INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

History of India is a history of different civilizations. At different stages of history, she has accommodated people of different origins like Aryans, Sakas, Kushans, Arabs, Afghans, and Mongols. Though they came to India as conquerors, in course of time most of them adopted with Indian culture and traditions. Indians on the other hand adopted a policy of co-existence. They ruled the country in collaboration with the natives, though there were instances of conflicts on account of various socio-economic and cultural reasons. Adopting Indian culture, they also maintained their cultural identity and lived here on the basis of the principles of give and take. However, whatever be the nature of existence of these peoples, they all adopted India as their homeland.

The Europeans were the last of the foreigners to come to India. They were here to write a different chapter in the history of the country. The aims of the Europeans right from the Portuguese were the total exploitation of the wealth of the colonies and India was not an exception. They realized this objective through colonialism and imperialism. The age of colonialism began with the dawn of the 16th century following the geographical discoveries. Having discovered new areas in Asia and Africa, the Europeans tried to establish their hegemony over the region.
Colonialism is a specific form of economic and cultural exploitation that developed with the expansion of Europe. The colonialism has found five distinct phases of developments as commercial colonialism, Industrial colonialism, new imperialism, neo-colonialism and globalization. The objectives of the colonialist undergo changes from stage to stage. In the early phase of commercial colonialism, roughly between 1500-1800, it was closely linked with the commercial revolution and merchant capitalism. The central aspect of commercial colonialism was trade. The Europeans aimed to establish trade monopoly over the newly discovered lands. For the purpose, the European countries engaged themselves in competition to obtain spices, gold, silver, slaves, etc. They even resorted to plunder and piracy to obtain the required quantity of the merchandise from the locals.

In order to achieve the objectives, the Europeans engineered several programmes including occupying territories, establishing white settler colonies, setting up of trade posts and forts and applying military strength to wrest as much world trade as possible.

The Portuguese spearheaded the western advance into Asia and Africa. Economic and religious motivations led them to the east with a deep animus against the Muslims, an offshoot of the long rivalry between Muslims and the Christians in the Iberian Peninsula and of the Crusades in the 11th and 12th
centuries. The Pope granted the king of Portugal the right to conquer the countries of Pagans. In this colonial and territorial retention in Afro-Asian lands they found the Muslims as the most formidable obstacle.

The main effort of the Portuguese in India was to dislodge the Muslims from their prominent positions in trade and commerce and to establish their sway over the Eastern trade. They considered the Muslims as their natural enemies and went about achieving their objective of colonization by resorting to extreme cruelty. The attempt of the Portuguese to realize their motives opened the era of resistance against the newcomers.

The history of anti-colonial movement in India can be broadly divided into three phases. The first was the phase when the Portuguese were successfully checked by the locals. The second phase started with the coming of the British. But the resistance of the natives against the British could not record any remarkable triumph. However it culminated in the First War of Independence in 1857. The third phase started soon after and continued till the independence of India in 1947. All sections of the society had actively involved in the struggle.

Malabar was internationally renowned as an emporium of trade. Many foreign traders had been attracted to the rich resources of this area from time

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2 The ancient Malabar was a very vast geographical expression. Some consider it the entire Malayalam territory and some between Sidhapur and Kollam. It also occasionally
immemorial. In the ancient period, people like Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Chinese and others came to Malabar at different stages of her history. They all came to Malabar as traders and not as conquerors. During the middle ages, the Arabs dominated the trade with Malabar. Calicut was the nerve centre of the Malabar trade. Its rulers, the Zamorins, were at the helm while trade with the Arabs was flourishing. In 1498, the Portuguese under the leadership of Vasco da Gama came to Malabar. Subsequently, everything turned upside down. In order to get trade monopoly with Malabar, the Portuguese played crooked politics. It brought the people face to face with the Portuguese. Finding it difficult to strike root in trade, the Portuguese made alliance with the enemies of the Zamorin. The new alliance and their activities disturbed the Arab safety and domination over the trade.

