INTRODUCTION

The Muslims of Kerala are generally known to the outside world as Mappilas. Seldom any one realise that Mappilas are but one among the many communities that formed the Muslim population of Kerala. The fame the community acquired may be due to the Mappila outbreaks of the 19th century and the Malabar Rebellion of 1921.

Even recent publications on the Muslims of Kerala do concentrate only on different aspects of the major community - the Mappilas. This work is an attempt to enlist various communities, their origin and growth, relative significance in the community, reactions to the major problems, response to important developments, life style, and inter-relation of these communities. The study aims at an evaluation of local influence and also to trace the impression of pre-conversion life. An attempt is made here to project the unparalleled role of Muslims of Kerala as the defenders of Islam against medieval West as the only one community on earth who fought people of the Dar ul-Harb while themselves in Dar ul-Harb. The evolution of the concept of martyrdom (Shahid), in fact the real resource of the
community to meet western fire power, is traced in this work. The significant contribution of religious leadership of the community of different ages in diverse forms has also been noticed.

Till recently, Muslim of Kerala have rarely been noticed in scholarly writings. This non-Urdu-speaking people were not included among 'The Indian Muslims' (M. Mujeeb, 1967). Only Dr. I. H. Qureshi had realised the need to begin the study of the history of Islam in India from Peninsular India, and included the Mappilas (for an outsider all the Muslims of Kerala are Mappilas) in his 'Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent' (1962).

The first realistic appraisal of the history and culture of Muslims of Kerala appeared in the monumental Malabar Manual (1881) of William Logan, first the Malabar Collector and then the Special Commissioner for Malabar, to investigate the causes of the Mappila Outbreaks of the nineteenth century. Innes and Evans utilised the materials available in 'Logan's Manual' to compile the Malabar District Gazetteer (1908) and the successive editions of Malabar District Gazetteers updated the informations. W.W. Hunter in his Indian Mussulmans (1876) showed unusual insight into the mind of the Muslim community and tried to highlight some aspects of Mappila Outbreaks of the 19th century.
Even native writers seemed to neglect this community. When T.K.G. Panikkar edited his 'Malabar and Its Folk' in 1900, Muslims were not included in the study and it was only in the revised third edition (1929) that a chapter by Hamid Ali on Mappilas, who represented one third of the 'folk', was incorporated in it. There was a spurt of works on Mappilas following the Rebellion of 1921. Some of them were motivated by enthusiasm to describe it as a struggle for independence and others to glorify the community. Another source of information were secret administrative reports. Then there was a series of 'Khilafat reminiscences' by veteran fighters. The themes of all such works were the ideology and activities of Congress-Khilafat volunteers. A few works on the Rebellion of 1921 by the Marxist sympathisers characterised it a peasant rebellion (Soumyendranadh Tagore's banned pamphlet, 1937, and Sukhbir Chaudhuri's Moplah Uprisings, 1977).

Except for P.A. Seyd Muhammad's Kerala Muslim Charitram (1961), a Malayalam historical study on the Mappilas, there has been no major investigation of the community's history, theology or culture by a Mappila. Khan Bahadur K. Muhammad's Meppilemar Engott, ('Whither the Mappilas') published in 1956 is the first and still
the only major discussion of the community's future by one of its own members. There was an unprecedented increase of monographs and commemoration volumes on men in various fields. To cite a few, like Ali Musaliar, Variyamkunnath Kunhamad Haji, K.M. Moula, K.M. Seethi Sahib, Mohammed Abdurahiman Sahib, Bafaqi Tangal, Panakkad Pukkoya Tangal, C.H. Mohamed Koya and others. These works contain important information regarding many aspects of life of Muslims in Kerala, but which are written in such laudatory forms that they must be subjected to tests for historical accuracy.

The 'Mappila Muslims of Kerala' of A.E. Miller (1976) is worth mentioning. But it is a compendium of available materials, wherein widely accepted notions are explained and do not contain any original thinking and analysis. Dr. Stephen F. Dale's 'Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922' (1980), is the only one research monograph published on Muslims of Kerala. He has tried to explain the ideology underlying the outbreaks of 19th century in terms of a militant revivalist movement and exploded the idea held by several writers that ridiculed the outbreaks were a mere act of 'Hal Ilakkam' (frenzy).

