INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM IN MALABAR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM IN MALABAR

The advent of Islam in Kerala in general and Malabar in particular is a subject of controversy among Scholars. So the scholars of history and the students of Kerala History are baffled in their attempt to understand the advent of Islam, due to the confused nature of written records and lack of specific contemporary evidence. The most widely accepted conventional view was that the conversion of Ceraman Perumal must be placed at the beginning of 9th century A.D. But recent findings would place it in the 12th Century A.D.

The only sources of information known to most historians like Logan, Padmanabha Menon and Krishna Ayyar were the traditional accounts contained in Keralolpati Grandhavaris of Calicut and Cochin and Tuhfat-al-Mujahideen. So in the light of the recent researches it is possible to make a re-assessment of tradition with the help of contemporary inscriptive and literary sources.

The Keralolpati tradition says that Ceraman Perumal, the last Cera ruler of Makotai (Mahodayapuram) partitioned the kingdom and embraced Islam and went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The partitioned kingdom was distributed to his kiths and kins who were present at the time of partition. He
also conceived the idea of choosing two Eradi brothers namely Manichan and Vikkiran to be his successors before undertaking his pilgrimage to Mecca. But they were not present at the time of partition. When they arrived little late, they found to their surprise that the kingdom was partitioned and the king could bestow only his broken sword and counch with an injunction to "die kill and seize" and also a plot of land and advised them to rule like the ruler of Malanad. After making these arrangements he left for Mecca\(^1\)

The same legend is furnished by *Calicut and Cochin Grandhavaris*. They also attest to the conversion story of the Ceraman perumal and his departure for Mecca. The account given by Sheik Zeinuddeen in his historical treatise *Tuh-fat-al Mujahideen* with regard to the spread of Islam in Kerala, more or less follows the same pattern of story and furnishes that a party of Muslim Faquirs with a Sheik intended to go on a pilgrimage to the footprint of Adam in Ceylon arrived at Kodungallur. The King of Kodungallur gave him a warm welcome. He was made to believe the tenets of Islam and also in the miracle of splitting of moon. He was impressed that he wished to go to Mecca. After, having furnished all the arrangements for the administration of the country he embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca. On the way to Arabia they landed at Pantalayini Kollam, Dharmafatam and finally reached Shahar on the Arabian coast.

\(^1\) Gundert, *Keralolpati* (Reprint), Trivandrum, 1961, pp.55-86.
Accompanying Perumal, Malik Ibn Dinar and his family started to Malabar to propagate Islam and to erect mosques. But on the way, the king dangerously fell ill. He handed over a letter to the Faquir and his associates to be given it to the ruler of Kodungallur, in which he had stated that all facilities for propagation of the new religion might be provided to them. Accordingly, they proceeded to Kodungallur and they began to undertake the missionary activities to accomplish the wishes of the perumal. With the permission of the Kodungallur Raja they constructed a Mosque there.

One after another mosques were built at Kulam, Tarfatan, Darmfatan, Fandarina, Shaliyat and Kanyarkut etc. After the completion of their work they set sail to Shahr Mohulla where the perumal's grave was situated. Zeinuddin concludes that there is no certain information with regard to the exact date of the perumal's conversion to Islam. But most probably it might be 200 years after Hijra i.e. about 825 AD.²

Logan is of the opinion that there are many accounts in Malabar concerning the introduction of Islam in Malabar. The Mappilas assert that their first convert had an interview with the prophet who instructed them the tenets of Islam. The prophet is said to have conferred on him the name of

Thajuddin and on that occasion he preached a Sermon. They again add that the perumal's tomb was at Shahr Mohulla.³

Logan has ascertained that the introduction of Islam into Malabar might have taken place 200 years after Hijra as said by Zeinuddin. This date or later date may be correct.⁴ The Arab merchant who visited Malabar and writes in (A.D. 851-52) "He did not know that there is anyone of either nation (Chinese or Indian) that has embraced Mohammedanism or speaks Arabic."

Logan is doubtful whether it was at Shahr that the Perumal came for the first time into contact with Malik Ibn Dinar, Habib Ibn Malik, Malik Ibn Habib, who were to be the pioneers of Islam in Malabar. He also adds that all the nine places chosen for the building of mosques were either the headquarters of the petty potentates of the country or the places giving facilities for the trade.

He again proceeds to say that Kodungallur, Kottam, Palayangadi perhaps Pantalayini Kollam enjoyed the advantages of being trade centres. The Arabs had settled in these places long previously and engaged in trade activities. An inscription on the tomb at Pantalayini Kollam recites after prayers. "Ali Ibn Udthorman was obliged to leave this world for ever to the

⁴ Ibid., p.192.
one which is everlasting and which receives the spirits of all, in the year 166 of Hijra, so called after Mohammed the prophet left Mecca for Medina."

Logan remarks that within a short span of time, Malik Dinar and his family would not have founded mosques in these places unless the ground had been prepared before them. And the fact is that the Arabs had carried on trade activities in the country and some of them had contracted alliances with women of the country. The Mappilas are considered to be the offsprings of this mixed race thus originated.\(^5\)

Finally he concludes that an information was received from an Arab resident that the tomb of the perumal was existing at Zaphar. It is also verified with the following sentences seen on it. "Arrived at the place A.H. 212 and died there A.H. 216. These dates correspond with the years 827-832 A.D. He adds that perumal left in 825 A.D which was the day of the commencement of the Kollam era."

But Padmanabha Menon refutes the view that the alleged convert had met the prophet in 9\(^{th}\) century A.D. which was three centuries after the death of prophet Mohammed. Besides, that none of the early geographers like Sulaiman (850 AD), Al-Beruni (970-1039 AD), Ad-Idirisi (1153-54) even Macropoli (1271-94). Ibn-Batuta (1324-54), Abdur-Razack (1441), Nicolo Conti (1444) did refer to the conversion story of the Perumal.

