

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN KERALA

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Kerala had remained a region divided into three administrative entities-the Malabar Presidency directly under British rule and the Princely states of Travancore and Cochin – a caste-ridden, hierarchical and agrarian society steeped in poverty and illiteracy.

The socio-political and religious conditions across the state were not in the way of progress. “The deprived communities were denied any rights of citizenry including right to property, entry to places of worship, use of public roads and enrolment in educational institutions.”¹ They were not allowed even to wear clothes above their waist. For instance, the Ezhava ladies were assaulted as they dressed like Nair women in a procession held at Kollam.² The same untoward episodes were reported to have occurred in many places like Karunagapally, Karthikapally and some other places nearby.³ It died out after the formation of S.N.D.P, for the upliftment of the Ezhava community in Kerala. It shows the social condition of the people all over the state of Kerala in the early period of the 20th century. Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-25), Guruvayoor Satyagraha (1931-32), and Temple Entry Proclamation (1936) were unprecedented revolutionary moves against the social untouchability that prevailed in the State.

Kerala's Muslims, though there are divergences of opinion concerning the exact date of the advent of Islam in Kerala, it is fairly believed had become a distinct community in this part of the peninsula by the end of the 7th century of the Christian Era. Right from the beginning, in Kerala, the Muslims had maintained relentless educational pursuits mainly religious in character. Its legacy unfolds under the Makdums of Ponnanni.⁴

However, in the twentieth century, the history of Muslim educational institutions in the State begins from the 15th annual meeting of the All India Muslim Educational Conference held in Madras 1901, presided over by Justice Badun.⁵ In fact, such meetings and conferences held across the country paved the way for serious endeavors towards the burgeoning of modern education within the community. Even the emergence of Aligarh Muslim University was the culmination of many Educational Conferences which were held in various parts of northern India. In the Madras Conference, a large number of socio-religious and educational activists actively participated in the meetings and imbibed the quintessence of its visions. As a result of this, Muslim leaders of the South took the initiative to form an organization viz. South Indian Muhammadan Association for the promotion of general education among

the Muslims in Kerala. Likewise, various steps were taken by many scholars in different parts of the State. It led to the generation of a series of community organizations in the respective regions with the object of establishing educational institutions.

Community Organizations and Educational Initiatives

It is not sure when Muslim educational initiatives began in the State. As described earlier, Muslims used their *Masjids* as educational institutions from the very earliest⁶. Until the first decade of the twentieth century Muslim education in the State was mainly concerned with *Dars*, *Othupallis* or *Maktabs* and *Madrasas* – where religious education is imparted and their education was mainly religious in character.

The Kerala Muslim Aikya Sanghom

Kerala Muslim Aikya Sanghom 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 *Sanghom* took place in Kodungallur under the auspicious leadership of Kottapurath Seethi Muhamad Sahib in 1922.⁷ It was the first all Kerala Organization of Muslim. A few illustrious leaders like Manappattu P. Kunhahammad Haji, Sheik Hamadani Thangal, E.K

Moulavi, K.M Moulavi, Sikhandar Haji took the initiative to make this attempt fruitful and vigorous.

The aims and objectives of the *Sanghom* were laid down as follows⁸.

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 *Sanghom*, to settle disputes among Muslims and make allround 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 first anniversary of *Aikya Sanghom* 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. Kunhi Moheen Haji (Mahi). The conference was presided over by Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi. This momentous conference discussed a historical move concerning the development of Muslim education. The Government of Travancore granted seven acres of land at Aluva to start an Arabic college for the Muslim community. The government had required the sponsors to deposit ₹ 10000.

A committee, viz., *Kerala Muslim College Committee*,⁹ was entrusted by the conference to collect and deposit it with the government. It was so unfortunate that the project became futile¹⁰. No further details are available in connection with this project till date. However, it is sure that if the project had been commissioned, the educational history of the Muslim of Kerala would have been totally different.

Before the formation of the *Sanghom*, there were many small Muslim organizations working across the length and breadth of the State. Such organizations led by the leaders had divergent opinions. They advocated different religious belief and practice in terms of *Ibadath*. *Sunni and Islahi* were two prominent sects adhering to different ideologies. The rivalry among the leaders prevailed in the name of trivial matters of *Ibadath*. The Sunnis were represented by orthodox *Ulamas* and their conservative religious interpretations. Their dogmatic beliefs vehemently opposed modern education, female education, and prohibited Muslim ladies entering the *Masjid*. They claimed themselves to be the real admirers of prophetic traditions.

The *Islahis*, sometimes sarcastically called *Wahabis* were the rivals of the *Sunnis*. They were quite adamant in dissemination of *Thouheed* and *Suannath*. They propagated that the innovative practices would undermine

the spirit of *Thouheed* so that the faith of followers is spoiled. The themes in which the *Islahis* concentrated their attack were *Shirk*, veneration of saints and the worship of their tombs, *Nercha*, *Moulid*, *Ratheeb*.

In the succeeding activities of the *Sanghom* the unbridgeable conceptual disparity precipitated between the two sects. The annual conferences of the Aikya Sanghom were held continuously from 1924 – 1934. All these annual sessions were presided over by prominent Muslim scholars like Moulana Abdul Jabbar Hazrath (Principal, Bakiyathu Swalihath, Vellore), Khan Bahadur Muhammad Shamnad, Moulana Muhammad Karmaduke Pikthai, Muhammadali Kasoori Sahib, Dr. Abdul Haq (Member, PSC, Madras), Khan Bahadur Mir Sainudheen Sahib, (District and Session Judge, North Malabar), Moulana Sayyid Abul Wahab Bukhari Sahib, B. Poker Sahib and Abdul Majeed Sahib.¹¹

Although, the *Sanghom* discussed various problems relating to Muslim education in the State and published two powerful magazines *Muslim Aikyam* and *Irshad* in Malayalam and Arabi – Malayalam respectively,¹² it did not stand for a long time. By the 12th annual conference of the *Sanghom* in 1934, it dissolved itself in order to merge into *Kerala Muslim Majlis* and handed over its properties to the Farook College, Kozhikode. Hus the longstanding ambition of religious leaders to

establish an institution like M.A.O College in Kerala was buried. However, it is an undisputable fact that all the enlightenment and inspiration that is visible in Kerala even in the present day, in connection with modern education, is the outcome of the twelve year activities of the *Aikya Sanghom*.

In subsequent years, educational activities, carried out throughout the State was in the wake of beacons that spread out from the *Aikya Sanghom*. The following is a brief account of the socio - educational condition of Muslims who were living under the three different political entities - Travancore, Cochin and Malabar.

Education in Travancore

Education in Travancore was dominated by the stringent control of Brahmanical hegemony, followed by other ways of informal hierarchies. For a long time they were the only beneficiaries of education across the state. Learning of *Sanskrit, Vedas and Upanishads* were imparted in various kinds of pathshalas, where education was confined to members of higher castes of society alone.

Different types of *Kudipallikudams* had existed in many villages. The instructors, who imparted education, were known as *asans* or *gurus*. They were normally not facilitated by the receipt of any predetermined

remuneration, but rather survived on some alms or endowments offered by philanthropists.

In 1817, Rani Gouri Parvathy Bai, ruler of the princely state of Travancore issued a prescript, that “the State should defray the cost of education of its people in order that there might be no backwardness in the spread of enlightenment among them, that by diffusion of education they might become better subjects and public servants and that the reputation of the State might be advanced thereby,”¹³ came in force, which was unable to catalyze the development of public education in the state. Even after the force of this order, the educational condition of Muslims and other backward communities remained unchanged. Indeed, the government began to interfere in education directly after the enforcement of this order.

In order to popularize modern education in Travancore, a number of vernacular schools were established under the supervision of Revenue Officers. Each school had been allowed two teachers, who were entitled to get salaries from the government. Raja Swathi Thirunal, who was fond of English education, took measures to establish an English school in 1834, at Thiruvananthapuram.¹⁴ In addition to this, some district schools also came into existence. From 1869 onwards, the government decided to give financial assistance to private agencies to run such schools effectively.¹⁵

As a result, the government took over a school run by Mr. Robert and appointed him as the head of the institution . Subsequently, the Raja's free school was elevated as a college.

During the same period, a lot of English medium Schools had begun functioning in many parts of Travancore. Kayamkulam, Kottar, Chirayinkezh were the places, where such institutions were started.¹⁶ By 1894, government revised the existing norms and condition of providing grants to the private agencies.¹⁷ Such reforms made some institutions which did not strictly follow the guidance of the government, ineligible. School education was mainly divided into three grades -Primary, Middle, and High.¹⁸ Some special officers were appointed for inspecting such schools.

In 1904, the government announced that the fee of the primary education in the first standard was exempted. It was a revolutionary step taken by the authority. The duration of the teacher training course was enhanced to two years and some teachers were appointed. In 1908, an Education director was appointed, and in the very next year an education code was published. A college for teacher education was established in 1911 at Thiruvananthapuram.

Muslims in Kerala were mainly concentrated in the Malabar district of British India. In Travancore, they comprised only about 5 to 6 per cent of the population in 1847.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the size of the Christian community was somewhat larger than that of the Muslims in Travancore because of the extensive work of Christian Missionaries across the State. The Missionaries' main interest was to propagate Christianity. In order to accomplish this objective, they established several schools. They were, however, mainly concerned with the propagation of their religion.²⁰ They tried to woo the Indians by making use of the printing press and vernacular languages. However, the educated natives opposed the propagandist agenda of the Christians. 'Did the European Missionaries come to Travancore with the intention of uplifting the low castes? The answer is an emphatic no. They came to convert and save the souls'.²¹ In spite of the fact that they came to India for the propagation of Christianity, they were forced to discharge their duties along with some social and educational services. Thus, they played an important role in laying the foundation of modern education in Travancore.

Rev. Ringle Tab, a famous missionary worker, had taken the initiative to establish six English medium schools in the southern part of Travancore. It was all in the name of religious propaganda. Another

Missionary worker, Rev. Mead, also extended yeoman service in the domain of education as well as missionary work. He headed the London Mission Society (LMS). Employment, education and female education were the areas of interest of Mead. He also founded a center for Biblical schooling near Nagercoil, one of the most important headquarters of the erstwhile Travancore Administration. "In 1816, he founded a modern institution at Kottayam viz. C.M.S College."²² Later on, this institution got affiliated to the University of Madras and thereafter higher education in Travancore spread farther to a large extent.

At this time, the educational graph of the Nairs and Christians were almost the same. The former was one of the major communities in Kerala that enjoyed the resources of the state over time.²³ They gained adequate representation in the Travancore Civil Service due to the Malayali Memorial. There was a controversy relating to the Memorial according to which a conspiracy was hatched between the Nairs and the authorities such that the Nairs were absorbed in service paying no heed to the Ezhavas. In the meantime, the Christians were already placed in various key positions, in recognition of their obliging attitude towards the British. The Devasom and revenue department were amalgamated together, so the appointments of persons other than Hindus was taboo. The Travancore – Cochin

Christians Association was founded in 1898 and they strongly demanded that the department be bifurcated. They submitted a memorandum to the Diwan in this regard. In 1922 this departments were split into two.²⁴ Thus, Christians began to get higher positions in the revenue department too. They started to establish many first grade colleges across the length and breadth of the State. During 1923 – 1924 they had one first Grade College and three second grade colleges out of nine in the state. Rest of the colleges was under government control.²⁵

Meanwhile, the Muslim orthodox Ulama were vigorously trying to inspire the community to keep away from English education as much as possible. The reasons for distrusting western education were the same as in the North. English was “the language of hell” and western education a “passport to hell.” As a result of this attitude Muslims were slow to adopt the new system of education and therefore their employment opportunities were also limited.

