that she will be asked about it, then should people not reflect on the responsibility that a woman has and the duties that she has to perform. There is a saying that goes “The storage_gives birth to the food from which mother cooks and I in turn eat”. In other words I eat whatever that is being cooked using what is already there. This is what has been practiced as long as human history goes. Nobody thinks about the different practical and scientific sides to this kind of a treatment woman receive. Is this the treatment women should receive, is what we should all be thinking about⁷²”- this is how beautifully they criticize that woman’s article. She carefully explains on such topics citing from the holy Qur’an and Sunnah. The main agenda in their writing was for the upliftment of women. There has been a strong critique against male-centered religious interpretations of society and patriarchal social norms in her writings and articles. Her editorial notes show that she had a clear vision on everything from women's kitchen to politics. She was eloquent about women's education and proportional social participation, at the same time she also criticized male-centered historical interpretations. Her actions are a continuation of these thoughts. It can be seen that Haleema Beevi used such methods before the birth of Islamic feminism, all over Kerala. Attempts were made even then, to re-read the teachings from Islamic ideology. It was also a kind of reading that shattered the prevailing common understandings.

“ To tell you, it is not the job of a woman to cook food. While it is legally the duty of a man to provide clothes and food for his wife, I wonder if it is right for the man to demand his wife be the cook. I used to ask, isn't it the same as the responsibility to oversee whatever happens in the house and a total control over things, what women have over the food too. Then I admit that there is no wrong in women cooking due to circumstances. But I am unwilling to call someone who rules the place a ‘servant’. She should be the expert who schemes and plans every work⁷³ “. From what is given

⁷² Ibid., p. 26.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 27.

in this short paragraph we understand that she has tried influence in every small part of a woman's life using her ideologies. She tried to find an alternate meaning even in the jobs like kitchen work, which the society saw as menial or trivial

T. C Kunjachumma

Thacharakkal Kannothe Areekakastan Kunjachumma, a strong female leader who understood the fact that coming forefront for mere education is not enough but also bringing woman to the forefront in-order to revolutionize the society is what is needed. She was the first woman in Malabar to fight against orthodoxy for the empowerment and liberation of women. Her husband, Khan Bahadur Kuttyamu Haji of the Kadaka house, was both a big merchant and a social worker. The ancestral house of T. C Maliyekkal located on the T. C road, built in 1919, is famous for the works done by unifying religion and the worldly, despite the gender caste or creed for social political and cultural revolution. This house was built placing due importance to the needs and facilities for women in mind and also recognising her as an independent individual. Kunjachumma organized and formed Malabar's first Charitable Trust for Women, 'Thalassery Muslim Mahila Samajam'⁷⁴, centring around this very house. This is also said to be the first organization formed for the muslim women in Kerala.

Born as the daughter of O. Mayanali, Kunjachumma went down to the public spheres of Thalassery, which has a large Muslim population, and took the helm of the social reform movement. Their activities and fame sang in and out of Thalassery. She joined the women's wing of the All India Muslim League and became a member during the period of the national movement. She attended the All India Muslim Annual Conference in Patna in 1938⁷⁵. Kunjachumma was the only woman from Kerala who made it to the Women's link of the Muslim League. When the mother of Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shoukathali arrived in Thalassery to promote the Khilafat movement, Kunjachumma welcomed her to her homeland and presented

⁷⁴ V Vasanthi, *Women In Public Life in Malabar*, Calicut, Libi Publication, 2013, p. 179.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

the then famous Dollar Chain to the Ali brothers. The prominent among many who appeared as guests at the Maliyekkal House include Congress President Yakub Hazar, AnnieBesant, Sucheta Kripalini, K. M. Kariyappa, A. V. Kuttimalu Amma etc⁷⁶. In January 1948, Sir Arthur Hope, the Governor of Madras, conferred a medal on Kunjachumma, a social activist following the storm of 1934, at Kozhikode. The award was also a tribute to their renaissance work in the socio-political spheres in Malabar. She was also the first muslim woman in Kerala to be honored by the British Government. Because she was present at the award ceremony she had to endure harsh criticism from the conservative sects of the Islamic community, explains her granddaughter and an avid follower PM Mariyumma⁷⁷, also known as English Mariyumma. Their greatness is enhanced by the fact that Kunjachumma came directly to the forefront of the Renaissance movement from a Conservative community. She remained as a role model and inspiration to the women of Malabar till she passed away at the age of 56 in 1945, and continues to do so. Inspired by TC Kunjachumma, the ancestral home of Maliyekkal then gave birth to many powerful women who strove hard for the community. Kunjachumma's daughter Manumma and her daughter Maryumma became strong leaders of the Thalassery Muslim Mahila Samajam.

A renaissance awakening could be seen in many Muslim families in Thalassery. This recognition led to the awareness of the need to pursue religious education as well as public education, in a time as early as in the 1930s, by both men and women. This decision led Vayappurath Kunnath Kunji Moyin Haji to send his three granddaughters to Convents, which became a first in the history of Malabar. The community who proclaimed learning anything outside of religion and the language arabic meant you were automatically out of the islamic community, who denied the woman's right to travel outside their houses, called him Kafir Mahin⁷⁸ because he stood against their narrow headed beliefs. These girls, who were the children of Kunjiyil Sahib and Kayumma, who later became famous for their social, cultural and

⁷⁶ V K Kuttu, Thalassery Muslim Charithrathilude Oru Yathra, Calicut, Other Books, 2010, p. 108.

⁷⁷ Interview with P M Mariyumma At Thalassery 12. 3. 2018.

⁷⁸ Ibrahim Bevinja, Kafir MaheeneThalassery Annoshikkunnu, Madhayamam Daily.

political renaissance activities inside and outside the country. These girls Ayisha Hashim, Amina Mayeen rouf, , Haleema Abutty, later came to be known as The Thalassery Sisters. They revolutionized women's clothing by wearing frocks, skirts and blouses amidst women who wore saree. For better education, they joined Sacred Hearts School in Thalassery⁷⁹. Being an educated and well versed man, Kunjimoyin Sahib built a library with books from esteemed publications like Oxford and Macmillian to which these girls had access and the fact that him being a Congress leader allowed them to be acquainted with other leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Sarojini Naidu etc.

All these helped them tremendously to build a unique influential social life. In 1887 B. E. M. P. The school was founded by Christian missionaries but the Muslims in the region were reluctant to receive a modern education. However, some of the prominent Muslim families in the area had trade relations with the East India Company, so that they were told they could study without being forced to study bible or in a way that would not harm their religious beliefs. On Friday, Muslim students were even allowed to go to Jumua a period earlier. There were people in Thalassery who received a modern education as early as the Nineteenth century like Vayapath Kunnath Mayan, Advocate Chochikaran Cheriya Orkatteri Alappikkei. Acharath Kadarkutty Sahib was the first Muslim Education Inspector in Kerala⁸⁰

The influence of Urdu and English on the advancement of religious and physical education of the Muslims of Thalassery by the middle of the 19th century was immense. Until then, very few scholars understood the meaning of the Qur'an. With the availability of translations of the Holy Qur'an into English by Maulana Yusuf and Muhammad Picketall, those who had learned English began to understand the essence of the Qur'an. At the same time, Islamic texts in Urdu were also obtained from the Kutch seth. The Kutch seth settled in Thalassery spent a huge sum on providing scholarship etc. for the modern educational advancement of Muslims of the Malabar region. Hussain Qasim trust was built for the same. Maulana Ahmad Tahir was an

⁷⁹ V Vasanthi, Op. cit., p. 179.

⁸⁰ V K Kuttu, Op. cit., p. 34.

Islamic scholar who came to Thalassery from Bhatkal a century ago and to begin a textile business⁸¹. He worked six hours a day and spent the rest of his time teaching Urdu, Parsi and Islam to the Muslims of Thalassery. By the end of the 19th century, V. Simian had brought numerous English books from publishing houses such as Oxford and Macmillian in London. The son of his sister's daughter served as Chandrika's editor and publisher for forty years⁸². ” The British judges in Thalassery often relied on Moins’ bookshelf for references. When the Britishers traveled on a single horse carriage, Moin learned to ride on a carriage with two of them. The man who raised his head and spoke out against the British”⁸³ says V. C Aboobacker.

Amina Hashim

Fighting against the social orthodoxy, Amina Hashim was the first muslim woman to attend an English medium school in Malabar. After completing her primary education from Thalassery, she obtained her Intermediate pass from Queen Mary's College, Madras, and MBBS from Punjab University⁸⁴. She had served in the healthcare sector in various places including Bowary, Pune and Thalassery. She was able to get an education from many parts of the country at a time when modern education was forbidden even to Muslim men in many parts of Malabar.

For a life partner, the granddaughter of Kunjimoyin sahib found a man who was highly intellectual and was politically influential. Amina was married in 1936 to Hashim Sahib, who was the Deputy Collector of the Malabar District under the then British Government. While living in Ooty with her husband, she was awarded the Kaiser Hind Award by the British Emperor for her contribution to the health care of the Tamil people and her contribution to the Red Cross⁸⁵. Amina Hashim, who was fluent in English, German and French, led an Indian women's delegation to Russia

⁸¹ Skariya Sakariya, Thalesery Regagal, Kottayam, DC Books, 1996, p. 65-68.

⁸² V M Kuttu, Op. cit., p. 45.

⁸³ Ibrahim Bevenja, Kafir Mayeene Thalesery Thedunnu, Madhayamam weekly, Calicut, 1997, p. 9.

⁸⁴ Interview with Maliyekkal Family Members at Thalassery 12.05.2018.

⁸⁵ Mujeeburahman Kinalur, muslim Novodhanavum Adhunikathayum, Calicut, Yuvatha books, 2010, p. 67.

during Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister. She contested for the 1950 Madras Legislative Assembly against Krishna Iyer and was defeated. PR Kurup, who later became minister, acted as her aider.

Ayisha Mayeen Rouf

Ayisha received her primary education at Thalassery Convent School with her sisters Amina and Haleema. Despite numerous social objections to her studies at the Convent School, she was an outstanding student who rose to the position of Head Prefect of the school. Ayisha is the first Muslim to reach the rank of Head Perfect in the history of Sacred Heart Convent School⁸⁶. After her schooling in Thalassery, she did her studies at Peter Anees College and Madras Queen Madras College, earning the highest marks in the state. Ayesha became the first Muslim woman to graduate from university in the then Malabar district⁸⁷. Being an outstanding tennis player, she represented St. Mary's College in intercollegiate competitions. After graduation, she worked as a teacher at the Thalassery Women's Training School and later as a Muslim school inspector in Manjeri. Later, when she was appointed as the Special Officer for Women's Education in Malabar South Karnataka, she played a historic role in the upliftment of Muslim women and the education of girls who had not seen a world beyond the walls of their homes. She says when she started working as an inspector, she was often accompanied by her brother, who served in the same Boys School Inspection Corps, as she had received many threats from the locals for traveling in the bus⁸⁸. During her four years of service as Special Officer in Education, the elementary schools established for Muslim girls made rapid progress. Inspired by that successful step, they went ahead with moves to establish Secondary Schools for girls. Within 10 years, the dream project of setting up Golden High School and hostel system in South of Malabar that could accommodate upto 200 students, had grown and it had become one of the best educational institutions in the region⁸⁹. After marrying Mohammad

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸⁷ V. K. Kuttu, Mujeebrahman Kinalur, op. cit., pp. 14, 68.

⁸⁸ Interview with Mariyumma, Op. cit.

⁸⁹ Mujeeb Rehman Kinalur, Op. cit., p. 69.

Sharif Mohammad Rauf, a Halonese businessman from Coimbatore in 1943, Ayesha moved to Colombo the following year and began her activities there. Ayisha Mayeen later established an English medium school for Muslim students in Colombo. Thus, when the Sahara Muslim Ladies' College was established in Sri Lanka in 1947, she served as the founding principal for over twenty - five years, helping to revolutionize the field of Muslim women's education in Sri Lanka⁹⁰. . Ayesha Rauf has made significant strides in Sri Lankan politics as well. An active member of the Ceylon Indian Congress, she worked for the advancement of plantation workers in Sri Lanka. She later ran for the Colombo Municipal Corporation in 1949 and won. She became the first Muslim woman councillor in Sri Lanka⁹¹. She was elected the first woman Deputy Mayor of Sri Lanka in the subsequent election for the post of Deputy Mayor of the Corporation. She was actively involved in resolving the problems of Tamils and Malayalis in Sri Lanka. When the Sri Lankan government took over Sahida Muslim Lace College in 1961, she became a government official and had to give up her electoral politics. When she was first invited to become the founding principal of a women's college in the African country of Zambia, she accepted the invitation and served regardless of age. Emerging from Thalassery and leading the way in progress through her educational renaissance, she passed away in 1991. Her history, which played a revolutionary role in women's education, is being written in the golden script of the history of Muslim women in Kerala.

Halima, the youngest of the Thalassery sisters, passed Intermediate from Queen Mary's College, Madras after completing her convent education. She married TC Abootty, the municipal chairman of Thalassery and son of TC Kunjachumma, the founder of the Thalassery Muslim Mahila Samajam. After marriage, her activities were concentrated in Thalassery, working in the forefront of the Muslim Mahila Samajam. She solved the small disputes among people and became the beacon of hope for the poor. She went to authorities for the poor and suffering. She is the granddaughter of Thalassery Standing Committee Chairman and Municipal

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 70.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 71.

Councillor Najma Hashim is her granddaughter and Thalassery Municipal Chairperson Amina Maliyekkal is the wife of her son. Here we can see women who are still able to make a clear contribution in the history of women in Thalassery. They sought to educate themselves through modern education and to use it for the good of society. The activities of the women of this house played a major role in the upliftment of Thalassery. The organization they started together is a prime example of this. Thalassery Muslim Mahila Samajam, formed in 1933⁹². To this day, women here are capable of making clear interventions. Through modern education, she sought to educate herself and use it for the good of society. Thalassery Muslim Mahila Samajam has played a historic role in the renaissance of women in Thalassery. She also served as its first president. After working for a long time under her founding leadership, the leadership of the Thalassery Muslim Mahila Samajam was passed on after her death to her daughter Manumma and later to her daughter Maryumma. Chinnamalu Amma (District Education Officer) C. K. Revathi, Karthiyani Amma and Justice Janaki were its members⁹³.

