Introduction
INTRODUCTION

Kerala is a small state located in the south west corner of India representing only 1.18 percent of the total area and 3.4% of the population. At the time of independence this region was ruled by three administrations, two princely states, Travancore and Cochin, and Malabar which was under the direct Administration of the British. These three units were united to form the present Kerala on 1st November 1956. The state constitutes 14 Districts and the total population of it as per the census of 1991-2001 is 31838619. Out of this Muslims constitute 7863842 which share 23.33 percent of the total population. So Muslims or Mappilas of Kerala have a significant position in its population and they are also characterized as a unique and historical society whose culture, literature, tradition, social ethos and politics etc have been moulded through the passage of time. But a very few studies have been appeared dealing with these aspects of the Mappila Muslims of Kerala even though several studies have been appeared up to date focusing on their historical and socio-cultural aspects and pertaining to some limited parameters and related issues like Mappila politics, folklore, culture, arts, songs etc. On the other hand, there is hardly subjected any painstaking efforts unfolding the development of Islamic studies in the region yet.

In this context I would like to pinpoint the sound relevance of this research program me on the topic of ‘Development of Islamic Studies in Kerala during 18th century to 20th century’. At the very outset I must clarify the concept and relevance of ‘Islamic Studies’. ‘Islamic Studies as a subject has very wide concept, it includes all studies which either

\(^1\) See Appendix, Table-I, p.245.
originated with Islam or developed and advanced under its influence, whether it be theological, philosophical, literary, scientific or historical’.  

'The term 'Islamic Studies’, currently used in scientific and professional journals, academic departments and institutions, encompasses a vast field of research with Islam as its common bond. References to Islam, whether in the sense of culture, civilization, religion or tradition, have become even more frequent since the appearance of a plethora of literature in European languages treating the notion of political (fundamentalist) Islam. The literature speaks of Islamic banks, Islamic economics, Islamic political order, Islamic democracy, and Islamic human rights and so on. However the Islamic studies covers a very vast area dealing with all the phases of Islam and Muslim, past and present, regional and universal, religious and political, cultural and social’.  

Even after the very advent and spread Islam in Malabar shores since 7th century A.D, there have been a number of scholars contributed to different aspects of Islamic studies. It may be pointed out that present research work mainly gives focus on the contributions of the Muslim scholars and others in the field of Islamic sciences, like Quranic Studies, Hadith, Fiqh and Tasawwuf, during 18th century to 20th century A.D. It is also remarkable that there has been no systematic and comprehensive study on this important topic carried out so far. Therefore the scope of the present study is upgrading and updating the development of Islamic Studies in modern times as a debutant effort.

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**Introduction**

**Sources and methods**

The sources for writing this work are mostly primary in nature. The original sources including both published and unpublished manuscripts have also been utilized for the study. On this occasion I must mention the limits of a researcher on the topic of this kind especially in the context of Kerala. A good number of original source materials written in Arabic and Arabic-Malayalam which would have been vital in the research are lost. Also there is a large volume of Arabic and Arabic-Malayalam literature, some of them published and many still remain unpublished. They remain scattered in the form of moth eaten manuscripts copies in shelves stacked carelessly in libraries attached to mosques and in private possession of individuals all over the state. Most of the materials were found in the form of lithographs from the decayed ware houses of old publications. By facing all these hardships and adversities, a hectic search has been carried out in the personal collection of certain scholars and experts in different parts of the state.

Regarding the methodology applied in the study, in the first two chapters, the method of Historical survey is used imparting introductory information. The subsequent and second part of the thesis carries an anatomical study on the development of four cardinal disciplines like *Quran*, *Hadith*, *Fiqh* and *Tasawwuf*. In this regard several recommendable primary and secondary works have been studied.

The criteria for selecting a work in this research is strictly based on its merit, those books having standardised information, methodological presentation, historical relevance are subjected to the study. The materials thus collected are analysed and synthesised.
Also conducted some personal interviews with some experts and scholars and local resource persons to widen the perceptions. In addition to these Kerala Muslim directories, encyclopedias, yearbooks, latest census report, autobiographies, gazetteers have been used and listed out in the bibliography.

