Chapter II

Socio-Cultural Conditions of Muslims in Karnataka
1. Introduction

Socio-cultural condition of a region is generally considered an indicator of measuring the development level of any community. Karnataka is today experiencing unprecedented transformations in the society, economy and the socio-cultural practices of its people. Muslims of Karnataka have their own socio-religious and cultural identity in the state. The Karnataka Muslims has greatly contributed to the state's culture and arts. Muslim craftsmen brought varied foreign architectural elements to bear on the Indo-Muslim buildings. The Muslims in Karnataka developed literary and spoken languages of their own like Dakhini Urdu, Beary, Nawayati etc. Muslims progressed and fortified the foundations of the Islamic civilization in Karnataka during the rule of the Bahmani Sultans (1347 - 1538 C.E.), then, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur (1489 - 1686 C.E.), the Barid Shahis of Bidar (1487 - 1619 C.E.), the Mughals (1657-1757 C.E.), and finally, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan (1761-1799 C.E.). As an outcome, today a majority of Muslims in Karnataka speak Urdu language.

The Indo-Arab trade relations have been persistent even before the advent of Islam in India. These trade relations bringing out cross-cultural relations between the two sub-continents eventually lead to the spread of Islam in the coastal areas of India in the early years. This yielded the formation of an innate cultural entity in the coastal areas besides giving rise to some specific communities in such areas. Coastal area of Karnataka 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. The communities that were eventually formed in the coastal area of Karnataka as a result of the Arab contact are termed as Beary and Nawayat.

Muslim Arab traders had begun relations with the coastal areas of Karnataka (then Malabar) as early as 7th century C.E. Ibn Batuta, in his travelogue (Rihlah), written in 1342 C.E., has mentioned a Muslim state in Hinnaur (Presently known as Honnawar and it is Udupi district of Karnataka), and has revealed that even at that time separate institutions were established for girls' education. The generations of Arab Muslims present in the Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts of south-west coastal Karnataka are Beary, and Nawayat. These people speak Beary, and Nawayati languages respectively.
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2. Muslim Rule in India: Tolerance and Harmony

Sind was the first territorial acquisition of the Muslims in India, though commercial and intellectual intercourse between the Arabs and the Indians had existed long before the Arab conquest of Sind and a number of Arab colonies had sprung up on the Indian coast. The invasion of Sind by Muhammad bin Qasim al-Thaqafi in 712 C.E. was triggered by the failure of Dahir, the ruler of Sind, to punish the pirates who had plundered the ship of the Arab traders and had made their family as captives passing the coast of Debal. The Muslim kings and emperors who ruled over India for over one thousand years were not colonial rulers but made the subcontinent their own home. They did not make any discrimination between religious communities but gave equal opportunity and ensured social justice to all irrespective of their religious affinity.

This is well-established by the fact that although Delhi remained the capital of Muslim rulers for 651 years (1206-1857 C.E.), the Muslims were a small minority there throughout the period. According to the 1971 census, the Muslims of Delhi constituted only 7.8 percent of the total population of the city. The bulk of the indigenous converted Muslims—artisans, craftsmen, and tillers—did not enjoy any privilege under the system of Muslim rule. Rather high caste groups from among Hindus enjoyed greater privileges under the patronage of the Muslim monarchies. In many cases, the most important jobs like those of ministers and chiefs of army were given to non-Muslims, especially Hindus.

During Muslim rule, there was complete social peace and harmony all over the country. This is aptly proved by the fact that history fails to produce even a single instance of communal disturbance which took place during the period of Muslim rule. Communal disturbance or violence is a phenomenon which came to be known in the sub-continent only during the British rule. This menace has emanated from the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the British colonial power.

3. Muslims under the British Rule

By the middle of the 19th century, the East India Company had emerged as ruling entity in India both in north and south of the Vindhyas. The Muslims, who had lost political ascendancy, were relegated merely to their social affairs. The political rule of the British in India had longstanding effects upon Indian Muslims. Lord
Dufferin (1826-1902 C.E.), the Viceroy of India describes the Muslims of British India in November 1888 as “a nation of 50 million, with their monotheism, their iconoclastic fanaticism, their animal sacrifices, their social equality and their remembrance of the days when, enthroned at Delhi, they reigned supreme from the Himalayas to Cape Cormorin”.

The process of colonization of India by the British colonial power began in 1757 C.E. with the downfall of Siraj-ul-Dawla, the ruler of Bengal. This was the outcome of a staged drama, known as the Battle of Plassey, where the main actors were the British East India Company, a group of Hindu aristocracy and their stooge, named, Mir Jafar (commander-in-chief of the government army). The British emperor took up the reign of the sub-continent in 1858 following the abortive first war of independence in 1857 led by the Muslims against the colonial forces. The new colonial authority regarded the Muslims as a potential threat to their political power as it were the Muslims from whom they had snatched the power. The Muslims, naturally, were hostile to the alien rule and showed their apathy to the new administration. Most of the Hindus, on the other hand, welcomed the new masters, began flirting with them and reoriented themselves with the blessings and sympathy of the ruling class.