Logan tries to prove that the Perumal's tomb was existing at Zaphar. Padmanabha Menon ascertains that in the absence of written records of respectable antiquity to corroborate the tradition of the conversion, one is disposed not to attach any evidentiary value to the tomb at Person gulf. He also criticises Zeinuddin by saying that the author does not vouchsafe to us the authority on which he makes the statement, but contents himself with the observation that it is well known to all but he never refers to the inscription on the tomb. If the inscription had been there he would have noted it. Moreover he does not confide to us the good ground for supposition.

To substantiate his viewpoint he further adds that the inscription almost shows that only a Zamorin lay buried there. He could not have been one of the Kings of Kodungallur called Ceraman Perumals. The native officials designation of the king of Calicut is Samuri or Samutiri or Tamutiri. The word appears in its original form in the name of the convert king on his tomb at Zaphar. It is usual to retain the original designation with the new names they adopt from the New Faith. Accordingly, the Hindu king of Calicut who became Mohammedan and undertook pilgrimage might have added Mohammedan name to the original name.6

Logan notices the name 'Samiri' while the Mappilas assert that the king buried at Zaphr was the 'Zamorin'. Padmanabha Menon asserts that it looks

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awkward to change the word "Samuri" to give it a particular emphasis on the authority of the Quran in order that the inscription stands as a proof to the Perumal's conversion. In conclusion, Padmanabha Menon says that whoever might be converted to Mohammadanism whether the Ceraman or the Zamorin, it is only legends and traditions uncorroborated by the contemporary records.

The Hindus as such reject the conversion story of Perumal. They hold that Ceraman Perumal lived and died as a Siva devotee. Padmanabha Menon has made use of some Tamil works to support the above statement. With all these available sources Padmanabha Menon infers that there is not much available material to support the Perumal's conversion to Mohammadanism while the probabilities are in favour of his having lived and died a devout Hindu. The Mohammedan legend is evidently the result of the mixing up of the early Buddhist conversion of Bana, one of the Ceraman Perumals, and of the much later Mohammedan conversion of one of the Zamorin Rajas of Calicut who claim to have derived their authority from the last Ceraman Perumal.

Logan is of the opinion that the indigenous manuscripts, however, differ from those belonging to Arab families settled in the district on one or two points while in regard to all other the accounts are identical. The points of differences relate to time when the first convert was made as to some of the
things that happened to him. The indigenous Mohammedans (Mappilas) are anxious naturally to claim for their first convert the honour of having had an interview with the prophet himself and of having been instructed by the prophet himself in the principles of the 'fourth vedam' as the religion of Islam is commonly called in Malabar.

The Mappila accounts likewise give the text of speech said to have been delivered by the prophet to the followers on the occasion and further assert that the prophet changed the name of the convert to Thaj-u-ddin (crown of faith).  

The Malayali Arabs do not credit these facts because in the first place the convert's name would have come down to the posterity being an influential person or had appeared in the list of Ashabis (person who saw the prophet).

The Malayali Arabs assert chiefly on Sheik Zeinuddin's authority that Islam was not introduced into Malabar until 200 years after Hijra. And this or later date seemed to be correct for the Arab merchant Sulaiman in A.H. 237 (852-52 AD) who has written with knowledge as he evidently visited the countries that he wrote about.

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7 Logan, _op.cit._, p.19.
So all Malayali accounts, however, are substantially in accord as to the following facts. The last king of Malabar converted into Islam and made pilgrimage to Mecca and it is clear that he landed at Shahr and it was from here he came into contact with the pioneers of Islam, who originally set out from Kodungallur.

So, there is good reason for thinking that this account of introduction of Mohamedanism into Malabar is reliable. It is beyond doubt that by 9th century A.D. about which time these events are said to have happened. The Arabs must have penetrated beyond India as far as China for purposes of trade and the places like Kodungallur had the double advantage of being both well suited for trade and close proximity to the Chieftains strongholds.

Modern scholars like Prof. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai and Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan have brought new findings into light. They have placed the conversion of Ceraman Perumal into Islam in 12th century A.D. in the light of the inscriptive evidences. Prof. Elamkulam arrives at the following conclusion. A King of Malabar out of respect for Islam may have gone to visit Mecca and Medina. If he were the Zamorin as suggested by Padmanabha Menon then it will have to be accepted on the basis of Ibn Batuta's records, that a Kolathiri also accepted Islam. So it seems better to connect with the story of a ruler who was a common ancestor of both the Zamorin and Kolathiri.
The conversion took place probably in the 12th century A.D. Till the 11th century, Kerala was not partitioned and Perumals were ruling at Mahodayapuram till 1102. It may be noted that the Madayi Mosque was completed in 1124. If the Perumal died in Arabia and if he wanted his associates to go to Malabar to spread Islam then he must have accepted Islam while in Arabia and kept the fact a secret. It was this time that Nambudiris became prominent in Kerala and caste system was well established. The Muslim travellers did not mention probably because it had not become sufficiently public to receive attention in their works.8

The different interpretations of Logan, Padmanabha Menon and others were mostly based on guess work because these scholars did not have the privilege of studying the records of the later Cera kingdom which existed from 9th to 12th century A.D. The foreign travellers who visited in 16th century AD., were the earliest to notice the Cerman legend and record it in their literature. The first writer to put in his record was Duarte Barbosa (1510 A.D). He has reproduced from hear say the story of the Perumal’s conversion, following him many writers have referred to it.

The 17th and 18th century chronicles called Keralolpati and Grandhavaris of Calicut and Cochin, probably compiled in the 18th century start with Cerman tradition. It is well known that legends have no time

sense. They tend to grow and absorb new materials. They get distorted during the time of transmission from persons to person or place to place.

On the whole it can be summed up with the remarks of Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan. According to him there is no specific contemporary evidence regarding the advent of Islam in Kerala. However, the tomb inscription standing at Pantalayini Kollam indicates the death of one Abbu Bin Udthorman in Hijra 166. These were certainly old tomb stones and the mosque itself contain a fragmentary inscription of Bhaskara Ravi. However the date of the tomb deserves to be re-examined.