Training classes and awareness programmes, blood test camps, literacy campaigns and free medicine distribution were part of the community's activities. Sebastian Valappally, the first Bishop of Thalassery, inaugurated the first anniversary celebrations. Her daughter Maryumma recalls that it was her mother, Manumma who hoisted the flag that day. demonstration of Cornflower mill and brookbone were done. The inauguration of the Literacy campaign was done by P. N Panikkar⁹⁴. Maryumma recalled that when she shared the pride in being able to train women in the area to read and write through a literacy class, and how she went home and picked up many women from their houses, to sit in class. The Muslim community was against family planning. In the 1930s, the Muslim Women's Society organized awareness programs, seminars and art events. The seminar was inaugurated by the then Director of Health, Thankamma. During the 1917 revolt that erupted in Thalassery, the organisation was

⁹² Vasanthi V, Op. cit., p. 168.

⁹³ Mahila Samajam, Report.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

engaged in several relief works under the leadership of Manumma. In addition to providing shelter, its women activists traveled throughout the rebel-held areas with their own songs of peace.

The Muslim Mahila Samajam, which played a pivotal role in the growth of the Muslim Education Society, organized and took women on buses in 1970 to attend a conference in Kozhikode. Such activities have met with numerous protests and even violence. The organisation started free sewing classes for community, trained more than 150 people in batching for over 30 years. Certified sewing training was started under 2 teachers with a salary of Rs. 30 each. Under the Muslim Mahila Samajam, girls were trained in martial arts, swimming and kolkali. The society was also a ray of hope for the poor of Thalassery. Assistance was given for marriages of poor girls irrespective of caste or religion. The activities of the organisation against child marriage, splurging of money during wedding celebrations have made a huge impact and they have let the people know their disdain. Women members, from Kunjachumma have been working for women's equality relentlessly. In Ramadan 1920, an organized party was formed in the Maliyekkal family.

Although the Muslim renaissance in Thalassery brought about revolutionary changes, the activities of the society do not exist today. However, the organization has played an important role in the advancement of women in the field of art and culture. The women's choir and drama troupe were formed under them. During this time, radio director Parukutty Amma came to record kolkali. PM Mariyumma was the leading member of this period. Born on 1925, she was the daughter of Abdulla Senior and Manumma. She received his English education in 1933 from the Convent School. She also played a pivotal role in the development of the Muslim Education Society. In 1970, she spoke at a conference in Kozhikode on the topic of Muslim woman education in English. Because she read English newspaper daily, she came to be known as English Maryumma⁹⁵. Maryumma, who was also an outstanding artist, was a member of the three-member selection committee that selected the announcers for All India Radio. Mariyumma, who is now 94 years old spoke with enthusiasm about

⁹⁵ V K Kuttu, *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

her leadership, and described with vigor her experiences during her education, her families and the renaissance activities of the Thalassery Muslim Mahila Samajam.

Kerala women and literary tradition

It is natural that in the prevailing patriarchy in society, known for its female slavery and gender antagonisms, would be active in the realm of literature as well. In women's literature, subtle and realistic expressions of women's liberation and experience can be found. Therefore, visions of women's liberation in literature are mainly sought after in women's writings. As in the life of a woman, how literature should be is also mainly determined by the patriarchal system. As it is in the life of women, the rules for literature is too decided by the patriarchal system. Even the topics discussed in the female writings. The advent of women into the realm of literature, which was predominantly occupied by men was, in a sense, a liberating process and a challenge. Dale Spender made some observations in this direction in his famous research book⁹⁶ (*Mother of the Novel*. 1936), which talks of many unknown female authors and novels that have been thrown out English literary history. For women who have no discomfort or rights as individuals, writing is a declaration of personality and jurisprudence in its own right.

In the society, the responsibilities of a woman is restricted to the private life she leads. A writer must burn herself by integrating the seamless execution of these tasks with her creative life. Many writers have repeatedly stated that this is a very difficult to balance and deal with. Traditionally, we find the idea women are the property of their husbands and children widespread. Husbands and children can ask for their services or help at any time. Demand explanations. They are obliged to obey. They belong to the family or group and not for themselves. Therefore they are compelled to stay within their boundaries. When a woman lets the world know about her life and experiences, she is letting loose the very personal secrets the society wishes to remain hidden. Since her life is so tied to the privacy of the household, the stories she publicizes are those of the dark and unknown world of patriarchy. Hence,

⁹⁶ Juliet Mitchell, *women's Estate*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971, p. 97.

writing does not go hand in hand with the responsibilities entrusted to a woman by society. But writings that deny superior class values can be found among the earliest Malayalam writers. K Saraswathamma was regarded as a 'male-hater' and a lone phenomenon, and her works were shunned away from the mainstream literature. The main topic discussed was not always emancipation. At times they were imitations of male writings and patriarchy. "Additional storytellers are more interested in adopting historical, chronological and paradoxical themes than social life. She was generally afraid that she would face opposition from society if she presented familiar life stories⁹⁷ "

It was after 1930 female writing began to focus on female emancipation. Receiving English education, women began to write. Idealism, subjectivity and philosophy can be seen in their writings. Mary John Koothattukulam, Muthukalum Parvathamma Kadathanadu Madhavi Amma (1909 -2000) Lalithambika Antharjanam (1909-87) K. C. Saraswati Amma (1919-1976) and Balamaniamma creatively expressed their sense of identity on many levels⁹⁸. These writers entered the social, cultural and literary spheres of Kerala and to creatively visualize the lives and imaginations of women. 1940s community showed active participation in the Malayalam literary debates. It wasn't surprising women had little or no role in it. But K. Saraswathi Amma created an alternative world for women and moved forward. At a time when the writer's conscience was full of masculinity, Saraswathiyamma was breaking down the constructs of the society's ideology of literature and creating realistic representations of women. All Saraswathi Amma's characters were female centric. Till then all the characters in literature were male centric. What they aimed for was a life free from slavery for women. Saraswathiyamma wrote how different female lives were from the commonly portrayed ones in literature. In her works appeared the real women. In those works, intellectual women who were born and raised in different life environments and different value concepts and later grew up to identify themselves as feminine were portrayed. "Penbudhi" and "Swathanthra

⁹⁷ MM Basheer, early Women Stories, Calicut, Libi Publication, 2004, p. 21.

⁹⁸ N K Raveendran, Op. cit., p. 48.

vaadhakaari” were two works where Saraswatiyamma declared her political stance. She makes a conscious effort to talk about women’s intellect in” Penbudhi” and as for “Swanthantravaadhakaari”, it speaks about how women should first know themselves for them to attain the freedom they deserve⁹⁹. These stories are timeless and still advocates for women's freedom and rights.

Thankamma Malik

Thankamma maliks writings can be read as feminist, as are the writings of Saraswati Amma. Thankammamalik has been a presence of femininity in Muslim magazines in Malabar since 1920. Her short stories can be found in magazines such as Ansari, Bharat Chandrika, Mitram and Al-Frooq. Her writings have been a source of imagination and potential for women's self - identification and progress.

Thankamma was born into a Christian family in Konni. At her home Meckattuveetil, . Thankamma was the fifth of the ten children of Varghese and Eliamma. They taught their children to live with a great sense of freedom. All children were educated and brought up with a sense of independence. Thankamma was interested in learning Hindi as part of her respect for the Hindi language during the freedom struggle. Mavelikkara Sreedharakurup was her first Guru. After passing the Hindi Entrance Examination, he joined the Shraddhananda Hindi College, Kottayam to study Rashtrabhasha Visharad. It was the college of Pandit Narayanadev. It was during this time Mahatma Gandhi spoke in the congress general assembly in Thirunakkara, which was had a profound effect on the young Thankamma who attended it. She began wearing Khadi and wrote letters to Gandhi, expressing her desire to learn hindi, staying by his side¹⁰⁰. Gandhi wrote back inviting her to stay at Mahilashram. After a years study at Mahila ashram, she joined in as Hindi Teacher at Maharajas Girls High School in Thiruvananthapuram. After receiving the Dalmia Scholarship in 1942, she studied at the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth in Allahabad and became a beloved disciple of poet Mahadevi Varma. She earned for her travel

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 191.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Jameela Malik daughter of Thankama Malik, 12. 3. 2017 at Kochi

expenses by selling her works. She sold the copyrights of her two books” Kanakalatha” and” Cherukadha Manchari” to Chandra Press in Thiruvananthapuram for the same¹⁰¹. It was during this period she became friends with Malik Muhammed. She wrote stories frequently for his magazine Mithram, which paved the way for their friendship to blossom into love. The couple got married in Kollam in 1948. Later, one can see the clear involvement of Thangammamalik in the running of Mitram magazine. After the death of her husband, she bought her own press and ran it under the name Malik Mohammed Memorial Press. Following Malik's death, Thangamma contested and won in the election. She was the first woman councilor in Kollam Municipality¹⁰². Her voice was loud and conscience clear. During the Freedom Struggle she was jailed for two months. On her return, she found the Press has ceased all its activities. Though she stepped back from Congress and its political works, she never ended her social service. The first malayali girl to go to Film Institute in Pune, Jameema Malik, is the daughter of Thankamma Malik.

Thankamma Malik's short stories about intense love, boredom and the power of family ties. In Bharatha Chandrika, her stories could be seen under the name of Thankamma Vargees. She is the author of stories like ‘Vidhi matham¹⁰³’, ‘Cage Beauty’. These are stories about the breakdown of relationships in the name of wealth and glory. The story ‘Premakirukkan’ is the story of a man who cheated by woman for money, who consequently becomes a madman. Pratheeksha portrays the lady who is fighting for the actualisation of her love. Many of her stories were translated from Hindi. ‘Nurse¹⁰⁴’, a victim of poverty and ignorant society, who chose education as her weapon. She eventually helps all those who wronged her in the past with the job she attained. ‘Aparadhini’ regains her pride through her education. She comes back after achieving a job on her own and makes everyone who once badmouthed her,

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Thankamma Vargis, Barathachndrika news paper, Thiruvalla, 1936, bharathachandrika publishing house, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Thankamma Malik, nurse (short story), Ansari magazine, Calicut, Vol. 57, 1961, p. 82.

speak good of her. That is her victory. Prathikaram/Revenge¹⁰⁵ - is the tale of a family that emphasizes male education. In this story, the family seeks the hand of a girl for money, in order to educate the boy, who leaves her after he attains a job. Jameela, the protagonist, then finds a job for herself and even finds herself capable of helping the man who left her. Most of her stories are about a woman's survival, revenge, and attachment. At the same time, she wrote stories against religious orthodoxy and immorality. Stories like 'Aulia'¹⁰⁶ are an interesting story about a girl who is trapped in her father's superstition and her boyfriend brings a fake aulia and gets her father to consent to the marriage. Her language was clear and easily understood by the masses and each of her stories had a hidden moral, which made her an exceptionally talented writer.

Muthubi

Muthubi is a name that cannot be avoided in the history of Muslim women's educational advancement, she was born in a family of Pulikal Narikuttu Kalam as the daughter of Koya Thangal and Khadija Kutti.¹⁰⁷ She studied up to class five at Pulikal Madrasat Munavvara, has applied for training but has not received it, to be approved for teacher training must have completed general education up to 8th standard. In order to promote the education of Muslim women, then the superintendent of Education Mr. Ghafoor Shah helped her to get the required general qualification for training, after which she became a teacher after two years of training. In 1922, Madrasatul Muqadius School Manager KP Mamukoya, who was also a municipal councilor, obtained permission to establish a municipal school in Kundungal, a Muslim backward area. The school which started mainly targeting Muslim girls was named "Nagarama Mapila - Girls School"¹⁰⁸, later Muthubi became the teacher of this

¹⁰⁵ Thankamma Malik, Prathikaram (short stories), Al Farook Magazine, Calicut, 1962, p. 24.

¹⁰⁶ Thankama Malik, Aulia, New Ansari magazine, Calicut, 1965, p. 12.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Fathima family member of Thangal family at Pulikkal, Malappuram Dt, 21. 4. 2018.

¹⁰⁸ Muhmmmed Koya Parappil, Kozikodinte Charithram (Mal), 2012, Vachanam Books, p. 235.

school. Some people clamored for physical education in addition to religious education for Muslim-girls. Many were reluctant to allow space. Khan Bahadur Atakoya Thangal gave away the land of his horse barn at Chappa for the school.

Muthubi was appointed as the head teacher of the school started there. Since dawn, they have been looking for children in Muslim ancestral homes and middle-class homes, and eight children have joined from four homes, it took three months of hard work to complete the attendance list till the 15th. In 1938 the school was relocated to a rental building of Mr. Muhammad Haji's, when the 5th class started. The municipal school was later taken over by the government. This primary school is still known as “Bivi's Schoo¹⁰⁹l” even though it has the name “Government Lower Primary School in Parapil”. Muthubi is an unforgettable name in the history of the advancement of Muslim girls in the backward areas of Kozhikode towards modern education. They made Muslim women aware of modern education by going from house to house in the vicinity of the primary school raised by her. In many houses, people woke up to the sight of Muthubi This pilgrimage lasted from dawn to dusk and the sacrifices she made were great. Her husband's family forbade her, and that case became a topic of conversation in their area. She was defamed as teaching girls hell language. Her first husband, who was the imam of the mosque, interpreted his wife's behavior as wrong and divorced her. Later she married Kodinji Hydros Koya in her second marriage. She passed away in 1988. By 1930, as a result of the constant efforts of such women in different parts of Malabar, girls started coming to the modern educational environment.

The representation of Muslim Women in writing from the 1930s to the 1960s is limited when compared to the wider literary landscape the period. nevertheless these writings provide valuable insights into the perceptions of women regarding their social status and religious rights. These writings often challenge patriarchal religious authority through forcefull language, and highlight the significance of women’s

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 238.

empowerment the women writers of this era were not homogeneous in terms of their social background. They were primarily drawn from the middle class and were aligned with colonialism especially women from Malabar. Additionally, some of these writers had familial connections to religious reformers; for example PK Subaida was the daughter of the religious scholar Moosa Moulavi, Zainaba was the daughter in law of KM Moulavi and Haleema Beevi was the wife of Muhammad Moulavi. Despite these ties, the writings of these women engage in a critical examination of religion and emphasize the importance of women's identity. Articles written by women do not completely deny patriarchy. But the emphasis in their articles will be different. She is giving new dimensions to the perspectives of religion itself. Women see education as a path to free thought and social action. Brave women who are looked up to are those who have proven their ability in the spheres of trade and war. In this way, they are breaking the prejudices about Islam by highlighting the bravery and the virtues of Islam. It is also noteworthy that these articles do not attempt to establish the existence of a Muslim woman. The basis of all written material are the social situations that prevail in Kerala. Therefore, they are trying to convince women of the rights and freedoms that Islam gives them and to make them accessible to all. Men who stand in the way of this are opposed and ridiculed. These also serve as a call to Muslim women to pursue education, social life and freedom. The question raised in here is why these women do not completely deny male-centric ideological values. What she is trying to achieve is not individual freedom, but the need for middle class women to be respected at home and in the community. Therefore, the writers are establishing their own identity by giving new levels of meaning within this ideological system.

