INTRODUCTION
Though the meaning of Religion in its common understanding is limited, it encloses rituals and customary moral values which have roots in the path of God. Religions of the world are often named or known after founders or exhorted communities or their countries. Christianity is named after Jesus Christ, Buddhism after Lord Buddha, the religion of Zoroastrianism after Zoroastr and Hinduism as that of India have the same kind of origin. But in the case of Islam, the religion is neither of an individual nor of a nation or a community.

Islam as a religion and civilization made its entry on the world stage with the life and career of Prophet Muhammad in Western Arabia. After his death a series of successors called Caliphs claimed political authority over the Muslim community. During the period of the Caliphate Islam grew into a religious tradition and civilization of worldwide importance.

The Arabs were pioneers of trade. All studies mention that the religious proselytization was not a specific motive of Arab merchants. They gave more importance to their own trading activities. As a result Indo-Arabian commercial relationship was established slowly. The Arab traders settled in Kerala and the local rulers co-operated with them and gave them all facilities as their trade

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1 Sayed Moideensha(ed.), Islamika Darshanam (Mal), 1995, p.3.
3 In Islam, it is the title given to the successor of Muhammad, who is vested with absolute authority in all matters of state, both civil and religious as long as he rule in conformity with the laws of the Quran and Hadith.
enriched the coffers of the government. Many Arab traders flourished Islam since they were encouraged by the generous and patronizing attitude of the Hindu Chieftains.

In the meantime, the large-scale increase of Muslim population in Kerala was not mainly due to the patronage of native rulers given to the Arab traders. The most significant reasons behind it were the social and economic backwardness of the natives who had been living a life of slavery under the rigid yoke of the high caste Hindus for many centuries. Moreover the propagation of Islamic ideology through their religious educational instructions had given a strong footing for Islam in India.

Islamic education is one that trains the sensibility of pupils in such a manner that in their attitude to life, their actions, decisions and approach to all kinds of knowledge, they are governed by the spiritual and deeply felt ethical values of Islam. They are trained and mentally disciplined so that they would acquire knowledge not merely to satisfy their intellectual curiosity or just for material worldly benefit, but to develop as a rational righteous being and bring about the spiritual moral and physical welfare of their families, their people, their country and mankind. The Holy Quran has influenced the educational

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7 A.D. Ajijola, Restructuring of Islamic Education, 1999, p.14
8 Ibid.
philosophers of the different countries of the world for hundreds of years in different ways. The Islamic countries have accepted the Quran as the constitution for their life. A large number of researchers consider that it is an encyclopedia for reference.

The Holy Quran exhorts mankind to attain perfection by acquiring knowledge through reading and writing. The first revelation of the Quran itself shows the importance of education. The first verse of the Holy Quran revealed to the Prophet begins with the command 'Iqra' (to read), and Allah commanded the devotees to pray the Lord to increase their knowledge.

The first revelation that came to Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, in the cave of Hira near Makkah in Saudi Arabia has thus been recorded in the Quran:

Read!

In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher,
Who created-
Created man, out of
a (mere) clot of
Congealed blood:
Read! and thy
Lord is most Bountiful,-
He who taught (the use of)
the Pen, - taught man
That which he knew
not.

The creator of the universe mentions in this first revelation that the fate of knowledge is tied up with the pen. The prophet who received this revelation in the seclusion of the cave of Hira was illiterate and did not know how to use the pen. This is an unprecedented incident in the history of the world that the first revelation which comes down to an unlettered Prophet living among an unlettered people in a country where even knowledge of alphabets was not common begins with the word “Iqra” (to Read). The unlettered Prophet was asked in this revelation ‘to read’ which clearly signifies that his followers would not merely be receivers of knowledge; they would also advance knowledge and spread it. The age of the Prophet so was not going to be an age of ignorance and antagonism to knowledge; it was to be an age of knowledge, reason, wisdom and true advancement.\(^{15}\)

\(^{15}\) Quran, Chapter 9, Surarul Alakh 1-5.

Thus the Holy Quran brings the essentials of all knowledge within the purview of unchangeable basic realities of life, which are so important for human happiness, peace and prosperity on earth. Its truths are universal truths; its values and its guidance are ever fresh for all the peoples of the world. It is quite a miracle that a compilation which lays no claim on any particular subject contains the very essence of all the known and unknown arts and sciences.