Masudi of Bagdad (890-966 AD) speaks of contacts between Malabar and Arabia and this is confirmed by Ibn Kurdad Bah (867-885 A.D) and Abu Zaid of Ziraf (916 A.D), these early contacts would increase the possibility of the Ceraman legend if it was being genuine. The plaque at Madayi mosque shows the year 1124 A.D. as the date of its foundation.

This evidence agrees with the date of the last Ceraman Perumal who is known from epigraphic records, to have ascended the throne in 1102 A.D., the king's name is mentioned as Rama Tiruvati and Kulasekhara Chakravartikal.

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9 M.G.S. Narayanan, 'Political and Social conditions of Kerala, under Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram', (C 800 AD - 1124 AD) (unpublished Ph.D thesis), Kerala University, 1972, pp.582.83.

10 Quoted in *ibid.*
This year was the closing year of Ramakulasekhara's reign as noted by Prof. Elamkulam.

This is refuted by Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan and he holds that an inscription from Tiruvalanjudi temple near Tanjore dated in the 4th year of Vikrama Cola (1122 A.D.) mentions the offer of a Tumbamalai to the deity in the name of Ceramanar Rama. This Rama is identified with the Ramavarma Kulasekhara. Hence it is ascertained that his reign prolonged upto 1122 A.D.\textsuperscript{11}

It was with Ramavarma Kulasekhara's strenuous efforts that the Ceras won the Cera-cola war and paved the way for the disintegration of Kulothunga's empire. Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan again proves the disappearance of Ceraman in 1122 A.D with the help of another Tiruvalanjudi record. Ramavarma Kulasekhara was the name of the last Ceraman Perumal as according to the literary evidence. All these evidences confirm us that Rama Kulasekhara must be the Ceraman Perumal. Finally, he concludes that Ceraman Perumal's conversion has found a place not only in the Muslim chronicles, but also in Brahminical chronicles, so it cannot be rejected as such.

The inscription of Madayi mosque is verified and understood that it was built in Hijra 518 corresponding to 1124 (ie. two years after the

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., pp.121-122.
disappearance of the last Ceraman, Rama Varma Kulasekhara. This evidence also supports the tradition that the first ten mosques of the west coast, including Madayi were founded by the friends of the converted Perumal, the last of the Cera line. According to this legend Saraf Ibn Malik, Malik Ibn Dinar, Malik Ibn Habib, Ibn Malik and their wives were responsible for the establishment of the first mosques at Kodungallur, Kollam, Maravi, Fakanur, Manjarur, Kanjurakukkutu, Jarftan, Dahfattan, Fandarina and Chaliyath.

Of these places Fakanur (Berakur) Manjarur (Mangalore) and perhaps Maravi is the Madayi which is evident from the Musakavamsa Kavya. Dahfattan may be Dharmapattam. Fandarina is the same as Pantalayini Kollam. Chaliyath is the same as Chaliyam. All these places developed into big centres of Muslims in the later period. This may be taken to signify the truth of the tradition.

Calicut or Kozhikode, the greatest centre of Muslims in Malabar in the medieval period is left out of the list. This indicates that the tradition itself was formed before the rise of the principality of Calicut, an event that happened after the disintegration of the Kingdom of Makotai. Thus the tradition of the propagation of Islam in Kerala towards the close of the Cera

period with the blessings of Ceraman Perumal is acceptable, as has been opined by M.G.S. Narayanan.

The tradition as recorded by Zeinuddin is basically correct. The mistake was in assuming the early date for the conversion of the last Perumal. Now the time of the last Ceraman Perumal has been established by these scholars beyond reasonable doubt, we find that the circumstantial evidence also goes to confirm the truth of the tradition.

In the wake of these researches and interpretations of the modern scholars the tradition has been legitimised and Ceraman Perumal had been identified as Ramavarma Kulasekhara of Makotai whose reign came to a close by 12th century AD as attested by the inscriptions and hence the religion Islam might have found its way into Kerala by 12th century A.D.

It is characteristic of the spread of Islam in Kerala that it could be called the work of immigrant Arab traders who were constantly being re-introduced by new arrivals. The first Muslim to reach the Malabar coast could very well have been the Sailors and traders who before the spread of Islam and after, might have frequented the ports of Malabar. Their settlements gradually brought about their establishments of their faith among the inhabitants in this
land. There was a willing acceptance of new faith by large numbers on whom the existing social order pressed heavily.\textsuperscript{13}

The lower castes who suffered under the existing social set up welcomed Islam as a chance to obtain some degree of social freedom. According to Logan conversion to Mohammedanism has had a marked effect in freeing the slave caste in Malabar from their former burdens. By conversion, a Cheruman (untouchable) obtained a distinct rise in the social scale and if he was bullied or beaten the influence of the entire group of Mohammedan community came to his aid. Partially, due to attraction of influential and wealthy Arabs, lower castes other than fishermen were converted to Islam.

The encouragement and support extended by the rulers were also instrumental in promoting conversions to Islam. The Zamorin of Calicut deliberately encouraged the lower castes to become Muslims in order to have sufficient sailors to man his warships. He ordered that in every family of fishermen in this domain, one or more of male members, should be brought as Muslims. This is corroborated by the fact that many of the fisherman along the Calicut coast are Muslims to-day.

The Arabs respected the women who came to the fold of Islam. By nature, they were polygamous and the marriages contracted with lower caste women depended on their financial status. They had concubines and children born to such women were converted and mother as well to Islam. So the growth of the population at first was confined to sea shores which were once trading centres.

Nevertheless, a study of the available records about Arakkal ruling dynasty will show that one of the most important rulers of Kerala in the early days had embraced Islam. The Arakkal records show that the Muslim principality established in the Muslim era. The seat of the family was Dharmatam in Malabar, where Sridevi, the sister of Perumal who according to legend embraced Islam, resided was a port, the place in Dharmatam called Arasarkulanazara, came gradually to be known as Arakkal. Sridevi's son Mahabali, embraced Islam under the name Muhammed Ali, he was Ali Raja, the founder of Arakkal dynasty.