A research work as attempted in this study,
to trace the origin and growth of various subsections of the community has not appeared so far, except for Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair’s *Malayalattile Mappilamar* (The Mappilas of Malayalam) (1917). Repeating the relevant portions of *Keralolpatti*, he prepared brief notes on Mamburam Tangal, Kozikkod Koya, Nahas and Mandayippuratt Muppans. Of these only ‘Naha’ is referred to in the present study as a community and Mamburam Tangal is included in the section on Sayyids.

The present study on the Muslim communities is subject to many limitations. Much of the information for the study of Muslim communities is derived from personal interviews with leaders of the communities. The informants flew into rage on being told of communities among Muslims and burst out that there is only one community and Islam does not recognise any differences among its followers. Theoretically they were right. No Census Report where the communities were mentioned separately was also available.

Many people answered the questions with reservations, and it seemed that they were conscious of the caste predilections and pre-conversion relics. Further every community claimed an Arab descent and
traced the origin of their names from Arabic even when they apparently contradicted historical facts and philological derivations. Tracing the Sufi influence in the community has caused great hardship. Wahhabi scholars, whom the present writer consulted, became indignant on the suggestion of Sufism and remarked that there is no Sufism in Islam and I was trying to create something new. At the same time in all the Darghas the custodians wanted to know the identity of the writer whether Sunni or Wahhabi and when the place (Edavanna, a Wahhabi centre) was mentioned, were reluctant to oblige. It is a pity that an invaluable collection of Arabic manuscripts are kept as waqf in the Chaliyam Masjid by the Qazi family with Wasiyyat, 'not to show to wahhabis'. Since Chaliyam had been an ancient settlement and the highest seat of Arabic learning before the rise of Ponnani, probably these collections may contain highly useful material on diverse questions. Again in the shrine of Kondotty a number of books are kept in a bundle and placed at one end of the cenotaph which are 'forbidden' to be opened. These books 'Kitabs' as they are called, may probably contain valuable information regarding the rise and growth Kondotty Tangals and the 'Kondotty-Ponnani Kai Tarkam' of the
19th century. Such materials were beyond the reach of present writer.

The methodology adopted in this study may be questioned. For the historical part of this study both published and unpublished sources had been consulted. An Epigraphist's help was availed to incorporate the contents of unpublished inscriptions found in mosques. Arabic chronograms in Jarams (Darghas) had to be deciphered with the help of 'Abjad' numerals. Innumerable hagiographic works in Arabi-Malayalam were collected from Darghas all over Kerala. A bulky collection was available from an old book-binder in Tellichery which considerably reduced the difficulty of collecting of them, some of which were printed more than hundred years ago. The genealogical trees of Sufis, Sayyids and communities were collected with great difficulty. Arab manuscripts which were sacred possessions of families and Sufi orders, containing the rules and regulations, 'dhikrs' and 'awrads' and succession ceremonies were consulted. A number of works on the disputes of various Tariqahs were looked into. Social gatherings, community functions, marriage ceremonies and nercceas (Urs) were attended and family rites and ceremonies were studied.
Descriptive sources like Keralolpati and Keralamahtmyam were available. Ibn Battuta's 'Rehla' contains information on the society of Kerala and especially of the coastal settlements which he visited. Shaykh Zayn uddin Makhdum's 'Tuhfat ul Mujahidin', written around 1583 A.D. was very useful for the study of political and social conditions of Kerala in the 16th century. The Book of Duarte Barbosa (1515) could provide the Portuguese version of 16th century history of Kerala. Fath al-Mubin, an Arabic Qasida (poem) on the battle of Chaliyam (1571) between the Portuguese and the Zamorin-Muslim alliance is not a mere eye witness report of the episode, but a first-hand report of the Portuguese atrocities on Muslims and its impact on the community. Travalogues of Abduraszaq, Mahuan Pyrard de Laval and Thevenot contain sufficient information of the Muslim settlements, Muslim monopoly of trade, flourishing coastal cities and markets, and of the rulers who had special love and regard towards traders.