By the 1950s, Muslim sects began to shift to the organizational level. Naturally several women's organizations and magazines were born. Women writings of this period were completely subordinated to the ideology of male authority. The writings

seen in the women's magazines like Aaramam, Pudava¹¹⁰ were completely in accordance with male dominance. What we see is a group of women who works blindly for these organisations.

¹¹⁰ Women organizations organs led by Mujahid and Jamayath Islamic groups.

CHAPTER IV

REVITALIZING PATRIARCHY AND CONDITIONING MUSLIM WOMEN BY REFORM ORGANIZATIONS

The examination of women's movements, particularly those associated with religious reform, delves into various modes and ideas that have shaped the course of history. Initially, these movements fostered a powerful emergence of women's writing, which played a pivotal role in challenging societal norms. However, as time progressed, the later phases of reform witnessed a certain regression, primarily due to a variety of factors. During the period in question, there was a notable emergence of Muslim women's organizations. These organizations, however, were often controlled and initiated by religious institutions. The extent of their influence in improving women's conditions becomes a crucial question to explore. By studying the literature and activities of these organizations, we can gain valuable insights into their endeavors and their impact on women's lives. This intricate interplay between religious reform, women's movements, and the organizations involved provides a multifaceted perspective on the evolution of women's roles and rights during this historical period.

Introduction of modern secular education in Kerala during the British rule created a divide among the Muslim community, particularly the traditional leadership. They were hesitant to adopt this new system of education due to various reasons. One of the primary concerns was that many among the community feared that the modern education system would negatively impact their religious beliefs and moral values. Along with this the political aspects of the system of modern education was of higher concern among many people in the community. The traditional leadership was apprehensive that the British education system would promote Western values and culture, which could lead to the erosion of the Muslim community's unique identity and traditions. They also feared that the younger generation would become alienated from their Islamic heritage and would become more prone to adopting a secular

worldview. Despite these concerns, many members of the Muslim community in Malabar saw the benefits of modern education and advocated for its adoption. They believed that it would provide opportunities for social and economic advancement to the Muslim community. Over the time, traditional leadership of the Muslim community in Kerala began to recognize the benefits of modern education and gradually became more open to it.

Modern education has opened up new opportunities for Muslim women, providing them with access to knowledge, skills, and resources that were previously denied to them. However, it is important to note that individual efforts and community organizations play a crucial role in educating Muslim women and empowering them to achieve their full potential. Community organizations could create awareness about the benefits of education, encourage parents to send their daughters to school, and provide financial assistance to families who may be struggling to afford the costs of education. They could also provide mentorship, tutoring, and other forms of support to help girls and women succeed in their studies. Individuals, too, can make a significant impact in educating their community, especially women. By taking on leadership roles, speaking out about the importance of education, and serving as role models for younger generations, certain individuals could inspire others to pursue education and overcome obstacles that may be holding them back. In short, education seems to have been a powerful tool for empowering Muslim women and creating positive change in their communities. With the efforts of various organization and individuals Muslim women in general got modern which in turn helped the community to achieve the present state of advancements.

Muslim Women of Kerala and Modern Education

Muslims had realised that English education was inevitable in order to survive and new found enthusiasm in the socio economic sphere formed as part of colonial modernity. Due to the efforts by several community leaders who were part of social and community reform many organisations and groups were formed. When the backward classes were allowed to attend the Sree Moolam Praja Sabha that was formed in Travancore each category toiled for the social and educational needs of their

respective communities. In the history of the Praja Sabha that was established in 1904, the ones representing the Muslim community had laboured for educational awakening¹. The members of the Praja Sabha, who hailed from different parts of Travancore had frequently raised the issue of Muslim education in the council. In 1915, three of the Sabha members; Kochu Hassan Kunju, Picha Bava and Adam Seth, had jointly submitted a petition to the government. The main issues it had raised were: “Free education for Muslim students in Government Schools, Employment for skilled and abled Arabi Munshis, More Muhammedan Schools in Muslim areas”². The Muslim community leaders had succeeded in repeatedly raising petitions like these in the Praja Sabha. In 1917, the British government established a Commission which recommended reforms to improve secondary education in India and enhance academic output of universities. The report also addressed the educational backwardness of Muslims and proposed solutions, including the promotion of Oriental Studies in universities. In an effort to increase female education, policies were introduced to establish "Purdah Schools" for elder female students, create a female education board, and encourage more women to participate in teacher training programs. These policies aimed to address the gender gap in education and promote greater access to education for women.

Overall, these reforms were an important step towards improving the educational system in India and addressing the needs of underrepresented groups such as Muslims and women. The emphasis on Oriental Studies in universities and the establishment of Purdah Schools were significant developments in promoting education and cultural awareness in the country. During this time, significant changes were observed in Muslim education in Travancore. In 1918, F. C. Hedgson, the Director of Education in Travancore, was tasked with studying Muslim education in the region and submitting a report with recommendations. His comprehensive report included seven suggestions, such as the provision of Arabic and Quran studies, the appointment of an inspector for Muslim education, opportunities for training abroad,

¹ M Muhammed Kann, Vakkam Moulaviyude Jeeva Charithram, Kottayam, National Book Stall, 1984, p. 105.

² Shree Mulam Prejasabha Presiding, section 11, Government Press, TVM, p. 101.

implementation of an Arabic curriculum in Muslim areas, conducting Arabic exams in regional language schools, scholarships for Muslim students, and prioritizing girls' schools. These suggestions were implemented through a royal decree, resulting in a noticeable increase in Muslim women's education in Travancore. According to the 1882 report, there were only five female Muslim students in a total of 24 English government schools and three grant schools, and 12 in regional language schools. To promote female education, the government provided complete fee exemptions and scholarships for female Muslim students in colleges. In 1917-18, three female Tamil teachers were appointed in Kottar and Thiruvithamkode schools to teach female Muslim students, and a girls' school was also established in the area.

In the Ruling report of 1923-24, under the heading Muslim Education, it was enthusiastically recorded that a Muslim girl had passed on to the 4th forum at Trivandrum English High School. In 1934, Hawa Beevi, the first Muslim woman from Travancore to pass the exams and be sent to Madras on a monthly scholarship for training and was appointed as a third grade teacher³. In 1938 a Muslim woman named Puthanveetil Aishamma, who graduated in B. sc Botany from the Lady Wellington College in Madras was given the chance to complete her education and a government job by giving a scholarship of 50 rupees monthly during her education⁴. It was as a result of the timely interventions made by the government to ensure female education, that helped many Muslim women get into the field of white collar or government jobs. In 1947, due to the changes put forward by the Maharaja of Travancore regarding compulsory primary education, included more private schools under this scheme, promoting more chances for education. They popularized education by hiring more teachers and expanded education to more communities.

However, the social circumstances of Malabar was distinct from Travancore. according to tne 1921 census, when compared to the regions of southern Malabar, such as Thalassery and Kannur, the area of malappuram, manjeri and Kozhikode in northern Malabar had a relatively larger Muslim population and were considered to

³ Ibid., p. 83.

⁴ Ibid., p. 86.

have been less developed. Most of the muslims of Malabar were peasant workers, they were in constant struggle against the Landlords and the British, and had created a strong resistance against the British government. Malabar from at least the 1820s has the history of resistance to share. This history of long struggle against British authority made them reluctant towards English education.

However many of the rich especially traders and merchant class among them, were supporters of both the British and the modern education system. In the beginning of 1920, due to receiving many petitions regarding from Malabar to the education ministers in Madras province, they were ready to find out the reasons for backwardness in education amongst Muslims and provide more facilities for education. In order to attract Muslims into schools the concession of 'Half Fees' was given regularly⁵. After the Malabar Revolution of 1921, it was the government's goal to expand Muslim education. Officers had reached the regions like Eranad and Valluvanad and Northern Malabar to implement compulsory education. When analysing the data of Higher Education in Malabar in 1921, 41 Muslims had passed the intermit exam and attended college, out of this only seven were women⁶. Yet, in secondary schools 5977 boys and 721 girls were attending. As part of improving the educational and cultural aspects of Malabari Muslims, there were several attempts from the part of the British. The British had firmly believed that the reason for the peasant uprisings from amongst Muslims were due to the backwardness in Education. In connection with this in order to study and suggest solutions regarding Mappila education, a committee was appointed in 1922. The various solutions put forward by the committee was submitted to the Madras provincial government the same year. The major suggestions put forward were:

Special Elementary Schools of Mappilas should continue.

Primary Education should be made compulsory for Mappila children.

⁵ U Muhmmmed, Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims, Kozhikode, Other Books, 2007, p. 67.

⁶ Ibid., p. 73.

The Mappila Training School in Malappuram should be closed down.

Special scholarships should be given to Mappilas for higher education⁷.

One of the decisions that the Madras government had implemented during the period of 1922-1923 was compulsory primary education for Muslims. Land was bought and schools were built all over Eranad and Valluvanad Taluks for this purpose. In the Taluks of Thalassery, Kozhikode, Eranad, Valluvanad and Ponnani primary education was made compulsory and to ensure participation of Muslim children, awareness campaigns were conducted among Mappilas. During the period of 1921-22 itself, it can be seen in the annual government report that the budget of Education was increased from 8.2 lakhs to 11.76 lakhs for the development of education. According to the notice released in 1925, accepting the suggestions of the Mappila Education Committee, boys between the ages of 6-11, especially in Eranad, Valluvanad, Ponnani and Kozhikode Taluks. In the council formed for this purpose, it was suggested that in order for Peace in Malabar and Progress in Mappilas, education was compulsory. Also during this period, there were attempts to hire Arabi Munshis to Religious Inspectors with necessary training⁸.

Graduates from the Muslim community were hired as teachers and the best of them were promoted as officers in the Education department. In 1926 for the purpose of managing Mappila Education a Special Officer was assigned with two Junior Deputies. With this the endeavors to form public opinions continued. It was concluded that religious education too should be included in order to increase the participation of Mappilas. During this time, there were several moves from the department of education to appoint Moulvis as Arabi Munshi Inspectors by giving them training.

Subsequently Mappila children were given different beneficial schemes and several awareness campaigns were held to spread the importance of public education amongst Muslims. In the academic year 1926-27, it is important to note that many

⁷ Ibid., p. 84.

⁸ Government order No, 1272, Dated 11th September 1923, Regional Archives, Kozhikode, p. 4.

students hadn't enrolled for the compulsory religious education in schools. Especially in the regions of Kozhikode, Talassery and British Cochin. In other areas, due to the lack of developments, special importance was given by the government. To this effect, local leaders and Ulamas were recognised by the government. Local organisations too constantly tried to bring Muslims into the sphere of modern education. Founded in 1918.

Ansarul Islam Bi Ta'leemil Anam was a Madrasa started by a reformer named Chembayil Mammad. Later, with the help of Kunju Muhammad Koya Haji and Kozhappathodi Muhammad Kutty Haji, it was re established as Madrasathul Muhammadiyya School⁹. Madrasathul Muhammadiya School was the biggest school in Malabar and students from Eranad and Valluvanad Taluks along with others from the hilly areas of Mukkam and Karassery had attended there, they had students even from Lakshadweep. The madrasa formed by Thammiyathul Islam Association in 1923 at Chaliyam is popularly known as Imbichi School¹⁰. It was renamed as Madrasathul Ihya Madrasathul Manar Elementary School in 1927 and was inaugurated by the then collector H R Pete, opening the door with a golden key. It was the first school registered in Northern Malabar. It can be seen that Such organizations have struggled for education in their respective areas in this way. By 1930 the changes in Mappila Education were starting to be visible, especially the number of students attending in regional institutions increased¹¹. There weren't many changes in female education during the period. According to the census of 1931 only 90 Muslim women had English language literacy¹². Muslim Women were kept away from School education due to the frequent involvement from the orthodoxy. In 1931 the Grivit Committee had stressed more upon transforming Muslim education into modern methods. Several suggestions such as building more primary and secondary schools in Muslim areas,

⁹ P M Saidu Muhammed, Kerala Muslim Jamayath Sthithivivarana Kanakkugal (ed), Perumbavoor, 1962, p. 70.

¹⁰ U Muhammed, Op. cit., p. 46.

¹¹ Ahmed Moulavi, KK Abdul Kareem, Mahathaya Mappila Sahityam (Mal), Calicut, 1976, p. 234.

¹² Census of India, 1931, Vol. 12.

arranging religious education in schools that Muslims are studying, giving special preference to Mappilas and include them in policy making regarding education, allotting more grants for Institutions focusing Arabic, and arranging the circumstances for Muslim girls to study and turn them into teachers etc. were put forward. The suggestions put forward were discussed by the Madras provincial government.

Until the 1920s the need for an exclusive school for Muslim girls were not raised anywhere in Malabar. However, the girls born in enthusiastic and wealthy families had studied at other schools, especially those associated with Christian convents. When this had come into the notice of some of the members of the Taluk board, they started demanding exclusive schools for Muslim girls. But, common people were not ready to defy the orthodoxy and send Muslim girls to school with the help of scholarships. From 1930 onwards, there were changes in girls' education. During this period, a girls' school was established inside the Malabar Special School. In 1932 Madrasathul Uthmaniya, the school started by Kunnikalakath Uthman Master in Ponnani had given admission to girls too¹³. He had admitted many girls including his own daughter at the institution amidst objections from the orthodoxy. 1936 witnessed the historical event when the Himayath Islam School started admitting girls. Another historical event was in 1933 when under the leadership of Khadeeja Yakub Hassan a prominent political leader in Madras a petition was submitted for the education of Mappila girls¹⁴. It was as a result of such petitions that in 1940 a school with (postal or hostel) facilities was started at Vettam Puthiyangadi, Tirur. In 1941 under the organisation by a group of reformist youth named Muslim Educational Association had conducted many campaigns for encouraging and supporting female education. In 1944, the Madrasathul Muhammadiyya was able to guide the society by allowing female students. Along with this, during this period the female Mappila teachers who had graduated from training school were appointed to female schools bringing a major change in Malabar.

