Mappila:

Mappilas form the largest community among the Muslims of Kerala. Sometimes the whole Muslim community on Malabar coast is known by the name 'Mappila'. In the Census Report of 1871 the Mappilas, or Moplahs, are defined as the 'hybrid Mahomedan race of the Western Coast, whose numbers are constantly being added to by conversion of the slave castes of Malabar'. In 1881 the Census Superintendent wrote that "among some of them there may be a strain of Arab blood from some early generation, but the mothers throughout have been Dravidian, and the class has been maintained in number by wholesale adult conversion".  

The origin of the name is a matter of dispute. The name 'Mappila' was also used for Jews and Christians but they were differentiated as 'Jonaka' and 'Nasrani' Mappilas respectively. One interpretation of the word is that it is a combination of two Malayalam words:

Maha (great) and Pilla (child) meaning great ones and noble ones, received and held in high respect. Logan and Innes take this view. Shamsullah Qadiri who has devoted a full chapter of his monograph 'Malaibar' to the discussion is of opinion that the word is connected with Christian migrants from Iraq, Arabia and Syria. Another derivation suggested is 'Ma' (mother), Pilla (child) denoting the children of mothers, so called as they were the children of mothers who were married to foreigners, Arab as well as non-Arab. It is also held that the word means 'son-in-Law' or 'bridge-groom' or the foreigners married to local women. The word is still in use to mean bridegroom.

Even if any of these arguments is accepted some other related questions remain unanswered. It was the Portuguese writer Barbosa (1515) who used the term 'Moors Mopulars' for the first time for the Muslims of Kerala. Why was it that none of the Arab travellers, Ibn Battuta (1349) Abdur Razzaq (1444) Ma Huan (1451) or Zaynuddin had used the term? Ferishta can be left out as his information was from the 'Tuhfat'. This proves beyond doubt that the word originated at a later date.

After going through all these arguments the present writer is of opinion that the original word was Muwalladun (مَوَلادُون) or Mawalladun (مَوَلادةً) which means Sayyid half-breeds, sons of Sayyid fathers and indigenous mothers. R.B. Serjeant used the term for Sayyid half-breeds in common. Arnold in his Preaching of Islam has testified to the existence of the word in centres of Sayyid migration. The last dal (د) when dropped in pronunciation becomes Mawalla(h). In the Mappila Malayalam especially 'wa' (وا) is often replaced by 'Ba' (با). Thus the word becomes Maballa(h) with the last dal (د) hidden. The various spellings used in different periods like 'Mepular' and 'Mopish' suggests that one sound after la (ل) existed, but since dropped. If this is accepted it will also answer the question why it was not used by writers before Barbosa. The Sayyids or the Tangals as they are called in Kerala, are those people who had migrated from Hadramawt. It was in the 14th and 15th centuries that Sayyids migrated in large

5. T.W. Arnold refers to Spain: "So that their descendants the so-called 'Muwallads' — a term denoting those not of Arab blood—soon formed a large and important party in the state", The Preachings of Islam, Lahore (1961), p. 139.
numbers to India. 'Calicut' and 'Malabar' are specially mentioned as the place of emigration. This means that within two hundred years, by the time Barbosa wrote, the Sayyid half-breeds had so increased in number that the term Maballa(h) could be used to indicate a Muslim. The fact that Calicut and, further north, Pantalayini Kollam (Fandarina of the Arabs) are Sayyid centres on Southwestern coast, while in Southern Kerala Muslims are called by family names, also strengthens this argument. It is possible that the name was later on applied to all foreigners and traders but nowadays it is being more and more exclusively used for Malabar Muslims. According to the Government notifications, the Mappila is a backward Muslim, belonging to the category of OBC (Other Backward Community).

Mappilas formed a patrilineal exogamous group. The Sayyids took Mappila brides but a reverse was not possible.

On the birth of a child 'Bank' (Adhan) was called into its ears. A black thread was tied to its hands possibly to ward off evil eyes.

6. In Southern Kerala Muslims are not called Mappilas, with their proper names they are called with clan names like Rawther, Methar, Labbai and Pillai while in northern Kerala no such clan names are suffixed.
The Mutikalaccil (Haqiqah) was generally held at the 7th, 14th, 21st or 28th day of delivery. The Ossattis (Barber ladies) acted as midwives on delivery.

The Sunnath Kalyanam (Khatna) was celebrated at the age from 8-12 generally. The Ammon (=Amavanan=maternal uncle) used to initiate the preparation for khatna and also the talks for arranging marriages. This upper hand of maternal uncle in such matters may be a remnant of matriliney, as many of the Mappilas were local converts. After the ceremonious bath when the boy was taken in joyous procession to the Jamaath Palli on Friday. The well-to-do families used to send their children in a procession seated on elephant's back. Among the poor they used to spread an umbrella 7 over his head. The occasion was considered very important. 8 The barbers used to perform Khatna. It is said that the uncle used

7. K.K. Mohammed of Koduvally in Calicut District informed during the field work that when the umbrella was held over the head of the boy one would callout "Neither for yesterday nor for tomorrow, only for today" in their region. Because holding umbrella was a honour or right which was rarely granted to common man by the Rajas or chieftains.

8. Because the ceremony which is the outward sign of the boy's admission into the fold of Islam is made the occasion for much feasting and rejoicing, and large sums of money are often distributed to the poor". L.A. Krishna Iyer, Cochin Tribes and Castes, Vol. II, p. 468.
to stand with a drawnup sword and if by mistake the boy was hurt, he would strike the barber with the sword. It was the barber himself who used to dress the wound during the days of confinement. The Musaliar and Mulla of the Madrasah were given presents on the occasion.

In the case of girls, ear-boring ceremony was also celebrated. In the typical Mappila style there used to be 8-12 holes on the ear where to begin with small rings were hung. On the occasion of marriage Cirru (ornamental ear rings) were worn in these holes and Kummattu (a gold ornament similar to a bird's cage) were worn in the lower ear lobe. The ear-boring usually took place at the age from 8-12 in olden days. It seems that this was a counter-part of Hindu 'Tirandu Kalyanam' (puberty rite) which was celebrated with great pomp.

Marriage proposal was initiated from the boy's side in South Malabar and in north from the girl's side. Often a Dallal (Broker) acted as Middle-man. Dowry was not in practice. But the Mahr and ornaments had to be previously agreed upon. The Nikah used to take place at the bride's house on arrival of the bridegroom's party. Not very often, only the Nikah used to take place but marriage was not consummated. On such occasions the girl's father and elders would go to the bridegroom's
house or Nikah would take place in either mosque of the respective Jamaaths. The usual practice was that the Qazi would make a short speech or read in Arabic verses on the importance of marriage, and conditions a true Muslim should observe in an alliance, which would end with a prayer. Then the father would take the bridegroom’s hand in his own and, the Gazi would say, which the father would repeat, “I have married my daughter to you for the Mahr of.....” The bridegroom would reply “I have accepted from you marrying your daughter for the mahr of.....” This was repeated first in Arabic and then in Malayalam by both. The Mahr as fixed was then itself handed over to the girl’s father. Mahr was often fixed in terms of ‘Panam’ (a quarter of a rupee of old) or in terms of ‘Pavan’ (sovereign) in the case of well-to-do families. Then after a communal dinner the ‘Putukkam’ (Rukhsati), the most colourful item of the marriage was held. The bride was clothed in costly bridal dress by husband’s sisters and others, and the party would include her own friends, dear and near ones. There used to be particular clothes with gold brocade

9. Uncle or brother in the case of an orphan. The Qazi or anybody else as may be authorised by the competent authority.
or silken cloths for the bride's dress. A lot of festivities used to be attached with marriage. Exchange of presents were also a costly affair.

Pregnancy was celebrated. A pregnant woman was considered to be an easy pray for evil eye and evil spirits. Hence 'Nulu' (charms) and 'Aikkallu' (Talismans) were used and nerccas (vows) were also made. A pregnant woman was visited by friends and relatives with 'Shirni' (sheerin-sweets). The girl was taken to her parental house for the first delivery. Generally she was brought at the 7th month of pregnancy. The second delivery used to take place either at the husband's house or her own house as would be mutually agreed for convenience. The period of confinement used to be forty days. The Ossatti who would also act as midwife used to take care of her and the baby during these days. On the fortieth day after the final purificatory bath the midwife and 'Mannatti' (washer-women) were adequately recompensed, with clothes, a measure of rice, coconuts, batel-leaf and money. Often another handmaid was also employed to attend the girl during the days of confinement. The reason was that the mother of the house would be busy managing the kitchen for the girl, the visitors and guests. The handmaid used to take the baby to those
visitors, or distant relatives who may find it inconvenient to see the mother in confinement. On such occasions presents were given to the maid often in cash. The well-do-do families used to keep the handmaid until the baby becomes ten or twelve years' old and she becomes a kind of foster mother. But there was no practice of entrusting the baby for suckling unless the mother was ailing or physically unfit. Rich families used to have such permanent handmaids as if a member of that family who might have nursed two or three generations in a household. Such maids would also accompany the bride to the bridegroom's house once or twice in the beginning until the girl become familiarised with the new household, and in some cases used to permanently reside with the bride.

Death was attended with great agony and grief. Often food was not cooked in the house on the day. The neighbours would feed them and all the assembled as required. There was no such tradition but as a matter of inconvenience in the house and unconcern of the household for hunger this was done. On the third day after death the 'yasin' and 'Fatiha' were read in the household. In the case of well-to-do families on the third day 'Mushaf Pettā Edukkal' (Taking the Box containing the Quran sherif) was held. A procession of Qaziz, Musaliars, Mukris and
the elders proceed from the house to the Qabar of the deceased where a **kulikkappura** (hut on the Qabar) used to be erected with seating arrangements for a few. Round the clock Quran was then read over the grave, often the family members or relatives used to join the readers for some time. This used to be continued for forty days. During these days Shirni (sweets) Appam (rice cake) and Kulavi (sweet drinks) were sent either from the house or from the house of the relatives. In the evenings there would often be a big gathering near such graves. The relatives used to compulsorily send big pitchers and baskets of sweets to the house to be sent to the grave for being distributed to such gatherings.

Some of the orthodox theologians like Zaynuddin Makhdum of 16th century in his "Path al-Muin" have declared it un-Islamic, found only in Malabar coast. The universal prevalence of Darghas, the veneration and rites and ceremonies rampant among Mappilas, had gone unnoticed till recently. It tends to believe that the veneration of 'Qabar' is a prototype of veneration 'Jarams' (Darghas). On the fortieth day a big communal dinner

---

10. In 1981 a dissertation was submitted in the Department of History of AMU Aligarh on 'Sufism in Kerala' for the award of M.Phil. Degree, being the first ever known study on Sufism in this part of the country.
used to take place marking the closing of the recitation. All the reciters would be adequately recompensed according to their order and ranks.

These days every Jamaat mosque has got a graveyard except those being built in crowded cities or in busy highways where sufficient space may not be available. But 100 years ago until William Logan was appointed special commissioner to enquire into the land tenure system and Mappila grievances. One of the 'long-standing' grievances of the Mappilas was 'the difficulty of getting from their Hindu landlords sites for mosques and burial-grounds'.

The existence of large graveyards in ancient settlements may therefore help us to believe that these lands were assigned to the community during its golden days - days of trade and navigation - and for the later Jamaath mosques graveyards were not permitted.