An analytical approach to Mappila social life is possible with the accounts of Hamilton, Buchanan and Wilks who noted the social hierarchy, caste system.
slavery and pollution. It also provide an insight into the cause of rapid growth of Muslims population in the interior districts. Islam stood in striking contrast to the caste-ridden Hindu society of Kerala. These writers provided information on the excommunication of Hindus who violated caste rules and selling of low-class women who committed fornication with a Nayar or Brahmin and the Moplas sending them beyond the sea, were simple and natural causes of the spread of Islam.

The works of W. Logan and Innes and Evans help us to interpret the phenomenal growth of the community further with the help of statistical data provided by the administrative reports. When Logan arrived at the conclusion, comparing the Census Reports of 1871 and 1881, that within 10 years some 50,000 Cherumars (slave caste) have 'availed themselves of the opportunity' of converting to Islam, much of the earlier hypothesis become more plausible.

Apart from indigenous works, foreign notices, Portuguese sources and administrative manuals, the hagiographic literature, namely the Maulid literature which is equivalent to the 'Malfuzat' literature were
utilised in this study. It is certainly for the first time that geographical literature was utilised for understanding the Muslim social history. 'Maulids' known all over Kerala as Mauluds were songs composed in honour of the Shaykh of a Tariqah, an Awliya, Tangal or a Shahid, and sung in every household at appointed hours to avail their blessings to overcome difficulties in life, would end with a Tawassul. Such a branch of literature was unknown as the scholars denied the existence of Sufism in South India. I.H. Qureshi noted in his 'Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent', that 'the extensive Sufi missionary activities found elsewhere in Indian Islam is not evident in South India.' R.E. Miller could only quote the above words in his 'Mappila Muslims' (1976).

Further there was an apathy towards Sufism as superstition and sorcery due to its too much involvement in Dhikr, retirement to solitude and use of Tawiz (talismans). Even singing the 'Maulids' among the educated was considered 'Shirk', and the literature was never subjected to any serious study. A few enthusiasts of folk songs had subjected the works for analysis since the 'Maulids' in Arabic-Malayalam retained many linguistic characteristics of 17th and 18th century
Malayalam, and therefore their interest was confined only to philological aspects. Tuhfat ul-Mujahidin was compiled with a view "to inspire in the faithful the desire of fighting the worshippers of cross; for a holy war with them is an obligatory duty". The community responded to the call made by 'ulame' and in the battle of Chaliyam (1571) which was the most desperately-fought battle between the Portuguese and Zamorin-Muslim allies on Malabar. According to Qazi Muhammad, author of Fath ul-Mubin, and one of the participants in the battle, "men came like ants from far off regions with what all weapons and provisions they could carry". How the masses reacted to the call for martyrdom could be read in Maulid literature. Kottuppally Mala, a contemporary poem, has its theme as the martyrdom of 'Kunhi Marakkar Shahid'. Kunhi Marakkar, the hero of the Mala was sitting on the carpet after his Nikah on the day of his marriage, and the feast was to begin. Then an old man ran into the pandal in panic and asked: "Is there anybody who want to attain 'firdause'? Last evening a Poruguuese ship had anchored off the shore; a few of the sailors came ashore in a boat, captured a Muslim girl and took her to the ship. Whoever will rescue the girl fighting Portuguese will attain paradise". The
song is very long with all the characters of an epic poem. In short the hero went out of the pavilion and took an oath that he will meet his bride only after rescuing the girl. At night he got onboard the ship, rescued the girl and decided to fight the heavily drunken sailors. But he was killed, his body was cut into pieces and thrown into sea. His severed body drifted ashore with the waves, and the limbs were picked up by Muslims who buried them befitting a Shahid. Later on Mosques were erected near those Qabars each of which took the name of the limb buried there. The mosque where his cheeks (Kot) were buried came to be known as Kottuppally. The song was composed after this incident. Such mosques known after human limbs are found in many coastal settlements in South Malabar. This shows the tradition of martyrdom prevalent among Muslims. Such instances are not mentioned in either of the indigenous sources or the Portuguese sources. Much material of similar nature has been utilised in this study to form an understanding of the social and cultural life of Muslims of Kerala.