¹³ Manas Saikia, *The Muslims of Malabar*, Cambridge, 2012, p. 112.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Several documents can be found regarding the increase in allocation of funds for female education and its promotion by the British. The state of female education and Muslim higher education had reached the modern standards by independence. The growth of Muslim education was visible even under the Madras District. Prominent politicians who got elected to Madras legislative assembly had raised the issue of Muslim education in Malabar. At a time when Muslim youth in Malabar, especially young men travelled to Madras to receive higher education, a Malabar centred Higher education institute Faruq College was established¹⁵. It was the first College established by the Muslim community in Malabar. This gave rise to an era of educational transformation among muslim of Kerala. When the decision to divide states based on languages was taken, the concept of Kerala was formed. With the formation of united Kerala, many opportunities were open for Muslim youth for educational and cultural development. This was mainly due to the fact that the Muslim population, 20 percent of the total population of the state could influence politics. Muslims, especially from Malabar, when they left the of Muslim league and the rise of youth with democratic ideas rose up, the sense of vulnerability among Mappilas were subdued and a notion of power had taken the stage. As part of the first communist government in the newly united Kerala, native Muslims of Kerala were considered as a backward class and given a reservation of 10 percent in jobs in the educational field. This was a great relief to the Muslim community that had a limited number of colleges and higher education institutes. In 1970, the total of Muslim organisations and individuals had 700 primary and secondary schools and 9 colleges¹⁶.

Organizations and Muslim Communities

Later on, the organizations that emerged among the Muslims in Kerala also had a clear role in uplifting women. Around 1920, the transition of the Muslim groups to the organizational level led to a new awakening, it can be seen that the rise and fall of many organizations from the Aikya Sangh to the Kerala Mujahideen era. Some

¹⁵ U Muhmmmed, Op. cit., p. 68.

¹⁶ K K Shabeerali, the Development of Muslim Women's Education and its impact on Islamic culture in Malabar, M. Phil Dissertation, JNU, New Delhi, 2005, p. 104.

efforts were made in South India following the footsteps of various scholarly organizations formed among Muslims in many parts of the world, as a result, the Majlisul Ulama organization was formed. 1927 A conference of that organization was held at Erode¹⁷. A group of scholars from Kerala participated in the meeting attended by dignitaries like Maulana Azad, Ali brothers, and Maulana Kuthubudhin Abdulbari. It was demanded in the meeting that the scholars of Kerala should form an organization themselves thus, the Kerala Jamiyatul-Ulama was formed on the second anniversary of the Aikya Sungam, which met at Aluva¹⁸. The main agenda of the activities was the educational progress of the Muslim community. The activities for the education of Muslim women were given considerable importance. As a result of these activities, it was possible to change the reluctance attitude towards education. The field of religious education has also undergone successful changes. Later, the educational activities of this sect were led by the Mujahideen in Kerala¹⁹. They also tried to establish Arabic colleges along with madrasahs. Arabic colleges excel in conducting government-approved courses and enabling Arabic college students to get government jobs. Another exemplary work has been done in revising the madrasa curriculum and teaching methods. The general education curriculum played a significant role in revising textbooks and also in formulating existing ones. Also, the services of teachers and trainers have been made available. In Madrasahs, classes 1 to 3 are considered as the primary stage, classes 4-5 as the intermediate stage and classes 6 and 7 as the advanced stage, and a proper curriculum is being prepared. The syllabus is sent to the teachers and other relevant people and the final form is given after discussion and based on that the syllabus is formulated and the textbook is written. As part of teacher empowerment Teacher Training, Text Book Orientations, Teacher Meets, and Teacher Welfare Fund, etc were conducted, and Vigyanotsavam, Pratibha

¹⁷ M Abdul Salam, *Islamin Kerala Groups and Movements in 20th century*, Kollam, 1998, p. 35.

¹⁸ K T Muhammed Ali, *The development of education among the Mappilas of Malabar 1800-1965*, New Delhi, 1990.

¹⁹ M Abdul Salam, *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

Awards and Vichara Vijnhana Exam helped the students to achieve excellence in academic and co-cognitive fields²⁰.

The Kerala Jamiyatul Ulama was formed in Aluva by Aikaya Sangam, but there was a mixed reaction to the organization among orthodox scholars. Some of the conservative scholars attended the third annual meeting of the Aikya Sangam held at Kozhikode. In this meeting, EK Maulvi explained the allegations against the group. But when the activities against superstitions went strongly ahead, some of the conservative scholars came to the conclusion that they are wahabites and their activities should be stopped. Following this, Syed Varakal Mullakoya Thangal and Ahmad Kutti Musliar of Pang convened a large gathering in 1925 at Kozhikode Kutchira Valiya - Juma'at mosque²¹. An organization of conservative ulemas with similar name Kerala Jamiyathaul Ulama was formed in that conference, with Muhammad Biran Musliar elected as the primary president and Parayil Hussain Maulavi as the secretary. 1926 A large meeting was convened at the town hall of Kozhikode and in the said meeting the new organization was named Samasta Kerala Jamiyatul Ulama and new office-bearers were drawn by Syed Abdurrahmanib Alavi Mullakoya in Thangal Nagar²². In 1934, Samasta Kerala Jamiyatul Ulama was registered. In the early stages, its approach was opposed to all reformers including educational reform activities, and strong opposition was expressed against teaching women to read and write. But in 1945, in the sixteenth annual conference of Samasta, which was held under the chairmanship of Qutubi Muhammad Musliyar, Abdur Rahman Thangal submitted some suggestions related to education. This meeting came to the conclusion that an accurate, clear and unified system is necessary for religious studies. In 1951, the Mushavara meeting discussed the issue at the annual conference held at Vadakara and formed a committee called All Kerala Islamic-Education Board with Moiteenkutty Musliar as convener. Although initially opposed, All Kerala

²⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

²¹ K Muhmmmed ayirur, Kerala Muslimngalum Vidhabhasa Prevarthnangalum (Mal), ed by AP Munjamu in Kerala Muslingal Noottandinte Charithram, Calicut, Vachanam Books, 2020, p. 356.

²² Ibid., p. 458.

Islamic Education Board was able to lead many vital achievements through their energetic activities in the field of education for Kerala Muslims when the need for education was realized. In 1956, Madrasas up to 8th standard were outlined as per the decision of the Board of Education held at Tanur. The Board of Education, which met on 10th May, 1958, decided to conduct public examinations in Class V, according to this, public examinations were conducted and certificates were distributed. Now more than 10200 Madrasahs are functioning under Samastha Kerala Education Board. About ten lakh students are studying. Very systematic functioning Under the supervision of the examination board, question paper preparation, distribution, and certificate distribution are being done almost flawlessly. Apart from these, Samasta Women's Islamic and Science College is functioning and around 600 girls are studying there²³

Chemmad Darul Huda Islamic University, led by its Founder Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Bahauddin Muhammad Jamaluddin Nadvi, adopts a unique approach by combining physical and religious education. It stands as the premier Islamic University in South India. In 1989, the formation of the Samasta Kerala Sunni Board of Education was prompted by a split in the Board of Islamic Education, an initiative driven by Samasta Kerala Jamiatul Ulama. This Sunni Board of Education has successfully modernized its curriculum and textbooks while preserving tradition. With over 10 lakh students across more than 9500 madrasas, it operates more than 25 small colleges offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The Sunni Board of Education has introduced significant reforms, including the inclusion of Arabic language studies and addressing contemporary issues. Textbooks on religious affairs, history, and ethics have evolved over time. Notably, Markus Knowledge Vidya, a knowledge city under the Sunni Board, is situated 40 km from Kozhikode City. It encompasses institutions like Unani Medical College and advanced study institutes, including a Law College²⁴.

²³ M Abdul Samad, Op. cit., p. 123.

²⁴ P M Said Muhmmmed, Op. cit., p. 18

Dakshina Kerala Jamiyatul Ulama is an organization formed by scholars from southern regions like Travancore. 1955 Dakshina Kerala Jamiyatul Ulama is formed in Thiruvananthapuram VJT hall, the President was Shihabuddin Maulavi and the Vice President was the Secretary. A working committee has also come into being and like other ulama organizations, South Kerala is making valuable contributions in the field of religious education. In Madrasas in Kerala, the curriculum is approved and exemplary work is done in teaching methods and teaching practice. Lajjanatul Muallimeen is an organization working under the Board of Education for the training of teachers and their welfare activities²⁵. Similarly, a welfare fund was also formed to help madrasa teachers. The Kerala Muslim Jamaat Federation was formed in 1981 with the aim of educational and cultural upliftment of the Muslim community. Mannania Islamic University is a noteworthy institution belonging to Dakshina Kerala Jamiyatul Ulama.

Numerous individuals have made substantial contributions to the advancement of education within the Muslim community, with Maulana Abdus Sabha Ahmad Ali emerging as a prominent figure in this context. His distinct personality was marked by a profound understanding that the primary pathway towards enhancing the Muslim community's well-being was through educational progress, and he undertook a transformative educational initiative. Maulana Abdus Sabha Ahmad Ali, born in Chavakkad in 1966, initially received his primary education before embarking on a scholarly journey. He pursued advanced studies, including a period of study at Azhar University in Egypt. Recognizing the pressing need for higher education among Kerala's Muslim population, he catalyzed the establishment of Anakayat Rawlat Arabic College in 1942, commencing with a modest cohort of six students²⁶. In 1946, Maulana played a pivotal role in the formation of the Raulatul Ulam Association, a dedicated organization tasked with spearheading educational initiatives.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁶ Jaleel K A, 'Farook College Ulbhavavum Valarchayum' (Mal), Rousathul Uloom Arabic College Souvenir, 1968.

The association, under the leadership of President Abu Sabah and with the involvement of notable individuals such as Advocate MP Hydros Sahib Kunju Vaidyar, PK Musa Maulavi, K Maulavi, MK Seetisahib, Raja Abdul Qader Haji, Punatil Abu Bakar Sahib, and others, sought to secure a more spacious location for the Arabic College. Notable contributions, including a 20-acre land donation by Abdullahkutty Haji of Puliali in Farook and a generous ten-thousand-rupee donation by Raja Abdul Qader Haji, enabled the construction of a new facility in Farooq, where the Arabic College was relocated²⁷. The vision of Maulana extended beyond the Arabic College. In a seminal moment during a 1947 meeting of the Raulatul Association, the decision was made to apply to Madras University for the establishment of a first-grade college, emphasizing the significance of English education for the comprehensive development of the Muslim community. The Maulana's unwavering commitment to this vision is exemplified by his resourcefulness, as he borrowed Rs 600 from a merchant in Madras to submit the application. Subsequently, the college, initially named the 1948 College, commenced operations in a residence known as Munnalakath in Farook²⁸. The pursuit of institutional affiliation necessitated the vacating of the building, leading to the relocation of the Maulana Arabic College to a temporary shed. In 1948, the college achieved formal affiliation under the appellation "College. " Maulana Abdus Sabha Ahmad Ali continued to serve as the president of the association until his demise in 1971. His aspirations for an educational center, which he envisioned as the college's headquarters, were evident in his writings. He articulated the ongoing educational needs of the Muslim community, emphasizing the necessity for specialized institutions for women, engineering and medical colleges, institutes of higher education encompassing diverse fields of knowledge, provisions for international academic exchanges, and arrangements for Islamic publications.

These reflections underscored his profound understanding of the role of education in advancing social progress and the aspiration for the Muslim community

²⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

²⁸ M Samad, Ibid., p. 12.

to attain dignity through these academic endeavors. He writes "By the grace of Allah we have got the College, Farooq College and other institutions. We still need special institutes for our sisters, engineering colleges of higher education containing all kinds of wisdom, arrangements to send them to distant countries, arrangements for Islamic publications, etc. Only after achieving them will we become a dignified community²⁹. His views on social progress and the role of education in it are evident in these lines. Today Farook College offers a range of academic programs, including undergraduate and postgraduate courses, in various disciplines. This allows women to access quality education in diverse fields, enabling them to make informed career choices and pursue their interests. Farook College has taken steps to empower women beyond academics. It conducts seminars, workshops, and awareness programs on women's rights, gender equality, and issues affecting women in society. These initiatives aim to raise awareness and promote gender-sensitive perspectives among students. The college encourages women to take on leadership roles in student organizations, clubs, and societies. This fosters leadership skills, confidence, and a sense of responsibility among female students. The college offers career guidance and placement support to all students, including women. This helps female students make informed career choices and secure job opportunities, ensuring their financial independence., Farook College has made commendable efforts in promoting women's empowerment through education and various supportive initiatives. By providing access to quality education, fostering a gender-inclusive environment, and encouraging women to take on leadership roles, the college has contributed to the overall development and empowerment of women in Kerala and beyond.

Muslim Educational Society, MES cannot be avoided in the history of Kerala Muslim education. It was formed in 1964 by a group of well-educated community lovers. In 1964, the Muslim Education Society was born from the brainchild of eight educated young people who joined Dr. Abdullah's residence. This society started with the intention of adding 100 people as members and giving scholarships to a few deserving students with their contribution but later became an active presence in the

²⁹ U Muhmmmed, Ibid., p. 190.

field of education advancement. The educational Muslim community, as it stands, provided the opportunity for higher education with much planning. In 1967, the society distributed Rs 3000 worth of clothes to the children as a solution to the problem of lack of clothes to go to school. In order to solve the problem of lack of money to buy books, the society distributed a scholarship of Rs 75000 with the aim of starting a book distribution scheme. Colleges were started at Ponnani, Mannarakkad and Kodungallar because the society gave preference to establishing colleges in the Muslim populated areas of Kerala. Educational conferences were organized in cities like Mumbai and Delhi to spread these activities not only in Kerala but across India. Now under MES - 10 professional colleges, 21 arts and science colleges and eight women's colleges, a total of 156 educational institutions are functioning.