Realizing that they were lagging behind, an effort was made with the establishment of Malabar Muslim Educational Association in 1911 at Cochin and its branches were formed in different parts of the State.²⁶ Prominent social reformer Vakkom Abdul Qadir Moulavi started the “All Travancore Muslim Mahajana Sabha” around the same time. The result of

his leadership and awareness led to the opening of many schools by Muslims where there were no government schools in their areas till then. *Madarasthul Muhammadiya* in Parappil (add a foot note), Kozhikode is an example of one such school that was established by Muslim initiative. They were fiercely against the spreading of English oriented modern education. As a result of this dogmatic approach, historically, the community had to wait for a very long period of 132 years to establish a college like C.M.S Kottayam²⁷. “It was only in 1948 that the first college of Arts and Science under Muslim Management i.e., Farook College came into existence,”²⁸ “subsequent to Farook, the next arts and science college in the stream of modern education was established under Muslim management in 1962; thus the span between the two colleges covers 14 years.”²⁹ The impact of this gap on the community is its inherent backwardness even today. The enrolment of Muslim students even in the public schools was meager. Their representation in higher education was almost nil. In the 1930s nearly 1000 students were studying in the Government English High school in Paravoor, out of this, only seven students belonged to the Muslim Community.³⁰

The year 1918 was one of the remarkable years in the history of Muslim Education in Travancore. ‘A Muslim educational officer was

appointed by the government to look after and promote the education of Muslims in the State.³¹ It was the realization of the long standing demand raised by renowned social reformer Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi. In addition to this, a training centre for backward communities was also launched. This facility could not last for a long period. In 1897, an arts and science college for women was also established.³²

At this juncture, the Muslim community in the State was steeped in ignorance and superstition and resisted any call to modern education even if the educational condition in Travancore and Cochin was not as worse as in Malabar. In 1911, male literacy rate of Muslims was 215 while the female literacy rate was 31 out of thousand.³³ The Muslim population of Travancore constitutes 6.5 percent in the first decade of the twentieth century. There is a version about the literacy rate among the Muslim women is showed as 1 percent only.³⁴ The Muslim reformers had to stir the sleeping community from this pathetic circumstance.

Though the orthodox *Ulamas* were determined to prevent the common folk from acquiring modern education, the advancement of western education among the other communities was steadily growing. From the consecutive years of 1912 to 1914 the enrolment of Muslim students in secondary education was showing no improvement.

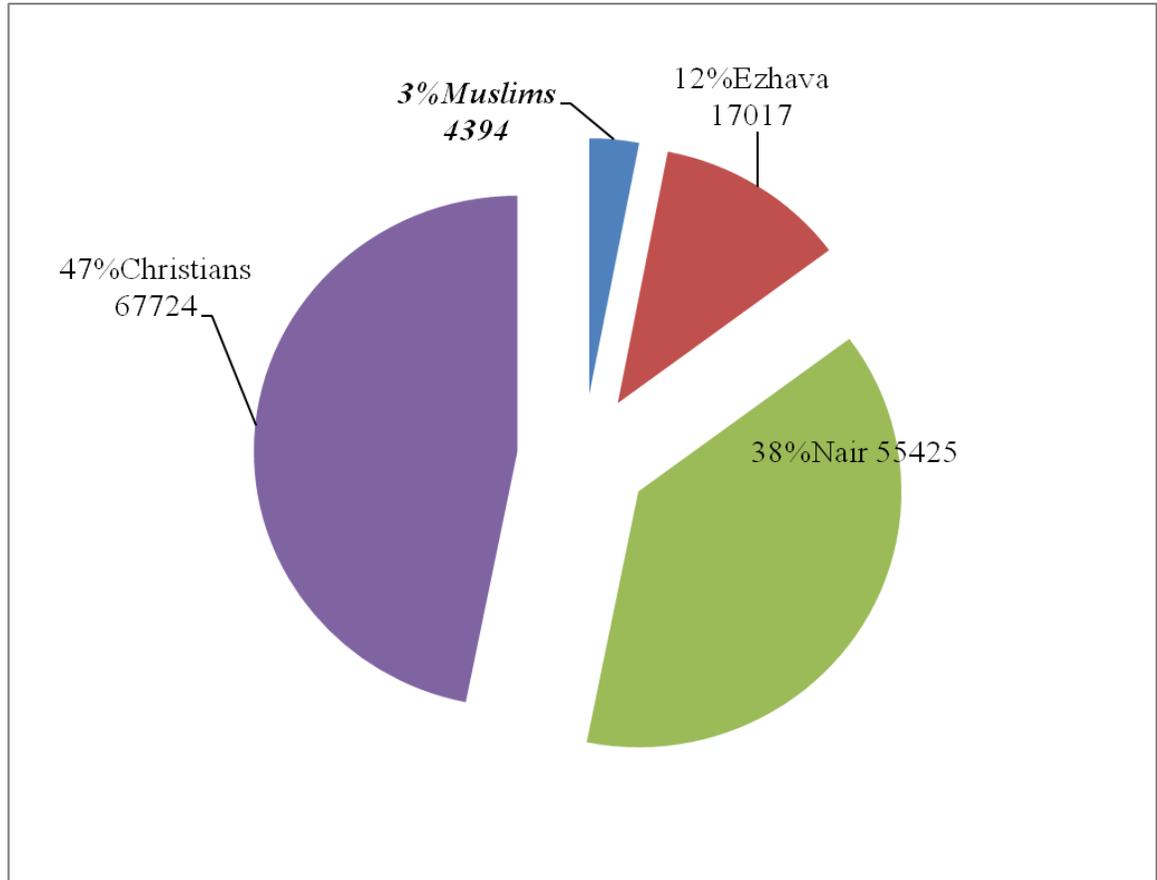
Educational Statistics of Travancore among different communities in the first two decades of the Twentieth century

The erstwhile Travancore was inhabited by different ethnic groups, which consisted of Muslims, Christians, and Hindus. Among the Hindus, the Nairs and the Ezhavas are the prominent castes. Even today these two groups constitute around fifty percent of the population of the State.³⁵

The following diagrams illustrate the status of education among the different communities in Travancore in the early phase of the twentieth century. Among the four major communities in Travancore – Muslims, Christians, Nairs and Ezhavas – the Muslims were trailing behind the others. While 47 percent of the Christian students are studying in different schools of Travancore, the percentage of the Muslim students are very meager. The second largest students' enrolment is marked from the Nair community which constitutes 38 percentages. However, both the Christians and the Nairs cover the lion share of the total enrolment, the Muslims and Ezhavas are only 15%.³⁶ Out of this the percentage of Muslims was quite deficient.

Diagram.3.1

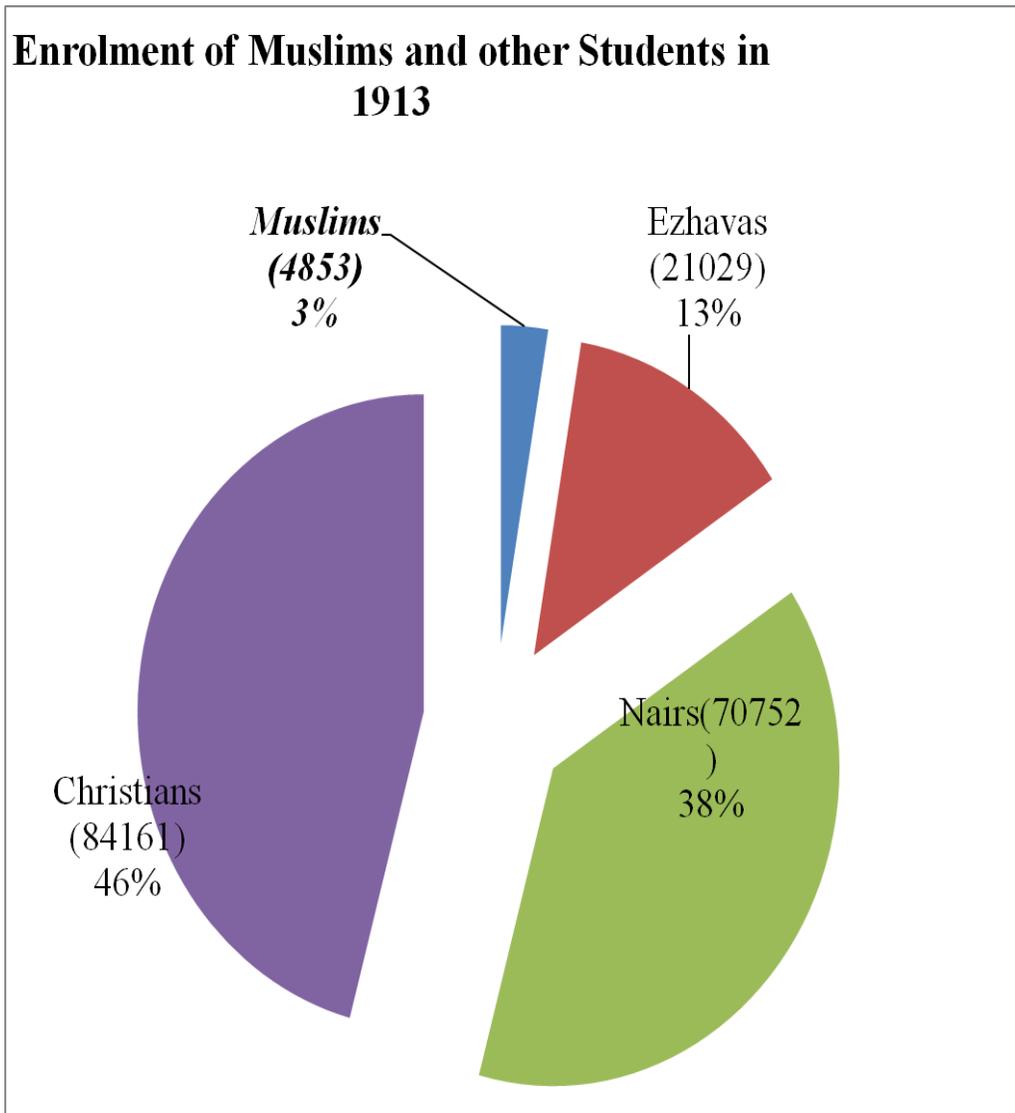
Enrolment of Muslims and other Students in 1912