RE Miller listed the following as specific factors involved in the growth of the Muslim community upto the time of European encroachment,

16 Ibid.
immigration, intermarriage and missionary activity, the support of the Zamorin and personal advantages.\textsuperscript{17}

For one thing the extensive missionary activity that was known elsewhere in the history of Indian Islam is not evident in South India. However, the sufi overtones with Malik Ibn Dinar, the first missionary and his assistants cannot be denied. The high esteem given by the Mappila community to sufi saints points to the influence of sufism on the life and teachings of Kerala Muslims. Zeinuddin, the author of \textit{Tuhfat-al-Mujahideen}, speaks of Muslim Sheiks being the first to propagate Islam.

Along with the traders, the Arab Muslims set off their journey from Yemen, a place in Southern Arabia, for their missionary programmer to eastern part of Asia and reached Indonesia and other countries in about 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} centuries A.D. In course of their journey, the Islamic missionary came to North Kerala in 18\textsuperscript{th} Century AD.

The most prominent of them Ibn Ali settled at Ponnani and Sayyed Mohammed Moula in Cannanore. The advent of Makhdum family and their activities centring around the Big Juma Mosque in Ponnani facilitated the rise of these towns so much so that it came to be called the little Mecca\textsuperscript{18} of Malabar. The oldest mosque of Ponnani is said to have been built in the 12\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{17} R.E. Miller, \textit{Mappila Muslim of Kerala}, Madras, 1976, (p.52-53).
century two centuries before the advent of Makhdums at the behest of Shaikh Fariduddin, 'Abdul Qader Khurasan, a well known disciple of Shaikh Muhadin Abdul Quadir Jilani, Abdul Aziz Makhdum, (1585) composed the famous devotional song called 'Muhayuddin Mala' in praise of Shaikh Abdul Quadir.

Kondotty Tangal, a descendant of a Persian family, preached Islam in the surrounding places of Kondotty at the end of 18th century and had a number of followers. Mamburam Tangals dedicated themselves for the propagation of the faith in Malabar. The Tangals of Malappuram and Tangals of Panakkad had done yeomen services to the propagation of Islam. The residents of the Laccadive Islands, 200 miles off the coast of Kerala attribute their conversion to the work of an Arabian missionary named Sayed Mohammed Moula also known as Mumba Mulyaka (C.12th). It is clear that Islam was introduced into Kerala through the efforts made by the missionaries in a peaceful way aided by native rulers, while the Muslims conquered North India as hostile invaders and fanatical iconoclasts and they came to the west coast as friendly traders and the ambassadors of Arabian culture.

Sayyid Jiffrey (1746 AD) aged twenty arrived in Calicut. Zamorins and other native Muslims welcomed them and he became proficient enough to propagate the injunctions of Islam through the religious talks conducted at

19 Quoted in S.M. Mohammed Koya, op.cit., p.9.
different Muslim pockets. In the meanwhile, he was recognised as the respected religious leader of the community. Sayyid Jiffrey's nephew arrived in Kozhikkode and then moved towards Mambaram near Tirurangadi and made it a centre of their activities.

The English Tellicherry factory records furnish evidence that there were skirmishes between Hindus and Muslims as a consequence of their activities. It also augments that the Zamorin sought the help of the British in suppressing the Mappila strength at Tirurangadi. Mamburam Sayyid Alavi Tangal, Sayyed Pookoya Tangal and Fazal Pookoya Tangal deserve a special mention in respect of the spread of Islam and spreading antiimperialistic trends among the Muslims and they were dreadful enemies of the British.20

The history of the Mappilas really begins form the times when the Arab traders began to visit the Malabar coast for trade. Muslims of this region are called Mappilas whose mother tongue is Malayalam, and claim to be descendants of Arab settlers. Their physical appearances indicate their Arab origin.21

It has been said that the Arabs had been carrying on trade with India since pre-Islamic times. Until the first century A.D. when both Red sea and Roman ships began to use the monsoon passage direct from Adent to India

20 Quoted in M. Gangadaran, op. cit., p.59.
the shipping routes had cautiously paralleled the Arabian, Persian and Indian coasts. It is said that the pre-Islamic Arabs exercised great influence on the Malabar coast. The rise of Islam revitalised their intercourse which had previously been more commercial than cultural in character.

Col. Wilkes observes "the peculiar manners of Malabar had produced an extensive intercourse between the females of the coast and their Arabian visitors and in process of time found a separate class in the community which retained the religion of their Arabian progenitors, blended with many of the local customs of Malabar." 22

Sea trade was left to foreigners as the Brahminical Hindus were temperamentally allergic to the sea and left such professions either to the lower castes or to the foreigners, partly as a result of the taboo and partly as a result of the fall of the Roman empire, Indian and western maritime activity had reduced after the fourth century and Arabs from South Arabia and Persia filled the vacuum engaging in a steady growing inter coastal trade.

The coastal settlements of Pantalayini Kollam, Parappanangadi, Tanur etc. were very near to the sea. Permanent settlement of traders on the seashore was made feasible by the availability of fresh water even in plots very near to the sea. This is a peculiarity of Kerala and because of this the traders did not need to come into the interior region for permanent residence.

They could stay in the market centres and near the ports themselves. Each community, whether Islamic or Jewish, had its own quarters in the trade emporia. It centered on a market place of religious institution and in each they followed their own customs, traditions and habits.

The trading centres of Malabar had separate quarters for separate trading groups. Ibn Batuta speaks of the three quarters at Pantalayini Kollam which was exclusively for Islamic traders.\(^{23}\) By the 16\(^{th}\) century there was a chain of Islamic settlements in the coastal trading centres of Kerala and important among them were Kollam, Kodungallur, Ponnani, Tanur, Parappanangadi, Kannur and Ezhimala etc. Most of these merchants were from Southern Arabia and Persian Gulf. This accounts for the Arab Islamic culture in Kerala in contrast with the Turko Persian Islamic culture in other parts of Kerala.

Consequently, with the rise of Islamic civilization in West Asia, there occurred a revival of the demand for Kerala goods. The history of the Arab settlements is inseparably connected with commerce. The nature of the voyages the Arab merchants undertook in early times could not but have encouraged the Arab mariners to have marital relations with Indian women.