Conferences and Emergences of Women's Organizations

Conferences are milestones in the history of the reform Movement. From the beginning of its activities, annual conferences for their ideological propagations. In the early period of K. N. M they conducted annual meetings, like in 1951 at Chalappuram, and in 1952, 1953 and 1954 at Kuttipuram etc³⁰. Among them in 1951 women gathered and renowned women delivered speeches in this conference. In each conference scholarly women used to deliver speeches and many women attended this.³¹ When the movement has grown and spread across the state it became difficult to conduct annual meetings. So they decided to hold a state conference in five years. As a result, conferences were held in 1979 March at Pulikkal, in 1982 April at Faroke, in 1987 April at Kuttipuram and 1992 May at Palakkad etc.

In 1971 K. P. Muhammed Moulavi became the general secretary of Naduvattul Mujahidin. After this formed a student organization that strengthened Islahi movement activities in Kerala. As a result of this an energization process occurred in the year 1979. Mujahid's conference at Pulikkal was attended by thousand members

³⁰ M. Muhammed Madani, 'Sammelanavum islahipresthanavum', Mujahid State Conference Souvenir, 1992, p. 32.

³¹ Ibid., p. 32.

and almost one lakh of audience. It became one of the remarkable points in the history of the Islahi movement in Kerala. In that conference many eminent intellectuals and orators, were participated from in and out of Kerala, represented by different religious socio-cultural and political scenarios. Though women's representation in this occasion was high, they were not allowed any special sessions or meetings of their own.³²

The second Salafi conference at Feroke in 1982 garnered significant attention due to its emphasis on women's activities within the organization³³. Unlike the Pulikkal conference, the K. N. M. conducted a special meeting for female students and established the Student Girls' Organization under the Muslim Student Movement (M. S. M). The women's wing of the conference was led by President M. Jameela, who addressed the theme "Muslim culture and the problems faced by Muslim girl students in the modern world. " The discussion included contributions from M. V. Suhadha (Calicut), Shahadhath Beevi (Kochi), Jameela (Palakkad), Habeeba (Mambad), and others. Moreover, the Women's conference, which saw participation from thousands, was presided over by Amina Sullami. The conference was inaugurated by P. Aysha Teacher (DEO Tirur), and notable speeches were delivered by Dr. P. K. Rabiya (DMO Malappuram) and Shaika Aliya Yeseen (Kuwait), among others³⁴. This conference played a crucial role in fostering a strong bond among women within the organization and highlighted their active participation and leadership roles in Salafi activities.

In 1982 a group was formed under Mujahid leadership for women with the title M. S. M women's wing. In 1982 the aim of this wing was to created a religious awareness among college girl students, and to inculcate Islamic culture based on monotheistic belief. Another aim of the group was to make women educated almost all areas and they adopted actions with that aim under the leadership of MSM women

³² Razak Sullami, Mujahid Prestanathinee Vallercha, Mujahid conference souvenir 1998, p. 22.

³³ M. Muhammed Madani, op. cit., p. 36.

³⁴ Razak Sullami, op. cit., p. 25.

wing. A lot of activities were conducted between conference and student conference separately. After the Kuttipuram conference of 1987, the leaders came to understand that women members are matured and capable enough to work themselves. Thus they felt the need for a separate women's wing and thus formed Muslim Girl Movement (M. G. M).

When a special group was formed for women, there created a new awakening among women from 1987 onwards, and M. G. M began to function regularly among women. Women folks who were sleeping under blind beliefs and aged old customs were to be awakened in to the importance of *Thouhid* (Monotheism). Keeping this aim in mind they conducted domestic (household) meetings, neighborhood gathering and evening classes in each unit. Different meetings were conducted for women based on regions, districts, districts, and state level under the auspices of M. G. M State Committee. Talks, symposiums and seminars were conducted along Kerala on the subject "Safe family, moral family"³⁵ instead of regular subjects. Topics such as splendidence, luxury, consumerism, teenage problems and solutions were discussed during the campaigns. M. G. M. mobilized women, social leaders acting in various levels and conducted talks and awareness classes. At the same time, they published a family magazine entitled *Pudava* means dress. Women issues and their solutions were discussed in this magazine. "Pudava is different from any other magazine; stories and pulp fictions, that meant for mere enjoyment is not the item of pudava, the various lights within the society, makes Pudava blessed,"³⁶ Kadeeja Nargees secretary of the organization comments on *Pudava*. Their first goal was to educate society about the freedoms and rights accorded to women by Islamic ideology. Their second objective was to actively work towards upholding and promoting the dignity and principles of Islam. These objectives sought to empower women within the context of Islamic teachings and to contribute to the broader societal understanding of women's roles and rights in Islam. and to get ready the Muslims and women to lead society by standing in the framework of Islam. Though the aim of organization was the freedom and

³⁵ M. V. Suhada, 'Muslim Streeyude Samuhikkarangam', Jamiyanadwiyya 40th annual conference 2000, p. 61.

³⁶ Kadeeja Nargees, 'Vanithamasikakalum Streeyum', *Pudava*, 1992, March, p. 12.

progress of women in theory, they haven't reached yet in equality allowed by Islamic ideology. Instead, they have been moulded to be obedient women, organized under patriarchal society. An evaluation of women's writings and speeches associated with women organizations that came and grew up under MGM, is attempted in this part. The article written by M Suhra Mongam under the title, 'Women: House wife Mother',³⁷ states that it is the duty of man to allow women freedom and protection, food and shelter. The article underscores the responsibility of women to family by saying that, 'women with good conduct and noble nature are always lead to the prosperity of a family. . . . women dying after fulfilling the duties of her family were rewarded with heaven'³⁸. Here she reaches the conclusion with substantiating evidence taken from Quran and Hadit that, nobility and responsibility were to be fulfilled by women only. Similarly, an article by Fathima K Areekode entitled 'Blessed Womanhood'³⁹, gives importance to the marital life of women. She denies the concept of equality of men and women, and the most important thing for family security and peaceful marital life is the obedience of male dominance. She continues with quoting from Holy Quran:⁴⁰

In the interpretation of the Quranic verses, she brings out the idea that women folk have accepted man as a center of power. She is offering frame work for an ideal wife or how a woman should be. Quoting prophet, she writes "women folk, you please do charity. I have the vision that most among you are in hell; you can decrease your curse and shows ingratitude towards your husband even though you are less in intellect and religion, I can see no one other than you have the ability to waste the intellectual capacity of power full man"⁴¹ The article ends by insisting that, women should be given freedom for worship and education, but should be with obedience in Islamic dress and with good character.

³⁷ M Suhra Mongam, *Mujahid 8th State Conference Souvenir*, 2008, p. 44.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³⁹ Fathima 1: Areekode4, *Anugrahikkapeeta Sthreetham*', *7th State Conference Souvenir*, 2004, p. 45.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴¹ *Hadith*

The women's organizations could not transgress the framework of the Mujahid Movement's ideology such as women's entry of mosque, fighting against un-Islamic customs, dowry etc. It could not address seriously the problem related to Kerala Muslim women or with the inequality among men and women within the religion, M. G. M. secretary Ayshakutty K. Says "still we have to do a lot, Kerala Muslim are immersed in dowry, jewelry and in extravagance. It is our duty to make women awaken of these problems⁴²,"

Another women's organization, Girls Islamic organization GIO, under the control of Jamaath –e-Islamic was born in 1984. Just like other movements, their aim was women's empowerment and Women's liberation. Their activities were centered in each Mahal. Strong awareness against the dowry system, conducting of classes against liquor and drugs and strong propagation against and degradation of socio-moral values were provided. But different from MGM, GIO aimed at women's involvement in politics. It is to be noted that they are making use of women in charitable efforts and in employment by ensuring their efficiency. In most of the campuses in Kerala, especially in Malabar the presence of GIO is notable. Basically, GIO follows Jamath-e-Islami's ideologies. In 1941, Jamath-e-Islami was formed at Lahore by Abdul-A 'la-Maududi with the aim of formation of an Islamic Nation. ⁴³ It was a formative political movement. Ziauddin Sardar writes that the founder of Jamath-e-Islami, Maududi's view on women, was that, by birth itself she is with less intellectual ability and deprivation⁴⁴. According to Maududi, by nature women are considered to be upholders of the morals of society, so that she has to be controlled. He says that Maududi judges women as less efficient than men in the domains like social, financial, cultural, political and knowledge levels. "Islamic law makes women a princess at home. The responsibility of earning is vested in the shoulders of men. It is the duty of a woman to control home using his earnings. Women are the

⁴² Ibid., p. 32.

⁴³ Ziauddin Sardar, *Desperately seeking Paradise*, 2004, p. 32.

⁴⁴ Moudidi, Pardha, cited from Ibid., p. 36.

housekeeper of husbands. She will be questioned of her duty on the Doomsday. The whole dealings related to outside the home are denied to the women's presence. ”

We can see that Yusufal Khardavi's (*Khardahavi's Fatwa*) and Moududi's (*Pardha*) works naturally propagate anti-women ideologies. Jamath-e-Islami has been following Moududi's and Khardavi's teachings accepting Moududi's in their literature opposition to female rights is clear. For example, the article written by Adv. Ashtar Ahamed entitled, 'Men, women equality and Muslim women,'⁴⁵ denies men – women equality and he gives the reason for that: “In family life man is one grade upper than women. Quality of woman with man brings out chaos in the family. It is a reality that by physical and other abilities men are higher than woman.”⁴⁶.

Women magazines

Kerala Muslim history witnessed the debut of women as organizers, writers and speakers during the period 1930-1960. Women like M. Halima Bivi, TC Kunjachumma, Ayisha Mayeen, B. S Sayeda, Justice Fatima Beevi, and Kunjiruma Teacher are part of the Muslim historical movement. Not all of them were of the same age, of the same type, or in the same way involved in reform activities. But there has been a clear involvement of these women in different fields in different areas and from different places in the issues like working and publishing newspapers, regaining the identity and rights of women, the social status of women, the freedom to participate in the public sphere including politics, attaining the extent given by Islam, labor participation, right to education etc. After the formation of organized Muslim women's organizations, women of similar calibre as those active in the 1960s did not emerge. The change of the Muslim community to the organizational level can be seen from the 1950s onwards, when women who once filled the field of women's renaissance through strong writings and speeches put forward a balanced vision of women's liberation. The period from 1950 to 1970 is the stage of KNM's educational advancement. Women's education, struggles for freedom of worship, and debates with

⁴⁵ Adv. Ashtarmuhammed, 'Sthree Purushasamthavum Muslim Sthreekalum'. 1993, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

traditionalists cemented the foundations of the Islahi movement. During this period women can be seen rising in the field of education. Growth of Educational Institutions Institutions under different associations, Institutions under KNM are examples of that. But after the 70s the organization became very powerful and the working methods of the organization changed. It can be seen that the organization has got a new energy through the process of decentralization of power in the organization. With the formation of sub-organizations of ISM(Islamic Student Movement), MGM(Muslim Girls movement), a new phase began for the Mujahid organization. - Women were given a place in the annual meetings of KNM⁴⁷. It is relevant to Halimabeevi's speech, where scholarly women used to lecture at mujahid gatherings held after the 1950s. Moreover, it can be observed that the programs and priorities adopted by the revivalist movements during the women's empowerment phase were very advanced. From mere literacy to higher education and employment, agendas to enable change in social and political arenas can be seen as part of the women's empowerment plan.

But the fact is that this stance on the women's empowerment project made the Mujahid movement more organized and the female student youth elements were formed, but it could not continue with its old vigor. Mujahideen organizations could not go far in marking the role and relevance of women beyond domestic life. This can be understood by evaluating the attitudes and activities of the women in the organization and their publications. A comparison of the Mujahid press publications after the 70s and the early writings shows that women have retreated from the reformative surge in literary thought. In this second phase, a significant change can be seen in the process of women's advancement. It can be seen that under the organization 'woman becomes more submissive than empowered. Among the Kerala Muslims there are many organizations that hold different views on religious, political, educational and cultural positions. All of them own newspapers and press today. Publications are coming out from organizations under the community today, targeting scholars, youth, women and children growing up in the community. Various factions of the muslim community including Sunni, Mujahid and Jamaat-e-Islami together

⁴⁷ AP Ahmed, Muslim Novothanam: Chilakeraliya Chithrangal (Mal), Edappal, Noun Books, 2004, p. 23.

have more than forty publications under their control. With the advent of print media, reformers started publications with a focus on religious propaganda, including magazines that catered to the scholarly community, political and social analysis magazines aimed at the youth, weeklies with features on organizational propaganda debates, and women's magazines aimed at mobilizing children and families.

Some religious reformers who realized that if the religious teachings and culture of the community is to be fully inculcated among women for the advancement of the community it is possible only by educating the female members of the family, thus various magazines were launched targeting the Muslim women. Muslim Mahila in 1923 was the first Muslim women's magazine published in Malayalam by Mr. PK Moosakkutty Sahib⁴⁸. Nisaul Islam is known as the first Muslim women's magazine published in Arab Malayalam in Kerala. Its editor was Komukutty Maulavi 1929⁴⁹. The first issue of Nisahul Islam magazine was published, it was printed from Irumpiliyam Hydaria Press. Following this, many lovers of the community started magazines for Muslim women. In 1972 A person named Idawa Jamal gave birth to a magazine for women called Ponnunol⁵⁰. In 1975 Priyasakhi was a magazine for women published by Thamarassery Muhammad.⁵¹ A publication named Madhuri - for women - was launched by Basheer Mallika, Palakkad, and a person named KA Malayali. Mappila Pennu is a magazine for Muslim women by MK Pavannur⁵². Although all these magazines were published at that time, reminding the importance of the family system and thereby empowering Muslim women, there was not a single woman on the editorial board, in production or in office work. But the first magazine run by a woman for women was Halima Beevi's Muslim Woman. Halima Beevi launched a women's magazine under her leadership at a time when technology had not developed much. Later she ran the magazines *adhunika vanitha* and Muslim

⁴⁸ Abu Majidha, Kerala Muslingalum Pathraprevarthanavum (Mal), Prebodhanam, 1998, p. 32.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵² Ibid., p. 35.

sthree. As a part of social reform - Muslim women slowly entered the world of letters, but the publications that came out for women to read from within the community disappeared. A large number of publications known as ' Mangalam and Manorama' were active in Kerala culture in the 80s, and a major part of reading community was drawn to it. There was a debate among the Muslim community that especially women who are housewives are going in such a wrong direction. The woman's magazines, taught by men, are gaining the upper hand in which women are pushed aside from the center of thought and knowledge and pushed to a superficial level, emphasizing only the traits of femininity, and only the world of glamor is amenable to women. ⁵³ For this very reason, efforts were made to move the women of the community away from the cultural thought process and stand tall in the religious environment.