The Portuguese attempts in Malabar would tell the long story of colonial endeavor in the land. The main aim of their intrusion was commercial and exploitation of the vast and rich economic potential of Malabar. As a consequence of the Portuguese intrusion, the trade, settlements, agriculture, cultural life and even the political stability of the region were adversely affected. They tried to impose their culture, faith and oceanic domination over the people of Malabar. Their introduction of Cartaz in maritime trade proves

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applied to the whole of South India. During the British rule it covers an area of 5787.45 square miles with seven Taluks of Calicut, Chirakkal, Ernad, Kurumbranad, Palghat, Ponnani, Kottayam, Walluvanad and Wynad. Arabian Sea, North Canara, princely states of Cochin and Western Ghats as its four borders, west, north, south and east respectively. The present study treats the area of Malabar as in the British time.
their colonial aim beyond doubt. Similarly the occupation of Goa and the establishment of their rule stand witness to their imperialistic aim in India. It is in this perspective that the present study treats the activities of the Portuguese in Malabar within the framework of a colonial set up.

At the outset, the Portuguese tried to achieve their economic interest at the expense of the Arabs who had trade with the country on an equal footing with the locals. When the Portuguese tried to exert their interests through political stratagem, the Muslims came forward to pay them in the same coin. The result was that Malabar became a battleground between the patriotic and the colonialisit forces.

The sea route to India was safe and secure to all seafarers till the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast of Malabar. The Nair army with Mappila navy, the backbone of the Zamorin’s strength put up their historic fight against the intruders. For nearly a century, the navy of the Zamorin, manned by the Muslims, resisted the Portuguese and prevented them from establishing themselves on the Malabar coast. As long as the unity among different communities lasted, no foreigner could establish their domination over Malabar.

Thus colonialism and the anti-colonial resistance in India had its first appearance in Malabar. The entry of the Portuguese to Malabar marked the
end of the era of peace and prosperity, amity and religious harmony of the region. Then, there started a saga of aggression and resistance.

When the Portuguese were eventually repulsed, there came the Dutch and the French. But their activities and influence were not predominant in Malabar except for a few pockets. The British came with more sophisticated stratagem than that of their predecessors. They compromised with the landlords and the influential strata of the society. Together they exploited the people. The British rule benefited only a micro-section of the society and thus the resistance forces became very active in the 19th and 20th centuries in Malabar.

The unique feature of India's struggle for freedom was the participation of all types of people irrespective of their status and positions in the society. The long struggles of anti-colonial struggles in Malabar stand witness to the presence of the different groups like rural, urban, labours, capitalists, rich, poor, high castes, low castes, tribals etc. Large number of studies has undertaken the role of the different groups in the anti-colonial struggle.

The ideological foundation of the anti-colonial struggle in Malabar can be traced to different sources. Islam contributed such an ideological foundation to the Muslims in their struggle against colonial and imperialist powers. The ulama, who constitute the steering class among the Muslims, interpreted the holy scriptures to the general public. The scholars like Sheikh
Zainudhin Makhdums of Ponnani, Sayyid Alawi Tangal and Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal of Mamburam were world-renowned scholars. They had strong popular support both on the basis of the commands of religion and due to their scholarship. The *ulama* in Malabar enjoyed a privileged position in the community as well as in the society. Their status and influences were recognized by the political heads who tried to woo them for their benefit.

Clergymen giving leadership to mass movements of political nature is not a rare spectacle in history. The role of *ulama* in the struggle for freedom and unity of the country was very salutary. Considering the position of the *ulama*, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru complimented, “The dust under the feet of these *ulama* is like corryliuin for my eyes and kissing their feet would be a matter of great pride for me.”[^3] The purpose of the study is to bring out the role of the *ulama* in the anti-colonial struggle and its impact on the course of the history of the Malabar region.

