

Towards the Development of Education System among the Muslims in Kerala: An Assessment

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Abstract

Muslims in Kerala are endowed with rich culture, religious traditions, and social ethos. Differing from the other areas of India, Kerala remained and remains the hub of business activities. The trade relationship between Kerala and Arabia in pre-Islamic era which later on resulted into the spread of Islam in the region—by peaceful means and ways and not by coercion. With the dissemination of Islam, Muslims in the region began to develop their educational setup wherein the Masajid were used to impart education to the Muslims and the system was known as ‘dars’.

The contemporary situation coupled with the unending challenges, compelled religious leaders to revisit vis-à-vis system of education as a whole. Realizing the shortcomings of the current system, they revised the curricula, syllabi and text books in the Madaris. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Muslims of Kerala were steeped in ignorance and superstition and resisted any call to modern education that resulted into the marginalization of the Muslims of Kerala. During this period, at large, there were no efforts from the side of the Muslim leadership to alter the situation. However, after Malabar Revolt (1921), Muslim intellectuals in Kerala initiated a two-fold campaign which expounded strict scriptural Islam on the one hand and modern education on the other. Slowly but surely it resulted in the modernization and Islamisation—an interesting twin process—of the Muslim community in Kerala.

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In this direction, this paper is a humble endeavor to analyze historically the development of education (traditional and modern) in Kerala on the one side and evolving system as a role model for the Muslims of other places in India on the other.

Introduction

Kerala is a small state located in the south west coast of India representing only 1.18 percent of the total area of India and 3.4 percent of the Indian population. At the time of independence this region was ruled by three administrations, two princely states, Travancore and Cochin, and Malabar which was under the direct administration of the British. These three units were united to form the present Kerala on 1st November 1956. The state constitutes 14 districts and the total Muslim population of it as per the census of 2001 is 23.33 percent of the total population. This section, mainly comprising the *Mappila* community and possessing an ethnic individuality and distinct identity of its own, has particularly invited attention because of the significant role played in the Indo-Arab and Indo-European trade relations of the past several centuries.

Spread of Islam in Kerala

It has been indisputably proved that Arabia had trade relations with Indian ports long before the establishment of the Roman Empire.ⁱ These trade contacts helped immensely for the mutual co-operation between the two subcontinents and the advent of Islam in Indian shores during the early period of Islam and the formation of an innate cultural entity. The long-standing Arab contact with the coastal areas of India has left its permanent mark in the form of several communities. The navigators and tradesmen came from Arabian shores and some of them settled in the coastal areas marrying local women. They never brought women folk from Arabia. The native rulers extended all facilities and protection to them because their presence was needed for the prosperity of the Rajas. Kerala was also one of the most important areas on the western coast of India where the Arabs found a fertile soil for the trade activities.ⁱⁱ The community formed in Kerala as a result of the Arab contact, is termed as *Mappila*. The word *Mappila* is derived from the two Dravidian words, *Maha* (great) and *Pilla* (child).ⁱⁱⁱ

In Kerala, Islam spread without support of any Muslim kingdoms. Intensive missionary activities took place on the coastal area and a number of natives supplemented to the mould of Islam because of the utter backwardness and social disabilities of the down-trodden people. Thus, among the *Mappilas*, we find both the descendants of the Arabs through local women

and the converts among the local people. The work of missionaries was instrumental in a big way in the spread of Islam in these regions. The democratic ideals and universal brotherhood of Islam, the existence of Arab colonies and geographical features of the area, the huge contribution of Muslim traders to the treasury and the cruelties of caste system. Political and religious factors in the region and the positive attitude of the native rulers were the main factors which made Kerala a fertile soil for Islam.

Development of Traditional Education System

The system of traditional education in Kerala, especially in Malabar, must have started at the same time as the first few Masjids were established in Kerala.^{iv} This system evolved over a thousand year period and even though for a century there was great emphasis on modern education, the traditional education system survived and with the addition of some new trends it continued to thrive. In Kerala there exists different levels of traditional education system, which has been categorized and termed as follows: –*Dars*^v, *Othupalli*^{vi} (*maktabs*) and *Madrasas*^{vii}.