During the field-work information was received that when a dead body had to be taken many miles away for internment, a party used go in advance with rice and vegetables so that they may prepare food for the party coming with the 'Janazah', during a short rest as previously

arranged sometimes in Anjacheyidi (90 KMs east of Calicut) Jamaat masjid dead bodies were seen. These were brought from distant places and by the time the bearers get exhausted and they left the dead body to be interred by the local people. This was due to the absence of grave-yards in the nearby places. As it was a long-standing grievance of the Mappilas in 1887, when the Special Commission was appointed it can be safely assumed that the problem was a very serious one for a long time.

Religious instruction was given in the local Madrasahs in places where Madrasahs were not available an elderly man of even woman collected some children and taught them to read and write Arabic and recite the Quran. Such 'Mullakkas' (Mulla+Kaka) were found in every village.

The Mappilas were traditionally traders, who were all part of the brisk foreign trade, which they lost to Europeans. Then they were compelled to move to the interior and manage riverine trade. Many acquired land and became land-owners and agricultural labourers. They supplied naval personnel to the ruling Rajas and were also employed in their army, and later in the army of Mysorean rulers and still later though on a minor scale in the forces under the British. Even at a later stage
they controlled the local trade since they were the bullock cart drivers, the chief means of transport before the development of the motor transport. They also controlled riverine trade and transport. The importance of riverine transport may be understood from the fact that in all the riverine interior settlements a main road used to lead from the central market to the main ferry. The old Jamaat mosques, all of them are situated on the road from the central market or old basar to the main ferry. It seems that this was meant both for the use of the local people and for the use of the passengers on the river.

When the British supremacy on Malabar coast was established, many were recruited for employment in plantations in Burma, Assam and for manual labour in South-East Asian concerns of the British Government.

The mother-tongue of the Mappilas is Malayalam. Mappilas are a community which has no tradition of Urdu. That is why they are isolated from the rest of the Indian Muslims. There is an overbearing tinge of Arabic and just as Arabic-Tamil, Arabi-Malayalam is in use for

12. Variyankunnatt Kunhahamad Haji, the man who established 'Khilafat' in Eranad in 1921 was himself leader of the bullock-cart drivers.
instructions in Madrasahs. But it did not develop into a separate language, though even dictionary of Arabi-
Malayalam had been prepared long before. They knew
to read and write Arabic and in the coastal settlements
there had been many, who could converse in colloquial
Arabic. There were well-known scholars in Kerala as
the Makhdums of Pennani, who were looked upon as
spiritual leaders by Muslims of South-east Asian
countries like Java and Malaya. There had been large
number of 'hafizs' also.

The Mappila dress in ordinary cases consisted
of one mundu (Dhoti) either, white, red, black or lined
with another small mundu which he used to tie round his
loing during work, used as a bath towel, and turban and
as fan in summer. This was often mud-stained. Shirt
was not usually worn. Still among Mappilas could be seen
people without shirt, but with his 'Mappila belt' and
Malappuram kathi' (Malappuram Dagger). The female dress
is a black or white mundu often with edges of silk
embroidery and a loose shirt. The head dress is Tattam
(another form of mundu) or a Makkana (veil).

13. C.A. Ahamed Moulavi and K.G.M. Karam (Ed.),
Mahattaya Mappila Sahitya Paramparayam, Calicut
(1978), pp. 35-38, 52-54.

14. A detailed discussion on dress and ornaments
follows in Chapter V.
$163$

Pusalans:

Pusalan, or Puislan (Pudu Islam) means new converts who according to the 1891 censes "are mostly converts from the Mukkuvan or fishermen caste" which process Thurston reported "was still going on" in 1909. K.V. Krishna Ayyar has observed that "in order to man his navy and merchant shipping, the Zamorin is believed to have ordered that one male member of every fishermen family should be brought up as Muslims. This resulted in the growth of the community of Pudu Islam (new converts). In the case of fishermen of Kerala coast often mass conversion of a village or a clan took place because kinship bonds were so powerful. The fishermen community in Northern Kerala are mainly Muslims (Pusalans), while in Central and Southern Kerala they are small Hindu, Muslim and Christian groups.


16. "Their (the Pudosalans) conversion took place relatively late and, because of this and their low occupation of fishing, they are allotted a low status in Moplah society". Victor S. D'Souza 'Status groups among the Moplahs on the South-West Coast of India', in Imtiaz Ahmad (Ed.), Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India, Delhi (1978), p. 46.
Kinship and communal bonds were very strong among them and a whole beach, always obeyed one single 'Karavan' (head fisherman of the Beach). It was only with his blessing and consent that any important event in the villages would take place. He had to be pleased with requests and presents, which was his right as the headman.

Recent studies have established that Pusalans had better knowledge of the species of fish, their habits and breeding season, the sea-currents (Niru), and various winds (karmu), and changing conditions of the sea, than marine biologists. They made their living either by contributing labour to the fishing unit or from the shares received for the equipments owned by its members. Besides the fishing tools and implements what a fisherman generally owned was only a thatched hut and household utensils.

Pusalans, as other Mukkuvas, believed in keeping nothing for the next day. Kadalamma (the sea-goddess) is bounteous. 'She would provide for the next day' was their belief. Hence by hard work Pusalans used to earn handsome wages which was spent on food, clothes and amusements saving nothing. During the rainy season when fishing was impossible in the raging sea, they would

inevitably starve. It seemed that the Pusalan’s beliefs and rituals were static and traditions were stagnant. 18

The Pusalans had their own way of attracting their children to sea. As soon as a boat landed after each catch, children at the beach soon surrounded it. They used to grab 5 to 8 pieces of small fish. The childish pranks are not resented or objected to by the members of the crew. In this manner a boy grabbed 7-10 fish, the cost of which comes Rs.2-3. Children were thus allowed to play truant by parents, who refuse to send them to any other vocation. Gradually these youngers acquire sufficient knowledge of their future career. The large number of children thus did not become a cause of poverty among them. On an auspicious occasion the young people would be initiated into the profession.

They maintained an economic reciprocity among themselves. The norms being that all the participants in a productive enterprise should receive their due share,

18. Thakasis ‘Chemmin’ (Prawn). The novel and later film which won so many awards was written when his fellow writers were blowing the trumpets of new social change of casteless society, end of landlordism, etc. But his novel alone described some of the traditional beliefs and practices of the Mukkuvas.
but social considerations enjoined the fishermen that they should take into consideration the age, skill and share in fishing unit. Thus the maxim each according to his labour became the governing principle in the distribution of every catch, in the case of a joint expedition.

Like the majority of the Muslims of Kerala the Pusalans were also followers of Shafi school of Sunni sect. The other Mappilas used call them 'Kadappurattukar' (dwellers of the beach), while themselves were known as 'Angadikkar' (towns-people). The term 'Puslan' was considered among non-fishermen communities to be a term of reproach. The 'Kadappurattukar' were divided into two endogamous groups on the basis of their traditional occupation, 'Valakkar' (fishermen who use the net) and 'Bepukar' (the hook-and-line fishermen). On the same beach they used to reside in separate quarters. They were patrilineal and polygamous, used to keep three of four wives simultaneously. The Bepukar were considered superior to Valakkar, and traced their origin to high caste Hindus.

In addition to the above endogamous groups there were other sections like 'Kabarukilakkunnavar' (grave-diggers) 'Alakkukar' (washeremen) and 'Ossans'
(Barbers) in the Pusalan settlements. They were engaged in preparing graves from time immemorial and were paid in cash whenever their services were required. Both Valakkar and Bepukar accept food from Kabarukilakkunnavar but do not intermarry. Similarly the Valakkar and Bepukar would not take food from the Alakkukar and Ossans while the latter two groups accepted food from the former. Among these three service castes the Ossan occupied the lowest position in the hierarchy.

The Pusalan were very strict in observing the compulsory religious injunctions. The five times prayer did not fit quite well into the daily round of Pusalan's fishing expedition. This was overcome by making the prayers 'Jam' (performing two consecutive prayers at one time in times of necessity). They observed prayer mostly in the Masjids. Usually fishing operations on Fridays were not conducted. They used Friday morning for repair of their nets and boats and when there was great demand for fish they went out to sea on Friday afternoon.

On the death of a member of the community they would send for the Qazi and the news would be spread. The neighbours suspend their expeditions until the burial take place.
Pusalans performed a number of rituals and observed numerous magico-religious practices in the course of fishing. They believed that sorcerers can cause illness and death by black magic and engaged a host of mercenaries such as fortune-tellers, magicians, exorcists and medicine-men in order to ward off the effects of sorcery, witchcraft and magic. Their rituals have been classified into eight main groups in a recent study. 19

1. Maulud = Recitation of the history, sayings and glory of Prophet Muhammad, his predecessors and descendants.

2. Pattu = Recitation of songs in Arabic-Malayalam in praise of the Prophet and his disciples.


4. Bayt = Singing of the elegy (in Arabic) in honour of the Prophet, his descendants or contemporaries.

5. Ratib = Observance of those special rituals in honour of Shaykh Rifai and Shaykh Muhiyuddin.

6. Performance of those rituals connected with the birth of the Prophet, ending of fast and the day of sacrifice, etc.

7. Adherence to those intermittent rituals held at irregular intervals (daily, weekly, monthly or annually) depending upon unusual occurrences like bumper catches, illness, ownership of fishing units, etc.


Some ten evil spirits, male and female, both Hindu and Muslim, and symptoms the possessed patient exhibited, and the various curing technique including Homam, Takideluttu, Ulinju Vangal, amulet and strings, sacrifice of cock, have also been listed by recent researchers. Rites are also performed to propitiate popular spirits like 'Ifrit' who the fisher-folk believed was the spirit of the waves. If he is enraged he would come to land and cause miseries.

Khattam Otikkal (Reading full text of the Quran) was conducted in honour of Ilyas nabi, the guardian of the sea, in the month of July when there would not be any fishing. This was done for getting protection from the violent waves and hazardous sea. Milk was considered compulsory for the feast in honour of Ilyas Nabi. The
reason for conducting the same ceremony in honour of Yunus Nabi was the expiation of all sins committed by Pusalans during the course of a year. It was conducted from first to tenth day of the lunar month of Safar. They believed that it was either on the second or the tenth day of Safar that Yunus Nabi was punished by God for impudence in asking him to bring Ti-Mala (Rain of fire and thunder storms) and killing those who refused to recognize him as the Prophet. Yunus Nabi was condemned to live in the stomach of a fish. The myth concerning Yunus Nabi had a strong impact on fisher-folk, and they observed the first ten days of the month of Safar as a period for repentance of their sins and misdeeds, keeping off from any work connected with their vocation.20

As for the Hindu beliefs, the Pusalans had the same idea about the cause of small-pox and cholera, and they did not lag behind the Hindus in sending votive offerings like coconut and coins to the local Goddess Bhagavaty. Pusalans also believed that convulsions, fits and epilepsy were caused by 18 kinds of spirits, and had almost similar treatment for curing these illness.

Pusalans like the Hindu fishermen attributed the failure of a catch to the wrath of the Gulkkan (Hindu deity) and consulted or employed the local Nambutiri priest for conducting special 'pujas' for appeasing the Gulkkan. On the whole it seemed that Islam had been super-imposed upon a primitive culture; it has not helped the Pusalans to give up their own peculiar shades of mystical magical feelings. We find among Pusalans the co-existence and integration of the beliefs and practices of Hinduism and Islam.