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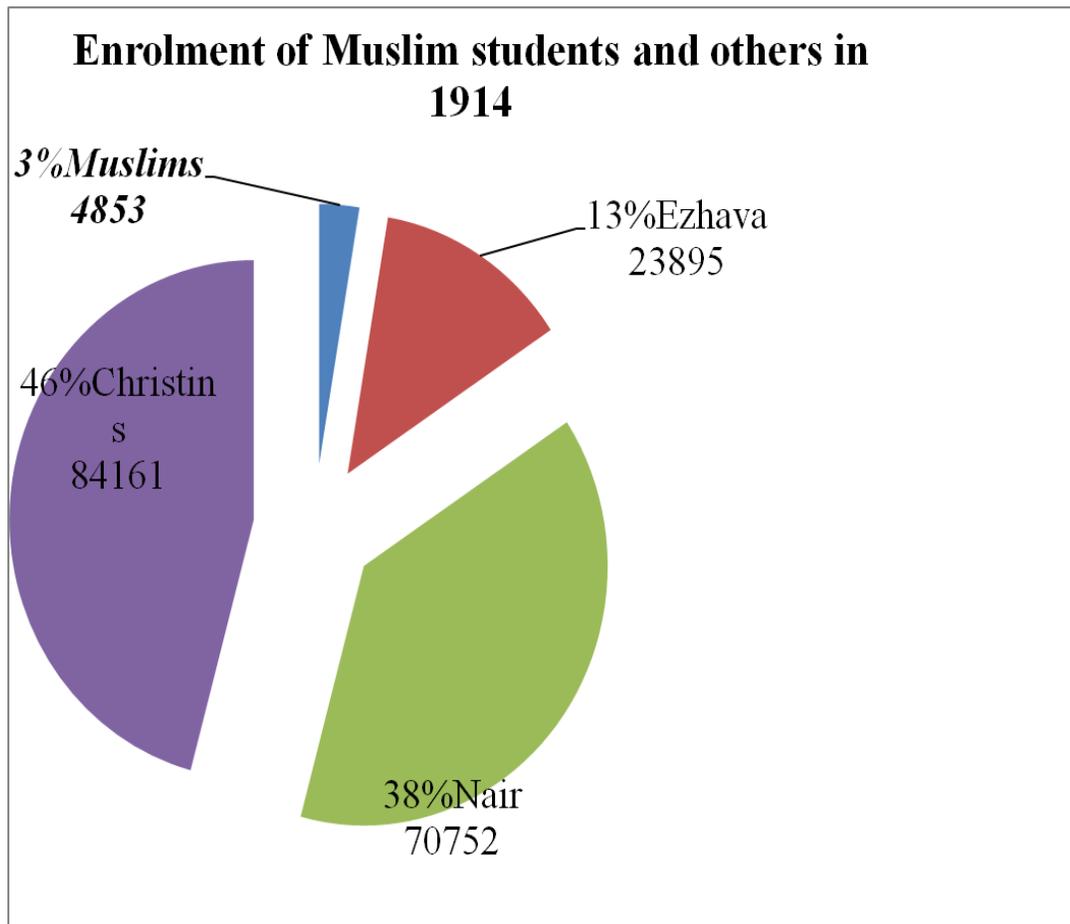
Among the four major castes, the Muslims and the Ezhavas were the two underrepresented groups. Between these two groups, the Muslims are more underrepresented compared to other groups.

Diagram. 3.2



The above diagram shows the enrolment of the students in 1913 representing four major communities in the State. The backwardness of the Muslim students continues invariably.

Diagram. 3.3



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The above diagrams A1, A2, A3, are the enrolment of Upper Primary students belonging to the four major communities in Kerala. In the three consecutive years from 1912 to 1914, the enrolment rate of the

Muslim community remained static (See Diagram A1, A2, and A3). The Christian community achieved its maximum gain in the three diagrams too. The Nair community was advancing fast, but just behind the Christians.

Advocacy of Vakkom Moulavi (1873-1932) towards Education

Marhoom Vakkom 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.⁴⁰

Moulavi was born in a noble and respectable family called Poonthran Vilakom at Vakkom, in Thiruvananthapuram District on December, 28, 1873. His father, Muhammad Kunju of Koyipurathu family, Varkala, was a wealthy merchant. For his primary education, scholars were invited from Malabar, Velure, Keezhakkare and many other places to

board and impart education. Such systems can be affordable only to wealthy families. 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 world⁴¹.

He realized the fact that the social awakening of the community can be possible only through educational activities. In order to achieve this goal, he started the publication of several journals, and encouraged others to go through it. As it was felt a large number of Muslims, especially women could read only Arabi-Malayalam, he established a litho Press and launched a series of publications in Arabi-Malayalam. Al Islam, an Arabi-Malayalam Monthly was one of the outstanding periodicals .He modified

the script to complement with Malayalam alphabet in full text.”⁴² Ta’ifmul Qiraat, Ahkam ut –tajweed, Kimiyas- Sa’adah, were reprinted using the revised Arabi-Malayalam alphabet.

In order to disseminate the significance of education among the Muslims, his journals were relentlessly echoing with substantial statistical evidences, which helped to open the eyes of both the authorities and the beneficiaries alike. The first issue of *The Muslim*,⁴³ a monthly journal, revealed the following data in connection with the disappointing educational condition of the Muslims at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Table. 3.1

Literacy rate of Muslims in Travancore in 1901⁴⁴

Total population of Muslims in Travancore	1,90,568
Percentage of total population	6.5
Literacy rate of Muslim	84/1000
Literacy rate among the women	10/1000
Literacy among the age group above 20	7.3/1000

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.⁴⁵

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 had found inadequate enrolment of Muslim students in the schools. O.M. Cherian, the divisional inspector of schools, was the first official to realize the educational backwardness of the Muslims in Travancore. According to him, in his educational district

comprising of ten Taluks, there were 8589 Muslim children in the age group, 15 to 20, but the educated among them were only 713. In Quilon Taluk, including Quilon town, of the 2464 Muslim children of the age group, 10 to 15, the educated among them were only 42. As a result of this, government started many schools in Kollam, Karthikapalli and Karunagapalli. The government appreciated Moulavi's service to the community for the cause of education and considered it remarkable.⁴⁶

A lot of the enlightened Muslims across the state began to realize that only through modern education could the underprivileged interests of the community be safeguarded. In 1915 the *Lajmathul Muhammadiya Association* was founded at Alappuzha, a Muslim dominated area, to promote the educational needs of the community. It was the earliest socio religious organization formed in Travancore aimed at disseminating education within the community. The brain behind the origin of this organization was Maulavi. The organization was formed in 1914⁴⁷ under the stewardship of N.A. Muhammad Kunju Sahib, a leading business man in the area. Bava Haji and Ibrahim Rawther were the important leaders of the same.⁴⁸ Due to their untiring efforts a lower primary school was founded, and it was upgraded as a high school in 1918. The first Arabic teacher was appointed in this school. *Nusrathul Islam* was the offshoot of

Lajmath started with the intention of promoting education among the Muslim youth who had hardly any schooling, though they were belonging to wealthy families. Moulavi had the desire to make *Lajmath* a state wide organization to unify all the educational activities of Muslims under this banner. He expressed this wish at the first presidential address of *Lajmathul Muhammadiyya Association*⁴⁹. Unfortunately, his desire could not be fulfilled.

In April, 1915 when Maharaja Sree Moolam Thirunal visited Alappuzha, *Lajmathul Muhammadiyya Association* submitted a memorandum pointing out the difficulties undergone by the community in the sphere of education. In the light of this memorandum the government took the following steps:

1. Arabic teachers were appointed in all schools which had a minimum strength of 25 Muslim students and
2. A Muhammadan School Inspector was appointed to encourage Muslim education.

In order to implement these orders 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; Vakkom Moulavi was made the president and Member of the board. The first Muhammadan Inspector appointed in Travancore Government service was S. Sulaiman Sahib.⁵⁰ 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 Qur'an* and *Adduroosul Adabiya* for Primary and secondary classes respectively. His work *Ahkam ut Tajweed* was exclusively written for the Qur'an teachers.⁵¹ In addition to these some other important books text books used in school were *Al Qiraatul Rasheeda*, *Ta'leemul Qur'an*, *Al Qiraatul Musawwarah*, and *Minhajul Arabiyyah*.

Although the government had taken many initiatives to promote Muslim education in the State, it was not welcomed among the Muslim

girls. The proportion of their enrollment was almost nil. In 1933 – 1934 a Muslim assistant inspector of schools was appointed as result of his effort enrolment of female students began to increase.

Table.3. 2

Enrollment of Muslim Pupils in Elementary Schools from 1924 – 1933

Enrollment of Pupil		
Year	Pupils	Schools Providing Arabic
1924 – 25	16,351	131
1925 – 26	16,381	140
1926 – 27	16,752	155
1927 – 28	17,900	175
1928 – 29	18,378	184
1929 – 30	19,269	198
1930 – 31	19,568	199
1931 – 32	21,080	Not Available
1932 – 33	21,330	Not Available

Table. 2 Shows the steady increase of Muslim pupils in the enrollment of elementary education from 1924 – 1933. During this period Muslim education in Travancore was in a transitional period. Throughout the period, the government had shown a positive initiative towards Muslim Education. As a result of this 5 Muslim girls appeared for Lower Grade Arabic Munishi Examination, four of whom cleared it.

Table.3. 3

Enrollment of Muslim Pupils (girls) in Elementary Schools 1933-36⁵²

Enrollment of the Pupils				
Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Schools providing Arabic
1933 – 34	18630	4853	23,493	217
1934 – 35	19221	6052	25,273	230
1935 – 36	21100	10450	32,550	253

According to the Table 3, the number of girl students' enrollment from 1933 to 1936 is remarkably increasing. During the year 1935 - 1936 more than 40% increase was marked in the girl students' increment comparing to the previous year. It is a great leap of education among Muslim women. As a result of this positive attitude among the Muslims a large number of girls were admitted to the schools and completed the secondary education. A Muslim lady graduate was deputed to undergo training in the Lady Willington College, Madras.

Table.3. 4**Number of Muslim students under instruction⁵³**

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Schools providing Arabic
1936 – 37	-	-	32,337	-
1937 – 38	23410	9743	33,153	272
1938 – 39	22516	9126	31,642	278
1939 – 40	22612	9719	32,331	284
1940 – 41	22717	9808	32,520	292
1941 – 42	22543	10181	32,724	294
1942 – 43	22186	10512	32,698	281
1943 – 44	23841	10486	34,327	-
1944 – 45	25774	10183	35,757	212
1945 – 46	23879	13897	37,776	231
1946 – 47	35163	11093	46,261	191
1947 – 48	-	-	56,494	-

According to Table 4, the last two decades of first half of the twentieth century shows that the enrolment of Muslim girls in elementary education was growing unprecedently. 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 Moulawi. For the first time a Muslim girl passed Vernacular School Leaving Certificate Examination and entered the college for higher studies in 1924 - 1925.⁵⁴

N.A. Muhammad Kunju Sahib, Bava Haji and Ibrahim Rawther gave the lead to the community in the establishment of Lajmathul Muhammadiya. Several local associations like the Muslim Dharma Poshini Sanghom of Nilakkamukku, Chirayinkizh Thaluk Samajam, etc., were formed to promote educational efforts in different parts of the State. But it was felt that a central body to co-ordinate the educational efforts was necessary. For this purpose the All Travancore Muslim Mahajana Sabha was formed through the leadership of Vakkam Abdul Kader Moulavi. Though the Sabha was short-lived, it was able to persuade the Travancore government to pass several measures for the benefit of the community. It was through its efforts that the government approved religious instruction in schools, and appointed Arabic teachers in Schools.⁵⁵

It was at this time that the All India Muhammadan educational conference was organized to encourage Muslim education. The promoters of Aligarh Muslim University Team toured different parts of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. They received warm welcome and substantial help

from the areas they visited. Their visit gave a boost to the educational efforts of the South.