Therefore, from the very beginning the British rulers adopted a discriminatory policy, hostile towards the Muslims and sympathetic towards the Hindus. The privileges earlier enjoyed by the Muslims in terms of property rights, etc., were withdrawn, government jobs were denied to them and trade facilities were made restricted for them. In terms of education, they offered an antipathy towards the English system and thus remained backward in this aspect also. All these factors combined together relegated them to a lower cadre in the new social order of the country.

The Hindus, especially the Brahmans, readily cooperated with the new rulers and did not fail to seize any opportunity to upgrade their status in any sphere of life. It did not take them much time to emerge as a dominant denomination of the society. The spread of English based education gradually made a new renaissance movement in the Hindu community who secured tremendous achievements in the areas of education, trade and the government employment. The Muslims were much behind the conscious Hindu community and their noncooperation with the new
administration was only adding to their miseries and backwardness. However, it was too late for Muslims to realize this. W.W. Hunter describes this new experience of the Indian Muslims as follows:

Instead of being the owners of the country suddenly deprived of their rights and bound to regain them, they have become what is technically called mustamin, or seekers for protection. As such they obtain from their English rulers a certain amount of their civil and religious privileges (Aman). Not indeed their former complete status under Muhammadan Rule, but sufficient for the protection of their lives and property and the safety of their souls. No interference is made with their private prayers or public worship, and their religious lands and foundations are respected.

India’s transition from the Muslim rule to that of British was gradual and was well planned out by the East India Company. Since the British were well aware of the attitude of Muslims towards the foreigners, when they first took over some of the Provinces, they left the Muslim administration absolutely undisturbed. They retained the Islamic law (Shariah) for Muslims, and appointed Muslim law officers to materialize its application.

4. Karnatak Muslims under British Rule

The British occupation of Karnatak started with the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799. The fall of Srirangapatna shocked the Muslim community. The death of their hero demolished them socially, politically and economically. The British saw Tipu in every Muslim and began suspecting them. On the advice of Purnayya (a Hindu army official of Tipu), they removed almost all Muslims from Army and other important civil posts. Even Muslims who supported Purnayya in his treachery were persecuted and driven out of the state. A few Muslims who supported Mir Sadiq, the assistant of Purnayya, were awarded pensions and driven out of Srirangapatna. Muslim Mukatib and Madaris were closed down and many learned men were forced out of Mysore. The treachery of Purnayya and Mir Sadiq made Muslims lose their political status and social authority.

Instead of serving the British under Purnayya, Muslims preferred independent professions. A few Muslims opted business and the rest switched to agriculture and unskilled professions. They were completely uprooted both politically and economically. To start business they had to borrow money from non-Muslims on
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heavy interest. The children were deprived of education. They rejected the schools opened by the English imperialists. The rejection of English schools and lack of their own schools kept their children illiterate. Other communities who had compromised with English began reaping the benefits by fetching all military and civil posts. Eventually, majority of Muslims remained illiterate and jobless. Those Muslims who could not withstand the onslaught of colonial power began compromising with the situation. They started enroll their children in English schools not visualizing the consequences. This provided an opportunity to Christian Missionaries, who began to materialize their agendas by bribing the Indians with free education. Mark Cubbon, T. Hudson and J. Gayard were specially deputed to introduce Christianity in schools. Bible study was made compulsory. The teachers were specially trained to propagate Christianity, while condemning other religions. These teachers, who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the Cross, began poisoning the young minds against their own religion.16

The British rule affected not only political conditions of Muslims but also the socio-cultural conditions of the Muslims in Karnataka. The downfall of Tipu had longstanding effects upon Karnataka Muslims. Many changes began to set in Karnataka Muslims. Due to the lack of a strong leadership, decadence and disintegration had overwhelmed all spheres of life of Karnataka Muslims. At this critical juncture western culture and civilization began to make inroads into the Karnataka Muslims.17 Since then the influence of western civilization has been the dominant factor in moulding the development of Muslims in Karnataka. Persian as the official language was discarded in 1837 and English and other vernaculars of India were put in its place. This change of language served as a constant reminder to the Muslims of their past glory.

Thus, Muslims, after losing political power, were easily overpowered with the sense of defeat, thus enveloping themselves in decadence, dejection and frustration. The institutional frame work of socio-economic life protecting the Muslims had virtually collapsed. The men of knowledge and skill were forced to flee from Srirangapatna to other states leaving a vacuum in Muslim leadership. The depression and frustration had weakened the thinking power of Muslims, whose courage and will to meet new challenges and exploit new opportunities was lost in midst of sufferings. This made them indifferent and inactive, leaving other communities to enjoy the
benefits. There arose an urgent need of community leadership which could organize the community and channelize its energies. The leadership should serve as an instrument of deliberation and discipline, as guide and teacher. Many Muslims rose to the occasion and began channelizing the energies of community into a constructive and productive ways. Under the British rule, a lot of the Muslim communities of this area became unsafe.