Sayyids:—

Sayyids as elsewhere in the Islamic world occupies the highest strata in social order among Muslims of Kerala also. "A peculiar sanctity is always attached to a Sayyid in Muslim society probably because of his alleged descent from the Prophet". 21 There had been large-scale migration of Sayyids from Central Asia in the wake of Mongol invasion during the period of the Delhi Sultanat. K.M. Ashraf observed that the Indians were used to the privileges of Brahmin hierarchy and because of that respect as a counter-part Sayyids commanded an exaggerated

and indiscriminate respect. "Every Sayyid was supposed to be brave, truthful, pious and possessed of every other noble quality".

Scores of Sayyid families had been constantly migrating to the Western-Coast of India. During the reign of Sultans of Gujarat (1400-1570) and their successors many families migrated both via land and sea. The government of Saudi Arabia was always unfavourably inclined to the Sayyids as they commanded respect in society, and often posed a threat to administration. Still later in the year 1224/1809 the Wahhabis under the leadership of Najd b. Kamil al-Najdi al-Wahhabi raided the main wadi, 'To save Hadramawt as they asserted from idolatory'. The Miret-i-Ahmadi, the eighteenth century chronicle of Gujarat listed the following important Sayyid families:

1. The Shirazis
2. The Bukharis
3. The Rifa'is
4. The Qadiriyyas
5. The Mashhadis

6. The Idrusis
7. The Tirmisis
8. The Bhaktaris
9. The Arizis
10. The Zaidis
11. The Madhavis.

Some of these Sayyid families were present in Malabar too. There was a constant stream of Sayyid migration to Malabar from the very early days of the introduction of Islam on the coast. The Sayyids came as missionaries too in trading vessels. From 17th century onwards certain political developments in South Arabian coast had compelled Sayyids to leave the land. It seems that as in Malabar, Portuguese depredations were unbearable in Hadramawt, since it was another vital link of the chain of trade settlements which Portuguese wanted to capture, and dominate. R.E. Miller observed that "European blockade of Kerala shores cut off from the Muslims the source of their preachers and holymen, who had came from Arabia to guide and encourage them in the faith". Miller was correct about the flow of Sayyids from Arabia to Malabar, but the flow of holymen had never been interrupted. Dr. Stephen F. Dale has shown that as late as 19th century during the Mappila outbreaks Sayyid
preachers of foreign origin were active in Malabar. R.B. Serjeant has noted that Malabar and Calicut were two important centres of Sayyid migration. Field work for this study was undertaken in Pantalayini Kollam (Pandarina) north of Calicut which is probably the largest Sayyid centre on the West-Coast.

The octogenarian Sayyid Abdulla Ba-qaqi was interviewed with a number of his fellow Sayyids. He belonged in the genealogical table to the 29th generation from the Prophet. According to the information gathered, there were the 'Hasani' Sayyids largely settled in Africa. In India and the East they were mainly 'Husaini' Sayyids. Sayyid Hamid, the fifth grand-father of Sayyid Hamid Bafaqi, came and settled in Quilandy. He had two sons, Hashim and Abdulla. As Hashim had only two daughters his family line ended with them since female descendant is not counted among Sayyids. Abdulla, the second son had seven sons and one daughter. The Bafaqis of Quilandy and Calicut were all the descendants of Abdulla by his seven sons, now numbering more than 1000. The Bafaqis were invariably known as Bafaqi(h) Bin faqi(h) and faqi(h). There were other four Arab families in Quilandy.

1. Ba-Raqiba
2. Batha
3. Basilmi
4. Baramiv
These four were only Arabs but not Sayyids.

Dr. S.C. Misra has listed Rifais and Qadiris, Bukharis and Mahdavis among the Sayyid families. These were only Sufi orders, the disciples being called with the suffix of Tariqa line which probably misled him to believe that these were community names. The Qadiris, Rifais, and Bukharis, called in Malabar as Hamdanis, are present in Kerala but they cannot be included in Sayyid or even Arab families. But Aidarus was a Sayyid and since among the Sayyids only the descendants are admitted to the Pir-Murid System, Aidarus can be called Sayyid. According to the information collected there were more Sayyid families.23

1. The Jifris
2. The Ba Alavis
3. The Ibn Shihabs.

The date of arrival of the first Bafaqah Sayyid, Sayyid Ahmad cannot be ascertained as no proof is available. But his second son Sayyid Abdulla who was popularly known as Valiya Seethi Thangal (the elder, or

23. A detailed discussion on the Sufi orders and their role in the spread of Islam has been given in Chapter II. The genealogical table appended would reveal the family connections of various smaller communities known after important ancestors.
eldest Seethi Tangal) lies buried in a magnificent 'Jaram' in the centre of the Sayyid settlements not far from the Sayyids' family Masjid, which is an important pilgrim centre of his devotees. An important nesca (Urus) is annually celebrated here on the 26th of Rajab, and Ratib is held. On the cenotaph of his Jaram is written the date of his death as A.H. 1160, on a wooden engraving. If the average life of a Sayyid (who has an unusually long life) is taken to be sixty-five, Sayyid Hamid might have come before 1100 A.H., or roughly some 300 years ago. The Sayyid's role in the Muslim community was well recognised by the rulers, and it is said when the 'Mamburam Tangal', the Ba-Alavi Sayyid had settled in Mamburam in Tirurangadi, the Zamorin recognized him as the leader of the Mappilas of Eranad and Valluvanad. Later during the Mappila outbreaks when the British administration was sure of the involvement of Sayyid Fazl in inciting the 'Cherur riot', he had to be 'respectfully' permitted to go on Hajj pilgrimage in 1852, instead of arresting and banishing him. Mappilas killed Collector H.V. Conolly in retaliation for the expatriation of Sayyid Fazl, their venerable leader.24

The Sayyids, proud of their Arab blood do maintain many of their original family traits. They were an endogamous society but if only Sayyids were not available they would seek partners among the Arabs. But a Malabari was rarely selected. Sayyid Ahmad was of opinion that their 'Sheriat' was against it when a marriage took place outside the community, it was only hypergamous and never vice-versa.

The birth rites were common. The Mutikalachil (Haqiqah) was held any day from 7th day onwards. But it was often delayed, sometimes upto 30 days since 'Sunnath' (khatnah) was also conducted together, because it was only then the mother was able to nurse the baby. The ear-boring ceremony was celebrated.

The Mahr was usually fixed at 7 'Mithqal', which had to be given or in some cases the lady had to consent as having received the Mahr. Dowry was unknown and even presents in the form of household utensils were not given.

The Sayyids had a separate grave-yard in Quilandy in the enclosure around the Jaram of Valiya Seethi Tangal, the first to be buried in Malabar in the Bafaqi line. It was only one 'Malabari' woman who was buried in the grave-yard other than pure Sayyids. A story
was current on this particular woman that one night a native woman came to the House of the elder Bafaqi and asked a place to sleep. The woman lied down to sleep and soon after she died. The Tangal then said that the woman actually asked a place to be buried and since he had promised her she must be buried in the Bafaqi graveyard. The story was related by Sayyid Ahamd Bafaqi. Their mother tongue was Arabic and the dress in vriably was the long-flowing white typical Arab dress with a white skull cap and headgear. The younger generation has taken to the ordinary Malayali dress, but white colour is always preferred. Now the only one member of the family yet in the Arab dress is Sayyid Ummer Bafaqi, the Muslim League leader. Their women observed strict purdah system and were never subjected to public gaze.

Sherief Muhammad ibn Hamid Abdulla had reached 'Qutbiyat' (The concept of Qatbul-Zaman in Sufism). On his deathbed he said to the assembled: "Soon after my death two persons would come. Give this staff and my turban to them", so saying he died. Just when he died two strangers came and received the staff and turban. One of them went and settled in Putiyangadi, near Calicut. Sayyid Shaykh Jifri of Calicut became his murid. The first Mamburam Tangal was the nephew of Sayyid Shaykh Jifri.
In the absence of a Muslim administration the Sayyids never became holders of administrative positions, state-grants and Inams as in the Sultanate or the Mughal Empire, which tempted Prof. Irfan Habib to call them 'exploiters', but in Kerala they lived, worked and fought with the people. When being interrogated in 1785 for joining the rebellious Mappilas, Sayyid Husayn Kunhikoya Tangal stated: 25

My reason for joining these people arise from the dictates of religion; for when a member of Musulmans are in trouble and in danger, it is for us Sayyids to join and die with them. Seeing their grievous state, I thinking of the face of God, joined them.

Vallyakatte Palli (the mosque of the big house) was constructed some 300 years before, and it was used ever since as a Sayyid Masjid. Teak is abundantly used for the construction with massive beams. It has got an elevated foundation about 5 feet in height and situated very close to the waves, cooled by the humming sea-breeze. No other special architectural features could be seen there. The masjid could be used by others as well for prayer. But the Qazi and Imam were always Sayyids.

Very near to the masjid there is one Jamar of Hyderus which seemed to be older in architectural features but could not be examined because the custodian was a very old man who could not conversed with.

On the ancestry of Sayyids Ahmad Bafaqi said:
After victory over Persia during the Caliphate of 'Umar many slave girls were brought to Madinah as captives. Among them there were two serene and humble yet dignified girls. On asking about them Ali was told that they were daughters of Kaiser, the Persian Emperor. Ali then bought them and presented them to his two sons, Hasan and Husain. One of the girls Shaharban, became the mother of Zayn ul-Abidin, the son of Husain, the only one who survived 'Karbala'. Thus the Sayyids of Kerala claim the royal ancestry in their Sayyid lineage.

Nahas—

Nahas are a small matrilineal community concentrated mainly in Parappanangadi on Malabar coast. Parappanangadi represents the ancient Tyndis of the Romans, which according to Periplus was one of the important ports of 'Cerobotro' (ancient Greek name for Kerala Ceraputra), second only to Muziris in pepper trade. 26 Around Tyndis

---

stood the ancient Caliyam, Beypore and other ports. The Nahas might have preferred the location of Tyndis to settle down.

The origin of the name Naha is supposed to be a transformation of 'Nakhuda' which means captain of a ship. 'Nakhuda' itself of interesting origin. According to Sulaiman Nadvi it is a combination of two words. The Nao (boat) in Hindi, and Khuda (lord) in Persian. Thus Nao-Khuda would mean the Lord of the ship. We have many references to Nakhudas in travel accounts. Ibn Battuta says that it was in a ship of Ibrahim Nakhuda, that he sailed from Gujarat to Malabar. Dr. S.C. Misra has traced a Muslim community of boatmen 'found around the major rivers in Central and South Gujarat and on the sea coast'. They claim that they originally came from Arabia and their original name was Nakhuda, which means a ship owner or a captain. Many of them still retain the surname Nakhuda. The term Nakhuda has been used for a Muslim shipowner in an inscription of 12th century. Ibn Battuta refers to Nakhuda Mithqal as a very rich merchant who sent out ships, between Arabia and China. One such Nakhuda


Mithqal was the founder of the stupendous Mithqal Palli (Miszqal's Masjid) of Calicut, which points to the influence they once wielded and wealth they commanded. 29

The Nahas in Kerala were also proverbial in affluence but as elsewhere they did not claim Arab descent. As the followers of matriliney, even family surnames are descended through female line. Malayalam is their mother tongue. Dress, food and manners were also not different from Mappila Muslims. Formerly they were endogamous. These days hypergamous marriages take place. A Naha lady is never given in marriage except to a Naha.

No particular vocation could now be ascribed to them. Like others in the fishing harbour they owned fishing boats and engaged in coasting trade of fish and coir. The community might have gone unnoticed but for its involvement in Kerala politics through Avukkaderkutty Naha the present Deputy Chief Minister and long-time minister of various departments in Kerala Government.