Reforms of *Othupallis* or Madrasa Movement

Actually the *Othupallis* or *Maktabs* were replaced by madrasas in the first decade of the 20th century and they became an effective primary academic movement in modern times. Modern education and progressive ideas made the religious leaders to consider the question of educational reforms. They began to realize the defects of *Othupalli* and *Dars* systems of education. Then madrasas with revised curriculum, syllabus with text books were established. The forerunner of this movement was A.M. Koyakunchi who founded *Ma'danul 'Ulum Madrasa* in Kannur in 1911. Such madrasas were also established in Kuttyadi, Badagara and Calicut. The study on the madrasa system of education in Kerala would not be completed without bring up the contribution of ChalilakathKunchu Ahmad Haji (1866-1919) and his reforms. He was one of the foremost religious scholars of the 19th century. He realized that the traditional education at primary stage was to be reformed. He was the real founder of the *Madrasa Movement*, according to Sharafudeen; “He was responsible for the modernization of *Madrasa* education and also the reformatory ideas went a long way in reviving traditional education on a systematic and proper basis”.^{viii}

He was responsible for starting a movement for the reform of madrasas. He was the *SadarMudaris* (principal) of the *Thanmiyathul Uloom Madarasa* at Vazhakkad.^{ix} First he

started higher classes in the madrasa on modern lines and renamed it as *Darul Uloom Arabic College*.^x It was the first Arabic College in Malabar as well as in Kerala. In that Arabic College subjects like Malayalam, Logic, Astronomy, Geography, Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Quran and Hadith were taught. For teaching these new topics modern teaching aids such as globes, maps, atlases, charts, photos, models, latest dictionaries, etc. were used.^{xi} He also used the modern examination system on western lines in this college. Haji was not satisfied with the reform of this Arabic College. He realized that the traditional education at primary stage was also to be reformed. So he started a primary madrasa at Vazhakkad with the help of his students. He started classes in the madrasa also on modern lines. While Islamic educational reforms were introduced by Chalilakath Kunchu Ahmad Haji in Malabar, in Southern Kerala Vakkam Abdul Qadir Maulavi (1873-1932) was introducing reforms on similar lines. He advocated reforms in religious educational system. He also tried to introduce Arabic language in Government and Private Schools.^{xii}

The madrasas that are found largely across the state are the reformed versions of earlier *othupallies*, which are imparting knowledge about fundamental Islamic teachings. Students, both boys and girls, attend a madrasa for two hours daily, early in the morning or late in the evening, thus allowing them to study at regular schools as well. The course is parallel to school education; from 1st standard to 10th standard and even 12th in some places. But generally the course was 5 to 7 years education in practice. There are regular examinations and inspections and the promotion of students is based on their performances.^{xiii}

These madrasas give another example of a creative response of religious elite to the post independence situations. It was the response of religious elite to the post-independence situations. It was the response of the Kerala government's decision to ban the teaching of religion in state-supported schools. It was after independence that madrasa system grew into a movement, which appears to be wonder and the strength of Mappila Islam.^{xiv} In contrast to maktabas or madrasas in much of North India, most Kerala madrasas are affiliated to and run by centralized organizations. The most important among these organizations are *Samastha Kerala Jamiathul Ulema*, *Akhila India Sunni Jamiathul Ulema*, the *Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen* and the *Jamathe Islami*. *Samstha Kerala Jamiathul Ulema* run 7865 madrasas.^{xv} While *Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen* run more than 500 madrasas.^{xvi} There are 151 madrasas under *Jamathe Islami*.^{xvii} There are again more than thousand madrasas under *Akhila India Sunni Jamiathul Ulema*, *Dakshina Kerala Jamiathul Ulema* and *Samsthana Jamiathul Ulema*.

The organized system of primary religious education has not only resolved Muslims' concern for basic Islamic education, but also facilitated positive attitudinal changes in secular schooling. Thus, far from being discouraged to study at regular schools in addition to the madrasas, they are generally encouraged to do so. Now there is widespread trend of English medium schools run by the above mentioned organizations which are following the madrasa syllabus along with the general English medium syllabus.