Many studies have been made on the advent of the Europeans in Malabar and the role that different sections of the society played in organizing resistance movements. As far as the Muslims were concerned their resistance was the outcome of the preachings and teachings of the religious leadership, the *ulama*. Yet, no serious work has so far been undertaken to investigate into the role of *ulama* in the anti-colonial struggle in Malabar. It is in this

background that the present study focuses on the anti-imperialist consciousness of the *ulama* of Malabar who initiated the ideological battle against the western colonial intrusion.

The study attempts to bring out the *ulama* tradition of Malabar from the very establishment of Islam in the region. In order to have a look into the condition of the society, an attempt has also been made to trace the problems of the Mappilas during the colonial period. Attempt has been made to analyze the role of the *ulama* during the Portuguese and the British periods separately.

**Primary Sources**

The study is mainly based on materials collected from the primary sources in Arabic, Arabi-Malayalam, Malayalam, English and the Portuguese. The important Arabic sources include *Tahrid Ahlil Iman ala jihadi Abadathi Ssulban* (The induction to the believers for holy war against the cross worshippers) of Sheikh Zainudhin Makhdum the Senior, *Tuhfat ul Mujahidin Fi Bahli Akhbaril Burtughaliyyin* (Gift to the holy warriors in respect of some information of the Portuguese) of Sheikh Zainudhin Makhdum the Junior, *Al Fathul Mubin Lissamiriyyi Iladi Yuhibbul Muslimeen* (The manifest victory to the Zamorin who loves the Muslims) of Qazi Muhammad, *Assaiful Battar ala man Yuvaril Kuffar wa ya Khudum min Dunillahi wa Rasulihi wal Mu’minin wal Ansar* (The sharp sword on the supporters of Infidels and those serving against Allah, His Messenger and the helping Believers.) of Sayyid Alawi
Tangal, *Uddat ul Umara wal Hukkam li ihananati wal Kafaratil Asnam* (Preparation to Judges and leaders to undermine the idolaters and unbelief) of Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal, letters and poems of Umar Qazi, and *Da‘wat ul Haq* (Call to the Truth) of Moidu Mawlawi.

The Arabi-Malayalam sources include *Muhimmat ul Mumineen* (Duties of the Believers) of Aminummantakath Pareekutty Musaliar, *Mahakkul Khilafa ala Ismail Khilafah* (Erasing the Khilafat on the name of Khilafah) by Mammad Kutty Musaliar, and *Nadil Masmooi ila Ma‘nal Khilafa Kama Hiyal Mashhuri* (Instigating people against the famous Khilafah) by K M Ahmad Kutty Musaliar. Besides a number of *Malas* like, *Kunhu Marakkar Mala, Mohiyidhin Mala, Madha Mohini Kunhami Mala* etc., *Padappattus* like, *Cherur Padappatt, Omara Padappatt, Malappuram Padappatt* etc., *Quissappattus* like, *Umar Quissappatt, Yusuf Quissappatt, Kairala Quissappatt* etc., *Moulids* like *Mamburam Moulid, Yahoo Waliyullah I Moulid* and *Qasidas* like *Qasidat ul Qutubiyyah* are also at wide use.


Besides the Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam sources, we have ample collection of European accounts. The most important amongst them are the accounts of Duarte Barbossa (*Description of the Coast of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the 16th century*), Francis Buchanan (*A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, 3 volumes), Lu do Vico de Varthama (*Travels of Ludovico de Varthama*), Gasper Correa (*The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*), H. Gundert. (*Keralolpathi*), William Logan (*Malabar Manual*, 2 volumes), Innes and Evans (*The Malabar Gazetteer*), R. H. Hitchcock (*Peasant Revolt in Malabar*).
A History of the Malabar Rebellion) G. R. F. Tottenham (The Mappila Rebellion 1921-1922) etc. These authors give a European version of the developments in Malabar that they witnessed or took part in one way or other. Their accounts are mostly official in character and need not be impartial and unprejudiced.