Beside, various Quranic verses emphasizing the importance of knowledge, there are hundreds of Prophetic traditions that encourage Muslims to acquire all types of knowledge from any corner of the world. Muslims during the modern periods of stagnation and decline confined themselves to theology as the only obligatory knowledge, an attitude that was generally but wrongly attributed to Al- Gazali's destruction of philosophy and science in the Muslim world.

Islamic education referred to in the Quran as the process of shaping character within the Islamic world view requires the Muslim family to expose its children and adults to all knowledge as means of understanding the parameters set in the Quran for the constructive relationship with God, other human beings and nature.

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17 Abu Hamid Al Ghazali, was a medieval Muslim theologian, Jurist and a mystic. He was born in 1058 A.D. in Iran.
18 http://www.Islamic Concept of knowledge.htm
The term "Ilm"\(^{19}\), i.e., knowledge, is widely discussed in the holy Quran. Besides various Quranic verses emphasizing the importance of knowledge, the Prophet himself had a passion for knowledge and encouraged his followers to go to China if need be to acquire knowledge\(^{20}\). It is noteworthy that during the time of Prophet Muhammad, Islam had not spread so far as to China and there were no Muslims in China who could teach Islamic studies. This tradition therefore reflects the broadmindedness and farsightedness of the Prophet who advised his followers to acquire knowledge from any one and anywhere, whether from a Muslim or a non-Muslim\(^{21}\). On the other hand, knowledge was identified in Islam with worship. To acquire knowledge was worship, reading the Quran and pondering upon it was worship.

Thus the holy Quran touches upon the aims and objectives of education. The purpose of education and the aim of human life are to develop morality and other attributes as much as possible among the people. Character formation is the major goal in any kind of education. The beliefs should be accompanied by action. The teacher, who has a major role, is charged with the duty of providing the means of right guidance. The Quran stresses such an education which is not merely acquisition of factual knowledge; but also a training of human beings\(^{22}\).

\(^{19}\) In the Quran the word "alim" occurs in 140 places, while "al-ilm" in 27. The total number of verses in which ilm or its derivatives and associated words are used is 704.

\(^{20}\) J.S.Bandukwala, op.cit., p.1341.

\(^{21}\) A.D.Ajijola, op.cit., p.40.

\(^{22}\) Zafar Alam, Islamic Education Theory and Practice, 2003, p.41.
The importance and objectives of education in Islam may clearly be noted from the following saying of the Holy Prophet;

"The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the Martyr."

"He dieth not who seeketh knowledge.

"The first thing created was reason. Allah hath not created anything better than reason."

"The angels offer their wings to the seeker of Knowledge."

The early educational activities of the Muslims were closely related to their mosque. During the earlier stages, there were no institutions such as schools or colleges to impart education among the Muslims. Mosques served as the centres of both educational and religious activities. The Madrasas were seen as necessary for Muslims for providing basic Islamic education. They served as an important instrument of identity maintenance for the community. They were institutions owned and managed by the community.

The mosques that came into use after the spread of Islam were the natural places to learn about religion. On an elementary level this implied simply learning by heart verses from the Quran and Hadiths. During the early stage children were encouraged to memorise verses and passage of the Quran. This tradition spread to the Kuttubs (Quranic Schools) everywhere in the Muslim

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25 A.D. Ajijola, op.cit., p.41
26 Ibid.
world, which were set up mostly in or beside the mosques, even in regions where Arabic was not spoken. Equally, up to the present day selections of famous Hadiths are also memorized and recited on numerous occasions by the Muslims.

On a less elementary level, mosques were also places of religious inquiry, discussion and debate, besides serving as places for communal worship and assembly, private study and meditation. In other words, the mosques were places where the religious aspects of things could be investigated and where people could look for religious truth, norms, and rules and for religious audiences all centered around the Quran.

Thus the history of the Madrasa education was started in Masjid (mosque). The functions of a mosque may vary in different settings. But its importance as a ritual centre remains. Mosques are primarily meant for offering prayers but they have also rendered great services in the expansion of education. Mosques still function as the centres of religious education both in the sense of giving instruction and in the sense of building a moral personality in the student, who becomes an integrated member of the community.