29. C. Gopalan Nair has recorded another tradition on the origin of the Nahas. One Princess of Vettathu Swarupam purchased a Pattu (Muslin) from a Muslim merchant without the permission of her father, the King. Since she accepted Pattu from a Muslim, she was excommunicated and married to the merchant. A palatial mansion and sufficient properties were assigned to her. The king also honoured her husband with the title 'Naha'. C. Gopalan Nair, Malayalathile Mappilemar (Mal.), Mangalore, (1917), p. 35.
Marakkars—

Marakkars were the Muslim navigators who had invariably settled in different coastal towns of Kerala, Tamilnad and Ceylon. They were mainly concentrated in the Tamil country and were a powerful maritime trading community and who had their settlements in Ceylon and the Strait. Settlements known as Marakkayars these people were described in the Madras Census Report of 1901 as 'a Tamil-speaking Musalman Tribe of mixed Hindu and Musalman origin, the people of which are usually traders'.

In the Gazetteer of South Arcot District, the Marakkayars (Marakkars) are described as 'largely big traders with other countries such as Ceylon and Strait Settlements and owning most of the native coasting crafts'.

The word Marakkayar is said to have originated from Arabic 'Markab', a boat. The story goes that when the first immigrants of this class (who like the Labbais, were driven from their own country by persecution) landed on the Indian shore, they were naturally asked who they were and whence they came. In answer they pointed to their boats, and pronounced the word Markab, and they

became in consequence known to the Hindus as Marakkeyar or the people of Markab.

This explanation is part of an attempt to find an Arabic root for the caste name. A more reasonable suggestion is here to make. The word seems to have originated from Tamil Cattamaram, the traditional type of fishing-craft used along the Eastern coast from Orissa to Cape Comorin with an extension northward up to Central Kerala. This keelless craft is formed by joining a few logs of light wood (Albissa species of wood). Four to five logs of light wood are tied together with coir ropes. Two wooden supporters called Kadamarams are used for lashing them together. Only a single sail is used and on return from fishing they are separated and dried. This type of Kadamarams are still in operation and seems to be the primitive types of fishing-crafts. The people who work or own these Kadamarams might have been called Marakkar, owner of a Maram. Not only that Marakkan is name by which fishermen folk are, sometimes called, but in Thakashi's, 'Chemmeen' even the fisherwoman calls her husband 'Marakkah'. Thus it would mean that the respectful 'r' is added to Marakkan which makes the word Marakkar.

There is another objection in accepting the origin of the word from Markab. That would mean, until 8th century A.D. the people in South India had not known Arabs which is highly improbable and even ridiculous. Further these people have never claimed an Arab origin. The most famous of the Marakkars were 'Kunjali Marakkars', or the naval captains of the Zamorins.

The Marakkars were seen in almost all the coastal towns and they were always on the move in search of trade prospectus. We find in 1503 when the Zamorin was invading Cochin and besieging the fort 'Ismail Marakkar' the head of the Muhammadan community had on Zamorin's inducement issued orders prohibiting the trade in rice with Cochin. When the Cochin Raja entered into treaties of friendship and when 'Cochin, became another Portuguese town like Lisboa' Ismail Marakkar and his people moved to the Mappila centre of Ponnani in search of a free port. Ponnani soon became a Portuguese target since it was Zamorin's arsenel and naval-head quarters. Due to constant bombardment of Ponnani, the Marakkars again moved to north and finally took up the Naval captainship of the Zamorin. Yet in all important trade

settlement there were rich and powerful Marakkars settle-
ments and in some places their own fortifications, as
Kotta in Ceylon, and that was why Marakkars became such
a dreaded menace from the Straits to Gujarat. Their
successful operations could not have been carried out
without sufficient local support.

Again according to the 1901 Census of the
13712 inhabitants of Porto Novo 3805 were Muhammadans.
The vernacular name of the town was Parangi Pettai or
European town, but the Muslims called it Muhammad Bandar,
and a large proportion of them earned their living
either as overseers or sailors in the boats, which plied
between the place and Ceylon and other ports. All these
point to the Muslim maritime community who were indigenously
called Marakkars.

There were innumerable Musalman saints who
were buried in Porto Novo but the most important of them
was on Malumiar33 who was apparently in his lifetime a
notable sea-captain. The fact that a sea-captain was
enshrined as the patron saint itself reveals the
character of the community.

33. Muallim or a ship master often called Malumi-var
(the respectable plural)
The Muslims of pure descent held themselves superior to Marakkars and Marakkars considered themselves superior to Labbaís. But from 16th century onwards the Marakkars had become economically prosperous and socially of equal status with other Muslims. Hence there was no ban on inter-marriages.

The Marakkars usually dressed in white Moulana lungis and white shirts with long sleeves. They wore a white embroidered plaited skull cap in Kerala. Their women observed purdah. Chaliyam, the ancient 'Shaliyat' is one of their settlements. There they are the landlords and exporters of coconut, fibre and coir products, copra and dryfish. Their houses are built close to the river and the main traffic till recently was by river. For their own purpose they kept comfortable decorated canoes of elegant style.

They were Sunnis and followers of Shafi sect and did not have any patron saint of their own, different from the common saints of every beach or settlement.

Marakkar is also used as a propername in any community and hence often a man to whose name marakkar is suffixed or a name with simple Marakkar, need not necessarily be a member of the Marakkar community. In
recent times Marekkars or Marikkars (as sometimes pronounced) have taken to other vocations too. The best example is the Marikkar Mortors, a chain of Automobile dealers in Kerala, Mahe and Pondichery.

**Keyis:**

The Keyis were a small but prosperous community of merchants, mainly settled in Tellicherry and Parappanangadi. They rose into prominence on account of their close co-operation with the English merchants of Tellicherry. It is related that one Aluppy Kakka, a petty trader of Chowva moved to the English settlement at Tellicherry probably in the first half of the 18th century. His family came to be known as the Keyis. The term Keyi is believed to be derived from a Persian word, denoting the owner of a sailingship. The migration of Aluppy Keyi might probably have been due to the disturbances in Northern Malabar at this time. Further the English used to encourage local traders to reside with their settlement.

Aluppy Keyi was popularly known as 'Chovvakkaran', meaning a resident of Chowva. His successors were also known by this name in memory of the founder of the house.

---

He was the chief merchant under the English East India Company, supplying pepper, cardamom and other spices. Every year he entered into contracts with the Company to supply a stipulated quantity of spices, for which he received an advance from the Company. It was through this trade with the English that Aluppy Keyi's fortune was built up.

Aluppy Keyi was succeeded by his nephew, Musa who improved the family's fortune by his commercial dealings by appointing sub-dealers in different parts of the country. The declaration of monopoly of spice-trade by the Mysore Sultans at this time hit the English Company hard, and it was through the efforts of Musa that they got trickles of these rare commodities during this period. Musa did not join the Mysore Sultans though they were his co-religionists but remained loyal to the English.

By the time the English gained control over Malabar, Chovakkaran Musa was a force to reckon with, in the commercial field, who had dealings with Surat, Bombay and Calcutta. He sent his sailing vessels as far

35. He entered into contact with the English factors at Tellicherry for the first time in 1779. Das Gupta has noted the development of the Keyi house. A. Das Gupta, Malabar in Asian Trade 1740-1800, Cambridge, 1967, pp. 128-30.
as Red Sea and Mocha. His intimate relations with the English East India Company made it possible for him to send drafts to his clients in the different parts of the Middle East and South Asia, payable at the English factories. Musa was so affluent that it was to him that not only local chieftains but even the Company turned in times of financial stringency. In 1784 the Ali Raja Bibi mortgaged several Laccadive Islands for two lakhs of rupees to him. The Islands were to remain in pledge till the principal and interest of his debt were liquidated.36 The authenticity of the entire transaction was suspected by the Joint Commissioners. Ultimately the Governor-General rejected the claim of Musa in favour of the produce of the Laccadive Islands.

In 1788 when the Company was in distress, Musa granted them a loan of Rs.10,000 for payment of salary to the English garrison.37 All these transactions indicated the wealth of Musa, and his political influence in the affairs of the local chieftains and the Company.

By the end of the 18th century the mercantile house of Chovvakkaran Musa enjoyed a unique position in Malabar. Buchanan wrote during 1800-01. "The Company had always made its purchases by a contract entered into with a few native merchants or in fact for many years almost with one only, that is with Choucara Mouse of Tellicherry; several others have also dealings with the Company but one of them is Mousa's brother and others are in a great measure his dependents". 38

After Musa's death, the family's commercial activities declined. The family was divided into four branches, namely Orkkatteri, Kelott, Putiya Purayil and Valiya Purayil. Instead of trying to revive their business, the Keyis invested their fortunes in land and became one of the leading land-owning families of North Malabar.

Keyis do not intermarry. They seek mates from Taravads of equal status like Acharatt, Kodankandi, Pommanicci and Mukkuttumpuram. All these Taravads together with the Keyis form one endogamous group. But within this group itself marriage is hypergamous. Nowadays marriages take place even outside the above Taravads but strictly hypergamous. They followed

Matrilinéal succession and this made them lethargic, inert and lazy. Karanavar did not care for the education and upbringing of the members of the joint family. Yet there had been many members of the community who distinguished themselves in various fields of activities. Mayam Kutty Elaya who translated the Holy Quran into Malayalam for the first time belonged to the community. Many distinguished personalities such as C.O.T. Kunhipakki who retired as member of Kerala Public Service Commission and Savan Kutty who retired as Chairman of Kerala Public Service Commission belonged to this family. The leading member of the community at present is C.P. Cheriya Mammu Keyi, the Vice-President of Kerala State Muslim League. The members of the Keyi community were actively involved in many of the revivalist and reform movements of the Muslims of Kerala in this century and the last.

Dakhnis or Pathans:

The Bakhsis, or Pathans as they are called by local people, were those who came as cavalry men under various Rajas, especially in the Travancore region. Some

39. Male members who married into the Arakkal family were known by the title of "Elaya".
of them came South along with the invasion of the Coramandal coast by Malik Kafur and settled there. These people in Trivandrum region were called 'Tulukkan' or 'Turuppan' on account of 'Turuppu' (special type of turban) worn by them when in uniform, riding their horses. They were mainly used to add pomp and show to the Royal processions. But these Muslim cavalrmen in the employ of Raja of Travancore supported him in many a crisis. When 'Mukilan', a petty Sirdar under the Mughal Emperor, invaded the southern parts of Travancore, it was a party of cavalrmen in the employ of the Royal family, who interceded on behalf of the Rani (Umayamma Rani, 1678-84) and prevented the spoliation of the Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple, the temple of the tutelary deity of the Royal family. 40 This incident is often cited as an example of the close relation between the Muslims and Travancore Royal family, just as it had been in the case the Zamorin Rajas and Mappilas of Calicut.

Many of them had also come as traders and businessmen and some of them arrived from the Tamil country as businessmen to the coastal towns such as Quilon and other important trade centres.

It is said that in Tiruvattar, near Nagaroil, there was a Pathan settlement formed after the invasion of Malik Kafur. In Trivandrum the regions around the present Palayam Muhuyuddin Mosque up toантанкод were the Pathan settlement. The word Palayam itself means military camp and probably of cavalry men. It was for the use of the Muslims in the camp that Palayam Masjid was built. In Trivandrum, the region was known among the locals, as Pattani Palayam. The original mosque was thus at least four hundred years old.