A lot of archival sources are also available to the study. The sources are scattered in different archives like National Archives of Delhi, Tamil Nadu Archives of Chennai, Kerala State Regional Archives of Tiruvananthapuram and Calicut. The sources are in the form of Correspondence, Revenue Records, Jail Records, Fortnightly Reports, Newspaper Reports, History of Freedom Movement File, Madras Legislative Assembly Files etc. The press reports of Bombay Chronicle, Al-Ameen, Mathrubhumi etc. have also been used for the study.

Apart from this, some memorials and souvenirs in Malayalam are found very useful to the present writer. Veliyancode Umar Qazi: Jeeva Charitravum Kritikalum 1767-1857, published by Veliyancode Mahallu Committee, 1999, Makhdumum Ponnaniyum by Ponnani Juma Masjid Paripalana committee, Wagon Tragedy Smaranika by Wagon Tragedy 60th anniversary celebration committee Tirur, 1981, Malabar Kalapam 1921: Smaranakalum Padanangalum by Malabar Kalapam 1921, 60th anniversary Celebration Committee volume, Tirurangadi, 1981, are noteworthy.
Moreover as part of tapping the oral resources the interviews with persons like M. Abdul Rasheed, son of Moidu Mawlawi, A. P. Muhammadali Musaliar, grandson of Ali Musaliar, T. K. Muhiyidhin Umari, son of K. M. Mawlawi, Monutty, the present head of Umar Qazi’s family, C. Hamza, the translator of *Tuhfat ul Mujahidin* Mankada Abdul Aziz Mawlawi, the translator of *Fath ul Mubin* and S. V. Ahmad Koya, Qazi of Calicut and large number of aged persons from Tirurangadi and surrounding areas have contributed to this venture.

**Secondary Works**

A number of works have been published both in India and abroad, which would be highly useful for the present study. K. M. Panikkar (*Malabar and the Portuguese*, Bombay, 1929) made an extensive study on the Portuguese period. He even coined the term 'the Gama Epoch' in history.⁴ A work by R. P. Das (*Portuguese Rule in India*, Bombay, 1963 attempts to study the Portuguese system of administration in India. Stephen H. Morse has published a monograph on Albuquerque, (*Ruling of India, Albuquerque*, oxford, 1982) for which he has widely used the Portuguese accounts. A recent work by K. M. Mathew (*History of Portuguese Navigation in India, 1498-1600*, Delhi, 1988) has attempted to give an account of the nature and character of Portuguese occupation in India. The latest works of Sanjay Subramanyan

(The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama, Cambridge, 1997) extensively based on European sources and brought out a monograph on Vasco da Gama.

Many scholars have undertaken studies on the economic aspects of the Portuguese expansion. M.N. Pearson (Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat, the Response of the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century, London, 1976), K.S Mathew (Portuguese Trade with India in Sixteenth Century, Delhi, 1983) and Sanjay Subramanyan (A Political Economy of Commerce in South India, 1500-1650, Cambridge, 1990) belonged to this group. Sanjay Subramanyan has brought out the depth of economic disaster caused by the Portuguese.

Though the Dutch and French tried to establish their foothold in Malabar, it does not contribute an epoch making period in her history. However scholars have undertaken in-depth study on the British rule in Malabar with special reference to mass resistance against it. V. Raghu Das identified nearly 79 major outbreaks that took place in different parts of Malabar during 1778-1967. E. K. G Nambiar (ed.), (Agrarian India Problems and Perspectives, University of Calicut, 1999), and D. N Dhanagre (Peasant Movement in India (1920-1950), Delhi, 1983), in their studies on peasant problems and outbreaks of Malabar, Bardoli, and Telunghana proved to be caused by the colonial disturbances. Ranajit Guha (Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in the Colonial India), A. R. Desai (ed.) (Peasant Struggles in India), P. Radhakrishnan (Peasant Struggle, Land Reforms and
Social Changes in Malabar 1836-1982), K. K. N. Kurup (William Logan, A study in Agrarian Relations of Malabar) and K. N. Panikkar (Against Lord and State Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921) also made similar studies on peasant insurgencies in Malabar.

A number of papers by Indian and foreign scholars have been published on the history of Malabar. Its land and people, its unique social organizations, family system, political ups and downs, trade and commerce etc. have become the subject matter of their studies.