Moulavi had given the lead to educational efforts in Travancore and Cochin. Under his inspiring leadership several local organization like Lajnathul Muhammaduya Sanghom 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 Aleppey, the Lajnattul Muhammadiya Sanghom 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. The first ends with demise of Moulavi, called the Moulavi Era, before independence, and

the latter begins with the emergence of C.H. Muhammad Koya as a socio-educational reformer after the unification of Kerala.

Education in Cochin

In Cochin State it was Kodungaloor that led the way in educational efforts. The Muslims in Cochin were somewhat different from that of their counterparts in Malabar. The majority of the population in the Cochin State consisted of other religious groups. It resulted in members of the community getting many acquaintances with their socio-cultural pursuit. So the literacy rate, political involvement, and public performance are different.

The Muslims of Cochin State began to participate in the political and educational activities of the State more effectively. The tremendous efforts of certain prominent personalities like Seethi Muhammad Sahib, Hamdani Shaykh, and others made remarkable achievements in this regard. Seethi Sahib, the first Muslim Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly who was elevated to this political arena mainly because of the experience he got from his father.

In 1911, the Malabar Muslim Education was formed at Cochin and its branches were formed in different parts of Cochin. Abdul Sathar Sait, Abu Muhammad, the first editor of *Malabar Islam*, Hamadani Shaykh,

P.K. Moosa Kutty Haji, Proprietor of *Muhmmadiya Darppanam*, and several other prominent Muslim leaders were the chief organizers of the association. In 1918, the *Muslim Samajam* at Munambam, the *Muffedul Islam Sanghom* at Kalvatti, Cochin and *Anvarul -Islam Sangham* at Mattacherri were established to promote educational activities in Cochin State.

On 20th April 1911, a primary school was started at Azhikkod in a building donated by Seethi Muhammad Sahib. This school proved to be the training ground for many persons, who rose to important positions in later life, like Abdul Rahuman and Seethi Sahib. As religious education was given along with secular education, it attracted large number of Muslim students to the schools. Kodungalloor thus became the premier centre of Muslim education in Cochin State.

In 1917 an organization called Cochin Muslim Education was formed by Seethi Muhammad Sahib father of K.M Seethi Sahib, of Kodungalloor and a number of leading members of Calicut. Muhammad Abdul Rahman and K.M Seethi Sahib and a host of young men who worked enthusiastically for the associations⁵⁶. It was the activities of the associations, which promoted the Government of Cochin to grant several concessions to the Muslims in the matter of education.

In 1920, when the Cochin Educational Code Revision Committee was constituted, Seethi Muhammad Sahib, the Secretary of the Association was nominated as the representative of the Muslims. He brought to the notice of the Government several educational problems affecting the community.

Education in Malabar

The word *Malabar*, comprises of two syllables *Mala* and *Barr*. *Mala* is an ordinary Malayalam word which means hill or mountain and *Barr* is probably an Arabic word which means land or country⁵⁷. As the Arabs had close contact with *Malabar* since time immemorable, most probably, it is a combination of a Malayalam word *Mala* which means hill and the Arabic word *Barr* land⁵⁸.

Today, the area known as *Malabar* now covers around six northern districts in the political map of Kerala. It was part of the erstwhile Madras presidency for a long time. *Malabar* constitutes 42.4 per cent⁵⁹ of the total population in the state and stretches over 45.01 per cent of the land area. It consists of Kasaragode, Kannur, Waynad, Kozhikod, Malappuram and Palakkad. Kasaragode the last district was formed in 1984.

The system of Islamic education must have started at the same time as the first few *Masajid* were established in Kerala. This system evolved

over a thousand year period and even though for a century there was great emphasis on modern education, the Islamic education system survived and with the addition of some new trends it continues to thrive. Religious education among the Muslims of Malabar can be divided into three distinct styles - *Othupalli*, *Dars*, and *Madradas*.

In order to impart religious education Muslims of Kerala evolved a simple programme. They used *Masajid* as educational institutions. Students were fed by the villages from their homes. The villagers divided students and teachers among themselves.⁶⁰

Othupalli or Maktab

Othupalli, a Malabaric terminology generally used to call madarasa or Pallidars in southerpart of Kerala and Maktab in North India. It is not quite different from their counterparts in North India or any Muslim countries. The origin of madrasa right from the time of Prophet of Islam as he established first such 'madrasa' in his mosque where he would teach tenets of Islam and explain the contents of the revelation, which he received. The formal establishment of institution of madrasa came into existence much later. At first formal madrasa was established in Nishapur in Khurasan, and the second was Nizamia madrasa in Baghdad, both in

11th century. Al-Azhar, the now famous Islamic university, came into existence during Fatimid rule in Egypt around that time⁶¹.

In Kerala, madarasas were the centres of solo-teachers' primary Arabic schools set up adjacent to *msajids*⁶². The imam of the mosque also acts as the teacher of the *Othupalli* and gives basic Islamic education to the children of the area. The *Mullakka* or *Mulla* or *muaddin* were the assistants who helped the Imam to run the *Othupally* effectively. Both boys and girls are admitted there for imparting primary *surahs* and *duas* from Quran and to learn to read Arabic. They also learn how to pray and other basic Islamic teachings are practiced.⁶³

The method of teaching in these schools is oral,⁶⁴ the *mullakka* recites the *Suras* the students would be asked to repeat the same until memorized. It followed the system of *pyal schools*.⁶⁵ The Curriculum was limited in addition to the recitation of Qur'an, *dikhr*, *hamd*, and *swalath*. This system survives and now serves as centers of Islamic education for students attending schools where they learn modern subjects. Classes under *Othupallis* are held either before or after regular school hours to accommodate school going children.

Muslims of Malabar had developed a separate script namely Arabi-Malayalam, something like Urdu. It was Malayalam written in Arabic

script, adapted to suite the Malayalam alphabet. Arabi-Malayalam script was used to impart religious education. New alphabets were devised by using diacritical marks on the Arabic alphabets to represent Malayalam letters and provide for local phonetics⁶⁶. It is a developed branch of literary vehicle and consisted of prose, poetry, *Mappilapattu* and *Qissa*. A large number of eminent writers such as Moinkutti Vydyar (1851-1891), Chettuvai Pareekutty (1847-1886), Chakkeeri Moideen Kutty (d.1926), O. Abu (1916 -1980), T. Ubaid (1908-1972), Pulikkottil Hyder (1879-1975) had patronage of Arabi-Malayalam literature. A series of distinguished publications like *Manivilakku*, *Sathyaprakasham*, *Malabar Islam*, *Muslim*, *Rafeequl Islam*, *Salahul Ikhvan*, *Al Islam* were come out in this language. Some sort of lessons from Arabi-Malayalam were also taught in *Othupallis*.

Dars System

Kerala's *Dars* system is unique and unparalleled which is not found anywhere else in India. Its scheme is genius in how it utilizes the resources available in the community for the propagation of knowledge. Most of the *Masjids* of Kerala are double-storeyed. Probably the reason for the construction of the two storeyed *Masjids* was to provide accommodation for students. It is most likely that this system might have started along with

the advent of Islam in Kerala. The first Muslim *Daree*, Malik bin Deenar had established twelve *Masajids* across the State⁶⁷. Most of them were built in double storeies. The purpose of the second floor is not only to hold the overflow of worshippers on special prayers such as *Juma'*, *Ramadan* and *Eid* occasions, but it also serves as a place where a group of students can be lodged and be comfortable. The first floor of the *Masjid* doubles as a classroom during non-prayer times.

The interesting feature of the *Dars* system is that the education is free for the students. They get free education from the imam of the *masjid*, and their lodging is free on the top floors of the building. These students are also considered guests of the locality where the *masjid* is situated and each house of the area is assigned a student and they are responsible for his food. In return for food, the student teaches the young children of the house. This way, the best use of limited resources is ensured and in the process, young generations get served with quality education.

The earliest and well known *dars* was in Ponnani, reputed to have been established by Zainudheen Makhdoom, the senior (1467-1521), which afterward came to be known as the "Little Makkah of Malabar."⁶⁸ A large number of students from many parts of India as well as from outside India such as Indonesia, Malaya and Java studied there. In 1887 there were

about 400 students in Ponnani *dars*, while in 1996 the number was about 300⁶⁹. However, it was so unfortunate, that the centre could not be elevated as an excellent centre for Muslim education institution in the future. It confined itself to religious teachings alone.

Though the *dars* system produced a large number of scholars and theologians, it was not free from terrific setbacks. The teaching method adopted by *dars* was defective. So that it could not be sustained far into the future. It is contrary to some Western assumptions of education which illustrates the different theories of learning. The Bi-polar and The Uni-polar Theories of education, propounded by Adams, illustrated the scientific relation between the educator and the educand. The former advocates the concept that the teacher is active in teaching and the students are active in learning.⁷⁰ The latter makes passive either of them. The *Dars* system followed its own method mainly based on by hearing the lessons. Today, innumerable Arabic colleges working in and around the State are the outcome of those primitive *dars*.

Reforms of Chalilakath Kunjahammad Haji (1283-1338 A.H.)

The study on the *Madarasa* education in the State would not be completed without bring up the contribution of Chalilakath Kunjahammad Haji and his reforms. The unscientific and monotonous

syllabi of the Madarasahs were restructured by Haji's unparalleled effort. His activities aimed at restructuring the *Madarasa* education was launched while he was working as the *Sadar Mudaris* of the Thanmiyathul Uloom *Madarasa* at Vazhakkad.⁷¹ Around the same time A.M. Koyakunhi started Madanul Uloom Madrasa in Cannanore.⁷² Maulana Chalilakath Kunhahamed Haji started higher education in his *madrasa* and called it Darul Uloom Arabic College. This *madrasa* introduced for the first time many new subjects and used modern teaching methods.

The orthodox ulama had maintained a defensive attitude towards the reorganization of *Madarasa* education introduced by Haji. This forced him to leave Vazhakkad and joined the *Madarasa* at Mannarghat with many innovative ideas.⁷³ Unfortunately, it could not be fulfilled as per his wish before his death. A lot of renowned scholars of the time such as Sayyid Sanaullah Makthi Thangal(1847-1912), Shaykh Hamdani Thangal(d.1922), Saidali Kutty Master(1856-1919), K.M. Moulawi(1886-1964), were the real reformers of Muslim education.

However, this system survives and now serves as centres of Islamic education for students attending schools where they learn modern subjects. Classes under *Othupallis/madarasas* are held either before or after regular school hours to accommodate school going children.

Muslim Educational Institutions in the post Independence era

In the post independence era, there has been a phenomenal growth in the field of education across the country. Yet, as often admitted by educationalists and planners, this growth has not been balanced in all states and regions and for all sections of the Indian society. It is repeatedly said that the country can be liberated from various socio-economic problems only when all sections and parts of the Indian society are equitably and effectively brought under the canvas of organised and meaningful education.

Kerala society remained under the suzerainty of many princely states until the second half of the twentieth century. However, in 1956, when Kerala State came into being, the educational status of the community had somewhat improved. These changes mainly took place under the initiative of different Muslim organizations. With the degree of ideological differences among the religious groups, the following organizations had embarked upon schemes to launch a series of institutions.