During the period publications ranged from the individual to the organizational level, in the dominant community organizations such as Jamaat-e-Islami, Naduwatul Mujahideen there were women from the beginning. However, it was around this time that MGM was formed under Mujahid movement, GIO which is a subsidiary organization of Jamaat-e-Islami, with the aim of awakening and making women more efficient. It is at this stage, Jamaat-Islam an Islamic movement that started the first educational institution for women thought of a magazine in such a way that she can raise her hand and instill creativity and knowledge in her to become an asset to the society, and women actively respond to social problems and ventilate knowledge. Addressing the problems affecting the women-community in social, cultural and moral fields, and molding a society of women with a sense of value, these were the declared objectives of the movement while preparing to start a magazine named Aaramam⁵⁴. In 1985, Aramam was born as the main newspaper of Girls Islamic Organization, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami. Aaramam magazine came into existence under the supervision of women with Fatima as editor and Sridevi as sub-editor⁵⁵. While men work behind the scenes of most women's publications,

⁵³ Fousiya shams, Muslim Vanitha Masika(Mal), in Jameel Ahmed (ed.) Kerala Muslim Conference Prebhandha Samaharam, Kozikode, 2005, p. 515.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 516

⁵⁵ Fousiya Shaz, Aramam Weekly, Magazine, Vol. 6, p. 23.

Aramum has had women on its editorial board since its inception. Sridevi, Asha Paul, Fauzia Muhammad Kunji, Ayesha, Rajina Kasim Kalam, have worked as editors at various times. PT Abdurrahman Munnur, Kadarkuttyum Marakode, Basheer Thodil, NN Ghafoor, Anwar Paleri etc. supervised the Aramam press committee at different times⁵⁶.

However, women later on themselves came as editors and Aramam magazine is completely under the all-women editorial board, K Fatima Suhara, Editor, Fazia Shams, Sub-Editors, and Bishara Mujeeb, Typing Layout Artist, took over the positions. Since women come down in all this, communicating complex women's issues by being an active presence, and many argumentative articles, discussions, and interviews, pointed out deployments of masculinity in women's private-public spheres and saw the light. According to sub-editor Fauzia "Trying to break through the veil of modern values and to convince the light and breadth of female identity, Aram is making efforts to reclaim the great institution of the family which is being awakened in the new times⁵⁷. . . ." Similarly, as famous writers write in Aram, they are also trying to bring up female writers by inspiring new writers and female students. After the advent of Aramam, many other magazines for women were born from other dominant organizations in the community such as Poonkavanam, Pudava, Santhushta Kudumbam, Mahila, Chandrika, etc.

The publication, Pudava published from kozikode by Kallingandi Ishaqi, was later taken over by the women's wing of Naduwatul Mujahideen and published under the auspices of MGM, Pudawa. The magazine Pudava was published with the same name as a family magazine Habiba Teacher, sister of Zubair Chunkattara, a member of the Mujahid leadership⁵⁸. More space was given to family-nurturing writings, along with creative importance such as stories and poems. The writings of women writers have come to light through Pudava. The novels of people like Saeed Sullami, a native of Kannur, were published through this. Khadija Nargis, Noor Jahan, Nadira etc are

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 32.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵⁸ Fiusiya Shaz, Op. cit., p. 566.

regular writers. With the split of the Mujahid organization, it came under the leadership of the ISM. After that, there were no women in editorial committee or editorial organization like other magazines. Achievements in cultural and social issues and other culturally relevant writings are gaining space in Pudava. Since 1987 supporters of Kanthapuram AP Abubakar Musliar started Poonkavanam trust. it began to publish a family journal named Poonkavanam. It was run by the Kozhikode-based Markaz sakavath Islamiya. This magazine is run by Kozhikode Markus and targets traditional sunni women and girls as women are the center of the family. But there have been no women in the field of editorial production till date. Women writers were absent. You can find writings in the magazine that clearly indicate that the magazine is run by Sunnis who are the advocates of orthodox thought. From this came male-centered writings in the form of women's sole responsibility for family care Since 1987, the Poonkavanam Trust, which is supported by Kanthapuram AP Abubakar, has been operating under the leadership of the Kozhikode-based Markus magazine. The magazine primarily targets women and girls, recognizing them as the cornerstone of the family. However, it is concerning that to date, there have been no women involved in the magazine's editorial production, with a complete absence of female writers. It is evident that the magazine is run by Sunnis, who advocate for orthodox thought. Unfortunately, this has led to a rise in male-centered writings, further perpetuating the idea that women are solely responsible for family care. It is crucial to address this issue and strive towards gender equality in all fields, including editorial production, to provide a more inclusive and diverse perspective.

The *Santhushta Kudumbam* is a magazine published by the EK section of Sunnis. The publication started in 2002 from Chelari, the headquarters of the movement. Although the label *Kudumba* magazine targets women and children, unlike *Poonkavanam* magazine, the activities are not women-oriented. Editor Bahauddin, Muhammad Nabi and others are behind this. Islamic History, Persuasive essays describe women's responsibilities within the Family, novels, short stories and poems are common subjects. Although not a magazine to discover or cultivate women writers on a large scale, the woman's writings under name *Faseela Pudukode* can be found in *Santhushta Kudumbam* magazine. Unlike the the masses of progressive

magazines, Muslim women's public engagement (behavior) is not their counter-issue. Instead, women are introduced and taught subjects such as motherhood, child care, obedience, etc.

Mahila Chandrika, a magazine for women from the family of Chandrika Patram(News Paper), was launched in 1995. Visually, when compared with women's magazines published by other Muslim organizations, its page, layout, and content are designed in imitation of mainstream magazines Vanitha and Grihalakshmi which are popular among women-community. The chief editor Mr. CK Tanur was maintaining the content in a way that gives opportunity to other women while considering Muslim women. The magazine has taken care to give a good space to women writers. Muslim women writers Zaheera Thangal and Khadija Mumtaz enriched the magazine's pages⁵⁹. Although all these magazines are ostensibly aimed at the upliftment of Muslim women, they are deliberately imposing the ideology of authoritarian/patriarchal Islam. It can be understood when the women's writing of the early period and the later women's writings are compared. Women's writings calling for the struggle for women's rights in Islam can be seen in magazines in the period up to 1960. But in the transition of Islamic society to the organizational level, women's space can be seen to vary. The duty and actions of the woman in the family were constantly being written by the family magazines. The difference in women's writings of these two eras on issues like gender equality and parda(veiling) is evaluated here with examples. In an attempt to examine the impact of reform on the Muslim community of Kerala it is important to make an evaluation of the reform with special reference to women and process their empowerment.

The *Probodhanam* (mouthpiece of Jamath-e-islami) weekly which published the second chapter of the translation of SafiyaIqbal's work "Women's Right"⁶⁰ as a serial in the 1990's highlighted the freedom allowed to women by Islam and its protection. The article also gives the religious opposition in the matters of female freedom and freedom of expression with the influence of western thoughts. Another

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 560.

⁶⁰ Cited, Probodhanam Weekly.

article of Abdurahiman Periangadi, member of *Shura* of Kerala State entitled, 'Women should be called back', ⁶¹states "if you call back women from offices working places and from roads and give job to men instead of women, that will be a solution for many problems. . . . women can spend at home by housekeeping and engage in home centered activities'⁶². By doing this, she can bless the atmosphere of home. Girl can play her own part by becoming a lamp of prosperity. Anti-Women stance such as 'Call her back' 'Save family the root cause of its all calamities' etc can be seen in the several articles and writings in the publication of Muslims. Even though GIO has been conducting many conferences and gatherings aiming at the progress of Muslim women, G. I. O also has been helping girl students to encourage in setting a research forum. As a part of these activities a group of Muslim girls are progressing in educational and social aspects. But there is a suspicion on the net result of this because its activities are under the framework of the mother organization, i.e., Jamthe-e-Islami.

The women's conference at Kuttippuram in 2001 was noticed for its women presence. A woman representative herself talks of this conference as: 'A conference which was participated by more than one lakh of delegates was organized by women with Hijab gathered as one from publicity to make announcement they will frame a lot of histories from the energy of unselfish gathering'⁶³. Conference was inaugurated by EvonRidly, British Journalist, who was recently converted to Islam. Her inaugural speech itself shows that she has only limited knowledge in Islam and Islamic rights. But women's organizations including GIO have been reluctant to accept ideas of Islmaicfeminists, who attempt to read Islam with a gender perspective. AminaWadud from America, FathimaMernisi from Morocco, Laila Ahmed From Egypt and AsraNomani from India etc. are the towering figures of this stream of thought. They challenge the representation of women and male domination within Islamic texts. And by following the basic Islamic texts, they try to demand the space that is assigned to

⁶¹ P. P. Abdu Rehman Peringadi, '*Sthreekale Madakkivilikkanam*' *Madyamam Daily*, 15. 3. 1998.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

women. However, the women's organizations among the Kerala Muslims claim that ideas taken from the modern world are against religion and its basic ideologies. Islamic feminism is based on God's omnipotence. To Islamic Feminists, God is the only creator. God created everyone as the same and gave the verdict that power was meant only to God alone. So, the creation of men and women is of having equal status. Thus Islamic feminism attempts to attain equal justice upholding Islamic ideology. Their instruction was to avoid each and every deal, which acts as an obstacle in the way of realizing Islamic unity of man-women friendship, which was dreamed by the prophet. These scholars have seriously attempted to clarify the wrong interpretations against actual connotations of the Holy Quran. Amina Wadud's work, *Quran and Women: Re-reading the Sacred text from women's perspective*, highlights the need for a new methodology in the reading of Holy Quran. Amina Wadud has done her study by keeping the accusations against women, the wordings used to subordinate men's power and the misunderstanding on women as opponent⁶⁴.

Islamic Feminism had to face strong challenges from within and out of Religion. The opponents within the religion evaluate Islamic Feminism as the latest example of becoming ideas as tools of invasion. The traditional Islamists criticize Islamic Feminism as re-writings of Islam for the sake of radical feminism. Jamath-e-Islami also accuses Islamic feminism as a part of western agenda for the destruction of Islamic family system.⁶⁵

Amina Wadud has totally denied not only the validity of the Islamic system but even considered it as an important obstacle to the freedom and development of Muslim women all over the World. Islamic Scholar Nazira's research on *hijab* was motivated by the incidents in Syria and Turkey, where women were prevented from leaving their home without the veil. The reformers encouraged women to remove the veil⁶⁶. Such Arab Muslim feminists who belong to the first generation of women

⁶⁴ Amina Wadud, *Quran Oru Penvayana*, 2000, Calicut, Other Books, p. 34.

⁶⁵ Muhammedali Shandinagar, 'Islammika Sthreevadam: American Dechrastriyakeni', *Aramam weekly*, 2004, p. 21.

⁶⁶ NaziraZein-ed-Din, "Unveiling and veiling", cited in K K N Kurup and Ismayil, *Emergence of Islam in Kerala in 20th century*, 2000, p. 322.

reformers attempted to extricate from all issues of cultural loyalty and betrayal' and effectively represented the aspirations of women who wish to live in modernity while remaining a Muslim. The most important challenge that the Muslim women of Kerala face today is that negation of freedom by a class of newly emerged Ulema associated with the tradition of reform, which has greatly affected their freedom of movement, education and free will and have led to several psychological and attitudinal problems. The outdated theological stipulations are easily targeted against women than men and this of course retarded their growth⁶⁷. The current discourses on the liberation of Muslim society is still dominated by traditional Ulemas, which limits the opportunities for women to voice their concerns and demand change. The Muslim women of Kerala are confronted with a range of complex and interrelated challenges that impede their autonomy and freedom. Among these, a notable concern is the infringement of their freedom of movement, education, and volition by a class of recently emerged ulema aligned with the tradition of reform. The resulting limitations on their social and psychological wellbeing are a cause for concern. Of equal significance is the influence of outdated theological precepts, which disproportionately target women and impede their development. Unfortunately, the current discourse on the liberation of Muslim society continues to be dominated by traditional ulemas, with limited opportunities for women to voice their concerns and demand change. Some Islamic intellectuals believe that the historical and socio-political circumstances, such as feudalism and colonialism, are responsible for the lack of gender equality in many Muslim societies⁶⁸. However, the existence of misogynist tendencies in Islam and the gender bias in the Quranic vision of life cannot be denied. As Laila Ahmed has pointed out, these biases continue to be present in several socio-political situations, and they need to be addressed in order to bring about true gender equality in Muslim societies⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ Anis Ahmed, *Women and social justice in Islam*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁶⁹ Leila Ahmed, "feminism and feminist movement in the Middle East", *Women Studies International Forum*, Vol. 5, 1982.

Summary, the challenges faced by Muslim Women in Kerala are complex and multifaceted. It is important to recognize the role of outdated theological stipulations, as well as socio-political circumstances and misogynist tendencies in shaping the experiences of Muslim women. Addressing these challenges will require a concerted effort from both within and outside the Muslim community, as well as willingness to engage in open honest dialogue about these sensitive issues

Purdha and Muslim Women in Kerala

A large number of Malayalis migrated into the Middle East in the late seventies and early eighties. Indeed, the lifestyle of Kerala Muslims has drastically changed with the phenomenon of 'Gulf boom'. The economic status of the migrated people increased. This Gulf boom made the religious practices strict and started to follow more novel ways of campaigns and organizations. This changed using of modern techniques of propaganda including video exhibitions, making use of 'YouTube' and other technological devices⁷⁰. These are reflected in the extensive participation of women who formerly were not allowed to move except at night time periodical religious classes are also arranged exclusively for women handled both by men and women teachers. Thus a silent process of internalization of religion with the rigidity of the mind and body is going on and which is evident especially in the observance of the Purdha system among the Kerala Muslim women. In this sense, women in Kerala Muslim society are more Islamised than men. In this context we will analyze the 'Purdha' tradition of Kerala Muslim women.

Presently purdha has been gaining acceptance among Kerala Muslims very recently. Once very rare to see even in Arabic colleges, now it has become common in colleges and schools. The main reason for its spread is that religious organizations insist purdha as a dress code for women. In this matter these organizations are having more or less the same stance and they instruct that women should dress modestly and purdha is preferable for them. Hijab system (scarf) has also gained prevalence among the Muslim women in Kerala recently. In those days *spardha* was used by upper Class

⁷⁰ K K N Kurup and E Ismayil, op. cit., p. 340.