The boats of the Arabs used to come to Malabar and other coastal areas of

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India, sometime in July or August and after, about four months of business returned in December or January. It was to a great extent due to the facilities offered by the monsoon winds that trade developed over a region of greater magnitude.\textsuperscript{24}

As they were in India for about four months in one year it could be reasonably supposed that they must have contracted some sort of marital unions, temporary or permanent with Indian women, for there is no evidence to show that they brought along with them their own women. Due to nature of the social organisation of both early Arabs and the Malabar, it was extremely easy for the Arabs to have such unions with local women.

The society in the early Arabia was organized on the basis of mother right. By tribal rule a woman was not allowed to leave her kin, but could entertain a stranger as her husband at her own place. The man either settled down permanently with his wife in the tribe or visited his wife occasionally.

The marriage into which the Arabs entered with local women on the Malabar Coast have some elements of 'Muta' marriage.\textsuperscript{25} It is a marriage of a temporary nature in which the contracting parties agree to live together in the house of the woman (wife) for a stipulated period of time and for which the man had to pay an amount mutually agreed upon that is Mahr (Bride's price).


\textsuperscript{25} Quoted in S.M. Mohamed Koya, \textit{op.cit.}, p.17.
The social condition of Malabar at that time facilitated the Arabs coming to this region to have marital union like 'Muta' marriage. In Malabar many of the communities such as Nayars, the Tiyas, and Mukkuvas with whom the early Arabs had connections have maintained the mother right character of their social organisation down to the present.

Mappilas or Moplahs are defined in the census Report 1871 as the hybrid Mohammedan race of the Western coast whose numbers are constantly being added by the conversion of the slave castes of Malabar.

As far the demographic picture of Muslims given by Logan in *Malabar* Vol.II, he says that in the case of Mussalmans the rate of increase is not much greater than that of Hindus but it seemed probable that a good deal of difference is due to conversion from Hinduism to Islam. Not less than 34.21% of the Mussalmans in the presidency are found in Malabar and they increased in that district by 18.04% while the increase of Hindus is only 9.89% of Christians 10.27%. It is well known that a coast but as it is not safe to assume that the people of each religion had the same rate of natural growth and it cannot be stated that how much of the increase in Mussalman is due to conversion. It is said that in former times, Mappilas were allowed to contract
alliance with Mukkuva women and that made children born as a result thereof, on Friday we handed over to the Mappila community.26

It is recorded in the Madras Census Report 1891, that conversion to Islam was common among this caste. The converts were called Puislam or Putiya Islam (new Islam). Their occupation was fishing. The fisher men at Tanur are for the most part puislamites will not go out for fishing on Fridays. Edgar Thurston says that they had been prospering of late years and would appear to be going in arrayed in showy shirts, watch chains, shoes of the kind known as "Arabi Cheruppu' etc.

The circumstances of the Mappilas of Malabar are not however of such a special character as to render it probable, they multiply much faster than their neighbours. So the rate of increase in Malabar for 10 years was taken as 15%. It is probably an outside estimate of natural growth.27 It may be asserted with confidence that not less than 20,000 of Mussalmans of Malabar people's growth were converts of Islam during the decade or children of such converts. If the Hindus and Mussalmans continued to increase at the same rates as between 1881 and 1891, their numbers would be equal to 12.16% from 1891. Many of the Mappilas retained their Hindu Law of inheritance but they were not withstanding rigid observances of ceremonials. In 1881, the

27 Logan, op.cit., p.196, New Delhi, Madras, 1993, pp.110-111.
census superintendent wrote that among some of them there may be a strain of Arab blood from some early generation, but the mothers throughout had been Dravidians and the class had been maintained in number by a whole sale adult conversion.28

According 1891 Census, on the total population of 40,249, Muslims numbering 38,173 forming 94.84 percent. The groups of islands at present known as the Lakshadweep are dominated by Muslims who constitute a large majority. 29 At present the Muslim population would come about to 1/5th of the population of Malabar.

The religious division of the Mohammedans are simple, They are classified as 'Sunni' 'Shias' and Wahabis. The 'Sunni' regard themselves as the only orthodox followers of the prophet. They insist on the supremacy of prophet Mohammed all over created beings and acknowledge the succession of Abu Beker, Omar, Usman and Ali as the first four caliphs or successors of Mohammed. The Shias dispute the succession of the first three caliphs and acknowledge, Ali alone as the rightful successor.

Shias reject the tradition favoured by the 'Sunnis' and insist on the authority alone. 'Wahabis' are chiefly puritans of the Sunni sectarians. It will

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be observed that Sunnis are by far the most numerous of the Mohamadan sects, they abound in all the divisions of the Mohammedan community but principally, among the Mappilas of Western coast 95.8% are Sunnis.30

'The honour of Islam' was conferred on a Cheruman or one of the other lower castes and these low-caste people converted to Islam were placed socially high through conversion. In the district as per Census report of 1871, nearly 50,000 Cherumars and other Hindus had availed themselves of these privileges. Now, a paraya or low caste's condition was much better. He was no longer the degraded paraya whose approach disgusted and whose touch polluted the caste Hindu. But, now belonging to a different scale of being, contact with him did not require the same ablutions to purify.31 By 1921, the Mappila population had increased from 25% to 33% of the total population of the district.32

The majority of the Muslims of Cananore district, are merchants, day labourers, and fishermen. The unique distinction of having had the only indigenous Muslim Royal House of Kerala goes to the district. The Arakkal Royal family of Cannanore which follows the Marumakkattayam system of succession, has played an important role in the political history of the district and in the socio-political history of Malabar Muslims.

31 Ibid., p.197.
The Arabs or Moors as they were called by the Portuguese played a vital role in bringing about the commercial prosperity and political power of Calicut under the Zamorins. The Zamorins gave them special privileges to settle down there and to carry on trade. In return, they assisted the Zamorin to become the overlord of Malabar and protector of Mamamgam. *Keralolpati* refers to the rapid rise of Calicut and it attests the presence of Mohammedans in the city. They were also given complete freedom to propagate the faith in the land. For these reasons they patronised the port of Calicut in preference to all other ports on the west coast. The Arabs did not interfere in the internal administration of the Zamorin's dominion but they were interested in building up his political power as a measure of self interest.  