There had been a few Sayyids among them whose Qabars were venerated, even by the local people whom they called Pattani Tannals. Of these Sayyids some of them served as scholars of Arabic, heading the religious affairs of the realm and also as Government functionaries in regard to the Persian language, in which correspondence with outside countries was carried on, till recently.

Among the Dakhnis Adhan was pronounced into the ear of the New born baby and 'Haqiq' was celebrated on the fortieth day of birth. The ear-boring ceremony of the first daughter was celebrated with much pomp and pleasure. Typical of their Dakhni culture, women assembled on such occasions as ear-boring and wedding and sung their favourite songs beating 'Dholak'.
The Dakhnis, whose mother-tongue is Dakhni, maintained the distinct type of dress also. The children wore the typical salwar-qamis and Paljama and shirt. Elderly women used to wear the non-Keralite (North Indian) skirt with many stripes, choli, Kurtta and half saree. This dress was compulsory for elderly women and elderly ladies in this dress are still seen.

The marriages talks had to be initiated from the male side. Mahr had to be settled. For the Valayidal (presenting any ornament preferably bangle, ring, wrist watch or even gold chains), the Dakhnis used only cheap glass bangles, however rich they were. The informant was of opinion that this was done in the tradition of nominal ornaments worn by Prophet's daughter Fatima. During the wedding they still insisted that there should be glass bangles in between the golden ones, and the 'Padasaram' (anklet) should only be of silver. They had typical nose rings on both sides of nose and another ring in the middle portion of the nose—without any parallel among other communities—which they called Bullaq. For the Talikettu, 'Karishamani' (The minute black glass beads which is an ornament of poor people) was compulsory. The golden tali had to be strung in the middle of this Karishamani. Dakhni ladies
never united Talis once tied. The marriage ceremonies lasted for seven weeks. The pomp and show decreased day by day and finally concluded on the seventh Friday, when both the male and female and their relatives would become familiar and well-acquainted.

Marriage was generally held at night. When the bridegroom reached the bride's house after 'Nikah', the brother-in-law would tie a 'Kankan', (bangle) as Rakhsa. The significance seems to be accepting him as brother and member of the family as in 'Rakshabandan'. The male's sisters would tie the bride another Kankan probably with the same significance. The ceremony of untying the kankan, known as 'Juluwa' is an occasion of much teasing and merry-making. Among the Dakhnis the Tali was always tied personally by the husband in the bridal chamber amidst the women-folk with merry-making, for which he was helped by his sister. On the occasion 'Badam' (Almund) and Kalkandam (sugar cubes) were showered on the couple. After tying the Tali the bridegroom had to perform 'Kalima parannatal' - breathing the Shahadat Kalima - on the fore-head of the bride. This appears to be an equivalent of the Shiah custom of 'Kalme-ki-Unqlee', when the bridegroom writes Sara-i-Ikhlas on the fore-head of his wife with the right hand pointing finger.
The 'Jeluwa' -untying the Kankan- took place on the third day of the marriage. Until then the pair won't see each other. This was generally an occasion of womenfolk. The pair would be seated side by side, but the bride's face would be covered. A mirror was then held in front of the bridegroom who was to name her ornaments and answer other questions of the assembled amidst laughter and teasings. Finally the screen in between them was removed and the pair would comfortably see each other for the first time. Even when tying the Tali both of them will have the veil of flower (sehra). On the third day the bride was taken to the husband's house, but was soon brought back. Until Friday of the week the lady's house had to send food to the male's house. This had to be of choicest dishes including fruits and flowers, carried in bullock carts or Tonkas. This was an occasion to display the dignity and wealth of the family and was naturally an expensive affair.

The first delivery always took place at the girl's parental house. On the seventh month the girl

41. This custom is a variation of 'Arsi Mushaf' observed in Shia marriages. Mushaf (Holy Quran) is held on Arsi, a mirror for seeking divine blessings on the pair. The bridegroom sees the face of the bride in privacy through the mirror in candle light under a shawl spread over the head of both. Sheikh Abrar Husain, Marriage customs among Muslims in India, New Delhi (1976), p. 111.
was taken to her house. This was another occasion when
the womenfolk assembled to sing beating Dholak. Child
marriage was common though it was not the rule.

Death was attended with the usual exhibition
of grief and reverence. The dead body was interred with
usual ceremonies. Then followed some strange practices
typical to this community alone. Every day morning
fruits were taken to the qabar. Yasin and Fatiha was
recited at the grave and the fruits were distributed.
In the evening "Sham roti" (Evening food, supper) was
taken to the grave, Yasin and Fatiha recited and the Rice
flour and Shakkar which was the stuff of sham roti, was
distributed. This was continued for forty days. During
the forty days reciters were employed to read the Quran.
Special prayers were held at the Qabar on 10th, 20th,
30th and 40th day of death. On the fortieth day was
held another pompous ceremony. Pandals (Roof) were
raised and relatives and neighbours were invited for the
occasion. The favourite dishes of the deceased person
were prepared and served. The Dakhnis believed that when
the 'Ruhani' (soul of the deceased) went out of the house
it would cause the curtains or other clothes of the Pandal
to move. The house would from that moment onwards be
safe from the soul of the deceased. Until this ceremony on the 40th day nobody dared to enter the room where the deceased breathed his last.  

Dakhnis celebrate Muharram for ten days with many Shiah customs. They raise Panjappuras (five shut) with replicas of five palms, four in silver and one in gold, in such Panjappuras. The palms represent martyrs of Karbala and the golden one represents a bridegroom who went to the battle field of Karbala just after marriage and courted martyroom. People considered it auspicious to visit, such Panjappuras and get blessings. The devotees were waved with peacock feathers or flags kept in the Panjappuras by the functionaries who received coins in return of such blessings. These 'Panjas' were taken in procession around the city on the seventh day which was called 'Savari'. On the ninth day 'Tikulicattam', (jumping into fire pit) was performed, a form of self-torture sympathising with the martyrs of Karbala. People made vows, (Nerccas) to supply firewood for preparing Tikkuli or firepit. The tenth day was the

42. This belief in appeasing the soul of the deceased seems to be purely Hindu in which the souls are fed and anniversaries of death are celebrated with rituals and ceremonies, lest the soul may wonder and cause mishaps to the family.
climax of the celebration. Dakhnis observed fast for ten days and avoided meat and fish on these days. The 'Kud' (Tazia) were taken in procession to water, in Trivandrum the procession went up to Karamana river. The idea was that the martyrs were being taken to bath. This procession was made colourful by such folk-plays as 'Pulikali', fancy dress, or 'Kaluttil Kuttikkali' (torturing the body). Devotees watched these processions in reverence and onlookers with amusement. At the river the Kud was covered with white clothes and procession returned along the same route. The returning procession witnessed the original Shiah practice of wailing, beating the chest in memory of the martyrs and people behaved as if they were accompanying the deceased martyrs. This was the culmination of the Muharram celebrations.

Dakhnis had introduced a few more items in the celebration preparing special dishes and drinks. On the ninth day they prepared 'Kichada' and 'Panakkam'. Kichada was prepared with rice wheat and pulses, in fact with many things, in memory of the food with stone and mud given to the hungry in Karbala by Yazid's men. Panakkam was prepared with Shakkar water and lime juice kept in a new earthen pot to which Agarbathi smoke added a special odour. This drink would be prepared and kept
closed with the Agarbathi smoke. The ghakkar water with lime juice would undergo fermentation and produced a special taste. Those who used to drink the Panakkam was of opinion that its taste and spirit in which it was consumed would cause a little giddiness. This was prepared and consumed in memory of the poisonous drinks given to the Shahids of Karbala by their enemies.

No other communities except the Bohras who are a small minority of business men in towns do celebrate Muharram with such elaborate ceremonies in Kerala. In Quilon the Karbala maidan was the centre of the celebrations. This shows that the celebration of Muharram by the non-Shiah communities was not uncommon in Kerala. There a few isolated Dakhnis in different parts of Kerala but they do not celebrate Muharram in such style. Many celebrities sprang up from Dakhnis since they took to modern education earlier. Because of his mother tongue (-Urdu-), a Dakhni is more at home in any other Muslim community outside the State.

Ossans:

Ossans, as the Muslim barbers were called, formed the lowest rank of Muslims of Kerala. The washermen and Ossans dispute themselves of their superiority to
each other wherever they are present, but since in larger part of the land there was no separate Muslim washermen, they invariably held the lowest rank.

Ossan families were present in every village. The birth and death ceremonies were common. Being a service caste the Ossan was expected to perform certain services to the village community in return of which he was paid; he also had certain exclusive rights.

On the haqiqa of a child, the Ossan received a measure rice, betel leaf, cocanut, a certain amount and a white cloth. If an animal was sacrificed, he was entitled to the head of it. These rights were given when haqiqa was performed in grand-scale, especially of the first child which took place at the house of the mother. The Ossan who performed haqiqa was brought by the male's party to the house. At the same time the Ossatti of the girl's village was entitled to get the right hind leg of the sacrificed animal.

The Sunnat kalyanam (khatna) was performed by Ossans and they nursed the boy and dressed the wound during bed-rest. This was the occasion when the boy was to be fed with rich nutritious food and the Ossan had to be served with same food.
On the marriage the Ossan shaved the bridegroom the previous day of the wedding for which he received a handsome reward from the bridegroom. When a new bridegroom arrived for salkaram in any family of the village, Ossan had the right to 'Kannadi Kanikkal' (showing the mirror) for which also he received a handsome reward according to the status of the bridegroom. The affluent families included a piece of cloth for Ossatti in the Ammayippudava (dresses brought by the bridegroom's party along with the bridal dress on the day of marriage). In certain cases the elderly Ossans performed bathing and 'Kafan ceyyal' (covering the dead body in white cloth) and other rites.

The Ossan had the right to be invited to marriages. On marriage feasts, he dined in the group of the commoners. Even in the functions such as haqiqa and aristocrat would feel it a humiliation to sit on a supra where Ossan is seated.

The Ossatti acted as mid-wife on delivery. She was called for this purpose and had to oblige. She bathed the child and nursed the mother for forty days. The baby thereafter was bathed by the washer-woman (Mannatti) of the village. The ossathi received adequate remuneration in the form of cash, rice betal leaf, clothes and
oil in addition to the hind leg of the sacrificed animal during Haqiqah. Since these people were welcome in every household and a potent propaganda group they had to be kept satisfied.

They invited others to their weddings, whereupon the village community turned up and made them presents of cash and kind but would not dine at their houses. As a token of taking part only drinks were received.

They were an endogamous group, and could never marry outside the caste. They accepted an elderly man of a group of adjacent villages as their chief who would mediate and fix marriages and other affairs.

In some places it was the duty of the ossans to carry the news of death. Since they were familiar with every household, they also acted as 'Dallalā' in marriages. Some of them were specialised in local medicines and served as 'nattumullas' in very few cases.

The death and burial ceremonies were common and they were buried in the common graveyard. Their children underwent education in the same Madrasas and they attended the same Jamaat Masjids. Since there is great demand for barbers for shaving head in the ceremonies of Hajj, many ossans are taken for Hajj by rich people which otherwise could be performed only by well-to-do people.
The younger ones were initiated into the profession on auspicious occasions and they persisted in the vocation since they received attractive remuneration. They were expected at every household of fixed intervals, ossans for shaving heads and ossattis for cutting nails. Ossattis received a measure of rice for such services and in addition the ossans were entitled to a fixed measure of paddy after every harvest. The ossans were thus an indispensable part of the village community of Muslims of Kerala.