Muslim women as a symbol of their nobility, especially those who belonged to Syiid families⁷¹. There are various views regarding the popularization of pardha in the society of Kerala. Some writers of Kerala are of the view that pardha can be considered as a symbol of a patriarchal order, to be controlled and submissive to men. ‘There is a special social order that helped men on invention and limited practice. Pardha formed as a part of this value system and it spread accordingly. Pardha, the female dress, shaped by male dominated society and its value system, later was coloured with religion. This is the situation that brought religious colour to purdha’⁷².

The debate about pardha takes diverse dimensions among the Muslim women. Many believe that the purdha is to secure personal liberty in a world that objectifies women. Several women writers have argued that pardha allows them to become autonomous subjects. Others have argued that the pardha can only provide the illusion of protection and serve to absolve men to the responsibility for controlling their behaviour. Both positions assert that Islam is not responsible for this; in fact the Quran supports the notion of gender equality. As Fathima Mernissi puts, ‘the existing inequality does not rest on an ideological or biological theory of women’s inferiority, but the outcome of specific social institutions designed to restrain her power’⁷³. The practice of Hijab among Muslim women is not based on religious doctrine, although the Quran does not mandate it. Instead it is based from the Hadith of Bukhari⁷⁴.

However many articles authored by the reformist Muslime organizations explain their supportive positions about hijab. According to them, “The basic role of

⁷¹ Shamshad Huzain, *Lingapathavikkum noonapakshathinum edayil*, Thiruvananthapuram, Basha Institute, 2000, p. 34.

⁷² Hameedchennamangallur, “*pardhayude Manashasthram*”, Thiruvananthapuram, 2002, Melinda, p. 12.

⁷³ Fathima Mernissi “A feminist Interpretation of women’s Right in Islam”, Women Studies International Forum, vol. 5, 1982.

⁷⁴ According to the Hadith ‘‘My Lord agreed with me in three things. . . And as regards the veiling of women, Allah’ I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from the men because good and bad ones talk to them, so the verse of the veiling of the women was revealed’’ (Bukari). Surah verses 59 of the Quran it most often cited in support of veiling, it states ‘ ‘ it states’’ 0 Prophet tell the daughters and women of the believers to draw their cloaks (vails) close around them that will be better’’.

hijab is to uplift the identity and personality of women from the 'beauty conscient' and outlook centered stature. It brings out the freedom of movement and self-confidence of women. Each and every Hijab wearers proclaim that she is not ready to be an attractive object with a dress designed by a male sexual eye'⁴⁰.

The popularization of pardha among the Muslim women of Kerala and Muslim reformation are mutually linked. Islam actually does not impose any special dress code for women, though pardha has been commonly used among Muslim women. Even though reform movements are not advocating pardha directly, we can understand through their literature that they are supporting it. In one of the articles that appeared in *Pudava Magazine* in 1990's the author states: "Pardha is meant for covering the beauty of women through which she can assure physical protection, and protection of chastity. Islam instructs that her beauty should be exhibited only to husband. Pardha tradition came into existence for the sake of solid marital life and to save women from sexual abuse".⁷⁵.

Here the writer comes to the point that women's sexuality is controlled. But such an article and perspective come out of a male writer is quite natural. But interestingly women's opinion also is not different from this view. According to some of the women, the pardha helps very much to keep her safe. Another article by a woman writer states the role of pardhaas follows: "The basic role of pardha is to uplift the identity and personality of women from appreciation of the beauty and outlook centered status"⁷⁶. It is argued that the fashionable lady always inspires men's sexual motives. But a woman who wears pardha proclaimed that her freedom is attained by wearing pardha. She is not ready to become an object in front of men's gaze. Here they do not directly highlight the Islamic roots of the religious aspects of pardha. But always they focus to the point that pardha keeps her protected.

Another article maintains that more than a dress, Pardha stands as a symbol of a culture. "Pardha should be a symbol of a culture which should not be merely a dress.

⁷⁵ Abdul Jabbar Thrippanchi, *Pardhaoru Brand Vasthrammo*, Pudava, 1996, p. 12.

⁷⁶ Suhada', *Pardhakkappuramulla Lokkam*' Pudava, 1999, march, 20, p. 14.

It is a mark of piety and worship, of human love and of showing dignity in talks and behavior⁷⁷”. The writer ridicules some women wearing pardha as a part of fashion, but which is shameful for religion. If someone wears it as a gown, without covering the head it is meaningless. It is emphasized that pardha is a part of culture and the writer demands it should be included as a part of religion. She continues, “Islam has not only purified her soul and way of thought but also tried to prescribe her external appearance as well, Islam prohibited changing of her natural appearance and exhibition of her physical beauty. . . . ⁷⁸The women who came through the reform tradition have always tried to introduce pardha as a regular dress. The organizations have a major role in it. If we analyse the history of Muslim women’s dress it is clear that each age has its own dress code and they are using pardha with fashionable dresses.

A lot of writing can be seen relating pardha with women’s morality K. K. Raheenas’s article on ‘women identity, safety and society’ ⁷⁹emphasizes the importance of women’s dress. Though there is no direct reference to pardha, the reader assumes it as pardha. It is stated that it is not obligatory to wear pardha, but women must formulate her character according to the framework of religion. There are several instances of publishing in women's magazines the interviews with great women of the world who had converted to Islam and accepted it as a protective cover to their body. Indeed these instances are obviously a part of the project of promotion of pardha among the women folk.

The issue of Muslim Personal Laws in India, especially in regard to women's rights, remains a contentious and inadequately addressed concern. Here are the key points explained in simpler In 1986, the Shah Bano case brought this issue to the forefront. Shah Bano, a 62-year-old Muslim woman with five children, sought financial support from her husband after he gave her an irrevocable divorce (Talaq) in 1978, as per Islamic Law. She filed a case asking for maintenance. The Supreme

⁷⁷ Editorial, ‘Stree Podhurangathu’, *Pudava*, 2000 July 12, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁹ K K Raheena, ‘Streeyude Swathavum Surakshayum Samadanavum’, *Aramam*, 2002

Court of India supported Shah Bano's claim and ruled that she should receive maintenance money, similar to alimony⁸⁰. This decision was seen as a victory for women's rights. Some Muslims felt threatened by this decision and protested against it. They argued that it contradicted Islamic law. In response to this pressure, the Indian parliament reversed the Supreme Court's judgment, leading to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986⁸¹. This law diluted the court's decision and denied even destitute Muslim women the right to alimony from their former husbands. The existing Muslim Personal Laws in India have provisions that are considered unfair in terms of gender equality. Some provisions related to oral divorce, polygamy, and post-divorce maintenance are frequently misused by Muslim men. It's important to note that Muslim Personal Law in India is not a divine or unchangeable law; it is a human-made law⁸². The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act of 1937 was established during British rule and has remained largely unchanged since India gained independence. The application of Islamic law, or Shariat, in India is limited to certain areas, such as marriage, divorce, child custody, wills, inheritance, and family matters. It does not apply to criminal matters. Despite widespread opposition and concerns about gender equality, comprehensive reforms to the Muslim Personal Laws have not been implemented. Some provisions within these laws are seen as violating women's human rights⁸³.

The reality is that no reform has been done in the Muslim marriage law such as to make law fruitful for Muslim women. These whole things are against bringing favorable reformation of the existing personal law and preserving on behalf of the power of patriarchy and religion. So a lot of reformation has been done in case of marriage law including sexual equality in various other religions. Though there have been changes in the law of marriage with sexual equality, many things such as

⁸⁰ Raziya Patel, 'Indian Muslim Women, politics of Muslim Personal Law and struggle for life with Dignity and Justice, review of Women studies, *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 31, 2009, p. 49.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 52.

⁸² Asghar Ali Engineer, *Women Right in Islam*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 24.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 34.

irrevocable divorce, polygamy, maintenance after divorce are always haunting Muslim women's life. Being not fully complied with the Indian Muslim personal law, it gives a lot of chance for many segregated sexual interpretations. In such a situation we can have a look on how the reform movement approached these issues. Most of the reform organizations kept mum over the most significant case related to a woman's rights. It shows how callous they were in the case of women issues. There is no opposition among Muslim organizations that Islam is the religion that protects women. But they never raised the demand that Muslim Personal Law should be reformed according to the changing role of women. There were a series of debates within the Islamic (reform) organization in 1920s, one of which titled 'women and Personal Law'⁸⁴. The following paper has a representative character to show how far can Muslim Personal Law remain unchanged? The article entitled 'Women and Personal Law' says, 'No other Law except Islam permits a widow to rejoin her former husband after she is found to be chaste.'⁸⁵ This article highlighting the virtue of Islam does not have a single mention of protection expenditure that comes to a widow. The article entitled women and personal law says, "if anyone can show any law in the world which is mostly justice and ethical that allows a widow to dwell with and return if she changes, otherwise disperse decently. . . ."

Personal law and related problems have not been taken for discussion among Muslim women or have not originated new ideologies. Though the Islamic laws are said to be extending protection to the woman, an active discussion of which is impossible among the Muslim women. It is the fact that Christian, Hindu caste women were organized for the purpose of reformation of civil Law related to them and they have succeeded in attaining it. For example, the right for divorce from husbands who indulge in extra marital relationships, for the Christian women was attained by the reformation of Indian divorce Act. But Muslim organizations including women's organizations are not concerned about the status quo. The opinion of reform organizations on the matter of women's right in Islam is different. It is revealed

⁸⁴ Debate conducted By Mujahid Group on 1995 at Calicut

⁸⁵ Cheriyaundam Abdul Razak, *Islam Shariyathum*, Pudava, 1995 July, p. 16.

through their writings and typical stance is shown below. 'The argument that women have no right and freedom in Islam is simply a criticism by the opponents with the purpose of defaming of Quran and sharia'. The author this believe that Islamic law is very powerful are it has been assuring women's right forever. He continues 'sharia is not only 'code' it is Dharma vision and life order. Sharia is the life schedule units psyche and soul'⁸⁶ Though in this manner they are gratifying sharia, they are not ready to accept (understand) that the Indian personal law is not according to pure Islamic law. Another article in *AlManar* journal claims that all protection to women is given by Islamic law and he says, "If anyone can see, a faultless justice than Islamic 'dharma' (justice) legal anthology, by putting together the supporting and opposing factors together for discussion. The whole family set up in Islam is favorable for women. She doesn't want to give others expenditure. She was not appointed with the responsibilities of others by financial burden or protection. She is not even in responsible for her expenditure, though Islam has given her claim for wealth⁸⁷

Here he is never thinking about women's individuality. She does not need money when all expenditure is on the shoulders of male. Many articles explain this way, and no article extends support to the women folk. Some women's writings show that the reason for degradation of Muslim women is mainly through modernity and the move away from Islamic ideology. N. V. Suhada says 'modernity has broken female honour and pride. This has been seen in each and every field of social life. There is a growing decay in human relationship and in family organization⁸⁸. At the same time there are some women activies who are not part of the Muslim women's organizations. They look at Sharia and religion as 'the religion that we follow now is the Arabicised Islam which must leave the custom of following traditions blindly without differentiating culture and religion. We should form a board of women and

⁸⁶ Huzain Madavur, *Islam Shariyathum*, Pudava, 1995, p. 14.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁸ N V Suhada, *Streeyude Jeevithavum Samskharavum*, Pudava, 2002, p. 16.

should interpret the Quran in our own way. Khazis and Moulanas are not the products of Islam. The interests of politicians are the source of their authority.⁸⁹.

To conclude, almost all articles related to women's issues discussed in Muslim reform organization's journals are not at all progressive in nature. Whenever they deal with women's issues, the traditional views regarding women and family are presented in the guise of interpretation of Quran and Sharia. Though the ideas of Islamic feminism and liberal thinkers are in favour of women, such a stream is never followed by the so-called 'women's journals'. More importantly, if the women in the early phase of reform attempted to critically evaluate their condition and wrote accordingly, a significant shift occurred in the later phase, when the reform movement attained an organizational structure. When the early writings criticized the patriarchal positions of the priestly class and leaders, now they reached a stage of blaming women and modern thought as the root cause of all problems. They find that women's behavior and dress patterns themselves cause all the atrocities against them. They criticize modernity and its values in the name of fashion, which is allowed to male members as it will cause the degradation of the family structure, patriarchal in nature.

⁸⁹ V PSuhra, *Lingasamatham Anislamikamo?* (Mal), 2007, p. 42.

CONCLUSION

The Kerala Muslim reform movement represents a significant milestone in the history of the Muslim community in India. It emerged as a response to the multifaceted challenges brought about by the colonial state and economy during the colonial period. In this context, the reformers of this movement recognized the pressing need for the Muslim community to adapt to the changing times and embrace new ideas to confront these challenges effectively. One of the most striking features of this reform movement was its unwavering commitment to the education and empowerment of Muslim women. The leaders and proponents of this movement were acutely aware of the prevailing conditions within the community, where women were often regarded as "stupid and ignorant." This perception underscored the urgent necessity to uplift and educate Muslim women, recognizing that their empowerment was crucial for the overall progress of the community.

In stark contrast to traditional norms that confined women to the domestic sphere and limited their access to education and public life, the reformers took a radical departure from such views. They understood that the traditional restrictions placed on women were not only detrimental to their individual growth but also hindered the community's development as a whole. Therefore, they embarked on a mission to promote education among Muslim women, considering it a fundamental step towards their empowerment. The efforts to educate and empower Muslim women were not mere lip service; rather, they were earnest and tireless. Reformers understood that providing education to women would not only equip them with knowledge and skills but also enable them to actively participate in the social, economic, and political life of the community. It was a transformative shift that aimed to break down barriers and create opportunities for Muslim women to contribute meaningfully to society.

In conclusion, the Kerala Muslim reform movement stands as a testament to the community's resilience and adaptability in the face of profound societal changes

brought about by colonialism. At its core, this movement recognized the importance of education and empowerment as essential tools for confronting the challenges of the modern world. By focusing on the education of Muslim women, the reformers of this movement laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and progressive future, challenging traditional norms and paving the way for greater gender equality within the community. The leaders of the reform movement, such as Makthi Thangal, Chaliyakath Kunjahammed Haji, and Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi, used their speeches and writings to spread their message of reform and reordering throughout the community. They challenged what they called superstitious beliefs and customs that had been entrenched in the community for centuries, and promoted a more 'rational and enlightened view of Islam. Through their efforts, these reformers were able to bring about a transformation in the community's attitudes towards education, women's rights, and religious practices. They helped to create a new generation of Muslims who were better equipped to face the challenges of the modern world, and who were able to reconcile their faith with the demands of a rapidly changing society. Overall, the Kerala Muslim reform movement was a path-breaking effort that helped to bring about a more enlightened and progressive Muslim community in India. Its legacy continues to inspire and guide Muslims in India and beyond, as they navigate the challenges of the 21st century.