5. The Partition of India

The break-up of India along religious lines resulted in the movement of about 14.5 million people - Muslims going to Pakistan from India and Hindus and Sikhs going in the opposite direction. In August 1947 C.E. West and East Pakistan were separated from India rather hastily. The newly formed governments were not equipped to deal with such a massive migration - one of the largest of its kind in the world - and there was huge violence on both sides of the border. The princely State of Hyderabad with its Hindu majority decided to remain independent, though there was the People's Movement in Hyderabad State which did want a merger with India. Soon, Hyderabad was merged forcefully with the Indian Union in 1948 through a police action.

The partition of Hindustan into India and Pakistan resulted in one of the great holocausts of the 20th century. More than 10 million people changed lands and more than 1 million died in this re-shifting of borders. The brutalities of partition included rape and abduction of hundreds and thousands of women, Muslim and Hindu. The issues surrounding the injured and missing women and their children continued to plague Indo-Pakistani relations since then. The post partition era including the second-half of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century has been marked by a series of tensions between Pakistan and India, including three wars, as well as communal conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in India. Partition was a big blow to the Muslim progress in North India. The intellectual as well as financial creamy layer of the community fled to Pakistan in 1947. The common Muslims who remained in India were haunted by communal riots. Muslims were viewed with suspicion in the immediate years after the formation of Pakistan. All these factors produced immense scare and despondency in the Muslim community.
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There were many Muslims, even among the Ulama (Muslim Scholars), who were against the partition of India. The Jama'iyat-i-Ulama-i-Hind, led by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879-1957 C.E.) campaigned against the Pakistan demand from the moment of the Lahore resolution. In an exchange of letters with Iqbal in 1938 Maulana Madani had argued that Indian Muslims were fellow-nationals with other communities and groups in India, though separate from them in religion. Furthermore, Maulana Madani felt that the hatred of Muslims which, in the 1940s was already being generated by the demand for partition, together with the stirring up of feelings of contempt and fear towards Hindus, would render the peaceful preaching and spread of Islam in India impossible.

Partition of the country has devastated the social fabric of Indian Muslim community. It led to the migration of Nawabs, Zamindars, intelligencia, high service class and resourceful people to Pakistan. Those who stayed in India were mostly labourers, marginal farmers and Muslims of low income group who faced horrifying communal violence even after 60 years of independence. Having contributed in the development of India for about a millennium side by side with other communities, the Indian Muslims realized, at this juncture, in agony that they had been made strangers in their own country. In the medieval period, particularly the Mughal era, they forged a united India and made it the biggest world power of the time. They made significant contribution to enrich Indian culture and civilization. They initiated freedom movement, fought the British and made immense sacrifices until the freedom was achieved. Just having won the battle for long-cherished independence they, to their dismay, found themselves in a situation forcing them either to shed their cultural identity or leave the country. It is indeed difficult to conceive such a human tragedy.

6. Muslims in Post-Independence India

The Republic of India is home to the second-largest Muslim population in the world and the larger section of population there being the Hindu. Muslims constitute the largest minority community of this country. Their presence is visible in all the states and union territories. After India's independence in 1947 most Muslims decided to stay on in the country despite large-scale killing and violence. In the heat of what are known as the partition riots, 'not to migrate to Pakistan' was a conscious yet difficult decision for most individuals and families. Those who remained in India boldly faced the onslaught of communal violence or the threat of it. It was not that
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Communalism was absent among the Muslims of the country. In fact, it survived, with both Hindu and Muslim communalism feeding on each other. Yet, by and large, Muslims chose to ally with secular forces. However, despite this, discrimination, social stagnation and educational marginalization cumulatively resulted in growing economic backwardness of the Muslims in large parts of the country and the share of Muslims in civil services dropped drastically.26

The socio-economic condition of Muslims has not improved much before and after the independence. Until recent time there were no reliable statistics to explore the situation of Muslims including other religious minorities in India. For the first time, the data on Muslims socio-economic indicators have been released by National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) through its 43 round survey conducting during 1987-1988. The analyzed state wise data reveals that the presentation of Muslims is poor in most of the socio-economic indicators like literacy, work participation rate, land ownership, government jobs and school continuation rate.27 This socio-economic backwardness of Muslims is not merely confirmed by the individual researches and surveys, and voluntary organizations but also by various Committees appointed by Government of India from time to time. The High Power Panel under the chairmanship of Dr. Gopal Singh, set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the early 1980 to enquire into social and economic conditions of the Indian minorities, found Muslims are backward in every sphere of life in India. After 23 years, again this is evident from the findings of the Prime Minister's High Level Committee under the chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Sachar, constituted to enquire into socio-economic and educational status of Muslims.28 There appears a substantial difference in the socio-economic and political representation of major religious communities in India. Among all the religious communities, Muslims are the most socio-economically underdeveloped and politically under-representative community in Indian society. It has been noted that the underprivileged sections of this numerically significant minority group has not received social and political support from the state, in comparison to their counterparts in the Hindu community.29