Labbais:

In the Madras Census Report of 1901 the Labbais are described as "a Musalman caste of partly Tamil origin, the members of which are traders and betel vine growers. They seemed to be distinct from the Marakkayars, as they do not inter marry with them, and their Tamil contains a much smaller admixture of Arabic than that used by the Marakkayars. In Tanjore district, the Labbais are largely betel vine cultivators and are called Kodikkalkaran (betel vine people)."

This community of Tamil origin are found in Kerala in groups in districts adjacent to Tamil Nadu.

43. E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. IV, p. 198.
It seems that they migrated through Shencotta to Kerala. They are sparingly distributed in different towns and had a small settlement in Cannanore. They were distinct from Malayalees by their physical features, mode of dress, life style and mother-tongue. Labbaïs in earlier days engaged in various vocations as a community but later shifted to various fields. In Cannanore they made very convenient skull caps.

They are said to be the Mappilas of the Coromandel coast, converted Dravidians or Hindus with a slight admixture of Arab blood. Regarding their origin, Colonel Wilks, writes as follows: “About the end of the first century of Hijirah or the early part of eighth century A.D., Hajjaj Bin Yusuf by his persecution drove some persons of the house of Hashim to exile. They fled in large numbers and some of them landed on the Western-Coast of India called the Concan coast and some others landed on the eastern coast called Maabar. The descendants of the former were the Nawayats and of the latter were the Labbaïs”.

There are many opinions regarding the origin of the word Labbaï. Some say that they got the name from the Arabic particle ‘Labbaïk’ corresponding with the
English 'here I am', indicating attention of being called, (the response of the servant to the call of his master).
A further explanation of the name is that the Labbaais were originally few in number, and were often oppressed by other Muslims and Hindus, to whom they cried labbaik, or we are your servants. It is also said that they are the descendants of the Arabs, who, came to India for trade. When these Arabs were persecuted by the Portuguese, they returned to their country, leaving behind their children born of India women. The word Labbai seems to be of recent origin, for, in the Tamil lexicon, this caste is usually known as Senagan, a native of Sonagam (Arabia), and this name is common at the present day. In religious matters they are orthodox Muslims, following Hanafi sect. Their marriage ceremony, however, closely resembles that of the lower Hindu castes, the only difference being that the former cite passages from the Quran, and their females do not appear in public even during marriages. Girls are not married before puberty. They are also called Marakkayan (Marakalar= boatmen), and Ravuttan (a horse soldier). Their first colony on the Eastern-Coast seems to have been Kayalpattanam and Kilekarai.

Thurston noted that while Dr. N. Annandale was surveying Madura District, he had noticed the use of
blow-gun probably made in North Borneo as he understood from its ornamentation, bought by the Labbais traders in Singapore. The Labbais had a great naval tradition as he noticed and "large proportion" of them had visited Penang and Singapore and carried on coasting trade with ports of Burma and Strait Settlements.

A high hat of plaited coloured grass and tartan (Kambayam) waist-cloth, are marks, which easily distinguish them. Their women dress almost exactly as Hindu women. Instead of the cap with plaited grass the Labbais in Kerala wore the black skull cap or white plaited cap. In the Cannanore settlement of northern Kerala they produced skull caps of various colours but usually of black and white colours. These skull caps were in great demand in the gulf area, because of the insistence on covering of heads during prayer. As the Arabs had typical headdress the foreigners found it convenient to keep a thin skull cap in his pocket and take it out for prayer. But the trade had considerably dwindled these days. Probably the Labbais might have had a roaring business in these caps in the South-East Asian countries where the followers of Shafi sect insisted on covering the head in prayer and even outside. Their women had earned a name or being "clever weavers".
The Labbaits are a people with great adaptability. They were an enterprising class of traders, settled in nearly all the large towns. They are vendors of hardware and general merchants, collectors of hides, and large traders in coffee produce, and generally take up any kind of lucrative business. It is noteworthy, as denoting the perseverance and pushing character of the race, that in the large village of Gargesvari in Tirumakudlu, Narsipur taluk, the Labbaits have acquired by purchase or otherwise large extents of river-irrigated lands, and have secured to themselves the leadership among the villagers within a comparatively recent period.

It were the Labbaits who invented Arabic-Tamil, written in Arabic script. It was following the Arabic-Tamil that Arabi-Malayalam was developed for the same purpose. Many of the guttural sounds in Tamil had to be softened down to Arabic. Since the religious education was probably carried out in Kerala also in this Arabic Tamil—before the development of Malayalam into a separate language distinct from Tamil language—many original Tamil words might have persisted. That was why lot of Tamil words unfamiliar in Malayalam have been preserved in Malas, Pattus, Bayths and such hagiographic literature produced in Kerala but written in Arabi-Malayalam on the trial of Arabic-Tamil.
The Koyas are Muslims of Calicut, settled only in that city and not in any other coastal or interior settlements. It is said that the name is a corruption of 'Kwajah', which means greater and respected.

It is not known who was the first to be called Koya or when was the name first applied to Muslims. None of Ibn Battuta Abdu al-Kazzack or Zeyn uddin called Muslims Koyas and Barbosa called them only as Moors Mopulars. But the word Khwaja as a term of respect was familiar to Muslims. They appealed to God as 'Khwaja Rajawaya Tempuran' (The respectful king, the Lord) Prophet Muhammad was referred as Khwaja Muhammad. Mahiyuddin Mala composed in the year 782 of Kollam era (1607 A.D.) by Qazi Mohammed in praise of Mahiyuddin Abdul Qadir Jilani, which was regarded next only the to Quran by the Muslims of Kerala, abounds in the word 'Khwaja'. The Shahbandar of Calicut held the title "Shahbandar Khwaja" and was called 'Jahantra Koya'.

A story is preserved in Keralolpatti which says that a young sailor from Muscat wanted to settle and carry on business in the land of sore honest King. He visited various countries testing the honesty of each King. The
trick was that he presented to every ruler of the countries he visited pickle jars, containing full of gold. He represented them that the boxes contained only pickles and when the rulers found that they contained gold they concealed the fact and appropriated the gold. At last he came to Calicut and tried his trick. The Zamorin on finding what it contained at once called him up and said "you mistook one thing for another. This is not pickles but gold". "The traveller thereupon concluded that here at last was a trustworthy King, and so he settled down at Calicut. He became the Koya of Calicut." This tradition alludes to the honesty of the King and security of property that prevailed in Calicut. Further this may also suggest that the first Muslim to settle in Calicut was either called by the King or known among natives as Koya. No date is suggested to this incident, but it may be anywhere near the emergence of the house of the Zamorin itself. Since 'Khwaja' is a Persian epithet (used in Gujarathi also) it can be safely assumed that the first Muslim to arrive and settle down in Calicut was a Persian.

---

44. Gundert, Keralolpatti.

45. Persian influence on Muslims of Kerala has been discussed in detail elsewhere in this work.
The Koyas however do not bear any significant Persian influence other than what is common to the rest of the community.

Koyas are a matrilineal community and matrilocal. They formed an endogamous group and tends to remain so by virtue of their visiting marriages. The system in Calicut was that bride-grooms were selected for hupergamous marriages. They would visit their wives during night and will have supper and breakfast at the wife's house. Then he would go to his own house for lunch. A Koya in Calicut will have no place in his own house at night because he shall have to vacate the place for his brother-in-law. Their system of 'Ara' solves the problem to a great extent. Aras were newly built for every marriage if the house was not big enough. It is more an apartment and exclusive property of the bridegroom and his wife and later on of their children, which not even the householders would use, without his permission. The wife visited the husband's house on important occasions. Husbands made their contributions to the joint-family for the maintenance of his wife and children. Often a matrilocal house had a large number of inmates of various economic status but the system of fixed contributions minimised the variation in standard of life. This system provided no scope for frictions.
and tensions of femalefolk. It seems that the development of the system was a favourable outcome of the mercantile tradition of the Koyas.

It is true that matriliny was an alien custom introduced in Kerala around 14th century, and it is often argued that it was probably taken from mariners. Robertson Smith argues that matriliny was in practice among the early maritime communities of South Arabia. If we accept that matriliny was introduced by early maritime people of Arabia, the Calicut system of matrilocal family can be taken as a Islamic modification of matriliny, where the ladies lived in their own house and received their husbands at night.

The mode of dress, life style, food and manners of the Koyas are not different from other Muslims. Their speech had a strong tinge of Arabic, a trait of their Arab contact for centuries. They have a lot of sweet dishes, and variety of spicy curries necessary to keep the visiting 'Putiyappila's in good humour.

46. In Calicut a son-in-law is invariably referred to as 'Putiyappila' - New bridegroom - who in other parts are referred to as only 'Mappila', meaning only Husband; however aged he be.
Many Arabs who had settled in Calicut had contracted marriage alliance with aristocratic families, and their sons and descendants infused many noble Arab traits among the Koyas. Calicut used to be a centre of 'Muta' marriages. There are separate localities still in Calicut where Muta marriages with Arabs take place. Calicut was also one of the important centres of Sayyid migrations. All these facts show the diverse avenues of Arab influence and its impact on Koyas. Many of the Koya settlements have Arab names. Mithqal Falli, Muqdar, Jiffiris, Bafqis, Baramis and a lot of other remnants indicate the Arab impact on Calicut. Once in Calicut flourished a Kazaruni Khanqah where Ibn Battuta had enjoyed the hospitality of his Sufi brethren. All these point to the Arab influence on Koyas.

Marriage was an elaborate affair for Koyas, lasting for many days. The usual rites and ceremonies were followed. The Verrilakett-preparing betel bundles with pieces of arecanut and tobacco - was an important occasion when only the near relatives, immediate neighbours and close friends alone assembled the previous night, made preparations for the next day, decorating

pandals, preparing various dishes and the elders recounting their old memories. Then took place the most joyous 'Mulanci Kalyanam' at the house of the bride when she was made to apply henna on fore arms and on foot by her own friends and elderly ladies with much amusements, singing of oppan'a and dance. The 'Ara' was decorated to the fullest satisfaction of the girl's family which was an occasion for expressing their dignity, taste and wealth. The exchange of presents between the two houses was a real burden and the bridegrooms were expected to contribute their share for all important occasions in the wife's family like marriages, 'Idul-Fitr and Bakrid. The bridegrooms had to be consulted and their permission obtained for all important events to take place in the family. Sometimes one member moved to a separate house on his own will and not by any traditional compulsion.

Koyas were mostly traders and businessmen. Their vocation varied from small shop-keeping to hoteleering, textile business, copra, coir, timber, wholesale trade, import-export trade and boat-building. They had to follow certain international standards in business since there had been competition from Gujarati Muslims, Saits, and Cettis who had streets of their own, and who still handle a considerable portion of business.
In the European Companies' period, various entered the field and controlled trading activities. One important aspect of business of the Koyas is, its continuing contact with trade centres of the Gulf region. By this contact large number of Koyas had recently gone to Gulf countries for employment. But the system of matrilocal endogamous marriages made Koya settlements outside Calicut rather difficult.

Koyas are ardent Sunni and followers of the Shafi sect. It appears that there had been large number of Sufi Tariqahs with considerable following in Calicut. The presence of Muhiyuddin Palli, Rifai Palli and Shadili Palli indicate the prevalence of those Tariqahs in bygone days. It also seems that there had existed some sort of rivalry among these Tariqahs; when Qazi Muhammed composed his 'Muhiyuddin Mala' in 1580, for he asks:

"Leaving a Shaykh with so much elation and exaltedness, Where do you go oh, people!"

The poet in the succeeding lines repeats his warning to the people to follow Muhiyuddin's Tariqah.