Kerala Muslim reform movement on the Muslim community, particularly Muslim women. This movement brought about significant changes that enabled Muslim women to engage with the new world that emerged in the context of colonial ideas brought by colonialism. One of the most significant aspects of the movement was its emphasis on education for Muslim women. The reformers recognized that educating women was key to their empowerment and upliftment. As a result, they took significant steps to provide education to women, which led to the emergence of a new class of educated Muslim women. These women not only gained knowledge but also participated in various socio-cultural activities, challenging long-held beliefs about the role of women in society. Women such as Haleema Beevi PK Subaida and Fathimakkutty emerged as leaders in their own right, writing articles that were published in journals such as *Ansari*, *New Ansari*, and *AlManar*. Haleema Beevi went

a step further and established her own journal and printing press to spread the ideas of reform. These women's efforts helped to break down traditional barriers and empowered a new generation of Muslim women to take an active role in shaping the future of their community. In addition to education, the reform movement also exposed Muslim women to mainstream society, enabling them to participate in higher education. This was a significant achievement, given that Muslim women had been isolated for a long time due to various social and cultural barriers. While the reform movement had its limitations, such as its focus on a narrow interpretation of Islam and the marginalization of certain sections of society, it was still a significant step towards modernizing the Muslim community and empowering its women. The legacy of the movement continues to inspire and guide women in India and beyond. . writings of early Muslim women writers reveal a strong desire to challenge patriarchal norms and to claim independent positions in society. They sought to break free from the constraints of patriarchal hegemony and create their own paths and identities. These writers used language and imagery that demonstrated their determination to resist patriarchal norms and overcome the limitations placed upon them. However, the attitudes of male reformers towards women's issues were often ambiguous. While they encouraged women to participate in the reform movement, their vision of the ideal woman was often limited to a stereotypical model of modesty and subservience to patriarchy.

The neglect of women's achievements in Arabi-Malayalam literature, singing genres, and the role of female religious teachers (Mollachi) prior to the reform movement is a significant aspect of the historical and cultural context of the region. This neglect can be attributed to several factors: One of the primary reasons for the neglect of women's achievements was the prevailing gender bias in society. In traditional Kerala society, women were often confined to domestic roles, and their contributions in literary and artistic fields were often undervalued or overlooked. The reform movement in Kerala, which gained momentum in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, sought to modernize and reform various aspects of society, including gender roles. While the reformers aimed to empower women and improve their status, their vision of a "reformed woman" was often shaped by Western ideals of modesty and

propriety. This narrow definition of a reformed woman excluded those who did not conform to these standards. Another reason for the neglect of women's contributions is the historical lack of documentation and preservation of their works. Many of the women poets, singers, and religious teachers worked in oral traditions or produced manuscripts that were not widely circulated or preserved. The reform movement was largely led by male reformers, and their focus was often on addressing issues they perceived as most pressing, community empowerment and improving educational roles among the people. While these were important concerns, they sometimes overshadowed the contributions and concerns of women. As society underwent significant changes during the reform period, there was a shift in priorities. The focus on modernization, education, and social reforms meant that traditional cultural practices and art forms were often marginalized or forgotten. It's important to recognize and acknowledge the significant cultural and artistic contributions made by women like Puthoor Amina, P. K. Haleema, Maluthatha, and the female religious teachers. Their works in Arabi-Malayalam literature, singing genres like Malappattu, Kathupattu, Oppananappattu, and Mappilappattu, as well as their roles as Mollachi, were integral to the cultural fabric of the region. They not only enriched the artistic and literary heritage but also played a crucial role in transmitting cultural values and religious teachings.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the need to recognize and celebrate the contributions of these women, as they are essential to understanding the diverse and rich cultural history of Kerala. Efforts to document and preserve their works, as well as efforts to challenge and revise the narrow definitions of "reformed women," are essential steps in acknowledging the neglected achievements of women in pre-reform Kerala society. The writings of Muslim women up until the 1960s reflect a concerted effort to redefine womanhood and to challenge the boundaries of orthodox ulema and customs. However, their struggles were often complicated by the limited vision of male reformers and the neglect of women's achievements in the past. Despite these challenges, Muslim women continued to assert their independence and work towards greater equality and recognition in society. During the phase of Muslim women's reform under the organizational frameworks of the 'Islahi' movement and

Jama'at-e-Islami, there was a shift in the approach towards women's upliftment. The organizations established respective women's wings, but their policies and actions were still guided by the male leaders of the mother organizations. As a result, women were seen as the agents of reform, but in reality, they were merely following the patriarchal values that were already established. This deviation from the early stage of reform, where women writers and activists questioned patriarchal norms and sought independent positions, is a concerning trend. Women were no longer seen as autonomous individuals but were expected to play a subservient role to men. This shift in approach highlights the need for a continued dialogue and reflection on the direction of women's reform movements to ensure that women are truly empowered and not just seen as instruments of change in a patriarchal society.

The emergence of Pardha as a popular dress code among Muslim women in the 1990s onwards is a complex phenomenon that reflects the socio-economic and cultural changes in the community. While it is true that Pardha is often presented as a form of protection and modesty, it is important to understand the ways in which it can also function as a means of controlling and containing women's sexuality. The spread of Pardha can be traced to the changing socio-economic conditions in Kerala, particularly the influx of wealth from the Gulf countries. This created a new class of affluent Muslims who began to adopt new forms of dress and lifestyle, including the promotion of Pardha among women. Interestingly, the promotion of Pardha was often led by women themselves, who saw it as a means of expressing their religious and cultural identity, and as a comfortable and practical form of dress. However, it is also true that many women may have felt compelled to adopt Pardha due to social pressure and the desire to conform to the expectations of their families and communities. In this way, the adoption of Pardha by Muslim women can be seen as an example of the ways in which women can internalize and reproduce patriarchal norms and values, even when they are seemingly promoted by other women. It is important to note, however, that not all Muslim women have adopted Pardha, and that there is significant diversity within the community in terms of religious and cultural practices. Moreover, there are many women who are actively challenging patriarchal norms and values,

and who are working to create new forms of expression and identity that are more inclusive and empowering.

The Sha Bano controversy of 1986 is a significant event in the history of Muslim women's rights in India. It was a case where a Muslim woman named Shah Bano sought maintenance from her husband after he had divorced her. The Supreme Court ruled in her favor and awarded her maintenance, but the decision was met with protests from conservative Muslim groups who saw it as interference in their personal law. The government eventually passed a law overturning the Supreme Court's decision and denying Muslim women the right to maintenance after divorce. What is striking is that the organizations that claim to be working for social reform, particularly for women's rights, did not take a clear stand on the issue. Instead, they remained silent or aligned themselves with the conservative groups. This highlights the fact that the patriarchal values are deeply entrenched in the Muslim community and that women's rights are often sacrificed for the sake of upholding tradition and religious identity. Moreover, even though the term "women's liberation" has become fashionable, women continue to be denied access to job and other privileges in institutions managed by these organizations, simply because they are women. This shows that there is a gap between rhetoric and action when it comes to women's rights in the Muslim community. Women's liberation cannot be achieved through words alone; it requires concrete actions and changes in attitudes towards women. Despite their claims of reform, the organizations mentioned earlier have been reluctant to approach the Shariah (Islamic law) from a woman's perspective. While they have succeeded in bringing women to participate in public gatherings, their intentions were to strengthen their function through participation rather than giving them a leadership role. Women leaders were not able to become members of superior councils nor lead the parent organizations. This means that they were not given any scholarly position of authority. Moreover, these organizations have discouraged new approaches such as "Islamic Feminism," which seeks to reconcile Islam with feminist principles. This reluctance to embrace feminist ideas and approaches has been a major roadblock to the progress of women's rights within the Muslim community.

The Mappila literary tradition, characterized by a unique blend of Arab-Malayalam, provides a captivating window into the early socio-cultural and political history of Muslim women in Kerala, particularly during the 17th century and subsequent periods. Although not widely printed until the late 19th century, this literary tradition has deep roots in oral transmission, with women playing a crucial role in disseminating these texts through song traditions. These songs, influenced by women and integral to their daily lives, offer valuable insights into the celebration and cultural expression among Muslim women. Prominent women poets such as PK Haleema and Maluthatha transcended the confines of the domestic sphere, composing numerous songs that reflected their perspectives, experiences, and emotions. The existence of matrilineal systems in the region allowed women to wield authority and recognition within their families, a notable feature of their social standing. However, as the reform period unfolded, male reformers initiated a significant shift in the perception of Muslim women. Some viewed these women as immersed in darkness and superstition, feeling a responsibility to bring about change within the community. The subsequent chapter will explore the perspectives and actions of these male reformers and their influence on the status and roles of Muslim women during this transformative period.

The Renaissance in Kerala gave rise to the concept of a model woman belonging to the aristocratic housewife, initially appearing progressive in light of Nair-Namboothiri marriages. However, in the long run, these ideals negatively impacted women's lives in two ways. Firstly, they confined women's status in modern public life to that of housewives. Secondly, women became second-class citizens without rights in social power, burdened with both housework and outdoor responsibilities. This was done to strengthen the domestic status of women, leading to their exclusion from social power even as economic opportunities arose. Feminism and the family concept were shaped by the reform movement and colonial liberal values, presenting the ideal woman as one who exemplifies modesty, adheres to patriarchal norms, and dedicates herself to community betterment. Nonetheless, a contingent of female reformers sought to advance women's causes through their

agency and activism, contributing significantly to women's writing and the emergence of the modern feminist movement.

The representation of Muslim women in writing from the 1930s to the 1960s, though limited compared to the wider literary landscape of the period, offers valuable insights into women's perceptions of their social status and religious rights. These writings often challenge patriarchal religious authority, using forceful language to emphasize women's empowerment. Women writers from this era, primarily from the middle class and aligned with colonialism, critically examined religion and stressed the importance of women's identity. While not denying patriarchy, their emphasis on education as a path to free thought and social action challenged societal norms.

By the 1950s, Muslim sects shifted to the organizational level, giving rise to women's organizations and magazines. However, women's writings during this period were largely subordinated to male authority. Women's magazines like *Aaramam* and *Pudava* reflected male-dominant ideologies, with women working blindly for these organizations. In conclusion, articles related to women's issues in Muslim reform organization's journals were not inherently progressive. While early writings critically evaluated women's conditions, a shift occurred in the later phase, blaming women and modern thought for societal problems. The later phase criticized modernity in the name of preserving family structures, leading to a change in the nature of women's issues discussed in these journals.

The efforts to empower Muslim women in Kerala have been significantly influenced by the active participation of individuals and political organizations, marking a transformative process evident in cultural and social advancements. This is particularly noticeable in the transition from traditional attire to modern dress, with modified styles inspired by Islamic principles becoming increasingly prevalent in various settings, including colleges and public spaces.

The pivotal year of 2000 witnessed the rise of educated young women leaders and researchers as influential figures within the reform movement. Their proactive involvement in public interest litigation, aimed at safeguarding rights granted by Islam, resulted in two notable legal victories. : in 1998, the court of the Munsif of

Kuthuparamba allowed Muslim women to enter Mazjids, and in 2006, the Wakaf Tribunal in Ernakulam upheld the same rights based on Islamic texts. A positive trend is the growing participation of women in the governing bodies of Mazjids, known as Mahallu Committees. However, despite these advancements, discussions on women's issues continue to encounter challenges within societal sub-revolutions. In the era of social media, religious scholars persist in critiquing women's attire and public presence. Nonetheless, a cohort of modern Muslim women has emerged, providing a critical perspective on these matters. Despite their presence, achieving a clear and effective intervention by women within Muslim organizations remains a formidable challenge.

In conclusion, substantial progress has been achieved in the ongoing journey to reform Muslim women's rights in Kerala. Despite noteworthy accomplishments, numerous challenges and obstacles persist. Gender inequalities within religious contexts often endure, reinforcing traditional female roles and impeding rapid change. Bringing about change requires not only legislative adjustments but also shifts in societal attitudes. Organizations resistant to adopting Islamic feminist ideas and gender equality principles must undergo a transformative process.

The groundwork laid by early Muslim women writers has paved the way for the current generation to question and challenge traditional beliefs. A noteworthy example is the action taken by women from the Muslim League political party, who criticized organizational authority and sought legal remedies in 2020, signaling a new beginning. The hope is that Muslim women will continue progressing toward greater equality and empowerment in their communities. While the journey may be prolonged, the commitment to change remains unwavering, providing a foundation for future advancements in the cause of women's rights in Kerala.

GLOSSARY

Bidath, Bida'a	:	Innovation in religious matters.
Dars	:	Traditional Islamic educational institution attached to mosques.
Fatwa	:	Legal decision if a recognized Muslim jurist or scholar
Islahi, Salafi	:	Reformist group, later organized as Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen
Jaram	:	Tomb
Hijab	:	Veil
Karanavan	:	Head of a matrilineal family
Karnothi	:	Female head a matrilineal family
Kaathukuth Kalyalnam	:	Ear - boring ceremony
Moulavi	:	A title of respect for a Muslim religious teacher, especially the reformist
Musliyar	:	A title of respect for a Muslim religious teacher, especially the traditional
Marumakkattayam	:	Matrilineal system of Inheritance
Madhab	:	School of Islamic jurisprudence
Mollaka	:	Helpers in Mazjids and sometimes teaches at Madrassa
Mollachi	:	Female madrassa teacher

Nercha	:	Heligious festival in honor of a saint
Shirk	:	Practicing idolatry or polytheism
Sunni	:	Traditional Muslims in Kerala
Thajdeed	:	Islamic Revival
Thouheed	:	Oneness concept of monotheism in Islam
Talaq	:	Divorce
Ulema	:	Theologians or scholars well versed in Islamic Sciences.

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Appendix

Eminent Personalities – Selected Photos



Usthath Kunjamina - *Mollachi*



Usthath Ayshath - *Mollachi*



T.C. Kunhachumma



Ayisha Mayeen



M. Haleema Beevi



Mahila Samajam, Thalassery