Samastha Kerala Jameyathul Ulama and SKIMVB

Samastha Kerala Jam'eyathul *Ulama* (All Kerala *Ulama* Organization), known as *Samastha*, is an association of eminent Sunni

scholars who enjoyed the highest support base among Kerala Muslims. The council of eminent Muslim scholars was established in 1926 to serve the religious needs of Muslims in Kerala. It has been organizing remarkable activities through its multifaceted organizational set up to empower the social, educational and cultural status of the entire Muslim community as it strives to nurture a better society keeping their Islamic values. The formation of *Samastha* was the response of these traditional *Ulamas* to the conditions of post-1921 period in which Kerala Muslim Community generally faced a radical shift from the folds of individual leadership to the folds of organizations.

Back ground of formation

As it stated earlier the formation of *Samastha* was the response to the ongoing modernization trends in the religious sects of Islam. The new ideologies, fundamentalist and puritanical views of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1702 – 1793), *Salafism* of Rasheed Ridha (1865 – 1935), Islamic modernism of Muhammad Abduh (1819 – 1905), Pan Islamism of Jamaludheen Afghani (1897 – 1939) began to influence the Muslim community of that period. A group of religious leaders would believe that the chief architects of *Kerala Muslim Aykya Sanghom*, which was founded at Kodungallur of Cochin State in 1922 by leaders like K.M. Seethi Sahib,

K.M. Moulavi and E.K. Moulavi. It tried to bring the scattered and unorganized reformist activists together. Later, they formed a *Ulama organisation, Kerala Jam'eyyat ul-Ulama*, at a two-day conference of *Aikya Sangham* held at Alwaye in 1924 where a large number of scholars were invited. It is a fact that the outstanding members of the traditional *Ulama* did not openly reject the *Kerala Jam'eyyat ul-Ulama* at first.

However, gradually, the platform of the organization started to be utilized to attack the traditional Islam that was followed unopposed for centuries and which was nurtured under the guidance of eminent scholars headed by Makhdums of Ponnani. They declared a host of Islamic cultural traditions as *Shirk* and *Bidaa*, and alleged the centuries-old scholarly and intellectual tradition of Kerala Muslims with deviations and alterations.

The *Ulama* felt the need to organise to defend and protect Kerala's Islamic tradition and to wage a revivalist movement against the new interpretations. Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar, who had already started counter campaigns against the 'Wahhabi ideology', along with some other scholars met Sayyed Abdurahman Ba Alawi Mullakkoya Tangal, who was a Sufi Sheikh and renowned religious scholar, to discuss the need of an organizational movement to defend the true spirit of the religion. Tangal

suggested convening a meeting of eminent scholars to seek a better solution.

In 1925, a group of religious scholars and other society leaders gathered at *Calicut Valiya Juma Masjid* and formed an *Ulama* organization after long and serious discussions. K.P. Muhammad Meeran Musliyar and Parol Hussain Moulawi were selected as office bearers of the organization. The newly formed *Ulama* organization convened many religious conferences, concentrating in the places where the new ideologists had received warm welcome, and directed the masses to be aware of the leaders and followers of the ‘*Bida’i* sects’.

A year later on June 26, 1926, a bigger convention was called at Calicut Town Hall, where eminent scholars from across the state participated, under the chairmanship of Sayyid Shihabuddin Cherukunchikkoya Tangal. The convention reorganized the previously formed temporary organization and adopted a full-fledged organizational set-up in the name of *Samastha Kerala Jam’eyyat ul-Ulama*. The convention nominated Varkkal Mullakkoya Tangal as *Samastha*’s first president, while Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar, Muhammed Abdul Bari Musliyar, KM Abdul Qadir Musliyar and KP Muhammad Meeran

Musliyar became Vice presidents, and PV Muhammad Musliyar and PK Muhammad became secretaries in the first committee.

The Educational Service of SKIMVB

It is remarkable that this spiritual leadership had developed a variety of educational systems to impart Islamic knowledge to each and every section of the society in a way best suited to and compatible with their period. Abdul Rahman Bafaqi Tangal drew attention of the Ulama in 1945, at the 16th Conference of Samatha held at Kariavattam, to the urgent need of the body to take up a leading and active role in setting up Madarasas across the State. He suggested that Samastha leaders should prepare a syllabus for primary religious education to be taught in one to ten classes of madarasas along with regular schooling⁷⁴. The 19th annual conference of Samastha Kerala Jamiyithul Ulama, held in 1951 at Vadakara, Constituted the Samastha Kerala Islamic Education Board, which took much pain in establishing full-fledge madarasa in and around the Malabar region. Until then there were *Othupallies* for primary education, *Darses* in the mosques for higher education, and *Wa'az* programmes for universal education, though not without demerits.

Samastha Kerala Islamic Educational Board or *Samastha Kerala Islam Matha Vidhyabhyasa Board*, known as SKIMVB, was Samastha's

first sub-organization functioning as a mini government which unites more than nine thousand Madrasas' curriculum and conducts public examinations in fifth, seventh and tenth classes. Paravanna KPA Muhyuddin Kutty Moulavi was the founding chairman of the board. Six months later on 17 September 1951, at an important meeting at Valakkulam Puthupparamba Juma Masjid in the patronage of Moulana Abul Haqq Abdul Bari Musliyar Al-Baqawi (1981-1965) a 33-member first working committee of the SKIMVB was constituted with Paravanna K.P.A. Muhyuddeen Kutty Musliyar as the president and K.P. Usman Sahib as the general secretary. In March 1952, the board called for application for *Madrasa* recognition, and the board working committee held on August 26, 1952 and ten madarasa were recognized.⁷⁵

The number of recognized *Madrasas* has been amazingly increasing since then. The number given below will help to understand the progress of the unique *Madrasa* System set up by Samastha for primary religious education; 1956 (149), 1961 (746), 1966 (1838), 1971 (2694), 1976 (3586), 1986 (5648), 1991 (6440), 1996 (7003), 2001 (7865), 11/09/2006 (8491) and the number reached in 8860 in 2010.⁷⁶ According to official records 10,35,000 students are studying in their madarsas.⁷⁷ All the *Madrasas* have classes at least until fifth standard. Many *Madrasas* have

classes up to 7th, 10th and even +1 and +2 classes. The board has spread the message of its model *Madrasas* to states and nations like *Andaman Nicobar Islands, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Maharashtra, Malaysia, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman.*

The Board also has 106 madrasa inspectors who are constantly on the move and continuously check for the quality of education being taught in boards affiliated to madrasas, hence the need for their special camp, as we saw earlier. In recent years the Board has spread its wings and now it has 384 madrasas in Karnataka, 38 in Tamil Nadu, 12 in Andaman Islands, 11 in United Arab Emirates, 3 in Oman, and 4 in Malaysia.⁷⁸ The board officials informed that their text books are being translated into Urdu but could not tell if there are any Urdu medium madrasas that seek affiliation with the Board. It conducts systematic training classes, *Hifz*, Lower, Higher and Secondary examinations to make the teachers more capable and well equipped. There are Inspectors named as *Mufatish* to visit each and every *Madrasa*, they examine the standard of education, check up the physical condition and atmosphere of *Madrasa*, give necessary recommendations to teachers and *Madrasa* managing committee and report the functioning of each *Madrasa* to the board. There are 86 inspectors, seven tutors to train the teachers, and six Qura'n reciters to

conduct *Hifz* classes. The board directly holds centralized Public Examinations in the 5th, 7th, and 10th classes. It has so far issued 2,039,021 fifth class certificates, while the number is 603,524 in 7th and 45,994 in 10th⁷⁹.

Pass outs from the Dars system are eligible for admissions to Darul Uloom Deoband, Nadvatul Ulama Lucknow or Jamia Nizamiya Hyderabad. Jamia Nooriya in Malappuram, established in 1963, provides two years higher education in Shafi Fiqh for those who want to remain in Kerala. Graduates of this prestigious institution are called Moulavi Fazil Faizy and are in high demand as teachers, khateeb, qazis, etc.

Darul Huda

On the other end of Islamic education is Darul Huda Dar ul-Huda Islamic Academy in 1986 at Chemmad, in Kerala's Muslim majority district of Malappuram, a relatively new institution with a fresh vision. Established in 1986, Darul Huda has set up a number of feeder institutions from where it takes the brightest students after completion of their primary schooling and takes them through 12 years of grueling Islamic and modern education. Dar ul-Huda offers a 12-year course that integrates religious education with important general subjects. During the first 12 years of its running, each year Darul Huda admitted 80 students out of hundreds of

applicants in the age group of 10-11, who had completed the fifth standard in both madrasa and school, on the basis of oral and written tests. The 12-year course has been divided into four stages - a 2-year Preparatory course, a 4-year Secondary course, a 4-year Degree course and a 2-year PG course⁸⁰. The syllabus includes religious subjects such as Quran, Tajweed, Hadith, Usul ul-Hadith, Fiqh, Usul ul-Fiqh, Aqeeda, Tasawwuf, Nahvu, Sarf, Mantiq, Balagha and comparative studies of various religions, as well as secular subjects like Maths, Social Sciences, History, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. In addition to this, Arabic, Urdu, English and Malayalam are taught. Facilities for extracurricular activities like debates, discussions, oratory training, computer studies and sports are also provided. The institution follows selected text books of both Kerala State and CBSE syllabuses for its teaching of secular subjects until the secondary level. While learning finer points of religion they also master subjects like Social Studies, History, Urdu, and English.

Darul Huda is a modern Islamic Educational Institution run by Samastha. The graduates coming out from this esteemed institution are going for higher studies in various premier Universities such as Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jamia Hamdard, and Aligarh Muslim University in India and Al Azhar University, Madeena University,

Riyadh University overseas. Some of them are seriously preparing for Civil Service Examinations too. However, it augers good for a community which enters into new arenas of education. According to the official version the motto of their educational institutions is to generate “new generation of scholars who can work in this new age and new world.” While it is too early to say whether Darul Huda is a successful experiment, it is an idea that was long overdue.

The Board had not concentrated its attention only with religious education but had entered into the modern field also. It is notable that this step was taken by strictly keeping a balance between religious and modern education. Crescent Boarding *Madrasa* & residential higher secondary school at Velimukku (Malappuram) and Crescent public school at Puthaiyangady (Kozhikkode) are well established institutions run by the board.

In addition to this, the board has begun to widen its educational activities by entering the new generation professional educational scene. The first outstanding step which the board has taken is the establishment of the Engineering College at Pattikkadu in Malappuram district. The MEA Engineering College, the second Self Financing Engineering College in the district, is committed to provide excellent and value based education with a

flair for ethics and professionalism. This venture of Samastha Kerala Jammiyyathul Ulama is headed by top class intellectuals. The College is governed by the “Muslim Educational Association” headed by Panakkad Sayed Hyder Ali Shihab Thangal. The Institution is affiliated to the University of Calicut. The college offers Graduation in EE, EC, CS, IT, ME and Civil Engineering.

The Samastha played a vital role in spreading Islamic education throughout the state and Middle East Countries. The effective intervention of organizations like Samastha made the way clear for Kerala Muslims to go ahead, so they enjoy quite peace and happiness in the state compared to the northern states which are massively populated by Muslims.