7. Muslims in Karnataka: Post-Independence Scenario

The reorganization of the states of India in 1956 was done on the basis of language. This has meant that Karnataka as a federal constitutional unit has been marked out as the region inhabited by the people who primarily speak the Kannada
language. The breakdown for the different important languages spoken in Karnataka today is as follows: Kannada (66.22 %), Urdu (9.96 %), Telugu (7.39 %), Tamil (3.84 %), Marathi (3.65 %), Hindi (1.97%), Malayalam (1.69%) and Konkani (1.57 %). It must be mentioned that most of those who speak a language other than Kannada (say Urdu or Konkani) usually also speak Kannada in mundane life. However, there are two exceptions to this. Firstly, in the border districts of the region – for instance, in the northern parts of Belgaum district, the southern parts of Dakshina Kannada district, and the eastern parts of Bellary district – people may or may not speak both languages. Secondly, in the new urban centres of the city, primarily in Bangalore, there are pockets of people that speak only Hindi and English and not any of the other languages listed for the state.\textsuperscript{30} Urdu is the mother tongue for 9 percent of the population who are mainly Muslims.\textsuperscript{31}

After the reorganization of states in 1956, the present state of Karnataka came into existence. When the census was conducted for the second time in independent India in 1961, the Muslim population in Karnataka was 23.28 lakh, which was 9.87 percent of the total population. In 1961, there were only 19 districts in Karnataka, when Bidar district was on top in terms of percentage of Muslim population which had 18.6 percent of Muslims, whereas Mandya district was at the bottom of the table with 3.49 least percentage of Muslim population. It is worth mentioning that Bidar district and Mandya district maintained their status of large and least populated districts with Muslims from 1961 till 1991. Prior to the 2001 census, seven new districts were formed in Karnataka, as a result of which Dakshina Kannada district (Mangalore) stood first in terms of Muslim population with 22.07 percent, whereas Mandya district maintained its last place.\textsuperscript{32}

According to the census conducted in 2001, out of 27 districts, 17 districts had more than 10 percent of Muslim population and other 10 districts had less than 10 percent of Muslim population. In 12 districts of north Karnataka i.e. Belgaum and Gulbarga division, the percentage of Muslim population is 14.39, whereas in 15 districts of south Karnataka, the percentage is 10.15. As it is known that Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur and Koppal districts which were earlier a part of Hyderabad state, have a different identity in terms of culture language and concentration of Muslim population. Muslims are 15 percent in Gulbarga revenue division and 14 percent in Belgaum division i.e. Mumbai-Karnataka region.\textsuperscript{33}
At the time of independence, a large part of the Muslim population from north India and Hyderabad state migrated to Pakistan, and after independence, a large number of people from rural areas have been shifting to urban areas, and this process is in progress even today. It is for this reason that Muslim population is concentrated in urban areas. According to the 2001 census, the total population of Karnataka was 52850562, in which 6463127 i.e. 12.23 percent are Muslims. Out of these 3815301 i.e. 59 percent of Muslim population leave in Urban areas, whereas 2647828 i.e. 41 percent of Muslims leave in rural areas. The ratio of women when compared to 1000 men is 957, and the literacy rate is 70 percent. After independence, from 1951 to 2001, census has been conducted for six times. The percentage of Muslim population during these 50 years has risen from 9.87 percent to 12.23 percent. That means the growth rate of Muslim population is just 2.36 percent. An analysis of Muslim population in contrast with the total population since 1961 till 2001 is as follows:

### 7.1 MUSLIM POPULATION IN KARNATAKA FROM 1961 TO 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No</th>
<th>Year of Census</th>
<th>Total Population of Karnataka</th>
<th>Muslim Population of Karnataka</th>
<th>Percentage of Muslim Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2,35,86,772</td>
<td>23,28,376</td>
<td>9.87 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2,92,99,014</td>
<td>31,13,298</td>
<td>10.63 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>3,71,35,714</td>
<td>41,63,691</td>
<td>11.21 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4,49,77,201</td>
<td>52,34,023</td>
<td>11.64 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5,28,50,562</td>
<td>64,46,327</td>
<td>12.33 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the latest statistics of 2011 Census, the Muslim population in Karnataka is approximately 78 lakh, which is 12.75 percent of the total population. The increment trend of Muslim population in India and Karnataka has been different from the increment trend of the general population. There was an increase of 24.22 percent in the population of Karnataka during 1961 and 1971, whereas the increment percentage of Muslim population then was 33.71 percent. Similarly, the general
growth rate between 1971 and 1981 was 26.75 percent, whereas the growth rate of Muslim population was 33.74 percent. In the decade of 1981 and 1991 the general population increased by 21.12 percent and the Muslim population saw an increase of 25.57 percent. In the previous census in 2001 the overall population increased by 17.51 percent, whereas the Muslim population increased by 23.16 percent. Therefore, these statistics prove that the growth rate of Muslim population has been more than the general growth rate.36

8. Socio-Religious Condition of the Karnataka Muslims

Islam entered Karnataka in the 7th century C.E. mainly through Arab traders. They were fascinated by the socio-cultural scenario in this land and decided to make Karnataka their home.37 The Karnataka Muslims have their regional, linguistic and cultural specificities. A Beary Muslim is as wide apart from the Northern Karnataka's Muslim as anyone could be. There is nothing in common between two except their religion. Even religion-wise there are inter-sectarian differences. A Beary Muslim is Shafi'i (follower of Imam Shafi'i's School of Jurisprudence) whereas the Northern Karnataka's Muslim a Hanafi (follower of Imam Abu Hanifa's School of Jurisprudence). A Bhatkali Muslim, a Nawayati, apart from a Mysorean Muslim has his own specificities. The Coastal Karnataka's Muslim is as different from the Urdu speaking Bangalore Muslim. The Islamic culture of coastal Karnataka mainly came through the traders and missionaries who came along with them from the coastal regions of Arabia.38 In other parts of Karnataka the creed of Turkish Sultans was followed. It is, therefore, necessary to study the specificities of Muslims from different regions of Karnataka so that a better appreciation of the pluralism within Karnataka Muslims could be obtained.