The prophet advised the Muslims to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. He also taught that to seek knowledge was a duty for every Muslim.

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27 Akhtarul Wasey, Madrasas in India Trying to be Relevant, 2005, p.21.
28 A.D.Ajijola, op.cit.,p.53.
and every Muslimah\textsuperscript{30}. During the early phase the Islamic institutions stressed memorization of the Quran, reading and writing. Teachers taught in homes, mosques and received their pay from pupils' fees or Waqfs\textsuperscript{31}.

Advanced schooling in mosques goes back to the seventh century, but the formal Madrasas as endowed, residential educational institutions stressing the Sharia\textsuperscript{32} took shape only in the eleventh century. The Nizamiyah in Baghdad was a renowned prototype of the Madrasa. In common usage, distinction between mosque schools and Madrasas gradually disappeared. Subjects seen as closely related to religion stressed the Quranic exegesis, Hadith, jurisprudence and theology. Arabic grammar and logic were also taught in these Madrasas. There were no formal admission, no grade levels, or written examinations.

Early centuries of Islam saw a flowering of knowledge, unknown to the world before, in fields as varied as medicine, astronomy, philosophy, algebra, law, music and chemistry. The Muslim education in the Middle East had followed certain specific trends up to the 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. In its character it was eclectic, liberal and the spirit of enquiry and research dominated the various disciplines, whether they were theological or Islamic science or the natural or physical science. In other words, education was both religious and secular and

\textsuperscript{30} Muslimah, which means every man and woman who followed Islamic faith.

\textsuperscript{31} A term which in the language of the law signifies the appropriation or dedication of property to charitable uses and the service of god. An endowment or appropriation must be of a perpetual nature, and such property or land cannot be sold or transferred.

\textsuperscript{32} Islamic law
there was a considerable amount of academic freedom both in teaching and research.

However throughout the Middle Ages, it retained its original character and continued to emphasize theological and Islamic studies. Generally Madrasas neglected other branches of knowledge except Islamic theology in their curriculum.

In India the Madrasa system was first introduced by the Ghanznavids and later as the Muslim rule spread, this traditional system of education became more widespread.

Since the arrival of Islam in Kerala the mosques and Madrasas have functioned as centres of religious education both in the sense of giving instruction and in the sense of building a moral personality among the Muslim students. But they were not helpful in developing the career of the students or in creating a morally well-disciplined community in the state.

The proposed research thesis entitled Islamic Education in Kerala with Special Reference to Madrasa Education is positioned in this context. The study intends to analyze the development of Islamic education among the Muslims during the 19th and 20th centuries. It also delves into the factors responsible for the development of Madrasa education in Kerala.

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34 The Madrasa system was started in India from the period of Muhammad Ghazni. The first expedition of Muhammad Ghazni was started in 1000 A.D.
35 N.Hanif, op.cit., p.327.
36 John L Esposito, op.cit., p.147.
It is believed that the Muslims, who form one of the major communities, came to Kerala in the 7th century A.D. The spontaneous growth of Islam due to conversion of the local inhabitants, who were mainly from the suppressed classes raised up a problem of imparting religious education among them.

In Islam, religion and society are identical and cannot be separated from each other. This inseparability is more conspicuous in the Muslim community of Kerala because of its intense emotional adherence to their religion\textsuperscript{37}. So their early educational activities were essentially religious in character. There were no institutions except the Madrasas to impart early education among the Muslims.

However, the limitations of the traditional system of Madrasa education could be overcome by the religious reformers of the Muslim community. Hence the proposed study attempts to enquire the contributions of the religious reformers also. After these preliminary religious education through the Madrasa Arabic College system has been serving as a centre of higher learning of Islamic studies in the state. The study also looks into these areas in detail.

So far many works have come out dealing with the historical development of the Muslim community and culture and those are closely related to the modern period. Though these scholars could mention the reasons of the social backwardness of the Muslim community, none of these works

concentrated on the role of religious education and modern education in shaping modern Muslim identity. The present study prioritize this point.

Moreover, the origin of Islam in Kerala is clearly mentioned in several works. Though most of these works focus on the historical development of Islam in Kerala, they are too limited to understand the early religious educational development of Islam and how the religious leaders treated the newly converted people. Attempts have been made in the study to answer these problems also.