The unbounded generosity and heartening hospitality are Arab heritage of the Koyas. A Koya is typical with his small potbelly, simple and humourous, and with least pretensions.
They invariably preferred white dothi and shirt and elaha with turban and cape, while female dress consisted mainly of the white mundu with wide coloured edges (Vellakacci) a tight shirt and a loose one over the other, and the pattam (small mundu). These days male and female have shifted to other dressing styles as in the case of any other community.

**Vattakkolis (Bhatkalis):**

In the Madras Census Report of 1901, the Navayats are described as "a Muslim tribe, which appears to have originally settled at Bhatkal in north Canara, and is known on the west-coast as Bhatkali". They are known all over Kerala as Vattakkolis, a corruption or Malayalam rendering of Bhatkali, while they call themselves 'Navayats'.

Bhatkalis are seen as businessmen in all important towns of Kerala like Ernakulam, Trichur, Calicut, Cannanore, and Palghat. They had a special liking to establish their business in Muslim-dominated areas. So

---


49. Zain al-Abidin, a textile shop owner of Sanjeri was of opinion that he set up business there because of his love for the greenish vegetation, straight forward people and the peaceful way of life. He had formerly run business in Colombo for nearly 35 years.
that they were present even in smaller towns of Malabar like Manjeri, Malappuram, Tirur, Badagara and Tellicherry. Bhatkalis had the monopoly of textile trade in these towns and they owned a good number of hotels. Textile and Hotel business are the two fields of business of Bhatkalis. Recently they have taken to iron and steal dealership due to the great demand for such commodities in large-scale constructions going around. In the cities of Ceylon, Burma and many of the South Asian countries, Vattakkolis are found running their business with moderate profits. They speak their mother tongue 'Nawayati' which is similar to Urdu in script and speech, but an amalgam of Sanskrit, Konkani, Arabic, Persian and Urdu. They run a fortnightly 'Naqsh-i-Nawayati' (Nevayati Views) from Bombay under the editorship Abuurahim Irshad in which they get information about Bhatkalis all over the world.

There are various opinions regarding the origin and meaning of the term Nawayat and these could be broadly divided into two categories; those which hold that the term is of Arabic origin and the others which ascribe to it an Indian origin.

Mary writers, especially Arab and Persian, have traced the origin of the community and its name to Arabia. In his work Tazak-i-valajahi, Burhan ibn Hasan says that the community of Nawayats is of Arab stock. In the Arabic language Nayat means backbone which signifies unity. So according to one opinion the community originally derived its name from the remarkable unity among its members under the leadership of one man. Consequently the community is called Nayat.

Allama Jalaluddin Sayuti, the author of 'Kashful-Ansab' says that the Nawayats are the progeny of an Arab called Abdullah Nayat. First they were called Banu-Wayat, the children of Nayat, and this expression gradually changed into Nawayat. He adds that after leaving Medina the community settled down in a place called Wayat which is situated at a distance of three days' journey from Baghdad. However, he is not sure whether the place derived its name from its new inhabitants or the inhabitants themselves derived their name from the place.

The author of Safa-ul-Ambariya, Maulana Muhammad Bayarjag states that the ancestor of this community was called Nayat, who was the son of Nazar-ibn-Kinana, the ancestor of the Prophet.
Jaffar Sharif calls the community Nuwa-ay-tay, and states that it originated in Arabia from the expression Nuwa-ay-t’hay (or new comers).

According to Qamus, the Arabic dictionary, the Navayats are a tribe of sailors, the term being derived from Nawati the plural of Muti which means sailor. This view is further supported by the Muslim historian Syed Sulaiman Nadvi who states that the Arab sailors of the Mediterranean Sea were known as Muti and Nawat. He is of the opinion that the Navayats living in southern India are descendants of Arab sailors called Nawat.

Next, we will examine the views ascribing the term Navayat to Indian origin.

Wilks says that Navayet is generally supposed to be a corruption of the Hindustani and Marathi terms for new-comer. In the Sanskrit language the word Navayata can be split up into nava (new) and ayata (come) meaning newcomer. On the face of it this meaning of the term is quite opposite, for it is generally believed that the forefathers of the Navayats were newcomers to their present localities. Viewed this way the community derived its name from the people of India.
Another opinion gives the term the meaning of those who came by boat, nave or nao meaning boat in Sanskrit and some other Indian languages.

The Navayats are Sunnis, followers of Shafi sect who do not as a rule follow any Sufi Tariqahs or venerate Auliyas and tombs, and are very punctual in observing compulsory religious practices. They often leave their wives and children behind in Bhatkal and sometimes take them to their places of business if they are sure of a comfortable life. The children of the school-going age are taken to such centres where they would complete their education and as well get sufficient acquaintance of business helping their parents.

Adhan and Jamat are pronounced into the ear or a new-born baby. The Navayats differentiate between 'Haqiqā' and 'Aqiqa' whereas it is one ceremony for the rest of the Muslims of Kerala. Haqiqā for them is only shaving the head which need not necessarily be celebrated. But Aqiqa is the sacrifice of an animal for the welfare of a child which would either be held with 'Haqiqā' at or any time once in life regardless of the age of the person concerned. On the fortieth day of delivery when the mother had purificatory bath, a feast was given to neighbours and relatives.
The Sunnat or Khatna took place at the age of 5-10. They did not celebrate ear-boring ceremony except for the first child. Vattakkolils say that too much ceremonies and celebrations means more and more expense. They could not afford to spend their hard-earned money in this way and those who earn without hard labour would not care to squander it away. This attitude towards wealth has enabled them to stick to necessities and to avoid luxuries. Child marriage was not in practice and marriageable age for boys was 20 and for girls 15. Marriage talks had to be initiated from boys' side and after preliminary talks, both parties meet. Mahr had be fixed. About 25 years ago the Mahr was usually fixed at 19½ varahan (seventy-eighty rupees) and now the husband offers any amount according to his status. Dowry is still not in practice among Navayats. Jewels, ornaments and other presents are made to the newly-married by the girl's parents but is not obligatory.

They are an endogamous group. Marriages take place only in Bhatkal and cousin marriages are preferred. Bhatkals have thus retained the purity of their blood, and are easily distinguishable everywhere by their fair complexion.

Victor J. D’Louza has given a detailed description of the marriage ceremonies of the Navayats. According to
him the marriage functions commence about ten days in advance of the actual wedding ceremony called nikah, and they last for about thirty days after nikah, thus occupying a period of about forty days. The bride's house is the venue of most of these functions. Generally all the important functions take place at night. The only other Muslim community on the west coast of India in which also marriages used to be celebrated for forty days is the Mappila community of Malabar. But whereas among the Navayats the marriages functions commence about ten days before the nikah ceremony among the Mappilas they start after nikah. Among them also most of the marriage functions take place at the bride's house and they usually take place at night.

The first function is called 'raththa' or 'thaharath' fixing night. At this night the engagement is confirmed and the day and time of the nikah are formally fixed. The kazi muktasars, friends and relatives are invited. Sweets like tatapolo and sacar-brinji are distributed. An important function of the night is the grinding of black-gram (Phaseolus roxburghii)
and it is called 'uddamusa'. In the bridegroom’s house the same day prior to this ceremony beads are strung to prepare the lucky thread which would subsequently be tied to the bride. From now onwards all the relatives and friends and whoever is invited to the wedding usually do not cook in their house but go for their meals to the marriage pendal. Although the ceremony of raththa is performed in the houses of the bridegroom as well as the bride, there is one important detail which is observed only in the house of the bride. Here the palang or the cot, which is subsequently decorated for the use of the bridal couple is ceremoniously kept in the proper place—that is, in the second room of the house. Among the Kolahs of South Kanara also great importance is attached to the installation of the bridal cot in the house of the bride, and the bridegroom’s sister’s husband or the maternal uncle places on it a gold ornament which goes to the bride.

Soon after raththa, arrangements are made to

52. It is usually a double cot.

53. In the house of the bridegroom there is no use for such a cot, or the bride and the bridegroom do not spend their nights together at the latter’s house for the first few years of their marriage or at least until all the marriage functions are over.
decorate the bridal chamber in which the bridal cot is placed. The cot and the room are profusely decorated and the work lasts until the eve of the nikah and involves much labour and material. In some houses, especially of rich people, two cots are decorated on either side of the room. If there is just one bride, only one cot is used and the other is kept for the sake of symmetry. If, on the other hand, there are more than two brides in the same house the other cots are kept in different rooms either on the ground floor or the first floor. In all the four corners of the cot four lamps are hung and these are lighted day and night for four days following the nikah. A peculiarity of the bridal cot is that it is covered with seven mattresses placed one above the other. The bride and the bridegroom will have to get into the bed by the aid of stools. This custom of covering the bridal cot with several mattresses was also followed among some sections of the Moplahs of Malabar. Much change had taken place in marriage ceremonies in recent time. The nikah takes place at the bridegroom's house where the father of the bride went with elders for the purpose. After nikah, the bridegroom

54. This is also the case with many of the Muslim communities in the coastal area such as the Koyas and the Konkani Muslims.
is taken to the bride's house and they garland each other. He then returns. The next day the bridegroom is taken to the bride's house in procession where a feast is given and he returns. The bride is then brought to his house by lai and after some light refreshments she is taken back to her house. The same night a party would take the bridegroom to the girl's house and the marriage is consummated. He returns after breakfast the next day. Then he continues visiting his wife at night. The girl resides with her parents until the time when the male has means and convenience to take her to his house or to a separate house. Bhatkalis claimed that divorce and polygamy were very rare among them. Formerly they used 'Tali' for marriage but the practice is not followed now and is condemned as un-Islamic.

Since they were concentrated in one place they have every facility for religious education of their children. It is one laudable character of the Navayats that even the small boys are regularly seen for the five times prayer in nearby masjids. The informant proudly claimed that there are a number of 'Hafizs' among Bhatkali boys and girls, a merit which no other community in Kerala would claim. Recently they have started many educational institutions including an Engineering College in Bhatkal.
They do not celebrate Muharram except for the fast of 9th and 10th days. The male dress of Baatkalis were white lungis and shirts with full sleeves. The ladies usually dressed in saree and blouse with full sleeves. They observed parish whenever they went out.

Kurikkals:-

Kurikkals were a community of Muslims settled in Manjeri, the capital of Mappila nad and in Payyanad, three miles to the east of Manjeri. The community was first settled in Kuvvanceri in North Malabar and moved to Manjeri in the beginning of the 16th century. They were held in high esteem all over Malabar. The rise and spread of Muslim League in Mappila nad was due to the toils and sacrifice of the members of this community. When Ahmed Kurikkal (Bappukurikkal) was sworn in as Minister, in the first coalition ministry of the state, the prestige of the community reached its zenith.

A note in Arabic, prepared by a great scholar Unnippokker Asaliar born in 1259, who was the Jazi of the Kurikkal Masjii of Payyanad, and the field survey are the sources of the study regarding the community. The scholar himself admitted that his information was derived from elderly people and family traditions. He
was one of the descendants of Qazi Simamu of Payyanad Masjid, whom the Karanavar of the Kurikkal community had appointed as the first Qazi.