The social structure of Karnataka Muslims has been constituted by the relationship between many communities and groups. As a matter of fact, in empirical context in spite of egalitarian norm of Islamic brotherhood, the Muslims of Karnataka are segmented into various orders and groups. Firstly, the Karnataka Muslims are segmented on the basis of Shariah laws or the schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Based on this there exist followers of two schools of Islamic law namely the Hanafis and the Shafis. However, the majority of the Karnataka Muslims are the followers of Hanafis.
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Secondly, the Muslims of Karnataka are divided among themselves into certain sects and sub sects. Of the two main Muslim sects are Sunni and Shia. Sunni Muslims are further divided into many groups or schools of thought namely, Bareli, Deoband, Ahl-i-Hadith, Jamat-i-Islami etc. Thirdly, the Muslims in Karnataka are segmented into various communities on the basis of their social honour or ethnic identity. The growth of Islam in Karnataka came through conversion, conquest, and immigration. One of the major factors in the Islamization was the state’s emphasis on translating Muslim texts into local languages. Sufi orders, which had been established in Karnataka during the early centuries, also served as grassroots transmitters of Muslim culture. Masajid, Madaris, and Makatib were continually built by Indian Muslims, sustaining community life in general and contributing to the expansion of the Islamic tradition.

The Karnataka Muslim minority has greatly contributed to the subcontinent’s culture and art. Muslim craftsmen brought varied foreign architectural elements to bear on the Indo-Muslim buildings. While avoiding the Hindu use of icons, Muslim architecture in Karnataka and other parts of India slowly began to reflect a combination of the two styles (called Indo-Muslim architecture) resulting in magnificent structures. Muslims introduced the art of miniature painting, and while their subjects were, for the most part, secular, the Hindus used this medium to express a variety of religious themes.

The Muslims in Karnataka developed a literary and spoken language of their own, Urdu (Dakhini Urdu). The Sufis, imbued with a profound zeal to propagate their mystic thought also taught the people through the local languages especially Dakhini Hindi and made ample use of Sanskrit words in their oral and written sermons. The new Muslims and the Hindu officials, soldiers, labourers and artisans were unable to speak Persian and Arabic. Consequently, a new linking language emerged and Dakhini Hindi served this purpose. Persian was employed for administrative and literary purposes and Arabic for religious purposes in the Muslim states. Influence of Persian, Arabic and Urdu languages is noticed on Kannada language. Words inherited from Muslim period of Persian origin like; Farz (duty) Payjama (loose pant) Khushi (happiness) Khuski (dry) Karamat (miracle) Itaqkat (fact) Makkur (mentioned/referred to) Ta’aqub (to follow) Kharch (spending) etc., have enriched Kannada language.

Kannada spoken in Bidar, Gulbarga, Bijapur,
Raichur, Mysore, Bangalore and Mangalore carry the flavour of the foreign languages in words as well as in accent. Urdu became the polite discours of the courts and, by the end of the Mughal period, was in common usage by Muslims throughout India.

9. Socio-Religious Conditions of Muslims in Coastal Karnataka

Muslims of coastal Karnataka have their own socio-religious and cultural identity in the country. Coastal Karnataka had established its relations with Arab region from pre-Islamic period. Spread of Islam in this area was peaceful in the first eight centuries. Muslims were an important part of that time. They lived under the non-Muslim kings with all security. They brought system of economy which was based on trade instead of agriculture. Arabians had no political interest in this region. They never tried to capture the country or convert the people to Islam by compulsion. To quote Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, "Islam was making headway quite peacefully and without adopting jingoistic methods."

The earliest Muslims in Karnataka were Arab Seafarers and merchants who settled on the coastal area of Karnataka under the protection of Hindu rulers. The coastal area of Karnataka did not experience Muslim rule until the 18th century, under Hyder Ali (1761-1782), and Tipu Sultan (1782-1799) of Mysore, and then only for a generation. The considerable Muslim population of the coastal area of Karnataka, marked by the Arab traveller Ibn Battuta (1304-1378) in the 14th century, had grown under non-Muslim power. The coastal Karnataka Muslims have their own rich culture, religious traditions and social ethos. They have their own political mind set too. Islam in Karnataka has a different history. Muslims in coastal Karnataka did not enter as conquerors or rulers. Thus the history of Muslims in coastal Karnataka is very different from that of those living in other parts of Karnataka.