The other main objective of the present study is to understand the progress of religious education among the Muslim community in Kerala and its objections to the secular institutions of modern education. A critical analysis of the backwardness of the Muslims in modern education and also the excellence in the field of religious education is attempted here. The role of Muslim progressive movements, organizations, and the leaders also forms the stuff of the study.

It seems appropriate to review some of the literature that is related to the subject under study. Though general works on Muslim history are available only a few deal with the systematic study in the field of Islamic education.

*Kerala Muslim Statistics and Directory* of C.K. Kareem is considered as an important work in which the history of Islam in Kerala is dealt in detail. The development of Islamic society in Kerala during the various phases of history is clearly described in the book, in which the earliest accounts of Kerala history and the relation of Arabs with Kerala before the emergence of Islam are also given. But this book is not intensive with the religious education of Kerala.
The historical work *Mappila Muslims of Kerala* by A.P. Ibrahim Kunju is always referred by one who studies Islamic history of Kerala. The book, which deals with the development of Islamic society in Kerala, provides a number of evidences for the immediate acceptance of Islam in Kerala. Also the rituals and practices among the Muslims and the cultural advancement of the Muslim community are given prime importance in the book. How the reformative ideals have influenced the Islamic society is also mentioned in this work. Still it is doubtful whether the changes brought in by the religious education is thoroughly analyzed.

The relevance of *Thuhfatul Mujahideen* of Sheik Zainuddin (16th century) regarding the Muslim history in Kerala can never be neglected. The English and Malayalam translations of the original Arabic book are now available. The advent of Islam, the caste system in Kerala, the superstitions in the society and the struggles of Malabar Muslims against the Portuguese are dealt in the work. The social conditions that favored the emergence of Islam are also described by the author.

Andrew Wink’s *Al- Hind the Making of Indo-Islamic World* (two volumes) deals with Indo-Arabian trade relations in detail. According to him there existed well-built trade relations between India and Arabia even before the coming of Islam in Kerala. Any researcher who attempts at the Islamic history in Kerala has to give prime importance in the socio economical conditions of the then Kerala and the relevance of this historical work lies in this regard.
There are a number of other historical works mentioning the cultural aspects of early Muslim society of Kerala. Likewise several government publications like William Logan's, *Malabar Manual*, C.A.Innes, *Malabar District Gazetteers*, provide a clear picture of the social condition when Islam was introduced in Kerala, and also these books give a vivid picture of the caste system in ancient Kerala. Logan's Malabar *Manual* deals with the traditional history of Malabar up to the 15th century.

Roland E. Miller's *Mappila Muslims in Kerala* is another unique study in this field. The main aim of this work is to describe the origin and growth of Islamic culture in Kerala. Thus it could be seen that books regarding the origin of Islam in Kerala are plenty in number among which are Tarachand's, *Influence of Islam On Indian Culture*, Ashin das Guptha's, *Malabar and Asian Trade*, P.K.Gopalakrishnan's, *Keralathinde Samskarika Charithram* (Malayalam), S.M.Muhammed Koya's, *Mappilas of Malabar*, K.S Mathew's, *Society in Medieval Malabar*, K.P.Padmanabha Menon's, *History of Kerala*, (four Volume), A. Sreedhramenon's, *Kerala District Gazetters*, and M.G.S. Narayan's *Perumals of Kerala and The Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*.

We can find evidences of religious conversion in these works. But none of these books prove the instance of forcible religious conversion and unfortunately there is no way to find out how these converted Muslims were given religious education in the earlier times. The study attempts to find out the above stated limitations.
In recent years several studies regarding the Muslims have appeared in various languages, especially in English and Malayalam. A. Abdul Samad’s, *Islam in Kerala Groups and Movements in the 20th Century* is a pioneer work on the various religious movements, organizations and groups among the Muslims in Kerala. Islamic reformation is clearly mentioned in this work in which the changes in the modern Islamic society are also dealt with. The principles of modern organizations like Jamaat-e-Islami, Kerala Jmeat-ul-Ulma are also mentioned in this work. But the aspect of modern education and religious education are dealt with only at a minimal level.

The contribution of Islam to the cultural realm of Kerala forms the subject matter of *Muslingalum-Kerala-Samskaravum* (Malayalam) of P.K Muhammed Kunji and here priority is given for a critical analysis of the rituals and customs followed in the Muslim community.