Development of Modern Education

Until the first decade of the twentieth century Muslim education in the State was mainly concerned with *Dars*, *Othupallisor Maktabs* and *Madrasas* – where traditional education is imparted and their education was mainly religious in character. History shows that Kerala Muslims were slow to come to terms with modern education. The *Mappila* community of colonial Kerala constituted a highly marginalized section of the society. For a long time, there were no efforts from the side of the *Mappila* leadership to alter the situation. On the contrary, the afore-explained backwardness and social exclusion was defended and legitimized using religion. The argument was that Malayalam is the Hindu-language and English is the language of British and it is the language spoken in the Hell, and therefore Muslims ought to remain illiterate in them. Womens' education was also discouraged in the name of religion. In the second half of the nineteenth century, *Salafi* movement made its debut in Kerala. The *Mappila* opposition to Malayalam, English and womens' education were regional innovations without any sanction from the Prophet. The *Salafi* intellectuals in Kerala, therefore, branded the anti-education stance of the community as un-Islamic. They initiated a two-fold campaign - a campaign which expounded strict scriptural Islam on the one hand and modern education on the other. This gradually resulted in the modernization and Islamisation- an interesting twin process -of the *Mappilas*. The pioneer of the movement was Sayed Sana'ullah Makthi Thangal (1847-1912). He was born at Ponnani Taluk in Malappuram district in 1847. He completed his primary traditional education under his father in a traditional way and secular education in higher secondary school, Chavakkad in Thrissur District. He completed his traditional education from different *maktabs* and became expert in Malayalam, Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Tamil and Sanskrit.^{xviii}

He pointed out that the *Mappila* refusal to learn English and Malayalam would only contribute to further marginalization of the community. He advised the *ulema* to modify their education system and syllabus. His teachings helped the Muslim community to understand the

importance of modern education. In his lifetime, MakthiThangal was criticized by majority of the *Mappilas*. However, he could make a group of active sympathizers at Kodungallur (a place in Thrissur district today). ChalilakathKunchu Ahmad Haji was also one of them. They worked sincerely for the social, political, religious and educational upliftment of the Muslim community. At that time education of Muslim girls was positively discouraged by orthodox *ulema*; he set a new example to others by sending his own daughters to school.^{xix} He advised the Muslim community to send their children to school for education.

E. K. Maulavi reached Kodungallur in 1918 and M.C.C Abdurrahman Maulavi joined him there in 1921. Due to the presence of the sympathizers of MakthiThangal, E. K. Maulavi and M.C.C Abdurrahman Maulavi found it easy to work at Kodungallur. KottappurathSeethi Muhammad and ManappattKunchu Muhammad Haji patronized the newly arrived scholars from Malabar. These two elites were already involved in educational activities. They could enroll many Muslim youngsters in schools and as such, Kodungallur was different from other Muslim-dominated villages in Kerala in this regard. In 1922, K. M. Maulavi, who was the secretary of *EranadTalukKhilafat Committee* during the rebellion in 1921 and the ‘*Kathib*’ (scribe) of ChalilakathKunch Ahmad Haji at DarulUloom, also reached Kodungallur. He was searched by the British authorities for his alleged complicity in the violent phase of the rebellion.

The ample presence of ideologues in Kodungallur encouraged them to deliberate for an organizational setup. A committee named ‘*NishpakshaSangham*’ was formed in 1922 with Muhammad HamdhaniThangal as the president. The aim was to ‘end an untoward row’ which was continuing between some Muslim families in the locality for many years, and to ‘nurture unity and brotherhood’ in the community. In the same year, the committee was dissolved and an all-Kerala organization called ‘*Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham*’ was formed in its place. The agenda of ‘*AikyaSangham*’ was much more elaborate than that of the ‘*Nishpaksha Sangham*’. It included calling Kerala-Muslims back to the original sources of Islam viz. the Quran and the Hadith, opposing polytheistic beliefs and priest-innovated religious rituals which were extant in the community, spreading religious as well as modern education, and supporting womens’ education. The ‘*AikyaSangham*’ bid to encourage womens’ education was heavily criticized by its Sufi opponents.

The Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham

Kerala Muslim AikyaSangham was the first collective initiative of Muslim intelligentsia in the State which discussed the socio-religious and educational aspects of the community. Kodungallur has a unique place in the history of Muslims in Kerala since the advent of early Arabs. The formation of *Sangham* took place in Kodungallur under the leadership of Kottapurath Seethi Muhamad Sahib in 1922.^{xx}The movement was led by Manappatt Kunchumhammad Haji, KottappurathSeethi Muhammad, K. M. Seethi, Muhammad Abdurrahman, E. MoithuMavlavi, K. M. Mavlavi, E. K. Mavlavi and M. C. C. Abdurrahman Mavlavi. AikyaSangham propagated its ideas through its journals- *Al Irshād*, *Al Islāh*, *Muslim Aikyam* and *Aikyam*- and annual conferences.It was the first all Kerala Organization of Muslims. The aims and objectives of the Sangham were laid down as follows:^{xxi}

1. To unite all Muslims by removing their internal differences for the general welfare of the community;
2. To educate the people through classes, pamphlets and public lectures;
3. To establish a forum consisting of selected members from the Sangham, to settle disputes among Muslims and make all-round efforts to dissuade Muslims from entering into such disputes;
4. To reform the religious, moral and economic conditions of Muslims by removing anti – Muslim activities.

The annual conferences of the AikyaSangham were held continuously from 1923 – 1934. All these annual sessions were presided over by prominent Muslim scholars like Moulana Abdul Jabbar Hazrath (Principal, BakiyathuSwalihath, Vellore), Khan Bahadur Muhammad Shamnad, Moulana Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthal, Muhammadali Kasoori Sahib, Dr. Abdul Haq (Member, PSC, Madras), Khan Bahadur Mir Zainudheen Sahib, (District and Session Judge, North Malabar), Moulana Sayyid Abul Wahab Bukhari Sahib, B. Poker Sahib and Abdul Majeed Sahib.^{xxii}

The first anniversary of ‘*AikyaSangham*’ was held at Eriyad in 1923. The conference was attended by a large number of people from different quarters such as Muhammad Sheruy (Kasaragod), Kalla Abdullah Sahib, B. Mammu Sahib (Talacheri), V. KunhiMoheen Haji (Mahi). The conference was presided over by Vakkam Abdul QadirMavlavi. Abdul Qadir Mavlavi was the leader of Salafis in Travancore. He was famous for his ‘*Swadeshābimāni*’ (1906-1910) newspaper, the first Malayalam journal to have direct link with Reuters. He was appointed by the government to prepare Arabic text books for the public schools in Travancore. The conference decided to establish an Aligarh-model Muslim college at Aluva.

The second annual conference (10-12 May 1924-Aluva) formed '*Kerala Jam'iyathul Ulama*', an organization of Muslim scholars, so as to guide the community in general and '*AikyaSangham*' in particular. The third conference of '*AikyaSangham*' (1-2 June 1925-Calicut) demanded appointment of Arabic teachers in government schools. In 1926, Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall was the president of the annual meeting (15-16 May 1926-Tellichery). Pickthall's lecture was focused on the contribution of early Muslims to modern science, and on the need to recapture that past. In this manner, AikyaSangham conducted twelve annual conferences.

AikyaSangham workers were able to keep their consensus on theology intact through these twelve years. But they got divided on political lines. Muhammad Abdurrahman and E. MoithuMavlavi argued for a nationalistic and anti-British AikyaSangham whilst K. M. Seethi, K. M. Mavlavi and E. K. Mavlavi advocated a pro Muslim-League organization. The League-faction could dominate the Sangham at the end of the day. The twelfth conference (1934, Arakkal Palace, Cannanore) decided to dissolve the platform, and to merge with '*Kerala Muslim Majlis*' which was a political-collective run by Muslim League sympathizers in Malabar. In 1936, *Kerala Muslim Majlis* dissolved itself in Malabar District Muslim League. AikyaSangham leaders decided to keep *Jam'iyathul Ulama* functional even after the dissolution of the Sangham so that the religious part of the movement could be continued. This organization is still working in Kerala. But it had the limitation that it could not give membership for the common Salafi sympathizers who were not religious scholars. In 1950, '*Jam'iyathul Ulama*' launched '*Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen*'-a mass Salafi movement which incorporated common public in its activities- to remove this handicap. The Salafi Muslims in Kerala are now generally known as 'Mujahids' after the name of this organization.

The 12 year long activities of '*Kerala Muslim AikyaSangham*' resulted in the introduction of Islamic Studies in government schools, stipend for Muslim girl-students in the erstwhile Cochin state, and the permission for Muslim girls to wear Islamic dress in schools. *Sangham* had formed a '*Muslim AikyaIsha'ath Committee*' to intellectually defend Islam in the context of the Christian as well as *AryaSamaj* missionary activities in Kerala. *Sangham* created a new community-based political consciousness, and contributed to the consolidation of Muslim-identity feelings in Kerala.