For procurement of materials on the social and cultural life and for studying the folk-life and rituals of various communities, an extensive field-work was
conducted in various centres from Kasarakod (including Ullal Dargha of Karnataka) to Trivandrum. Information on Mappilas is derived from observation in Mappila nad (Malappuram District). The Koyas were studied in Calicut and Keyis in Tellicherry. For analysing the custom and manners of Sayyids extensive interviews were conducted in Pantalayini Kollem ('Pandarina' of Arabs) and Calicut. Members of the rich Marakkar community settled in Chaliyam were interviewed. Some of the Pathans who were once settled east of Palayam Masjid of Trivandrum were interviewed to study their social customs and manners especially elaborate celebration of Muharram, marriage rites and ornaments. Pusalans' life was observed in Tanur 'Ossan beach'. The eldest living Naha was interviewed at Parappanangadi, their only settlement at present, though some of its members in isolated cases have moved to far interior places. Information on Labbaies were derived from interviews with some of the members of Pathanamthitta, one of the important Labbai settlements and of the Labbai Colony of Cannanore. Service castes like Ossan were studied in a few adjacent villages of Malappuram District. The Kurikkal community was subjected to study at Manjeri, their important settlement where they are also the leaders of the community.
Malik Dinar Urs of Kasarakod, held once in three years, was studied where a compulsory levy of contribution for the Urs was noted. The presentation of a replica of sailing vessels in fulfilment of a vow and the offering of cardamom was noticed in the Dargha of Hazrat Madani of Ullal (in Karnataka, but the devotees are mainly from Kerala). Dozens of caparisoned elephants arrayed in majestic pomp was photographed in the Nercoa of Hydross Kutty Muppan of Manattala (Chawghat), where the practice of taking out the replica of the tomb of the saint was noted. Folk arts as well as rituals like Kolkali, Aravana and Daff were studied during the many annual Nercoas of Kondotty. Pure rituals like Ratib and Moulud were attended for study in the centre of performance. Birth and death ceremonies, and marriage rites, dress, ornaments, and social gatherings were studied. Reciting Quran on the Qabar uninterruptedly for 40 days was noted in the graveyard around the Main Masjid of Manjeri. The information collected during the fieldwork was compared with similar works on communities by E. Thurston (1909) L.A. Krishna Ayyar (1909) and lastly P.K.G. Mathur (Mappila Fisher-folk, 1978).

A regular pattern was followed in the interviews. To begin with, questions were put on birth rites, Haqiqah, Khatna, ear-boring and puberty rites, marriage talks,
marriage rites, dress of bride and bridegroom, social customs, feast and amusements in order. Then the ceremonies in the seventh month of pregnancy, succession rights, specialised vocations, death rites and Madhhab (Sects), social status and vocational mobility were enquired into. Questions were then put on important events in the history of the community, interaction with other Muslim communities and non-Muslims, special social rights and privileges, and important historical figures. Then the conversation was allowed to drift into the informants favourite topics, wherein often an Arab genealogy, purity of blood, wealth and prestige of bygone days, pomp and show of marriages or the deeds of a well known hero figured out. Often a published souvenir, or a pamphlet or a written manuscript or some other important relics kept in the family were produced in between the conversation. Ladies interviewed were helpful in giving information on social customs, dress and ornaments, food habits and in tracing some of the Hindu relics retained by the Muslims. Necessary information was collected from such leisurely talks.

Chapters for the study are arranged in the following pattern: Chapter one deals with the
introduction of Islam into Kerala by foreign traders, who were treated as honoured guests. The various factors that helped the spread of the creed like marriage alliances of Arabs with local women, conversion of the outcastes, purchase of low class women sentenced to death, Zamorin's order to bring up one male member of fishermen family as Muslim, are discussed. The caste to class movement of slave castes and their social status, royal patronage and privileges of Shah bandar and Kolikkod Koya are also discussed. A new and probable derivation of the origin of the name Mappila from 'Mavallad' is also suggested in this Chapter.