There was a considerable amount of economic prosperity in Calicut under the Zamorins. It is also a recognized fact that the Zamorins sought the help of Moors for their territorial conquests and subdued the greater parts of Malabar but scholars like M.G.S. Narayanan has ascribed the event to the 13th century A.D.

Attesing the tradition contained in *Keralolpati*, Logan expressed his view that Arab and Mohammedan elements became predominant among the population of Malabar and with their help and co-operation, the Zamorins encroached the neighbouring territories. There is also a version in the same

book that, the war against Valluvanad was suggested by the Calicut Koya. It is supplemented that once Calicut Koya visited Tirunavaya, where Mamangam festival was conducted, he became astonished to see the pomp and gaiety of the festival, and the proud privilege of the ruler of Valluvanad under whose auspices it was conducted.

The Koya personally went to Zamorin and instigated him to take up arms against the ruler of Valluvanad so as to get the overlordship of Valluvanad and enhance his political authority and even assured him of all the assistance and co-operation in the event of war. In the battle that followed between the two forces, the Valluvanad ruler fell fighting and Zamorin occupied Tirunavaya and accorded the title of "Shahabander Koya" to him. He also got the dignities of a Nair Chief. One among the privileges granted was the right to stand on the right side of Zamorin, which added his prestige in the service of Zamorin.

The privileges and advantages enjoyed by the Mohammedans at the hands of the Zamorin could also be understood from the foreign accounts. Ibn Batuta describes that Calicut is one of the important regions of Malabar where merchants from all parts were found. The Mohammedan merchants of this place were so wealthy that one of them could purchase the whole freightage of such vessels which were put here.34 'Rise of Calicut', says K.V.

34 Quoted in K.P. Padmanabha Menon, p.229
Krishna Iyer, is at once a cause and a consequence of the Zamorins ascendancy in Kerala. Its trade filled his coffers and enabled him to extend his authority. Originally a barren strip covered all over the thorny jungle was converted into a mighty sea port, where the Chinese and Arabs met to exchange their products.35

Mahuan also testifies to the existence of Mohammedans who being the subjects of King were treated generously by the king and there existed twenty to thirty mosques where the Mohammedans gathered for prayers and all the business transactions were stopped during those hours and after the prayers the business was resumed. Abdur Razack also throws light on the Friday Sermon and Khazi's role as a representative of the people who were assembled in the mosque.

The Chinese Mohammedan Ma-Huan also gives a description of Calicut. "Many of the king's subjects are Mohammedans and there are twenty or thirty mosques in the Kingdom to which the people resort every seventh day of worship. In this day during the morning the people being at mosques no business what ever is transacted and part of the day, the services being over business is resumed."36


Abdul Razack observes that the town was inhabited by a considerable number of Mussalmans and had built two mosques in which they met every Friday to offer prayers. They had one Khazi priest and most of them went to their shops after prayers. The wealthy merchants could carry on the trade without much difficulty as they had a sense of justice and security.

Under the patronage of the Zamorin the Mohammedans also built many mosques in Calicut. 'Muccunti' mosque is one among them. It also helps to understand that it is an aristocratic Musim house called 'Muccinrakam or the House of Muccin' close to the mosque which is related to the mosque. A Jarum or burial monument is also found there. It seems that a certain Arab merchant prince called Mucciyan came and settled down here and built a mosque which was endowed with landed property by the Zamorin also. Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan is of the opinion that the inscription may be attributed to the 13th century A.D. The mosque might also belong to this period. Besides this, there were many other mosques. Sheikkindepalli is also a very old mosque located at Kuttichira, a Mappila stronghold which is said to have been built over the grave of a Mappila by name Suppikkavatil Sheik Mamukoya. He is said to have died some three hundred years ago.37

Later the privileges and concessions enjoyed by the Arabs at Calicut especially in trade was threatened by the Portuguese with their arrival at

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Kappad in Calicut in 1498. The monopolistic rights of the Arabs on trade in Calicut had been challenged by the Portuguese. The Zamorin wished the continuance of the Arab trade. So they jointly fought many fierce battles against them and got rid off them from Calicut. The Portuguese, diplomatically allied themselves with the rajas of Cochin and involved in the internal affairs of Cochin and got an upper hand in economy and politics of Cochin.

The original home of Marakkar was Ponnani. When Almeda attacked Ponnani they scattered to Tanur and other regions. Kunjalis were the heridatary admirals of the Zamorin, they fought against the Portuguese for long period in the history of Calicut. But ultimately, the Zamorin suspected the over ambitious nature of the Kunjalis which made a shift in the attitude of the Zamorins and helped the Portuguese capture the Kunjali IV, the last of the Kunjalis and handed over to them to be hanged. He met with a tragic death. There can be no doubt that the lives of these Chiefs reflect glory and honour in all Malabar for their achievements against the naval tyranny of the Portuguese, which form indeed a great chapter in the history of Malabar.

One distinguishing feature of Mappila community is the social organisation. They follow a peculiar social system different from the one followed by the Muslims generally. The majority of Malayali Hindus lived

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according to matrilineal kinship and joint family system. Though the Islamic law of inheritance is against the matrilineal principles, its followers in Malabar adhered to the system which is a distinctive feature of the society.\(^{40}\) This system exclusively found among the Mappilas as among the other sections of Malabar population is a strange phenomenon, as followers of Islam are enjoined by religious scripture to adhere to patrilineal rules of descent, inheritance and succession.

The matrilineal system or Marumakkatayam occurred among a section of Muslims of Malabar and in Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands, particularly, and it is confined to a few wealthy families. Regarding the origin of the system in Malabar among Muslims, there are many theories. Kolathnad which corresponds roughly to the present North Malabar, has its own social systems and the subjects who were strictly under its edicts were subjected to the system prevailing there. The Muslims living in Kolathnad were obliged to conform to the general practice prevailing there in the law.\(^{41}\)

A second theory is that the matrilineal kinship system was adopted by North Malabar Mappilas from the Nayar community, probably, as a result of intermarriage and conversion. It is supposed that the development of the system may have been associated with the Nayar practice of Polyandry,

\(^{40}\) S.M. Mohamed Koya, *op.cit.*, p.225.