Advocacy of Vakkam Moulavi (1873-1932) towards Education

Vakkam Abdul Kader Moulavi was one of those rare men whose greatness was recognized while he was alive, being the chief architect and a towering leader of Muslim revivalism. His unparalleled intellectual approach towards the milieu of Muslims in Kerala made an enormous impetus in the socio-educational arena. Moulavi imbibed religious as well as general education ideas from various scholars of the world and he endeavoured to disseminate the light of knowledge across the State. In order to overcome the distressing backwardness of the Muslims in the state, he forecasted a definite and realistic groundwork for the social and educational upliftment of the community.^{xxiii}

Moulavi was born in a noble and respectable family called PoonthranVilakom at Vakkam, in Thiruvananthapuram District on December, 28, 1873. Studious and intelligent Abdul Khader soon became proficient in different languages like English, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit, as well as Arabic. He acquired immense knowledge through his untiring efforts and became a master of a wide variety of subjects. On finding that most of the Muslim masses were illiterate in their mother-tongue Malayalam, Moulavi resorted to the use of Arabi-Malayalam, it was written in Arabic script, adapted to suit the Malayalam alphabet. It was an attempt to provide for the Muslim common folks a special medium for their religious literature. This self-styled linguistic connotation prepared by Moulavi to teach the illiterates, including house wives, in the community to lead them outside of their rigid and parochial world.^{xxiv}

Moulavi carried out some extensive campaigns throughout the state showing the deplorable condition of Muslims. He convened a meeting of the Muslim elite at Thiruvananthapuram. The meeting prepared a memorandum consisting of the following demands to submit to the government for the promotion of Muslim education:

1. To appoint Arabic Munshis to teach Arabic in the schools,
2. To appoint two inspectors for the inspection of Arabic teaching in schools,
3. To grant scholarships to Muslims students from Metric classes, and
4. To disburse full teaching grant to Muslim schools.^{xxv}

The government paid adequate attention to the memorandum submitted by Moulavi and his companion. The demands began to be implemented by the government phase by phase so that the community also became aware of general education provided for their children. Some local committees were proposed to take the responsibility of encouraging the parents to send their children to the schools. These initiatives were welcomed from many quarters. The government appreciated Moulavi's service to the community for the cause of education and considered it remarkable.^{xxvi} The government appointed Vakkam Moulavi as the Inspector of

Muhammadan Schools. He had been entrusted to prepare a curriculum for the scientific execution of secondary education under this board. For the promotion of Muslim education, the Maharajas of Travancore extended very much assistance to the Muslim pupils. Special fee concession was granted to Muslim children, Arabic Munshis were appointed in elementary schools from the year 1915 – 1916, Arabic has been announced as a second language, six Muslim vernacular schools were opened in 1918 – 1919 and a number of these schools were extended in 1923 – 1924.

In order to further the expansion of Muslim education in the State an Arabic Examination Board was constituted; Vakkam Moulavi was made the president and Member of the board. It was this board that drafted the syllabi and the text books for the different classes. Moulavi prepared curriculum for Arabic teaching in the State. He prepared a few books like *Ta'leemul Quran* and *Adduroosul Adabiya* for Primary and secondary classes respectively. His work *Ahkamut Tajweed* was exclusively written for the Quran teachers.^{xxvii} During the academic year 1946-47 the total number of enrolment was 46,261, out of which around one third of the students were girls. It was one of the most remarkable achievements ever witnessed in the educational history of Muslims in Travancore. This huge jump of the community in the sphere of modern female education was the outcome of relentless work rendered by Moulavi.

Moulavi had given the lead to educational efforts in Travancore and Cochin. Under his inspiring leadership several local organization like *Lajmathul Muhammaduya Sangham* of Alappuzha, *Lajannathul Hamdani* of Azhikkode and several others interested themselves in education. An Arabic teacher was also appointed to teach Arabic in the school. In April, 1915 when Maharaja Srimulam Thirunal visited Alleppey, the *Lajnattul Muhammadiya Sangham* submitted a memorandum detailing the difficulties experienced by the community in the field of education. In response to this petition, the Government took the following steps. Moulavi was unlike other reformers of the community, not only was he sitting somewhere and writing some meaningful articles but also he maintained a close association with government authorities, thereby he could bring to their notice, the distressing matters of Muslims. To a certain extent, this could find some affirmative consequences from the part of the government. There is no doubt about the assertion that there were two gigantic personalities and their attendant golden epochs in the twentieth century, pertaining to the development of Muslim education.

