CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

In the history of the world, religion plays an important and significant role. As we know, man is a social animal, who gradually developed and adopted new and different methods of living. According to available sources of information, it is universally accepted that our ancestors who were uncivilized and barbarians worshipped several nature gods and goddesses but they had faith in rituals and creator of universe. From time to time man passed through different atmospheres, learnt more about gods and their miracles, and developed several ways of approach to god. Similarly, several new ways, ideas, concepts came to existence and the human race started to worship various religions and gods.

Every religion has its own concept and principles. In 6th century A.D. the religion of Islam was introduced and spread not only in Arab but also in entire world. Before the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAS) Arab was not politically united. It was a country without a government. Each tribe considered itself an independent sovereign unit. There was no law except the law of the strongest.

Loot, arson and murder of innocent and weak people was the order of the day. Life property and honour were constantly in jeopardy. Tribes were always at daggers with one another. They could hardly discriminate between pure and impure, lawful and unlawful. Their lives were barbaric. The Arabs were fond of the 3 W's. i.e., Wine,
Women and Wealth. It was, therefore, a manifestation of God's great wisdom that he choose Arabia as the birthplace of the Prophet.

With the teachings of Islam Prophet Muhammad (SAS) brought equality, fraternity, and feeling of oneness, peace and humanity not only among Arabs but also throughout the world. To preach and propagate Islam, Prophet Muhammad (SAS) took keen interest and sent many Sahaba-E-Karam (companions) all over the world. In India before the arrival of Mohdbin-Qasim, 7th century A.D., Arab had trade relations with India. The Arab traders also started preaching Islam along with their business and the Sufis and Awaliyas were equally responsible to propagate Islam all over India.

Islam spreads in India through the Arab traders, Sufis and various Jamaatein, when we speak about Karnataka the Muslims of Karnataka migrated from North to South India at the periods of Sultan Alauddin Khilji and Mohammad bin Tughlaq at the beginning of the Bahamani period, 2 or 3 generations was passed here and they developed the matrimonial relationship with the other Muslims and mixed with the different regional Muslims. Latterly, spreads all over Karnataka they came to South with the armies of Adil Shahis of Bijapur and the army of Golkonda. We find a lot of mixed culture because of the impact of the different ways of living, for example trade, customs, societies, etc. Religious tolerance played a pivotal role amongst the emperor for example Akbar. We can see many customs of the Indian Muslims is the result of the impact of not only the Mughal emperors but also the influence of Indian society. We can see the
impacts of Indian culture in Muslim culture like the customs of Chaumasa, Satavasa (Kubusa), Processions, Birthday Celebrations, Rounumai ki Rasam, etc. in dressing like sari and dhoti for men, in ornaments specially like tali (mangalsutra), kalungara (finger ring), anklets, etc. but the celebration of Muharram Tazia (Panje) is the impact of the Isnaashri (Shia) on Indian Muslim society.

The Indian Muslims have become flexible in following the said rules of Islam, it is because of the influence of Indian culture. Indian Muslims have drifted away from the Arab Muslims in dressing, language, cooking and all the way of life.

The impact of one culture upon another can be noticed politically, socially, economically and even spiritually. Sometimes the spiritual impact goes to the extent of changing the religion of the people. The establishment of several Muslim kingdoms in India brought several changes in the field of religion and social life. Islam is based on the principle of equality. However, the Indian society gradually started mingling in the beliefs and principles of Islam. But, some people were interested more in gaining political, social, religious and even personal benefits to get popularity in the society. Therefore, as a result, there were many sects and sub-sects formed in the religion of Islam.

The meaning of sect in English is section, part, or division. However, in Urdu language the section is called 'Firqa' meaning differentiate or difference or a thing, which is very different from other. Thus, we can find more appropriate meaning of the Sects and Sub-
sects of Islam in Urdu language i.e. 1) Tawhid, means the unity of God, There is no deity except Allah.
2) Prophethood, 1, 24,000 Prophets sent by Allah to warn and guide the people from various Prophets of God and the last prophet was Prophet Muhammed (Sallallahu Allaihi W-Sallam - Peace be upon him). It is clearly accepted and believed that henceforth there cannot be any other Prophet who are likely to come in this world. 3) Akhirat means the last Day of Judgment i.e. called Qiyamath. Along with the above said three basic beliefs, the acts of worships which are regarded as five pillars of Islam are 1) The declaration of faith (Shahadath) 2) The prescribed prayers (salat) or Namaz 3) Fasting during the month of Ramzan 4) The poor – due (zakat) 5) The pilgrimage to Makkah. If any slightest difference came in these basic beliefs and the acts of worship that is considered as the sect of Islam which is not at its purest form.