\(^{41}\) S.M. Mohamed Koya, *op.cit.*, p.62.
helping to ensure that family descent would follow the blood line. As Henry Maine pointed out in his *Early Law and Customs* that the development was due to certain peculiar circumstances as an innovation it was introduced into Kerala at a later stage replacing the earlier matrilineal system as evidenced by the account of foreign travellers.

In many areas of social life Muslims have adopted elements of Kerala culture ranging from dress habits to marriage practices, including such customs as tying of 'Tali', paying dowry to the bridegroom and purifying ablutions after birth. Conversion from Nayar community, or for that matter, any other section of Kerala society did not make the converts give up these customs. An overwhelming majority of the Indian Muslims are descendents of early converts from Hinduism. Most of them have retained many cultural practices of the earlier faith. It was not only among the Mappilas but also among Lebbais of Tamilnadu, Kutchi Memons of Gujarat, and some of the Punjabi Muslims, the mother-right was followed.

Among the Mappilas, are a number of converts from the Nayars, Tiyas, Mukkuvas, who have mostly mother-right characteristics. The Mappilas were the followers of Marumakkattayam rules and customs long before they embraced the faith of Islam. According to Logan, however, the

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42 R.E. Miller, *op.cit.*, p.25.
Mohammedans who settled in North Malabar changed the rule of inheritance previously prevalent among them and adopted Marumakkattayam rules.44

The Muslim Marumakkattayam 'taravad' had certain characteristics features similar to Hindu 'taravad' in its constitution. They have retained the 'taravad' and matrilineal system of inheritance. It consists of many individuals immediately or distantly related to one another but all are tracing their ancestry in the female line to a common female ancestor. 'Taravad' members, both male and female, have a right to maintenance, as long as the family property is not partitioned but have equal shares in the family property when it is partitioned. Membership in the 'taravad' is acquired by birth. The male member manages the affairs of the 'taravad'.

A peculiar development among the mother right Muslims is matrilocal residence. Putiyapila (Putiya Mappila - New bridgegroom) customarily resides in his wife's natal house on marriage. He spends a relatively large part of his income in the wife's house and contributes to the maintenance of his wife and children. A Putiyapila may sometime divide his time in the wife's natal house and his, if two are in the neighborhood. But if the houses are at a distance he visits her at nights and unlike the mother right. Hindu husbands, he may stay at her house for one or more days at a time. He even leaves his personal belongings in his wife's house, if possible private room is reserved

44 Logan, op.cit., p.72.
for him. The present situation in rural Malabar is that in the majority veedus (houses where husband resides) the practice of visiting the husband is still present. The wives also go periodically to their husband's veedus. As a result there is a social cooperation between the veedus of the husband and wife.

In the Arakkal Royal House the usual practice followed is that the eldest member in maternal line, whether male or female succeeds gaddi, and many a lady has adorned the royal throne with the title 'Beevi.' The Arakkal 'Swarupam' as the Muslim Royal House is called, is cited as the best example of matrilineage. Contrary to the fact that Islamic law does not recognize succession through females in this family, succession has always been through females and Beebees. The Senior most ladies have been the rulers of the Muslim Royal Chief tancy in several times. The matrilineal heritage of the Muslim Royal House is attributed to the fact that some Hindu customs have been preserved through centuries in the family as reminiscences of the past. Hence, the line of succession was traced through the maternal lines which is quite opposed to the principles of primogeniture enjoined in the Shariat.

46 Ibid.
As against this matrilineal social structure, the social set up of the coastal towns of South Malabar presents a different picture to a large extent. Here the family property is divided according to the Sharaiat as against the Marumakkattayam law. But here too though the property is partitioned according to Islamic Law, the house becomes the common property of all members, the daughters having a permanent interest. The properties in the female line are heirs to it while the interest of the son ceases with their death.48

Marriage is matrilocal, but the husband does not permanently lodge in to 'taravad' of his house as in the case of North Malabar. He takes his food on his own and goes to sleep in the wife's 'taravad' every night. This is common to Nayar customs. Although, children are brought up in their mother's 'taravad', the husband has to contribute towards the expenses and maintenance of his wife and children. Still in all matters, the Karanavan of the 'taravad' has greater authority than the father.

Kathleen Gough in her study on 'Mappila-North Kerala' in the book Matrilineal Kinship connects the Matrilocal residence of the Mappilas with their occupation. The Mappila men used to be away from their homes and lodged in different places for carrying on their trade transactions and slept in rest houses, so it was natural that women as among Central Kerala Nayar

48 S.M. Mohamed Koya, op.cit., p.70.
tarvads should live in their natal houses protected by the head of their own matrilineal group.

The mother right house-hold is generally maintained out of the income from the matrilineal estate by the Karanavan. He is responsible for the management and distribution of income to the family. Putiyapila also sometimes supplements the income but the aristocratic family seldom receives contributions from him. A wife is likely to move out of the 'taravad' only when her husband provides a separate house for her and own children.49

Among the other Mappilas the husband addresses Ni' (thou) but the Arakkal ladies have to be addressed in the plural 'Ningal' by their consorts. It is said that their husbands have to adopt rather subservient attitude towards them. As a married male virtually forfeits his share of his income from his own, the wife's 'taravad' has to make ample provision for his economic well-being. This is done by a series of dowries.50 Dowry as a payment made to the groom by the father or kinsmen of the bride, has never been a part of Muslim marriage. The only property transaction sanctioned by Islam on such an occasion is the payment of a contracted amount called 'Mahr' by the groom to the bride. It is not just a marriage gift from her husband but a consideration that clinches the marital contract.

The 'Mahr' is solely the property of the bride. The Mappilas other than Arabs lay much importance upon the payment of the dowries of which one type is called "Kizhippanam" (literally means the purse money) because it is handed over in a purse. In the interior of South Malabar the amount of 'Kizhippanam' varied from Rs.35.00 to Rs.10,000.00.