The work of Stephen Fredrick Dale, Mappilas of Malabar, 1498-1922 Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier, New York, 1980., is a deep study on the basis of frontier theory developed by him. The theme of the work is the conflict between the Mappilas and the foreigners. Besides being a treasure house of information on the condition of the Mappilas during the Portuguese and British periods, it describes the cultural relations of the Mappilas with the Hindus. It examines the arrival of the Portuguese and its impact on the history of the region. Mr. Dale may be considered as the first historian to highlight the role of ulama in the struggle against the colonial powers in Malabar. As his analysis was mainly based on official records, we do not get a clear-cut picture of the ulama from his work.

A. P. Ibrahim Kunhu, Mappila Muslims of Kerala: Their History and Culture, Tiruvananthapuram, 1989., made a documentary study on the history
and culture of Mappila Muslims of Kerala. He gives a vivid description of the vicissitudes that the community faced in the course of her history. He brings out a special chapter on the celebrities of Kerala. The chapter attempts to give a pen picture of some great men including a few ulama. But as a general study, it does not focus on their status in the society and their role in the struggle against the colonialists.

The work of Ronald E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A study in Islamic Trends*, Madras, 1976., gives some sketches of socio-political and cultural life of the Mappila society. When the work of Ibrahim Kunhu presents a general history of Mappilas from their very origin to the present time, the work of Miller is an attempt to bring out the cultural identity of the Muslims. Though both the works are useful, they do not go deep into the role of ulama in shaping the history of the community. S. M. Muhammad Koya, also contributed to this field through his work ‘The Mappilas of Malabar. Calicut, 1983. It brings out some peculiar customs of Mappilas but pays little attention to the role of ulama in the anti-colonial struggle in Malabar.

A good collection of Malayalam works has also been published. They are of immense use to any investigator who ventures on the role of ulama in the history of Malabar. C. Gopalan Nair (*Malayalathile Mappilamar*, Mangalore.), K. Muhammad (*Mappilamar Engot*, Trichur, 1956.), K. K. Muhammad Abdul Kareem (*1921 le Khilafat Lahalayum Ali Musaliarum,*

Besides the above writers, two monumental works in Malayalam have been published in the form of directories, one by C. N. Ahmad Maulawi and K. K. Muhammad Abdul Kareem, *Mahathaya Mappila Sahitya Parambaryam*, Calicut, 1978, and the other by C. K. Kareem, *Kerala Muslim Directory*, (3 volumes), Cochin, 1960. The former includes a comprehensive study of Mappila literary figures and the latter brings out a detailed directory of the personalities and gives a statistical survey of the Muslims of Kerala.

Besides these works, a large number of articles written by different scholars are also of great importance for the present study. Among these, the papers of F. Fawcett (‘A popular Mappila Song’ *Indian Antiquary*, *XXVII*, 1899, and ‘War Songs of the Mappilas of Malabar’ *Indian Antiquary* *XXX*, 1901), M. Gangadhara Menon (‘The Yaqub Hasan Episode’ *Journal of Kerala Studies vol. 1-2*.), E. K. G. Nambiar (‘Colonialism Padinaram
Noottandil: Oru Avalokanam’, Mal. Vijnyana Kairali, 30th vol.3rd March 1999) and A. P. Abdu Rahman (‘Deportation of Sayyid Fazl’, Farook College 40th Anniversary Volume) are of great use for the study.

Sources from the personal collections of A. P. Muhammadali Musaliar, Abdu Rahiman Mangad, Professor E. K. Ahmad Kutty and Mankada Abdul Aziz Maulawi, have also been used for the study. Manuscripts of important Arabic sources preserved in the mosque libraries of Kakkove, Valiya Kulangara and Tanur and Ahmad Koya Shaliyathi library of Chaliyam have been utilized for the study.