Jamaat-e-Islami and Majlisu Ta’aleemil Islamiya

Jamaat-e-Islami was founded in the Indian subcontinent in 1941 at Lahore by about seventy learned men, under the leadership of the eminent scholar and thinker Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi.⁸¹ It is a comprehensive Islamic revival movement and re-organized after Independence in 1948 as Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), it has been working in the country for about six decades with its own policies and programs taking into consideration the social, cultural and political circumstances that prevail in India. JIH has its Headquarters in New Delhi and has branches in all provinces.

As soon as Jamaat e Islami was formed, its functions were started under the pious and stern stewardship of V.P.Muhammad Ali, popularly known as Haji Sahib, in Kerala with the cooperation of the earliest *Salafi* scholars. Since then the movement held many conferences which were landmarks in its history. It is said to have been believed that each conference showcased the growth and development of the movement. In its 55 years of history in Kerala, it has held 15 state conferences apart from numerous area level conferences.⁸²

In addition to these Conferences, the movement had convened a historical event, the State Women's Conference on the theme of Women's Strength for Social Revolution, organized by Jamate Islami Kerala, held at Kuttippuram, Malappuram on January 24, 2010. Thousands of women participated in the Conference with an unprecedented enthusiasm.⁸³

The *Majlisu Ta'aleemil Islamiya*, the educational agency of the Jamaat –e- Islami Kerala, founded in 1979, has made great inroads into the territory of religious revival in the State and has made immense contributions to its educational and cultural domains. In founding the Majlis, the Jamaat had envisioned an educational system with frames mainly based on Islamic subjects. Although the Jamaat was rather preoccupied with educational activities than their other counterpart in the

State, they also had undermined general education. As early as 1950, the Jamaat was making a conscious effort to set up many educational institutions in terms of Islamic nature. Nevertheless, an important fact worth mentioning here is that the movement had not taken any effort to establish modern educational institutions during this period. In the meantime, right from the very beginning, a number of madrsas and Arabic Colleges had been set up by Jamaat exponents and workers across the State.

Aliya Arabic College (1943)

Aliya Arabic College started functioning from the month of May 1943 at Chemmanad in Kasaragod district. It was inaugurated by Sayyid Abdul Rahuman Bafakki Thangal. Though this college was started by the collective effort of Muslim Ulamas of that period, gradually it came under the management of Jamaat e Islami Kerala.⁸⁴ The Inaugural meeting was presided over by Khan Bahadur Muhammad Shamnad and addressed by E.K.Moulavi, Izzuddin Moulavi, Muhammad Salih Moulavi, A.K. Sharun Sahib.

However, the *Jama ath* felt that unless they could not start a large number of institutions upholding their revival ideology, their concept would be illusionary. The socio-religious situation to launch such

institutions was so favorable due to the activities of *Islahi* activists who were the forerunners of Jamaath workers as well. It was in this context that in 1979 Majlisu Ta'aleemil Islami, a formal educational board of Jamaat e Islami Kerala was launched primarily for supervising their existing and forthcoming educational institutions and secondly for embarking upon a programme of renovation and standardization of the curricula offered by them. Right now, the *Majlis* undertakes extensive activities such as preparing the syllabus and year plan, holding of inspections, orientation programmes and examinations, conduct of distant education programme, cultural fests and teacher welfare programmes. Apart from Arabic and Urdu, English language is also taught in such institutions.

Al Jamia Islamiya Santhapuram (1955)

The Islamic University or Jamia Islamiya Santhapuram, was the transformation of prestigious and ripened Santhapuram Islamiya College founded in 1955, a deep rooted academic institution in democratic India has been established to meet the mounting needs of Islamic propagation in India and to fill the emptiness in the field of meaningful Islamic higher studies.⁸⁵ During the past years, after the establishment of this college, about 35 batches of scholars have graduated and they are rendering momentous services in different fields in India and abroad. Moreover,

almost all the leading personalities of Jamaat e Islami in Kerala such as K.A.Siddiq Hassan (General Secretary Jamaat e Islami Hind), O.Abdul Rahuman(Editor Madhyamam Daily), V.K.Hamsa(Editor Gulf Madhyamam) are the products of this premier institution. In short, now Kerala zone of Jamaath e Islami and all its offshoots, educational and publications wings are administered by persons who had graduated from Santhapuram Islamiya College.

Today, Santhapuram Islamiya college is known as Jamia Islamia, the formal declaration of the University and inauguration was accomplished in the hands of international Islamic Scholar Dr. Yusuf Al Qardawi in 2003. At present the University Comprises Preparatory Course,Usooludheen Faculty and Usooludheen Faculty for women, Sharia Faculty,Qur'an Faculty, Da'wa Faculty, Institution for Imams and Katheeb, Centre for Islamic Economics, Centre for Research and Islamic Studies and Centre for Information Technology .The authority intends to establish different colleges and institutions in the near future.

In addition to the above colleges, there were a large number of institutions launched across the lengthen breadth of the State. The establishment of Madarasathul banath in 1952 at Chennamangalore for women's education was a revolussionary step in the direction of

advancement of Muslim woman. Islahiya College, Chennamangaloor, Ilahiya College Thiroorkkad, Falahiya College Vatanappally, are the most important institutions which function under the Majlis.⁸⁶ However, now Majlis controls more than 300 educational institutions including 14 Malayalam medium school, 26 English Medium Schools 23 Secondary Schools and 22 Islamic Colleges, many primary and secondary madrasas, schools from nursery to higher secondary levels as well as undergraduate and postgraduate level colleges impart education in both Islamic studies and modern disciplines including technical fields⁸⁷.

Thangal Kunju Musaliar (1897-1966)

Thangal Kunju Musaliar was a successful industrialist, educationalist, philanthropist and a great visionary who played a pivotal role in contributing to education and social awareness of the community. His enthusiasm was equally visible in various interests such as education, journalism and industry. He is eligible to be called the father of feeding technical education in Kerala. He was known as ‘Cashew King’ in south India even before the emergence of independence which yielded the much-needed foreign exchange of the State. He earnestly upheld humanitarian values and laid the foundation of professional education in Kerala by establishing the TKM College Trust in 1956. In recognition to his services

to the nation, the Govt. of India released a commemorative postage stamp in his name.

Musaliar was born in a middle class family at the ancestral home of his parents at Kollam on 12th January 1897. His family proudly traces its ancestry to Malik ibnu Deenar, a legendary Islamic missionary who came to India in the 8th century. The name Thangal Kunju Musaliar summons up the memories of an era, when Kerala dominated the cashew export trade in the 1940s and 50s. And he had the unique distinction of being one of the world's renowned employers.

While at the peak of his business career, Musaliar became preoccupied with new thoughts, of, how best he could provide education to the new generation for the better development of the society. As a result of this, with the collaboration of many like-minded people, an organization named Travancore Muslim Majlis was formed in 1938 in Kollam and he was elected as the president of the organization⁸⁸. The main object behind the foundation of this organization was to promote social and educational awakening among the community. However, some laudable efforts were made somewhere else to empower the community; it could not be materialized in a proper manner.

On November 4th 1944, he started the publication of a full-fledged vernacular news paper named *Prabhatham*. Many outstanding writers including the doyen of Malayalam literature Joseph Mundasseri were the customary columnists in the Paper. Literary, social and political critics have regularly appeared in *Prabhatham*.

As a man of extra ordinary vision he foresaw the tremendous importance of education in the years to come. These thoughts have paved the way for the formation of T.K.M Educational Trust in 1956. The trust started its first educational institution; it was the first of its kind in the educational history of Kerala and was named TKM Engineering College at Kollam. By laying the foundation stone of the college, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, said that if the rich in the society come forward like Musaliar, the problems in the education sector would be resolved to a large extent. Again he reiterated that Musaliar, here by realized the unique concept of the Mahatma that all the haves are really trustees. Their wealth should be spent to meet the cause of the society. Through this unrivaled approach Musaliar became a unique model to society⁸⁹.

The college started with 120 students, which constituted around 1.02 per cent of the total students of engineering colleges in the country⁹⁰, and a faculty of six, offering courses in Civil, Mechanical, and Electrical

Engineering. During the inaugural speech Dr. Humayun Kabeer, Minister of State for Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, pointed out that Musaliar was the role model in the society for promoting higher education in the country⁹¹. The institution was the first Engineering College in the private sector. Various news papers including Malyala Manorama, the prominent Malayalam daily, had published editorials admiring his heroic move⁹². The minister expressed his view that the government of India would like to enhance the number of engineering students in the country from 10000 to 14000 by 1961⁹³. Now the institution sports eight under graduate courses, three post graduate courses and many research centres.

C.H. Muhammad Koya

C.H. Muhammad Koya, the tenth 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 more⁹⁴.

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 almost

all 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 1967.⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ As a 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”.⁹⁷

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 teachers⁹⁸. 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 included Cabinet in the State, particularly 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'⁹⁹

It was the only first grade college in central Malabar at the time of its inception and was originally affiliated to Madras University in 1948.¹⁰⁰ 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 Aikya Sangham finally resulted in the formation of Raulathul Uloom Association. The first institution the 'Rouzathul Uloom 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 Moulavi Abussabah Ahamed Ali Sahib (President), Adv. MV. Hydross Sahib (Secretary), M. Kunhoyi Vaider (Asst. Secretary) and seven other members¹⁰¹. However, apart from this most prestigious College, under the patronage of Rauzathul Uloom 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 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.

Kochunni Master (1921-2008) and his Socio-Educational Movements

In Cochin, there were many prominent personalities in the community, but the eminence of Kochunni Master cannot be disregarded. The absence of Muslim intelligentsia of Cochin in the sphere of education, such as Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi in Travancore and Chalilakath Kunjhammad Haji in Malabar, had created a huge vacuum in the promotion of education in the community during the early period.

Kochunni Master born in 1921, at Kochi, began his career as a teacher and entered politics through the Praja Mandalam Party. His contribution as the first Mayor of Kochi Corporation, as MLA in the State Assembly, as KPCC treasurer, was praiseworthy and will be remembered by one and all.¹⁰² He was a strong and courageous trade union leader who found time for his literary pursuits. With all these humilities Master is known to us by his relentless community extension activities rendered for the cause of Muslims in Kerala.

Master was an integral part of Islamic Seminar of 1963 held at MIHS Ernakulam under the auspices of Jama at Federation led by Majeed Marakkar Sahib, P.M. Mayinkutty Sahib, Abdul Kader Hali(Kaja Beedi), Sayyid Haji, Cheri Kunjhi Koya Thangal, Haji Hassanar Rawther Athirampuzha, Haji K.C.M. Mather, A.B. Kochunni Sahib, A.V. Muhammad sahib, K.H. Sulaiman Master, P.E. Musthafa Rawther, Haji K.Hassainar, E.K.Muhammad, Prof. Moideen Sha Sahib, K.K.Abdul Rahiman Sahib, P.A. Sayed Muhmmad Sahib, Muhammad Shafi Sahib and Pallippuram Pareeth Sahib.¹⁰³It was so unfortunate that the Muslim educational Conference could not yield any result in setting up educational institutions in Kochi.