The amicable relationship between the Arab traders and natives of coastal Karnataka led to the cross-cultural transmissions also. The great respect that the Arabs were honored with and the need for temporary settlement due to monsoon wind system gave more chances to mutual contacts. After the arrival of Islam in the land of Arabia, Muslim traders brought some of the natives in the coast to the fold of Islam. The Arab Muslims married with the local women and procreated thus, multiplying number of Muslims. Their descendants spread in different parts of this region. The entry of Islam was quite peaceful in coastal Karnataka and it began not by hostility
but by mutual cooperation between Muslims and the Hindus. The local people of coastal Karnataka greatly benefitted from the trade with the Arabs. It is also interesting to note here, that the Sufis played an important role in spread of Islam in coastal Karnataka. They mainly converted people from lower castes who were the victims of the upper caste discrimination. A great deal of converts came from fisher folk of coastal areas.

In the coastal area of Karnataka i.e. Bearys and Navayats, whose foundations were laid within a few years of the demise of the Prophet (SAW), had evolved as powerful inland cultivating group. Under Tipu Sultan they had enjoyed some privileges. But under the impact of European colonialism, which had cut off the lucrative Arab trade, then they gradually became a society of small traders, landless labourers and poor fishermen.

The origin of the term Beary also explains the trade connections of the Muslims of coastal Karnataka. The Muslims of coastal Karnataka increased prosperity of the region and the rulers supported them and provided all the needed facilities. The local pre-Islamic traditions, architectural styles etc. had deep imprint on the coastal Karnataka Islam. The Masjids built by the early Muslims in coastal Karnataka were not of the Arab architectural style. Its architectural style was deeply influenced by the local temple architecture. Similarities of architecture of Masjid lend additional support to this position. The domed Masjid of north India were notably absent in both regions prior to the 19th century. Writing on Masjid architecture in the coastal areas, especially in Malabar, Miller is of the view that:

The unique Mappila mosque [Masjid] architecture not only reflects the Mappila community's integration in Kerala culture, but also its isolation from Indian Islam. Instead of following the Mughul pattern, Mappila mosques observe the indigenous Jain style of architecture. Mappila tradition holds that the original mosques were built on temple sites whose lands and endowments were handed over to the first Mappila missionaries by their friendly trustees. It is surmised that this may have “set the fashion” for the future.

A possible reason for the pattern of mosque architecture was the fact that carpenters and masons who controlled the building trade were all Hindus. Though it
was partly due to the available skills of local artisans but it is also important that they
did not try to totally reject the temple architectural patterns and import artisans from
Arabia. This style continued for long and only recently the Arab Muslim architecture
was adopted.53

It should also be noted that the coastal Karnataka Muslims also are not a
homogenous lot. Those who live Dakshina Kannada district are different from those
who live in Uttara Kannada district. They have different traditions and avocations,
and their language also is different. Dakshina Kannada district’s people used to speak
Beary language and Uttara Kannada people speak Nawayati. The Muslims of coastal
Karnataka are not a ghetto community. The regional factors have deeply affected the
Muslim culture of coastal Karnataka. They are scattered all over the region and
intermingled with other religious people in their daily endeavor. There are few signs
to distinguish them from other communities even though on the surface one could see
certain features in food habits, dress and customs, and manners. But the similarities
are many. Thus, among these communities, we find both the descendants of the Arabs
through local women and the converts from among the local people. 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 systems, political and religious factors in the region
and the positive attitude of the local rulers were the main factors which made coastal
Karnataka a fertile region for Islam.54

10. Muslims Struggle for Social Justice in Karnataka and the Government’s
Response

Karnataka state has a unique position in struggle for social justice and rights of
the backwards. After the end of Tipu Sultan’s rule, Mysore state was under the British
imperialists for a long time. It was handed over to the Maharaja in 1881. Dewans
were appointed to assist the Maharaja. Incidentally the early Dewans were either
Tamil or Telugu Brahmins. They preferred the Brahmins from Madras Presidency for
top administrative posts. Since then the top administrative positions and around 80
percent of the total posts were occupied by Brahmins. This caused dissidence in other
sections of the society. Voices were raised against the Brahmins. Thus began a
campaign to end the monopoly of Brahmins. It was led by Lingayats and Vokkaligas
together.55
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On August 23, 1918, a committee was constituted by the Maharaja to look into the complaints and recommend for proper representation of all sections in the administrative jobs. It was led by Justice Miller. Nawab Ghulam Ahmed Kalami, president CMA (Central Muslim Association) was a Muslim representative in the committee. The committee submitted its report on July 18, 1919. According to this recommendation reservations were provided to the Muslims and other backward communities in the government jobs and Muslims were allowed to establish their own schools and hostels and scholarships were also granted. On the basis of recommendations of Miller Committee the Maharaja issued a government order on May 16, 1921 with regard to reserving the government jobs for the backward classes including Muslims. It is essential to mention at this point that in the Madras Presidency also which was under British rule, special facilities were made available to the backward classes. Muslims were given reservation separately. Before Miller Committee, Muslims had some facilities in Mysore State. When Miller Committee included Muslims in the backward classes list Muslims had registered their objections. They wanted separate reservation for them proportionate to their population. It was felt that Muslims were better placed before the Miller Committee. The Maharaja had ignored the objections raised by Muslims. Reservation benefits started in 1921 and were there in operation till independence of India. Later, Supreme Court termed the reservations as unconstitutional, which were based on caste and religion (Champakam Case). The government amended the constitution for first time and incorporated clauses 15(4) and 16(4).56