Role of Muslim League in Post-Independence Era

1947 was obviously a turning point for the rank and file of the All India Muslim League all over the subcontinent. Muslim League leaders who remained in India after partition were very few and a staple of that 'very few' did not take interest to sustain the party in the country. But the League leadership in Malabar and Madras was greatly concerned about the plight of the party and the community in India after independence and partition. K. M. Seethi Sahib, who was the leader of the Salafi Movement as well as the Muslim League in Malabar at the time of partition, played a crucial role in defeating the attempts of the North Indian League leaders to dissolve the party. Seethi Sahib and Qa-ide Millath Muhammad Ismail Sahib managed to continue with the party in Madras, especially in Malabar. RoudathulUloom Association, a cultural-educational platform developed by some scholars of Malabar in 1942, was able to establish a first grade aided BA College at Farook near Calicut in 1948 with the political as well as financial aid of Madras state Muslim League.

K. M Seethi Sahib became the speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly in 1961. He was the first ever Muslim League speaker in post independent India. The 1967 Left Front ministry in Kerala was a landmark in the history of the post partition Malabar Muslim League for League had its own ministers in it- C.H. Muhammad Koya and M. P. M. Ahmad Kurikkal. From this time, any one of the contending political fronts in Kerala always gave League a space to cooperate, and assigned ministerial portfolios to it when elected. The representation which League had in various coalition-ministries in Kerala after 1960s facilitated the sanction of many aided Muslim-colleges in Malabar. Scholarships were introduced for Muslim girl students. Calicut University was established in 1968 in the Muslim majority area of Malappuram district.

C.H. Muhammad Koya

C.H. Muhammad Koya, the 10th Chief Minister of Kerala, of the Indian Union Muslim League, was one of the most outstanding personalities in the history of modern Kerala and the guiding force for the Muslim community of the State. An able leader with a tremendous mass following, an eminent journalist, author of a dozen books, silver-tongued orator, exemplary statesman and founder of the University of Calicut, C.H. was all these and more.^{xxviii} C.H. was born in a lower middle class family from where he rose to become the chief minister of the state. While in power, he handled the portfolios of home, education, public works, tourism, social welfare, *Waqf* and revenue. But his hands remained free from corruption. Only after his death it was detected that his tiny house had been mortgaged.

C.H. was appointed as minister of education in the EMS Namboodirippad ministry in 1967.^{xxix} The education department was his deliberate choice. He knew the importance of education to his community and to the masses in general. Many of his friends warned him not to take up that portfolio, as it was a nightmare for all those who had handled it earlier. It must have been the backwardness of his own community in the sphere of education that prompted him to take up the challenge. Keeping this view in mind, C.H. reiterated his demands for the educational advancement of the community through his meaningful speeches in the Legislative Assembly many times.^{xxx} As minister of education he was instrumental in formulating many progressive reforms. It is worth remembering that the policy of making education free up to the tenth standard was implemented during his tenure.

As a means to attract Muslims to modern education, he introduced Arabic as a subject in schools and colleges. When he became the education minister, facility of studying Arabic was available only in three colleges. Within a short span of time, he introduced Arabic in almost in all colleges for BA and MA classes as well as second language for degree – pre-degree classes. In fact, being the education Minister of the State, CH served the State as well as the community with an inimitable stewardship. He categorically stated:

“If you ask me what specifically is my single achievement during the course of my fairly long term of education minister-ship in the Government of Kerala I would answer without any hesitation that it was the establishment of the Calicut University”^{xxxi}

In the same manner it could be observed that his greatest achievement for sake of the community during his tenure was the creation of 12000 vacancies for Arabic teachers.^{xxxii} The children of those Arabic teachers have come out with excellent educational qualifications including professional degrees. A large number of schools and colleges were granted by the League in the educationally backward areas. With the emergence of these institutions, education of Muslims in the State improved dramatically. In short, nobody can deny the fact that the overall educational development of the community across the State is the impact of the ‘CH effect’ and the League’s contribution.