A few researches have been undertaken on the different aspects of the part played by the ulama in Malabar. The unpublished theses of the following scholars like K. Gopalan kutty, ‘National Movement in Malabar’, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1986., K. K. Mohammed Abdul Sathar, ‘History of the Ba Alawis of Kerala,’ Calicut university, 2000., N. Padmanabhan, The Role Mappilas in the freedom struggle, Calicut university, 1992., K. T. Jaleel, Kunhammad Haji and Ali Musaliar- A Role in the Malabar Rebellion., Kerala University, 2005 and Qazi Muhammad Jamshed, Role of Jamiat ul Ulama in the Freedom Movement, 1937-47, A. M. U. Aligarh, 1987 contain some very useful references to the subject. But these research studies do not give emphasis to the role of the ulama community in particular. Though a plenty of materials are available, no attempt has so far
been made to make a thorough use of them. Further they do not furnish a
critical study on the role of the *ulama* in Malabar politics. Hence the present
study is important as an attempt to investigate into the role played by them in
the anti-colonial struggles in Malabar.

While abundant sources are available on certain personalities, there is
paucity of materials about some others. As some *ulama* are also great authors,
their works stand witness to their thoughts and actions. Access to the Arabic
language and availability of Arabic sources have helped the investigator to go
deep into the study when compared to those who are not adept in Arabic.

As far the methodology is concerned direct and systematic approach is
adopted. In the footnotes the conventional system is followed such as the
italicized 'Ibid.' to indicate the book just referred before and italicized
‘op.cit.’ for the work already cited anywhere in the pages before.

**Organization of the study**

The present study includes seven chapters. The first chapter is an
introductory part that traces to delineate the major objectives of the study. It
also includes a review of the earlier works and a critical study of the source
materials. The methodology adopted for the study is also discussed in the
chapter.
The second chapter, ‘The position of ulama in the Muslim society’ deals with the position, status and role of the ulama in the Muslim community. It attempts to sketch their activities in the Islamic world. The chapter also traces the role of ulama in the Indian subcontinent. In the chapter the ulama are being discussed in the colonial setting.

The third chapter entitled ‘The ulama in Malabar’ starts with the genesis of Islam in the region and the position of the Mappilas in the Malabar society. The ulama heritages of Malabar and their activities are examined. The different groups among the ulama with their distinct features are discussed in the chapter. Finally, it makes an attempt to explain the jihadi tradition of the ulama.

The fourth chapter is on the role of ulama in the Mappila-Portuguese conflict. As background of the chapter, an attempt also been made to bring out the condition of Malabar on the eve of the Portuguese colonialism. The chapter highlights the atrocities of the Portuguese in Malabar and the subsequent entry and part played by the ulama in the anti-colonial struggle.

The fifth chapter, ‘the ulama in the Mappila-British conflict: early phase,’ deals with the struggle of the Mappilas under the ulama leadership during the early British period. It makes an attempt to depict the agrarian problems in Malabar, which caused numerous outbreaks against the landlords. Special attention is paid to the role of Sayyid Alawi Tangal and Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Tangal of Mamburam and Umar Qazi of Veliyancode.
The sixth chapter is on 'the Ulama in the Mappila-British Conflict: Later Phase.' It mainly discusses the role of ulama in the tenancy, Khilafat and non-co-operation movements and their role in the revolt of 1921.

In the concluding chapter an attempt has been made to sum up the work with the important findings of the researcher. The findings are listed and presented along with the explanations and examinations of themes in the chapter.

**Limitations**

Since the topic covers a period of more than 500 years, the tapping of the sources became a Herculean task. Hence no claim is made about an exhaustive exploration of the sources. Some literary sources, including most of the Arabi-Malayalam works, lacking the period of composition were very cautiously used. The inaccessibility into the original Portuguese sources has put a great curb on the study. So also the detailed accounts on many ulama are lacking because they had not craved for name and fame, which tended to drop the events into obscurity.

There is immense of scope for further research in the allied topics like the role of pro-colonialist ulama, the Qazis of Calicut, the Tangals of Kondotty, Arabi-Malayalam literature etc.