After independence several changes were made in Mysore State. After the reorganization of states, the condition in Mysore had taken new shape. During this time nobody paid attention towards social justice. Two major communities of Karnataka (Lingayats and Vokkaligas) occupied politics and other resources. Government issued a list of backward classes in 1959 to provide them reservations in educational institutions and government jobs. But it was set aside by the court. The government appointed a committee under the president ship of Dr. R. Nagan Gowda to identify the castes and classes which deserve reservations. The Nagan Gowda committee submitted its report on May 16, 1961. It had declared all sections of Muslims as backward. A government order dated July 31, 1962 was issued, based on the recommendations of the Committee, which declared all sections of Muslims as
eligible for reservations. But the Supreme Court struck down the government order in 1963 (Balaji Case). Since 1963 till 1972 the reservation issue was under suspension. Lingayats and Vokkaligas had formed governments after independence, but they protected the interests of their own communities. Other caste and communities were not taken care of. Injustice with backward classes continued till Devaraja Urs became the chief minister in 1972. He was the first non Lingayat and non Vokkaliga chief minister. He formed the first Backward Classes Commission in 1972 under the chairmanship of a retired High Court judge, L. G. Havnur. This commission was popularly called as Havnur Commission.\textsuperscript{57}

The Havnur Commission submitted its report to the Government in 1975. It had not considered all Muslims as backward. Its contention was that Muslims are a religious minority in this country hence they shall be considered as a special group and 6 percent reservation should be meant for them separately. In addition to this, the Commission had recommended to include some sections of Muslims on the basis of their professions by inheritance in the list of backward classes. But the government order issued in 1977 keeping in view the recommendations of Havnur Commission had included Muslims in the backward classes. This was challenged in the High Court of Karnataka (Somashekarappa Case). The Court upheld the government order and made it clear that the religious minority tag of Muslims does not prevent them from being included in the backward classes. The High Court order was challenged in Supreme Court (Vasant Kumar Case). The Supreme Court judgment came on November 23, 1983. The Supreme Court had directed the government to form one more backward class’s commission to review the backward classes list issued in 1977.\textsuperscript{58}

As per Supreme Court’s directions second backward classes commission was formed on April 18, 1984. It was headed by the former chief secretary, Karnataka Legislature Mr. T. Venkatswamy. Mr. M. Basheeruddin from Raichur was nominated as a member of the commission. T. Venkatswamy Commission submitted its report on March 31, 1986 to Rama Krishna Hegde government. This commission had also recommended considering all Muslims as backward for the sake of reservations. But the government did not accept the commission’s report. The main reason for this was the commission had not included Lingayats and Vokkaligas into backward classes list.
The Vokkaligas protested against their non-inclusion. As a result the commission report was rejected.\textsuperscript{59}

But the state government had given an undertaking to the Supreme Court that a list of backward classes would be prepared based on the recommendations of the new backward class commission. It was essential for the government to establish one more commission. Hence, under the chairmanship of former judge, O. Chinnappa Reddy, a third backward class commission was established in 1990. It was one man commission. Chinnappa Reddy Commission also recommended inclusion of all sections of Muslims as socially, economically and educationally backward community. Based on this report a government order issued in 1994 included Muslims in backward class’s category II. Another government order, issued later included them in category II (B) along with Buddhists and Christians. 6 percent reservation was recommended for this category. The very same year the famous Mandal Case (Indira Sahini Case) judgment came. The Supreme Court had fixed the maximum limit of reservations to 50 percent. In view of this ceiling categorization of backward classes was revised again in Karnataka. Muslims were given 4 percent reservation under group II (B). Some other groups of Muslims included in category I and few others in II (A) based on professions by inheritance. This was first time that all the Muslims were considered as backward and given 4 percent reservation exclusively. It is under implementation till date since 1994.\textsuperscript{60}

In the Indira Sahini Case, the Supreme Court had directed all the state governments and the central governments as well to appoint permanent Backward Classes Commissions at the earliest. The government of Karnataka enacted Backward Class Commission Act in 1995 to implement the directives of the Supreme Court. Under this Act, first permanent Backward Class Commission was constituted under the chairmanship of famous advocate Mr. Ravi Verma Kumar. This commission had recommended in its report in 200 to make one category of all the non-Hindu backward communities such as Muslims, Christians, Buddhists etc. and give reservation to them proportionate to their population and 50 percent to be reserved for the Hindu backward classes. If it was accepted Muslims would have got 6 percent reservations. But the then S. M. Krishna government showed no interest in this regard even though there were five Muslim ministers in the cabinet. After Ravi Verma Kumar, Mr. S. Muniraju was made the chairman of the Backward Class Commission
in 2001. He gave no report to the government. In 2003 Mr. Sidgengayya was made the chairman. He submitted the confidential report in 2005 which was not made public till now to the best of my knowledge. In 2007 Backward Class Commission was re-formed under the chairmanship of Dr. C. S. Dwarakanath. This commission submitted its report in 2010. This report also is yet to be made public.\textsuperscript{61}

Over the past century Muslims have been continuously making efforts to secure and upgrade their social status, though unsuccessful at large scale. Several recommendations have been put forth before the administration from time to time but their implementation had witnessed no materialization till date except for few measures taken into this account.