Islam is a religion in which God has given a code of conduct for the human beings of this world. It is clear in Holy Quran i.e. “all people be afraid of your God, who created first couple Adam and Hawa (Eve) from whom many men and women were born”. It is clear that all the people of different countries and tribes were born from the same man and woman. It is also very clearly mentioned in Holy Quran that there shall be no discrimination based on caste, creed, colour, place of birth, gender, region. Thus nobody is superior or inferior. All are equal in the eyes of Allah. If at all, there is a difference in the eyes of God it is purely based on the quality of piety (one who is afraid to Allah).
After the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAS) the religious administrative powers went in the hands of Caliphas. Abu Bakr Siddique became the first Caliph who was succeeded by Hazrat Umar Farooque. After the death of Hazrat Umar Farooque (2nd Caliph) in 644 A.D, Hazrat Usman (3rd Caliph) was chosen and was murdered in 656 A.D, bringing a civil war over the succession, and laying the foundation for an eventual split. In place of Usman, Hazrat Ali became the Caliph. After the period of Hazarat Ali (4th caliph) many political issues came up due to which the Islamic foundation was shaken and as a result, gradually many sects emerged.

It is fact that nowadays Muslims are divided amongst themselves. The tragedy is that Islam does not endorse such divisions at all. Islam believes in fostering unity amongst its followers.

The glorious Quran says "...And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves." [Al-Quran 3:103]

Which is the rope of Allah that is being referred to in this verse? It is the glorious Quran. The glorious Quran is the rope of Allah, which all Muslims should hold fast together. There is double emphasis in this verse. Besides saying ‘hold fast altogether’. It also says ‘be not divided’.

Quran further says,

"Obey Allah, and obey the messenger".

[Al-Quran 4:59]
All the Muslims should follow the Quran and authentic Ahadith and should be not divided among themselves. It is prohibited to make sects and divisions in Islam.

The glorious Quran says:

“As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least. Their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did”.

[Al-Quran 6:159]

In this verse, Allah (SWT (Allah Subhan Wa Taala)) says that one should disassociate oneself from those who divide their religion and break it up into sects.

Some may argue by quoting the Hadith of our beloved Prophet from Sunan Abu Dawood Hadith No.4579. In this Hadith the Prophet (SAS) is reported have said, “My community will be split up into 73 sects”.

This Hadith reports that Prophet (SAS) predicted the emergence of 73 sects. He did not say that Muslims should be active in dividing themselves into sects. The glorious Quran commands not to create sects. Those who follow the teachings of the Quran and Ahadith, and do not create sects are the people who are on the true path.

According to Tirmidhi Hadith No.171, the Prophet (SAS) is reported to have said, “... My Ummah will be fragmented into 73 sects and all of them will be in Hell fire accept one sect”. The companions asked Allah’s messenger which group that would be. Where upon he replied, “It is the one to which I and my companions belong”. A true
Muslim should only follow the glorious Quran and the Sahih Hadith. If only all Muslims read the Quran with proper understanding and adhere to Sahih Hadith, Inshah Allah most of these differences would be solved and we could be one united Muslim Ummah.

The study of sects and sub-sects of Islam can be divided into two major sects 1) Ahle sunnat wal Jamat or Ahle Sunni 2) Non-Ahle sunnat. Ahle sunnat further divided into school of laws, School of thoughts, sects based on Peeri-W-Mureedi (Tasawwuf), Professional and Non-Professional based sects, many ethnic groups like, Meo, Memons, Tamil Muslims. Labbe, Konkani Muslims, Sunni Bohara or Vohara, Mapilla, etc. Non-Ahle sunnat contains rest of all the sects and sub-sects that means the followers of these sects made changes in the basic beliefs and practices of Islam according to their will and wish like shia, kharjia, motazala, marijia, Bukharia, Mushaba, Ismaily khoja, Bohara etc. Hence, the present study is mainly concerned with the sects and sub-sects among the Muslims of Karnataka with special reference to North Karnataka. The study also deals with the Nawaiths and Siddis and other sects of Ahle sunnat wal jamaat, including the customs and the festivals of Ahle Sunnat and Non-Ahle Sunnat.

Scope and Objectives

The study covers the period from early times to the birth of prophet Mohammad (SAS) (571 A.D-634 A.D) till date. Further it also focus on the conditions of the Arabia before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAS) and also the life and achievements and the teaching of Islam was discussed. In the times of Calipha’s, the gradual
developments and the spreading of Islam to other parts of the world. The present work deals with the arrival of Islam to India, through the Arab traders, Sahaba-E-karam (Companions of Prophet Muhammad), Awaliya-E-Karam (Religious Heads), Sufi saints and Religious Institutions. In this scenario, the emergence of the Sects and Sub-sects among the Muslims of India are discussed in general, the special historical and analytical emphasis is given to the Customs, Culture and beliefs of the Sects and Sub-sects of North Karnataka.