Farook College—‘the Aligarh of Malabar’^{xxxiii}

The advent of Farook College in 1948 and a network of sister institutions in its campus indicated a new era in the history of Muslim education in Kerala. This has been pointed out to be the first institutional efforts of the community to come to terms with advanced modern liberal education.^{xxxiv} It was the only first grade college in central Malabar at the time of its

inception and was originally affiliated to Madras University in 1948.^{xxxv} Following the states' reorganization, the college came under the University of Kerala in 1957 and under the University of Calicut in 1968. The College celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1999- 2000.

The Farook College was the culmination of the cherished dream of the Muslim intelligentsia in the early period of the twentieth century. The series of Islamic seminars and the drift in the AikyaSangham finally resulted in the formation of RaulathulUloom Association. The first institution the 'RouzathulUloom Arabic College' was started in 1942 in Anakkayam, offering higher education, in Quran, Sunnah, Islamic Studies and Arabic Language and Literature up to the post graduate level. In 1946 a committee was formed with the intention of starting a first grade college. This committee consisted of MoulaviAbussabahAhamed Ali Sahib (President), Adv. MV. Hydross Sahib (Secretary), M. KunhoyiVaider (Asst. Secretary) and seven other members.^{xxxvi} However, apart from this most prestigious College, under the patronage of RauzathulUloom Trust, many allied institution such as a Training College, Educational Centre and a Residential School are effectively functioning today. The total present strength of these institutions is around 7000 students and the the lion's share of these students belong to the Muslim community. Certainly, Farook was unlike other colleges in the State, an inspiring instrument for the birth of many modern educational institutions within the community after that.

Conclusion

It is an undeniable fact that Kerala has witnessed a significant development of Muslims in the field of education (traditional and modern).The history of Kerala Muslim renaissance shows that some prominent Muslim leaders in Kerala, Muslim League and Indian National Congress always stood active in Kerala before and after partition. This helped the Muslims achieve some educational/social ends which alleviated the backwardness of the community. The Arabic and Islamic learning was exercised in schools from the dawn of 20th century onwards.The last four decades have witnessed an amazing transformation in the educational status of Muslims in Kerala. There are a large number of educational institutions that are run by various Muslim managements owing allegiance to both stream of education, religious and modern in character. Almost all district headquarters in the State have at least one Association for the sake of Muslim welfare and education. Muslim Educational Society (MES), Muslim Service Society (MSS), KMCT, Muslim Association Trivandrum, Kollam, Alappuzha and so on are relentlessly rendering services to the community. All these efforts have to be

coordinated together for the deliverance of qualitative and inclusive education in the community. Most of the Muslim organizations have special wings to give educational and career guidance and indicates to what extent educational activism has reached Muslims of Kerala.

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^{iv} Ahmad Maulavi, C. N., *MahthayaMappilaSahithyaParamaryam* (Malayalam), Kozhikode, 1978, p.26

^v In Kerala the *Dars* were the centers of higher education system attached with masjids.

^{vi} *Othupalli* is a Malabaric terminology generally used to call primary school to impart religious and Arabic education for Muslim boys and girls. It is known as *maktab* in North India. It is a center to teach the Arabic script, the recitation of the Quran and performance of *Namaz*, thus initiating a child into the basics and ritual of Islam. It was found in almost all Muslim localities in Kerala.

^{vii} The term Madrasa currently used in scientific and professional journals, academic departments and institutions, a centers of higher Islamic learning. In Kerala Madrasa used for a Islamic religious school for younger children for the teaching of the Quran, Arabic and basic knowledge about Islam.

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- ^{xxv} Muhammad Kannu, '*Vakkom Moulavi and Renaissance Leaders*', Trivandrum, 1988, p. 35.
- ^{xxvi} Quoted by Muhammad Kannu, *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
- ^{xxvii} *Ibid.*, p. 145.
- ^{xxviii} *Milli Gazette*, New Delhi, May, 2010.
- ^{xxix} Information and Public Relation Records, Government of Kerala.(updated version 2010)
- ^{xxx} *Proceedings of Kerala State Legislative Assembly*, 1967, Vol. XIV, No. 19, Cols. 4054-55., Kerala Legislative Assembly Library, Trivandrum.
- ^{xxxi} *University of Calicut News*, Calicut University, 1975, p.2.
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