Meanwhile, Master was strenuously engaged in multifarious social activities particularly in the trade union sector with an untiring aspiration to extend some educational initiatives. It was in this context that the Chairman of Al Ameen Trust, headed by Dr. Mumthas Ahmad Khan, a leading Muslim educationalist in South India who manged many educational institutions in Bangalore, called on Master and explained the contribution of modern education towards the upliftment of the community.¹⁰⁴ Master was fully enamoured with the idea of starting some educational institution. Thus, an educational trust named Al Ameen was

formed in 1979¹⁰⁵ and he became the chairman of the same until his death in 2008.

For the establishment of the trust, Master travelled extensively in the gulf countries to collect donations. He was immensely encouraged by people from many quarters. As a result of his laborious work and boundless help from like minded people, Al Ameen College, an aided Arts and Science College, came into being in 1981. The college was upgraded in 1992 with P.G. courses. Apart from aided courses, many self financing courses are also conducted here.

The Al Ameen group of educational institutions in Kochi is the result of his selfless and sincere hard work and envisioned efficiency.¹⁰⁶ The other institutions established by the Trust are Al-Ameen Academic Centre, Edathala, Aluva, Al-Ameen Public School, Edappally, Kochi, Al-Ameen Industrial Training Centre, Edathala, Aluva, Al-Ameen Public School, Chandiroor, Al-Ameen Public School, Pathanapuram, Kollam and Al-Ameen Public School, Sreemoolanagaram, Aluva. Thus, in the educational history of Muslims in Kochi, Kochunni Master has an endearing place.

Emergence of Muslim Educational Society (MES)

The last four decades have witnessed an amazing transformation in the educational status of Muslims in Kerala, supposedly the most backward in education. The driving force behind this effort has been the Muslim Educational Society(MES), the biggest educational agency of the Muslim community in India having thousands of life members and hundreds of institutions.

The movement started under the dynamic leadership of the late Dr P.K. Abdul Ghafoor in 1964 at Calicut, was supported by a large number of professionals and businessmen, and in a short span of time, it spread to all Districts, Taluks and even the Panchayats in Kerala, other parts of India and even abroad. As on today it is the largest Muslim Educational Society in the State owning the largest number of general educational institutions in the aided sector.

MES has more than 9,000 life members a large number of well wishers. It not only has Units in each and every District in Kerala, but also has spread to the neighboring states like Tamilnadu and Karnataka. It has also well established units in the Middle East countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, and the organization is still growing fast, extending its services further to reach every nook and corner of the State.

In the 1960s Calicut town was the nerve centre of many Muslim cultural organizations. People were willing to help the poor students of Farooq College. ‘Aligarh Old Boys Association’ and ‘Calicut Muslim Association’ were also functioning in Calicut under the leadership of Dr. P.K. Abdul Gafoor, Prof. K.M. Bahaudheen, Dr. M.A. Abdulla, Dr. K. Muhammad Kutty and A.V. Muhammad. The prime objective of the organizations was to reform the community¹⁰⁷.

Dr. M.A. Abdullah, one of the founders of the MES describes its origin thus, ‘We used to help the students of Farooq College and also students from various Medical and Engineering colleges coming from poor backgrounds. Those students seeking assistance were compelled to wait outside the clinics till the practice was over. This situation created an inferiority complex among the students. Keeping this in the mind, we decided to create a mechanism which would enable the students to accept assistance with dignity. The first consultative meeting was held to discuss this matter. On September 10, 1964 the following people assembled in the residence of Dr. P.K. Abdul Gafoor, Prof. K.M. Bahaudheen, Dr. M.A. Abdulla, Dr. K. Muhammad Kutty and Adv. A.V. Muhammad, C.P. Kunhammad and Prof. A.P. Ibraheem Kunju. These people were from different organizations. After the meeting a new organization finally took

shape. One suggestion was that ten rupees per month should be collected from the members and this should be utilized to provide assistance to the needy. Another suggestion was to approach the rich people in the city and collect the money so that the interest accruing from it can be used for providing the scholarships. But some people opposed this suggestion saying that if money is collected from those people not related to the organization then it would impede the independent functioning of the organization. Dr. Abdul Gafoor's suggestion that those who are interested in educational activities can be contacted after the formation of the organization was accepted by all. All those who participated in the meeting became members contributing 10 rupees each. More people agreed to be members by contributing the money and soon it became evident that the endeavor to form an organization would be a huge success.¹⁰⁸

MES on path

In October 11, 1964 a meeting of existing members was convened. It was held in Himayathul Islam Hall near Kozhikode South Beach. C.P. Kunhammad presided over the meeting. The meeting was convened with the agenda of framing rules, selecting the office bearers and preparing the future steps of the organization. Dr. Abdul Gafoor was selected as the first president of the society.

The following persons were selected as office bearers. Dr. P.K. Abdul Gafoor (President), C.P. Kunhammad, Prof. K.M. BAhaudheen, Dr. Ms. Kamarunnisa Khalida (Vice Presidents), Dr. K. Muhammad Kutty (Secretary), Dr. MA. Abdulla (Joint Secretary), K.C. Hassankutty (Treasurer) and Adv. A.V. Ahammad (Legal Advisor), P.A. Khadir Meeran, S.K. Khader, T. Abdul Azeez, V. Abdur Rahman, K.V. Kunhammad Koya, P.K. Ali, Dr.T.P. Muhammad, K.C. Ahammad and M.A. Shukoor.¹⁰⁹ The organization was named Muslim Educational Society, Kozhikode. The working committee was entrusted with the job of framing the rules of the society. Dr. Abdul Gafoor while suggesting the further steps to be taken by the society declared that the society will distribute an amount of ₹ 25,000 as scholarship in 1965, and the amount will be doubled in the coming years. The declaration of the president was a huge surprise for the public and the media.

It was a clarion cry in the service sector, especially from a community which was reluctant to forge ahead in the modern education sphere. The society had to face two threats from the community, one, those who were very far from education and its benefits because of economic lack and the other, the girls who were denied access to main stream education because of the unreasonable attitude of the conservative Muslim

scholars. To overcome these threats the leaders of the society utilized every single opportunity they got, to make people aware of the importance of modern education. The first Muslim MRCP holder in South India and a Medical College professor Dr. P.K. Abdul Gafoor and his team wandered in the midnight to meet the rich people in the cities and villages of Malabar to lay the foundation for a new movement.¹¹⁰ These leaders sacrificed their health and wealth to promote the organization. The people in the city and villages supported the society and they started contributing their wealth for the cause of modern education. They were ready to join the movement without hesitation. This membership drive was known as the ‘Chloroform effect.’¹¹¹

The main objective of the MES is education and the social and cultural up-lift of the Indian Muslims. The secular organization with a firm belief in the Indian polity views that protective reservation is essential for the salvation of the downtrodden backward classes. The principle of the organisation is to keep away from party politics and sectarian religious philosophy. However, they enjoyed great support from the IUML, the one and only the political organization which bagged parliamentary position since the inception of the Government of Kerala, to establish various types of educational institutions in different parts of the State. Kunjhali Kutty

P.K. observes ‘We never claim that we are showing privilege to a particular organization, but it is one among the many like minded organizations in the community, particularly the downtrodden, which has came forward to exercise the constitutional rights with the relentless help of Muslim League. Again he reiterated that C.H. Muhammad Koya, the former Chief Minister of Kerala, was so generous to the community in terms of promoting education.’¹¹² Meanwhile, the response of the MES, to many issues had undermined the Muslim League’s bighearted attitude towards them. The history of the MES College, Mambad is an indispensable yardstick to measure the openhanded policy of our party towards the MES.¹¹³

The cardinal principle of the organisation is “the development of the individual leads to the development of community”, which finally leads to nation building. So it began to give great emphasis to all sections of the society. Women's education is another main theme in the agenda of the organization. It emphasizes the democratic values that are inherent to Islam and believes in the principle of collective responsibility in running the organization. The MES adheres to the concept of social justice and is at the forefront in the fight to achieve this.

In order to strengthen the economic state of the society, it entered the agricultural field also. There was a separate committee under the leadership of Kappungal Saithalavi Haji and Dr.M.B. Bavakkunhi.¹¹⁴ As part of this, the society planted rubber trees in 105 acres of land in Edathanattukara,¹¹⁵ 38 acres in Mampad and 15 acres in Erumeli, Idukki district. The Society collected the amount from the Zakath fund even though this raised much objection from the side of the conservative scholars. Between 1964-65 the MES distributed scholarships for 98 students, among them 12 Medical students, 21 Engineering students, 26 Polytechnic students, 3 B.Ed students and 35 Pre-Degree, Degree and PG students.¹¹⁶ The amount was increasing every year it reached one lakh in 1968. It distributed a total amount of 45 lakhs and above in the year 1993.¹¹⁷ The society runs several scholarship schemes including endowments which can be described as follows:

1. MES's KS. Abdulla train the talent scheme(1972-73)
2. Special scholarship for the children of Imams and Mullas who are working in the mosque(1972-74)
3. Scholarship for the children of sea men(1973-74)
4. Matching grant scheme(1975)
5. Sponsorship project(1986)
6. All India Muslim Educational Society Scholarship (1976)¹¹⁸
7. M.E.S.MFAR Scholarship Scheme

8. M.E.S .Special Sponsored Scholarship Scheme
9. MES Endowment Scholarship Scheme¹¹⁹

Sprouting of Educational Institution under the Society

Indeed, the Society realized the fact that for the development of the student community the scholarships alone were not sufficient because there were not enough colleges for the community. There were only four Muslim Arts and Science Colleges in the State, two each in Malabar and Travancore region. So the MES leadership seriously set in motion a series of discussions to launch a number of modern educational institutions in the State. With the immense support of the Muslim League, Muslim Aristocrats, and like minded people in the community, MES could fulfill this mission immediately.

Today, it runs 72 English-medium schools, most of which are affiliated to the Central Board for Secondary Education, the rest to the Indian Council of Secondary Education and the State Boards. It also has more than a couple of dozen colleges, including 14 Arts and Science Colleges, one Medical College, two B.Ed. colleges, two Business management colleges, two engineering colleges, and a nursing and a dental college. Most of these are located in the Muslim-dominated parts of Calicut and Mallapuram districts. The assets of the MES, says its

President, Dr. Fazal Ghafoor, a well-known neurologist, amount to some 8000 crore rupees.¹²⁰ The total number of students enrolled in MES-owned institutions, he says, is almost 60,000. More than a third of them are non-Muslims. A brief account of its important institutions is given below.

MES College, Mannarkkad Malappuram (1964)

The courage and bold decision of Dr.P.K. Abdul Gafoor, President of the Society paved the way for the foundation of the first college in the name of MES in Kallady, Mannarkkad, in Malappuram. In 1967 Kallady Cheriya Kunhammad donated 35 acres of land and one lakh rupees for the college.¹²¹ On July 3, 1967 the college was started with 286 students. There were only 9 Muslim girls when the college was started, but within a short span the number of female students doubled and it reached to 426 in 1993. The college was the starting point in the history of the MES; thence it grew by leaps and bounds in the educational sector.

MES College Ponnani, Malappuram (1968)

Ponnani is an emotionally important place in Malabar for all Muslims, and boasts rich Islamic traditions and various important religious institutions. Though the people were enriched in Islamic learning, not one ray of modern education could penetrate these realms. The decision of the MES leadership to launch an Arts and Science College in Ponnani was

highly thought of as a contemporary need. However, the college was inaugurated in July 22, 1968 with the unconditional support of the Ponnani Branch of the Muslim Educational Society. Graduate and Post graduate courses in science and arts subjects flourish in the college. When the college was opened, there were only 215 students with 60 Muslim boys and 10 Muslim girls. After five years the student strength reached 2199.