*Restructuring Islamic Education* of A.D. Ajijola discusses Islamic education and its relevance. The author takes the same way to tell the importance of knowledge as that of Prophet Muhammad did for the promotion of education. It points to the necessity of restructuring the Madrasa educational system revealing its inadequacies. But this book too lacks detailed study regarding the development of Madrasa education in India, particularly in Kerala.

Another attempt, which discusses the Madrasa movements in India, is *Madrasas in India Trying to be Relevant* by Akhtarul Wasie. The traditional Islamic religious education and Madrasa educational system are authentically reported
in this work. Here again the growth in the religious educational set up of Kerala is mentioned only briefly, whereas the changes that took place in Madrasa education in modern India are described in detail.

Thus most of the existing studies give a comprehensive outlook on the Muslim community in Kerala. No systematic work has been done so far in the field of Islamic education in Kerala. So this work is entirely different from the existing studies and I would like to historically analyse the problems of Islamic education in Kerala, and its impact on Kerala society.

The methodology employed in the study is primarily analytical and descriptive. The basic data for the study have been collected from various Archives and Libraries. Primary materials are mainly depended on and secondary data have been supplemented wherever necessary.

Sufficient source materials are available in the Madras State Archives, Directorate of Archives Thiruvanathapuram, Regional Archives Thiruvanathapuram, Regional Archives Ernakulum, Regional Archives Kozhikode, the Administrative Records of Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar. Besides, the Education Reports, Census Reports, Records of different Muslim groups like Jamaat-e-Islami, Kerala Naduwathul Mujahideen, Samastha Kerala Jameat Ulama and Dakshina Kerala Jameat Ulamas, the Quran and Hadith have been used for the completion of the study. Moreover, various Reports, Educational Proclamations, are also referred to. The original documents like the Administrate Reports of the various Arabic colleges in Kerala, Manuals and Proceedings of
Islamic Institutions, Report of various Official as well as non-official Committees about Islamic education, etc., were consulted: finally field studies and interviews with eminent Islamic Scholars have enriched the study.

The secondary data used for the study have been collected mainly from various Libraries, News papers, Journals, Articles and Periodicals.

The present study is organised in five chapters excluding the Introduction and the Conclusion. The introductory chapter is an attempt to review the conceptual framework of the study. It highlights the research problem, the hypothesis, the scope of the study, the objectives and methodology. The literature of previous studies is also very briefly analyzed.

The first chapter focuses on the historical background of the Muslims of Kerala. This chapter also deals with the earlier social conditions in Kerala and how it has helped the spread of Islam and what might have been the logic behind the religious proselytization by the Arabs who had only commercial interests in the earlier period. All these problems are examined in depth in this chapter. Moreover, it gives details of the early Muslim religious educational activities in Kerala.

The second chapter discusses the reason for the educational backwardness of the Muslims. During the colonial period, the British introduced several educational reforms. But the Muslims did not gain much benefit from the British education. They concentrated only on religious education. A deeper
analysis of the reasons why the Muslims were cautious towards modern education is attempted in this chapter.

The third chapter deals with the social reform movements among the Muslim community in Kerala. The activities of the leaders of Muslim reform movements and their centres of activities are described in this chapter. The changes brought in by the efforts taken by the Muslim reform leaders in education and the activities of the leaders carried out in response to the limitations of the then existing religious educational system in favor of modern secular education is also analysed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter tries to give a complete picture of the present Madrasa system in Kerala. One can find a total shift from the traditional Muslim educational system to the modern Madrasa system under the direction of Jamaat-e-Islami and Kerala Naduvathul Mujahidiin.

The fifth chapter explores the Madrasa movements of the Sunnis who are regarded as the orthodox section among the Muslims. The Madrasa activities of the traditional Muslim groups like the Samastha Kerala Jame at Ulama and Dakshina Kerala Jame at Ulama etc. find a focus in this chapter.

The findings of the research are explicited in the concluding chapter. It analyses the problems existing in the Madrasa system in Kerala. It also emphasises the necessity of changing the structural pattern of the educational system. Suggestions and recommendations for the development of Islamic education and culture in Kerala are appended. The Bibliography at the end of
the study indicates the various sources consulted. A glossary is given in the last part.

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