**Design of the study**

The thesis is presented in 6 chapters excluding the introduction and conclusion. The opening chapter deals with a general survey on the development of Islamic studies in Kerala. The present chapter throws light on the advent and spread of Islam in Kerala and proceeds to the pivotal instances and circumstances which led to the formation of Muslim society. Co-operation of the local rulers, role of Sufis, Sadat and Missionaries, construction of mosques, installation of Darses and sprouting of Arabic- Malayalam have been vividly surpassed. The chapter also highlights the impact of colonial encroachment upon the Muslim Ummah and their reaction towards the same. It ultimately constitutes an astonishing picture that even in such a bubbling and boiling situation, how the Muslim scholars had devoted their time and energy to the promotion of Islamic Studies. Thus early developments of Islamic Studies have been surveyed in its chronological order.

The subsequent chapter, *‘Contribution of religious and academic institutions in the development of Islamic Studies in Kerala’* has been vividly enumerated while correlating with the socio-political condition of the Muslims at the advent of Islam and the circumstances which led to the installation of religious and academic institutions like Darses, Maktabs, Madrasas, Arabic colleges and universities in Kerala. The discussion primarily focuses on the mode of curriculum, style of pedagogy, and its specific roles played in the promotion of Arabic and Islamic Studies in
the region. The present chapter throws light on the mile stones, pivotal instances in the evolutionary process of Islamic education as parallel to the progress of modern education in Indian sub continent. Also discusses the visionary role of Islamic organizations to institute the aforesaid religious and academic institutions. The steps and measures of the Government of Kerala enacted at different times have also been reviewed in this regard.

The third chapter in related to the ‘Development of Quranic studies in Kerala’ which is the first and for most branches of Islamic studies. This chapter is designed under some broader headings as historical overview, the origin, Development and trends of Quranic studies in Kerala, a survey of the works done on Quranic studies in Kerala, Major Quranic studies and review of Quranic literature. The overall information will validate a comprehensive account on the nature, characteristics, trends, milestones, dimensions, genesis and development of the Quranic studies during the last two centuries.

The fourth chapter deals with the ‘Development of Hadith studies in Kerala’ along with a brief historical overview. A special assessment is given on the genesis and general characteristics of Hadith studies in the region. Then systematically approaches towards the study of translated works, by which Malayalam versions of ‘Sahih al Bukhari’, ‘Sahih al Muslim’, ‘Riyad al Salihin’, ‘Bulugh al Maram’, ‘Mishkat al Masabih’, ‘Matnu arbai’n’ and ‘Adab al Mufrad’ have been studied. Besides general works on Hadith studies were also analysed.

The fifth chapter ‘Development of Fiqh studies in Kerala’ contains historical overview on Islamic jurisprudence and examines the historical development of Fiqh Studies in Kerala which handles the characteristic features of Islamic jurisprudence in Kerala, progress of Shafii’ school of
Islamic jurisprudence in the region, the rare presence of other schools of Islamic jurisprudence, Qazi system prevailed in the region and the series of debates on the jurisprudential matters are observed. The central analysis is oriented under the titles of ‘Tarjamat’ or translated works on Fiqh. Moreover relevant information were also provided in this chapter about ‘Ibadat’, ‘Mua’malat’, ‘Faraidh’ and ‘Fatawa’.

The sixth chapter envisages the ‘Development of Tasawwuf Studies in Kerala’. After the historical overview, origin, development of Sufism in Kerala, A Study of Sufi poems in Kerala including Muhiyuddin Mala, Kappapattu and Nool Madhu, Hidayah al Adhiya, Allaf al Alifu, Jauharat al Tauhid, Qasidah al Umariyah, Al Mawahib al Jaliyah, Manqus Moulid have been undergone a considerable review. Subsequently analyses some case study on renowned Sufi personalities whose works and thoughts have tremendously influenced the region of Kerala such as Shaikh Abdul Qader Jilani (1078-1166 A.D), Allama Abu Hamid al Ghazali (1058-111 A.D), Umar Khayyam (1048-1123 A.D) and Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273 A.D). This enquiry proceeds to the significant general works on Tasawwuf Studies.

The concluding session critically analyses the overall findings of the study. It takes into consideration the contemporary realities, problems and prospects of the Muslim Community in Kerala. An exhaustive account has been furnished on the genesis, spread, social and cultural formation and educational land marks of the Muslim Ummah in Kerala which cross examines the role of the Muslim scholars and Muslim organizations in the promotion of dynamism, academism and creativism. The undesirable aptitudes and habits created by the said organizations have also been critically projected.
Appendixes on latest communal vis demographic population as per the census 1991-2001, tables of Cadre based Muslim Organization and institutions in the region are provided. A detailed table of *Moulids* (eulogies) compiled by the Keralite scholars and poets are furnished. Bibliography and glossary are also given at the end.