11. Impact of Hindu Culture on Muslim Society

The Muslims of Karnataka have been influenced by certain traditions of the community around them. The major neighboring community in Karnataka has always been Hindu. As a result, from the very early periods there have been several points of contact between the Hindus of the area and the Muslim community living within it.\textsuperscript{62} Islam was introduced to this state through Muslim Arab traders. It reached the western coast of Karnataka from across the Arabian Sea. Later, other part of Karnataka received the streams of Muslims through the invasion of Malik Kafur, a military general of Sultan Alauddin Khilji who made an incursion into Karnataka in the beginning of 14\textsuperscript{th} century C.E.\textsuperscript{63}

Muslims have been living in Karnataka state for several centuries and have adapted themselves to the social, cultural, political and economic conditions of the region. The present Muslim population did not remain isolated from the traditional Hindu society and their mutual contacts and active participation in the socio-cultural life resulted in a process of cultural diffusion. If the Islam i.e. traditions and customs influenced the Hindu way of life, the Muslims also came under the impact of the traditional Hindu culture. It appears that the Muslim society adopted many practices prevalent in the Hindu society and accordingly the Muslim society experienced some changes and modifications in their socio-cultural life. In this way, a gap between the ideals of Islam and the actual practices of the Muslim society was visible in different aspects of their life.
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The impact of Hindu culture on the Muslims in Karnataka was mainly found in respect of family life and marriage. The traditional culture of the region produced a significant impact and various elements of this culture were incorporated in the cultural life of the Muslims. Some of these were even contrary to the preaching of Islam. For example, polygamy was a common practice in the Muslim society of Arabian region, but in India even the keeping of second wife has become rare. This outlook apparently developed in the Muslim society under the impact of Hindu customs. North Indian Muslims might have been discriminating classes of Muslims for marrying, while it is negligible in South India. But somewhere it is found among Syeds, Mughals, Shaykhs, Patans and others.64

In the same way, in Islam, widow remarriage has not only been permitted but rather encouraged and stressed upon, as it was the common practice in the early part of Islamic history. The superstitions associated with widowhood among the Hindus somehow crept into Muslim community. It is obvious that this non-Islamic practice in the Muslim society developed under the impact of Hindus. All these changes in the Muslim social life and impact of the elements of Hindu culture on Muslim society have brought for the two basic facts. Firstly, the Muslim living in Karnataka or in other states of India came into contact with the Hindus and the process of social interaction started resulting in cultural diffusion and adaptation. Secondly, an important factor responsible for these changes had been conversion of large numbers of Hindus to Islam. They accepted Islam but did not discard totally their old values, attitudes and ritualism. In other words, they had changed their religion but could not change their old culture. Consequently, their rituals and practices were incorporated into Muslim society.

The symbiosis of Hindu and Muslim cultures continues unabated and most vibrantly.65 The interactions between Hinduism and Islam especially mark the particular evolution and development of Indo-Muslim beliefs. In the early centuries, the caste system, so much a part of Hinduism, influenced Islam in a number of ways. Some Hindus at lower caste levels converted voluntarily to Islam, hoping for a more egalitarian future. Indeed, over the centuries, the 'untouchable' caste has accounted for many of the conversions from Hinduism. Indian Muslims were influenced by the Hindu caste system and the concept of high class and lower class people.66 In this way, the tradition of co-existence and the process of conversion became instrumental
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in the adoption of the elements of Hindu society by Muslim community and vise versa in various spheres of family and social life.

12. Influence of Islamic Culture on the non-Muslims of Karnataka

No doubt Muslims assimilated many Hindu practices. On the other hand Karnataka society and culture was influenced by Islamic tradition to a very large extent. The historian Tarachand, in his book, *The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, observes that social and cultural revivalism in the South was due to the impact of Islamic culture. Islam brought to India a conception of human equality and the message of universal brotherhood, introduced equality in society, rejected caste system and untouchability. In due course, these ideas began to have a conscious or unconscious effect upon the philosophical Hindu mind and fostered the growth of liberal movements under religious reformers. The presence of am paved the way for the growth of the Bhakti cult. The reformers of 15th and 16th centuries like Kabir, Nanak and Srirchaitanya preached fundamental equality of all religions. Rich Hindu classes were influenced by the Muslims dress, etiquette, recreation and other activities. Food of Muslims like Biryani, Kabab and Palan etc. were adopted by the Hindus. Hindu-Muslim contact led to linguistic synthesis. Urdu is the outcome of a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and of ideas with the concepts and languages of Sanskrit origin. The Urdu became language of the people. The Hindi language was also influenced by Muslim contact. This is distinct in vocabulary, grammar, similes and styles. Literature in India was influenced by the Turko-Afghans to a large extent. Many Arabic, Persian and Urdu words found their way into the local Kannada language.67
Notes and References


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66 Falaksha, *op. cit.* pp.132-135

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