According to the note, one of the zamorins honoured the leader of the community with the title 'Kurukkal' or Kurikkal, appointing him as his own teacher, due to his special skills with fire-arms. Before that the community was known as sheikhs in Mavvanceri, the place of their earliest settlement. The tradition ascribes their origin from Abu Ubayd ibn Jarrah, one of the close companions of Prophet and one who was given the glad tidings with the promise of paradise. He was a great hero unrivalled in martial arts who had held the command of many expeditions under the Prophet and the first Caliph Abubakr. Kurikkals claim that this martial tradition later on helped them to master fire-arms when they came to be used in Malabar. Many of the members of the family had served as instructors in the use of fire-arms in the employ of various Rajas of Malabar, and it was their fame that caught the attention of the zamorin.

The first two members of the community to settle in Manjeri were Ittan Kurikkal and his nephew Moideen.
Kurikkal. In fact the history of this community provides an insight into the history of the Muslim community in Hanjeri. Until their arrival in Hanjeri there was no mosque for congregational prayer. Even in 1881 it was a serious problem for the community that the Hindu landlords seldom gave sites to construct mosques and burial-grounds. Even the British administrators were conscious of this fact as one of the causes of Mappila outbreaks which they sought to remedy in 1881. At that time Kurikkal and his nephew requested the Raja of Hanjeri to allot them a site for construction of a mosque, which was granted in Payyanad, two miles east of Hanjeri. The Zamorin cancelled the permission given by the Raja on the insistence of the enemies of Muslims. The Kurikkals appealed to the Zamorin and gained possession of the land but on condition of payment of a huge sum within a prescribed time. Meantime Palice Kurikkal had gone to Chaliyam as instructor in fire-arms, where he married a widow, mother of a young boy. He brought to Hanjeri his

55. There is a tradition that they were sent by the Zamorin to the Raja of Hanjeri, one of his vaiklis, to train his soldiers in the use of fire arms.

56. "On February 5th, 1881, the former (... log... ) was appointed special commissioner, to enquire into land tenure and tenant right in Malabar, and to consider the best means of removing another Mappila grievance of long-standing, the difficulty of getting from their Hindu landlords sites for mosques and burial grounds". C. Innes and A. Evans (eds), Malabar District Gazetteer (Reprint, 1951), p. 1.
wife and her son and all the property, which the boy had received as patrimony. When it was time to give the amount to the Zamorin the property of the boy was utilised for this purpose. Moideen Kutty Kurikkal wanted that the amount taken from the boy's property should somehow be a source of income for him. Since there were no mosques in the nearby surroundings, he foresaw that the Qaziship of the mosque may yield a good income to the boy and his descendant. For this purpose the boy, Simamu, was tutored under great ulama, sent to various 'Dars' and finally to Rannani. The descendants of Simamu thus held the Qaziship of the Payyanad Mosque. Unnipokker Musaliar who wrote the said note was one of Simamu's descendants. With the construction of the mosques, Moideen Kurikkal moved to Payyanad and settled in a place called Melettodika. Later on the family branched to various Taravas like Kokkooth, Kochirittoodika, and Pattayapurakkal.

The Kurikkals acquired the leadership of the community of Eranaa with the construction of the mosque and by virtue of its custodianship (Mutavalli). It is impossible to trace the history of the community in succession. But all the elder members of the community were 'Nattu Muppans', and heroes of their age. It is
said that they had trained and organised their own members and fellow Muslims establishing a militia of their own. Their status and chivalry were used only for the good and the welfare of the people. Attan Kurikkal who was at first friendly with Tipu Sultan, who had stationed his main garrison at Manjeri, later on rebelled and fought with the Mysorean forces, due to the misgovernment of Tipu's agents in 178.\footnote{57} Again in 18\ldots it seems that some serious developments had taken place when Attan Kurikkal was harshly treated with his friends Chempan Pokker and Unni Mutta Muppan. We see the administration reprimanding two British Officers for their excessive zeal in dealing with the Mappila leaders. Due to his ability to wield authority among Mappilas, Attan Kurikkal was appointed as the Zamorin's revenue agent for the Manjeri area in 1796.\footnote{58} When the British adopted the policy of appointing the influential Attu Muppans as their agents for the collection of revenue

\footnote{57} C.A. Innes and P.E. Evans (Ed.), \textit{Malabar District Gazetteer}, (1951), p. 63. \footnote{58} A.E. Miller, \textit{Mappila Muslims of Kerala}, Madras (1976), p. 95. There was an exchange of fire between the forces of Tipoo Sultan stationed on the present college hills, and of Attan Kurikkal stationed around the Rayyanad Masjid. Large number of cannon balls found in the bushes around the masjid, are obviously fired by Tipoo's forces on this occasion.\footnote{58} A.E. Miller, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 110.
and maintenance of law and order, Attan Kurikkal was placed at the head of a 100-member auxiliary police force. Some of his rivals envied his power and influence with British Government. An incident which took place probably in 1800 was narrated by an elderly member of the community where a misunderstanding was created between the then Malabar Collector and Attan Kurikkal, which culminated in the death of the latter and confiscation of all the properties of the community. Later on, the misunderstanding was removed and properties returned. In 1939 Moideen Kurikkal the elder member of the community was awarded the title of 'Khan Sahib' and the title of 'Khan Sahib' in 1946.

It is very difficult to compose a chronological sequence of events connected with the community, because very often names like Attan, Ahamd and Moideen repeatedly occur. It is not uncommon to find so many members of the same name still in different families. This tradition of naming after great ancestors seems to be one of the Arab traits of the community.

Kurikkal had a great role in the rise and spread of Muslim League in Trinad. During the Hyderabad operation when all the Muslim League supporters evaded
arrest joining other political parties, it was only Hassan Kutty Kurikkal who boldly proclaimed his allegiance and courted arrest. After release he won a seat to the Madras Assembly as the Muslim League candidate. When Muslim League came to power in the coalition government in Kerala named Kurikkal was sworn in as minister for Panchayath and local body. It was his historic speech in the State Muslim League Conference held at Mannanchira in Calicut in 1967 that resulted in the formation of Malappuram district in 1969. Since then at least one member of Kurikkal community was always elected to the State Assembly. The trust of the Muslims in Kurikkal community was further evinced in the election of Hassan Achchood Kurikkal as Chairman of the Manjeri Municipality.

Kurikkals were mainly instrumental in the construction of the Jamaat Masjid of Manjeri. Since then the Karanavars of the community invariably succeeded as Mutawallis. By virtue of this office they also acted as arbitrators and judges of social and communal affairs. They are Sunni and followers of Shafi sect with a comparatively high veneration of Sayyids and pirs. A set of three books of large size (3' x 1½') of Tura’in in beautiful calligraphy has been preserved in the house of the later Haidar Kutty Kurikkal, prepared by a certain Bakhshan Musliar about 150 years ago.
Kurikkals conducted hypergamous marriages with aristocratic families. But there was a tradition of excluding some Tarawads from marriage alliance, as informed by an elderly woman of the community, probably of being new-rich.

Nainars:-

The Nainars were converts to Islam of the same, who came from Tamilnad. They were settled only in Cochin. It is believed that the Nainars first settled in Kerala about 500 years, entering into contract for certain works with Rajas of Cochin. They had certain rights and privileges during the Raja's Elunnellatt. The name was used formerly to mean Savarikkara: (rider). Some writers are of opinion that they migrated to Kerala following persecution in Pandyan country. 59

It seems that Nainars had been converted sufficiently earlier to Islam since they have a greater affinity towards Arabic language.

Ravuthars:-

They were Hindu tribe of Tamil origin converted to Islam, who retained their caste name even after conversion.

It is believed that the word means 'cavalry man'. The Madura District Gazetteer mentions that cavalrymen under the Rajas were called 'Ravuther', and they were a martial class. It appears that several Ravuthars migrated to Kerala on account of persecution of the foreigners in the Pandya country. They are found widely distributed in the eastern parts of the Palghat region.

Bohras-

Bohras were the only Shiah community settled in a few major towns of Kerala like Calicut, Cannanore, Cochin and Alleppy. They migrated from Gujarat some four generations ago.

They were a sub-division of Ismaili Shiahs which bifurcated into two branches, the Eastern Ismailis or the Nizaris represented in Gujarat by the Khojas, and the Western or Mustaalis to which the Bohra community with a highly developed theosophical frame-work which underlined its administrative system with symbolic and mystic system of notions, grades and cycles belonged.

The Ismaili Shiahs to which Bohra community belonged was persecuted during the Mughal rule. 60 This

60. "No other Muslim community in India suffered more at the hand of the iconoclastic Sufi rulers. And finally none other have developed a business outlook which is distinct in Muslim Miesra. S.C., Muslim Communities, Nai Dhaara, 1964, p. 15."
at any age. Ear-boring ceremony was nominally celebrated. The marriage talks had to be initiated from the male side. The Nikah was solemnized anywhere according to convenience. After Nikah the bridegroom proceeded to wife's house with a Sehra (flower Veil) on his face. This was removed by the bride at her house. The bride was then taken in procession to the bridegroom's house.

Shaykh Abrar Husain has listed a number of ceremonies observed by the Shia community which anyhow was not followed by the Daudi Bohras of Kerala. Many of these ceremonies were relics of local and Rajput customs as developed in Gujarat.

Bohras reiterated that there was no system of dowry among them. Mahr was fixed as rupees 100, 152 or 252 and never more. The parents used to keep their status in marriage giving gold ornaments to their daughters. According his position the husband offered an equal amount of gold, often double the amount and sometimes less, without any religious, traditional or customary compulsion. All that was given to her was her own property in which husband had no right. Even the expenditure of the feast on the day of marriage was born by the male. Thus among the Daudis marriage of

61. Shaykh Abrar Husain, Marriage Customs Among Muslims in India, New Delhi (1976), pp. 108-118.
a daughter was never considered to be a burden on parent
of the girl as is the case with the rest of the communi-
ties. The first delivery took place at the girl's house,
where she was brought on the seventh month. At the time
when the girl was taken to her house the relatives of
the husband made her presents of ornaments and new clothes.

Bohras had a mosque of their own where the
chief functionary was an 'Amil' equivalent of 'Qazi'.
A 'Khadim' looked after the maintenance of the mosque.
Mulla Sahib (Mullakka) among Mappilas, was next to the
Amil who could also perform the duties of Amil in his
absence and also headed the local Madrasah. These
functionaries were appointed by the Dai from Bombay and
were subject to transfer to Daudi mosques all over the
world.

On Fridays the Daudis assembled in the mosque
and conducted the congregational prayer. Khutba was not
held before prayer, but only an ordinary sermon after
it. Daudi Bohras said that Khutba was the right of the
Imam and since the Imam (21st Imam, Tayyib) had disappeared
it is not held. When he reappears (as Mahdi) Khutba will
be held. They do not tie their hands on chest, which
would be done only after appearance of the Imam. They
keep hands hung down close to their body in prayer.

Daudji Bohras celebrated Muharram with enthusiasm. They often fasted either for ten days or on 9th and 10th days. No procession was held. They assembled in mosque, listened to sermons, wept and cried and beat their chest but all inside the masjid. "No dramas and demonstrations outside", said a Bohra youth. They used to wear Paijama and Jubba or lungi and Jubba to Masjid with the Bohri cap, white skull cap with golden tissues. On ceremonial occasions they wore churidar, Sherwani and fetah (The Bohri cap with golden brocades). Outside they wore the ordinary dress. Their ladies used to wear Ghagra (a skirt) Blouse and Dupetta, the bride too wore this dress on the day of wedding. Girls usually wore Paijama, Kurta or Shelwar Qamis.

They held compulsory Iftar (ending a day's fast) at the masjid. All the members of the community including children and ladies took part in it and contributed their share. Thus the 'Jamaat' or communal organisation is very strong among the Daudi Bohras as elsewhere in the world.