MES Asmabi College, Kodungallur (1968)

The space for the college was initially occupied by the family of Ismaeel Haji Eisa Sait the famous business man in Ernakulam. The premises was made ready and the college building constructed, but there was no one to manage it, so the building was donated to the MES and they started the college in 1968 in the name of Asmabi wife of the late Ismaeel Haji. The college was upgraded in 1977.

MES Mampad College (1969)

The personal interest of C.N. Ahammad Moulavi the great Islamic scholar in Malabar was the driving force behind this college. He got the sanction to start a college in Eranadu Taluk from the University. Mampad Athal Moyin Athikari contributed 25 acres land in Mampad. Moulavi formed an organization viz. Eranadu Muslim Educational Association in which a good number of rich men joined. The college started functioning

in the year 1965 and it went on till 1969. Then the college management was compelled to stop its functioning due to acute financial liability. The suggestion was to hand over the college to MES. There was a mixed response in the MES Executive regarding the issue of taking over the college. Finally the decision hinged on the casting vote of the president Dr. Abdul Gafoor who went ahead with the bold decision to take over the college. In 1969 the Hon. Minister for education Janab CH Muhammad Koya handed over the key of the college to Dr. Abdul Gafoor. The college was renamed as Doctor Gafoor Memorial MES College after the accidental death of Dr. Gafoor. The college was upgraded in 1970. In 1978 PG courses were started in Arabic, Islamic History, Economics, Zoology, Mathematics and Commerce. In 1993 the total strength of the students reached 1832 in which 1143 were Muslims.

MES KVM College, Valancheri

MES Valancheri Unit was the result of a strong desire to begin a college in the area. The government sanction was delayed. So they started a parallel college in the Raman Memorial Basic Training School in 1973. The committee received the sanction in 1981 from the Government following a massive protest in front of the collectrate of Malappuram district. The premises in which the college was situated was very far from

the city, so for further convenience the college was shifted to the city and named as MES KVM College in the memory of KV Muhammad who contributed more than two lakh rupees for it. The college was upgraded in 1993.

MES Nedumkandam College (1982)

The district committee of MES Idukki Chapter strongly demanded a college in Nedumkandam the least developed area in the district. The tireless effort of Dr.PK Abdul Gafoor and VK Kutty Saheb to get the sanction for the college became successful in 1982. The College is affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. Now the college has five Under Graduate programmes and five Post Graduate programmes. The college is an eminent centre, playing a key role in the development of higher education. The college is the only committed centre of higher education in the area and serves the educational needs of generations. It is situated in an ideal pleasant and calm location surrounded by cardamom, pepper plantations at Vattappara in Pampadumpara Panchayat of Udumbanchola Taluk .

MES College Marambally (1995)

M.E.S. College Marampally is an aided college affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University. By establishing a new college at Marampally

in 1995, the M.E.S. has broken new grounds in the field of higher education. The technical and professional courses offered in this institution have gained wide acceptance from the society and that gave added confidence to the management to start professional educational institutions. It is located between the towns of Aluva and Perumbavoor. The college commits itself to the mission of M.E.S. that is to work for the educational, social and economic advancement of the people of India in all possible ways. It tries to promote Higher, Technical and Professional education and improve the standard and quality of education among the people in general and the minorities and backward classes in particular. The motto of the College is to meet the challenges confidently and constantly raise the standards of excellence.

MES Medical College, Malaparamba

The ambitious dream of the Muslim Educational Society to build up a Medical College to reduce the imbalance between the rich and the poor in getting quality medical care was realized through this project. The location chosen is Malaparamba, a remote area near Angadipuram in Malappuram District. Dr. Fazal Gafoor, the architect behind this herculean venture had the inner vision to foresee that this Medical College would be a boon to thousands of rural people in and around this district by offering

compassionate medical care. By the establishment of these institutions, MES fulfilled the dream of the great founder of the Society; Dr. Abdul Ghafoor.

Now the Medical College has 300 beds and provides free medical service to the needy. Two community medical care centers, one rural and another urban, are functioning. Regular medical camps are being conducted in remote areas to reach out to the needy. The academy has a nursing college which functions in a four storied building with spacious class rooms, most modern teaching technologies, office and well equipped laboratories for fundamentals of Nursing, Community Health Nursing, Nutrition, Anatomy, Physiology and Computer Science. It is the first college of Nursing in Malappuram District to get attached to a Medical College Hospital. The annual intake of students is fifty.

MES Engineering College, Kuttippuram (1994)

MES Engineering College Kuttippuram, is the first self financing engineering college with minority status and it is situated on the banks of the Bharathappuzha in Kuttippuram, Malappuram. The college is widely acknowledged as one of the top institutions for imparting technical education in the state. It caters to the needs of Muslims in particular and others in general. Today over 2750 students undertake their undergraduate and post graduate courses here, under the expertise of over 400 qualified

faculty members and research guides. The college offers graduation in Applied Electronics & Instrumentation, Architecture, Civil Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering, Electronics & Electricals Engineering, Electronics and Computer Science, Information Technology Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and post graduation in Computer Science Engineering, Business Administration and Computer Application. It is the first self financing Engineering College in the state run by a Muslim management.

In addition to the aforesaid aided colleges, MES has started a large number of Parallel and Self Financing Educational Institutions under different Universities. MES Erumeli, is an unaided college established in 1995 at Erumeli, Kottayam District. It offers many graduate and post graduate degrees in scientific and advanced courses. MES College for Advanced Studies, Edathala(2005), MES College Villiappally, Vatakara, MES College Kunnukara, Aluva (2004), MES College chathamangalam, MES College Villiapally Vadakara, MES College Kunnukara, Aluwa, are the most important self financing educational institutions run under the auspices of MES Taluk or district committees. Moreover, some other colleges are situated in the following places; Koyilandi, Nilambur, Vandoor, Tirur, Kaniyapuram, Kalpetta, Bathery and Edathanattukara.

The society runs a large number of schools in the state and outside including Middle East countries. In Kerala it runs 6 aided schools affiliated to the state syllabus, 6 unaided schools, 30 schools in CBSE stream and 2 special schools. Other than this bulk number of schools the society provides primary education in 30 different backward areas. With all these outstanding contributions in the sphere of education, MES has a truly enviable track record.

Muslim Service Society MSS (1980)

In 28th April 1980, one more Muslim organization was formed in the State with multi objectives of promoting education and rendering services to the needy. Even though MSS was a splinter group of MES, it rendered its activities in the community extension services. The discontent that mounted among the workers of the MES culminated in the formation of a new organization named MSS. It was mainly because of the ‘turn key’ issue raised by its activists.¹²²

The alleged ‘turn key’ issue was a business venture offered from gulf country to raise funds to meet the growing demands of the Society. At this time, a controversy arose from some quarters that the main office bearers of the Society were trying to convert the venture into their private business. But a group of the members in the MES made it a private firm

but they were not ready to reveal this project to the remaining members. The issue was made public and there followed serious discussion and disputes in the committee which led to the birth of a new service organization namely MSS. The founding leaders of the society were K.V.Koyassan Haji, M. Abdur Rahman, Arakkal Abdullakkutty, E.K. Muhammad, K.V. Kunhammad, P.M. Muhammad Koya and C.P. Hashim¹²³.

The services and style of action of MES set the path for the smooth functioning of the newly founded Society. The people at that time were totally aware about the necessity of such movements. Today the society has its branches in all most all taluks and districts of the state which renders immense services especially in the field of education and health. The bylaw of the MSS does not allow anyone to become an office bearer for more than two consecutive terms. This condition saved the society from being institutionalized. So the members concentrated fully on educational development which culminated in drastic changes.

The prime objective of the society is to promote education, to engage in services for needy people, to create an atmosphere of harmony and unity between the different socio-religious groups and to run

institutions for the fulfillment of these objectives. Some of such institutions and service centres are given below:

- MSS Cultural Complex, Calicut. The state committee centre was inaugurated in 1982. It includes Juma Masjid, Hostel, Auditorium, Free medical aid centre and Career institute. The complex plays a vital role in studying the key problems of the community and finding the proper solutions.
- Mavilikkadavu MSS Public School. The school is situated in Calicut in the name of late PA Muhammad Koya. It follows CBSE syllabus.
- Medical College Medical Aid Centre. The centre started functioning near to Calicut Medical College in 1993. It gives shelter for the poor patients and destitute.

In addition to these contributions, the Society moves with an irrefutable written motto 'Ideal Man for Ideal Society'¹²⁴. After completing thirty years in the field, the society helped the community to go ahead in the field of education. It worked very hard against institutionalization and factionism. It gives priority for the personal enlightenment and charity rather than enhancing the number of institutions.

KMCT

KMCT, a charitable trust in Kozhikode, conceived the idea of imparting top class education beyond pure knowledge to experimental learning and personal growth to the aspiring young generation of the State. To meet the terms of these cherished visions KMCT started to establish professional educational Institutions as back as in 1994 and ventured into the profession of education by starting their first institution at Kozhikode, the heart of Malabar in Kerala.

Attaining employment for educated youths as early as their completion of education is so difficult, but not impossible. In KMCT Group of Educational Institutions are offered the degrees such as professional and technical are highly job oriented advanced courses in accordance with the rising demands of the time. Apart from graduate and post graduate degrees in engineering, management, nursing, pharmacy, education, and dentistry, a large number of diploma courses are offered in various innovative and vocational courses. All these courses are job oriented and capable of meeting the demands of the new trends. Within little more than two decades, KMCT established more than a dozen of such professional institutions offering various types of advanced courses. Infact, the community is mainly demanded these types inclusive education to a large extent.

Role of Orphanages in the Community

In the holy Quran, caring and sheltering of orphans is urged as a religious duty.¹²⁵ Right from the period of Prophet, providing protection for the orphans was relentlessly encouraged. The Muslims were handing over their religious as well as spiritual spirit through generations. In Kerala this community happened to be inclined towards the customs and traditions of the Arabs who had been visiting and staying in the coastal strips from time immemorial. As a result of this, the Muslims in Kerala realized the need of operating and maintaining orphanages from very early times. However, today, the total number of orphanages in Kerala is 675 out of which 165 (24.4) are under the control of Muslim managements.¹²⁶ It is quite coincident that it is the exact percentage of the Muslim population in the state.

The Tirurangadi Orphanage was founded in the 1920s as an abode for the Mappilas orphaned by the great revolt of 1921 against the British. Later it became an important centre of education which now comprises of a first grade college, training school, hospital etc. The Jamiyathu Dawathul Wa Tabligh Islami (JDT Islam) was established in Calicut in the early 1920s also for helping the orphans of the Revolt of 1921. This also has now grown into a centre of learning which includes Polytechnic College,

Industrial Training Centre, Orphanage, etc. The JDT also runs a multi-specialty hospital. The Mukkam Muslim Orphanage near Calicut also is one of the pioneer centres of education which now includes a first grade college, training school, higher secondary school, orphanage etc. Since then a number of orphanages and other associated educational institutions have sprung up in various parts of Malabar.

In addition to the above discussed important associations and significant institutions in the State, 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 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.

End Notes

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