In the second chapter an attempt is made to study sufism as prevalent among Muslims of Kerala and the way how it became instrumental in the spread of the creed, especially in the post-1498 period, when the community was suffering from the Portuguese onslaughts all over the country. Their lucrative foreign trade was lost and they were compelled to move to the interior. In the interior where there was rigorous caste discrimination, Islam offered an avenue for freedom from slavery.

The study of sufism in Kerala itself was
undertaken against the generally accepted notion of the absence of sufism in South India. It was interesting to note that Kerala had more Sufi orders than Akbar's India as noted by Abdul Fazal. Various Sufi practices which are still emulated and social institutions which have undergone transformation and new ones adopted have been discussed. The sphere of activity of various Sufi orders, their ideology and the lack of knowledge of common man of the complexities of Sufi rituals and philosophy are discussed. The charisma resulting out of Karamah of Sufis helping conversion is also discussed. The role of the Sufi khanqahs in the trade centres as 'pious night-clubs' has also been noticed. Attempt is also made to evaluate how the charisma of Sufis worked among Muslims in a way beneficial to the community to overcome its difficulties.

The third chapter attempts an evaluation of the significance of Portuguese domination over Muslim trade, aiming at the economic destruction of the community. Attempt is made to trace Portuguese history of one century prior to 1498 when the destruction of Muslims was the proclaimed national policy, and the various factors that they sought to utilise in this
They followed a policy of befriending the enemies of the Zamorins, who was known in the West as 'Moorish Prince'. They unleashed inhuman cruelties on Muslims which have been discussed in Tuhfat and Fath ul-Mubin. 'Kunjalis, Admirals of Calicut', who claimed to be saviours of Islam could operate with equal skill, ease and familiarity in Malabar, Travancore, Cochin, the Coromandal coast and even in Ceylon, since they had their kinsflok settled all over India's coast. Attempt has been made to trace, the persistence of enmity between Muslims and 'Worshippers of the Cross' and to show how the tradition of 'Shahid' was carried into the 19th century outbreaks, finally culminating in the rebellion of 1921. The earnest attempts of Ulama to write to the rulers of the Muslim world against Portuguese is seen in Qasi Muhammad's Qasida 'Fath al-Mubin', which he stated "was addressed to the rulers of 'Sham and Iraq', that when they hear (the Zamorin and Muslims fighting against the Portuguese) they may consider joining him or at least the need of helping him (the Zamorin), who fights the infidel Portuguese more zealously than a Muslim King". Unity of Muslim world was again the idea in inviting the help from Sultan of Turkey, Pasha of Egypt and Muslim rulers of the Deccan.
which were naturally envisaged by Muslims in Calicut. They could easily think in terms of world Muslim unity because they had seen on their streets Arabs, Egyptians, Yemenites, Abyssinians, Tunisians, Persians, Gujaratis, Ceylonese, Tamil and Chinese Muslims presenting a wide spectrum of the Muslim world. They never lagged behind any of these Muslims even in scholarship and learning.

The emotional crisis and change in attitude of Muslims when Kunjali IV was handed over by Zamorin to the Portuguese and when Hyder and Tippoo invaded the land is highlighted. An important note is made in this Chapter that foreigners were welcome so long as they supplemented the economic interests of the rulers and they were never welcome in areas where their economic interests came into conflict.

In the fourth Chapter a detailed study is made of the different communities and subsections belonging to the Muslim population of Kerala. The major community, Mappilas are dealt in detail. Rites and ceremonies of the life cycle of individual and social and cultural life of the community are explained. Repetition of the same customs and ceremonies are avoided but their variants are noted. A comparative study of smaller
communities of Mappilas is attempted. Vocational groups like Pusalan and service castes like Ossans, maritime class of Nahas and Marakkars were subjected to observation. The only one Shia community of Kerala, the Daudi Bohras has been included in the study. The Panjappura of Muharram celebration of Dakhnis and taking out the replica of the jaram of Hydross Kutty Muppan are variations of one custom. Similar influences and imitations have been largely noted in this study.