The study aims to –
1) identify the various sects and sub-sects of Indian Muslims.
2) to examine the classification of the sects of earlier times and present times.
3) understanding how the occupational based sects emerged specifically in North Karnataka
4) critically examines how sects resulted in the disunity of the Muslim Society.
5) the Ahle sunnat wal Jamat or Ahle sunni which is not a sect of Islam.

Review of Literature

The role of sources is important for the reconstruction of history from the times of ancient to modern. They may be classified into several groups. For the present study, primary and secondary works are used. Among the important works worth mentioning are:

A large number of books available on religion and Islamic principles are used as the primary sources. Among them
1. Quran
2. Ahadith
3. Mazahibul Islam
4. Ganibattuttaliben

These four books are the primary sources for the present research work. The holy book of Quran describes completely about the Code of Conduct to the humankind, and proves prophet Muhammad (SAS) as the best example for the Muslims of the world. The Ahadith (furmans of Prophet Muhammad (SAS)) of Tirmidi and Sunan Abu Dawood, state about the Muslims split into 73 Sects. The work Mazahibul Islam of Najmul Ganikahan Sahab and Abdul Ganikhan sahib is a very important and unique source of material for present research work, which throws light not only on the classification of the 73 Sects, but also their founder, beliefs and the differences between Sects of Non-Ahle-Sunnat-wal- Jamat.

The book also gives information about the ethnic groups and other sects of Islam. The work Gunibattuttalibeen of Hazarat AbdulKhadar Jeelani is another important source material. In this book, the classification of 73 Sects of Islam are discussed. Some other literary works are:- Tarique Ilmul Fiqqa by Sayed Amimull Ahesan, which throws light on Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), for the schools of thoughts the books like Swaneh-Ala Hazarat, Ahle Hadis, Bareilwi Ahle hadis or Deobandi Hazarat, Dastoor of Jamatein Islami, Gazetteer of the Districts, the work Arab-w-Dayare Hind throw light on occupational and Non-occupational based Sects; for the ethnic
groups books like Tarique-un-Nawayat, Nawayats of Canara, Nawayats of Ahsan (Hasan), Gujarat and the people of Gujarati, Encyclopedias, different Imperial and States Gazetteer, Census Reports, Journals, Interviews and field work.

Daily Siyasat, Weekly Saalar etc; are used as the sources in the present work

**Methodology**

The present study on "Sects and Sub-sects among the Muslims of Karnataka with Special reference to North Karnataka - A study" is completely based on the religious works of Islam. Only two literary works are available to clarify and identify the 73 sects of Islam. The specified monthly Journals, newspapers and many books have been referred for the study. The field works is done at Bhatkal, Haliyal, Hubli, Belgaum, Gulbarga, etc. All these sources are of immense value for the study. They are studied systematically in order to understand the subject.

**Plan of Study**

**Chapter-I: Introduction**

In the first introductory chapter, the necessity to take up the study, the sects Sub-sects, its definition, scope and objectives of the study, review of literature, and sources materials and methodology have been discussed.

**Chapter-II: History of Islam**

In the second chapter, the conditions of the Arabs before the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAS), introduction and teachings of Islam have been discussed.
Chapter-III: Spread of Islam in India

In the third chapter, the spread of Islam in India and the various persons responsible. The impact of Islam and Muslims in India have been discussed.

Chapter-IV: Sects and Sub-sects among the Muslims of India

This chapter throws light on the Sects and Sub-sects Ahle Sunnat wal Jamat and Non-Ahle Sunnat wal Jamat. The definitions, the spread of customs, belief and practice of the each Sect and ethnic groups are discussed.

Chapter-V: History and Culture of Karnataka

In this chapter, the brief introduction to North Karnataka, its spread, districts, population etc are discussed.

Chapter-VI: Sects and Sub-sects among the Muslims of Karnataka with special reference to North Karnataka

This chapter is milestone of the thesis, in which the origin, definition, conditions customs and festivals of Nawayath, Siddis, occupational and non-occupational based sects of North Karnataka are discussed. The festivals and customs of Ahle Sunnat and Non Ahle Sunnat Jamatein of India and particularly the Karnataka are also discussed in general.

Chapter-VII: Conclusion

In the last conclusion chapter, the overall theme of the subject Sects and Sub-sects among the Muslims of India is discussed, with special emphasis to North Karnataka.