The fifth chapter is an attempt to give a descriptive account of the various cultural aspects of these communities. The distinct features of these communities like rituals, ceremonies, food habits, dress and ornaments are noted here. Communal gatherings and feasts, on all important occasions are special characteristics of Muslims alone. It is interesting to note that right from Haqiqah upto death ceremonies and even rituals like Ratib, Maulud, and Khatam otikkal have been made occasions of communal feast. Adoption of indigenous style in the construction of houses and mosques have been noticed here. Their close resemblance to temples has led many to believe that they were temples turned mosques. The fact was that buildings
were constructed according to the principles of Taccausastra (the science of architecture) by the local masons and carpenters, using local building materials like laterite stones, lime mortar and timber. Due to the heavy rainfall they had to use sloping roofs, roofed with tiles or thatches which made any architectural innovations in Islamic style impossible.

The origin of Muslim female dress is traced to the Jews as the elderly ladies called a blue-black mundu worn by them 'yudattuni' (Jewish cloth). Too many varieties of ornaments including a few garlands of Tawis which later on took the name 'Ellassu' (a Hollow cylinder with both ends covered and Tawis inserted in them) are noted. These were worn by both males and females. The custom of wearing the 'Malappuram dagger' on a wide belt, dreaded and confiscated by British after Collector Conolly's murder, is described. The social charm, friendliness and affection, exuberant in communal gatherings, a great trait of Muslims of Kerala is also discussed.

The folk-life of the above Muslim communities are dealt with in the sixth Chapter. The religious
awareness and sufi tradition gave rise to innumerable rites and ceremonies. The way of celebrating folk festivals like Nercoes and Maulids, are described. The local influence in such celebrations as the procession bearing 'centipede flags', fancy dress parades, use of drums and pipes are noticed. The use of fireworks, distribution of food and of various 'Tabarruk all Hindu influence on folk-life are described. The relics of pre-conversion days like propitiating Hindu deities and spirits in vocational rites as in the case of Pusalans are noted. The form of offerings like breaking coconut, lighting lamps and burning eggs are also described in this Chapter.

A class analysis of these communities is also attempted. Of these only Kurikkals were a pure landed-class followed by Keyis who later shifted from business to land-ownership. The Mappilas formed the agricultural labour class between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The Bhatkalis and Bohras were purely business class. The Nahas and Marakkars formed a maritime class, while Pusalans formed a labour class. During the period under discussion Sayyids alone formed the religious class, but not the priesthood. Many of
the Sayyid families were wealthy merchants, who could
with the help of their kinsfolk settle in different
parts of the world and operate international trade with
much ease and comfort. The Bafaqih and Jifri Sayyids
had their warehouses and business in Malabar, Ceylon,
Burma and Singapore even in recent times. The Pathans
and Rawthars who were a service class in times of
royalty have now been shifted to various vocations like
shopkeeping, small-trade and governmental jobs. The
Ossans alone are at the same time a service caste and
class, among whom class mobility is little noticed.
On of the reason may be that the Ossan's profession is
well-paid and the youngsters take to profession at a
very early age. Their ladies in anyway have to perform
the traditional services in village community, and this
fact hampered any psychological impetus necessary for
any change.

The Pusalans also remained a class with an
aversion to change, the reason again being the early
initiation to the traditional profession which never
required any formal education.

An interesting finding observed in the course
of the aversion to pomp and luxury exhibited in social
functions by the traditional business groups like Navayats (Bhatkalis) and Bohras. "Much celebrations, means much expense, which we cannot afford with hard-earned money", a Bhatkali confessed. At the same time new entrants make roaring business in textile and hotel business and amass fortunes, a mysterious irony of course.

In spite of the existence of all these communities none claimed superiority over the other or tried to formulate an order of caste hierarchy. They were all but vocational groups forming one important section of the 'multi-cultural amalgam' of Malayali society.