There are two types of 'Stridhana' and 'pirivu'. The former literally means womens property. It consists of some property of the brides 'taravad' made over to the bride in addition to the maintenance of the property rests with the husband while he is expected to share the income with his wife and children. The latter is a loan which is given to the bride groom in order to enable him to start a business or any other economic enterprise for the benefit of his wife and children.

While 'stridhana' type of dowry is common among all mother right Mappilas, the so called "Kadamvaippa" is paid only when the husband stay permanently, in the 'taravad' of their wives. The 'stridhana' gift made over to the husband was supposed to revert to wife's family on the death of the wife without issue or on divorce. A second claim cannot be made for maintenance from the taravad. There is also a peculiar tenure as 'strivastu' in which female descendants of grantees are entitled to the property.

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The matrilineal system of inheritance and its concomitant joint family system stifled the legitimate aspiration of large section of the people and denied to them opportunities for full self expression in society.\textsuperscript{52} The mother right system among the Mappilas as among the Nayars and Tiyas began to disintegrate by the turn of the century. During the century as free trade and cash crop economy developed they began to acquire personal property by their own efforts, which they handed over to their wives and children.

The idea gained momentum among Muslims, as among, Nayars and Tiyas that self-acquired property of a man should go to his wife and children rather than to his mother right family. Legislative sanction to this idea was given by the Mappila succession Act 1918 (Madras) which enacted that self acquired property of a man died intestate would be passed on to his wife and children.\textsuperscript{53}

The Mappila marumakkattayam act 1939 (Madras) provided for equal per capita division of the matrilineal 'taravad' property among its male and female members. The act was passed to define and amend uncertain aspects of the law relating to family management, partition and succession among Muslims following the Marumakkattayam law.


\textsuperscript{53} Quoted in A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, \textit{op. cit.}, p.177.
At the beginning of the present century some Shafi uloma of Malabar urged their people to give up the non-Islamic customs and accept the laws of Islam. Their efforts created consciousness among the Mappilas to replace their local customs by Islamic law. Some of the influential members of the community demanded the enactment of the law empowering the Islamic law of succession in the place of customary law. To meet this demand a bill was introduced in the Madras Legislature.

There was been a consensus of opinion in favour of the bill and the bill will be the most popular measure as the Mappilas following the "Marumakkattayam" custom of inheritance are practically, unanimous in their opinion. Government are convinced of wishes of the Mappilas in this respect have already extended welcome to a bill designed to carry the wishes of the community with effect through the Collector of Malabar.

When the Muslim leaders made efforts to secure legislative suppression of customs in favour of Islamic law, they did not intend to exclude the law of wills nor was it the intention of the legislature to do so while enacting the Mappila succession of Act, 1918. But the Act failed to enforce the Islamic law of wills Act 1898. The judges made their decisions in accordance with the English or local customary law and religious matters were left to Kaziz, Muftis, Sadramin, and Sadr-al-Sadr.

54 Quoted in P.V. Balakrishnan, _op.cit._, p.128.
There was no uniformity in the application of law and personal law. This anomaly was rectified in such an extent in 1937 when Muslim personal law (Shariat) and Application Act was passed. This law governs both Sunnis and Shias in specific matters including inheritance, but excluding charitable and religious endowments. All agricultural lands were continued to be governed by customs except in two states, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where by later legislation, agricultural land was brought under the purview of the Act.

The object of the Act was to make the Muslim personal law the rule of the decision in all questions regarding adoption, wills, right of inheritance, special properties of females (including personal properties) inherited or obtained under contract or gift or any other provision of personal law, dissolution of marriage, maintenance, dower, guardianship, gifts, trust properties and Wakfs in case the parties were Muslims.

The Muslim personal law or Shariat Act adopted by the Central Assembly in 1937 made Shariat law applicable to Muslims instead of customary law. Further in 1949 the legislature passed an act extending the provision of the Shariat Act passed by the Central legislature in 1937 to properties owned by Muslim in Madras State and therefore, the Muslims of
Malabar who followed Marumakkatayam also came to be governed by matrilineal law of inheritance by Muslim everywhere.\textsuperscript{56}

The matrilineal system started signs of set back with advancement in education and change in outlook and also financial position kept in increasing day by day. Due to many reasons they desired to have a unitary family. In the present Kerala society, to speak in practical terms the matrilineal homesteads have become father controlled but children belong to the mothers family.

Another significant feature of the Society is social stratification. It is divided into two clearly distinguishable section though, the division is not rigid and complete as was in the Hindu caste system which prevented social intercourse, the division is apparent. There are both vertical and horizontal divisions. Vertically, Mappila community consists of Arabis and Malabaris. Horizontally, it is divided into Malabaris, Pusalans and Osans.

There are some customs which establish relative status of these groups. Firstly, these groups are endogamous, intermarriage with other groups rarely take place. Only the male person can marry a female of an inferior group and not vice versa. For instance, a Tangal male may marry a Mappila woman, but a Tangal woman can marry only a Tangal male.

\textsuperscript{56} A. Sreethara Menon. \textit{op.cit.}, p.379
Regarding 'Mahr', though there is no limit to the amount of 'Mahr', in practice, it is fixed by a custom certain families give 'Mahr' in terms of gold on the occasion of the marriage.57

The fixed 'Mahr' varies according to the social status of the family. Generally, it varies from three to thirty mithqals or their equivalent in rupees. 'Tali kettu' is the sole role of the women in marriage. But there is no place for 'Talikettu' in Islam. It is influenced by Hindu Customs.

Though one of the fundamental principles of Islam is universal brotherhood, people belonging to higher groups are invited to social functions like marriages, the host will have to invite them personally, while persons of equal or lower rank be invited by hired person or invitation cards. The people will have to be treated with special consideration. They will have to be addressed as 'Beevi' and make them sit down.

For higher groups, they have a separate mosques, special burial grounds and even separate Quazi.58 Tangals are a small section of the Mappila community who claim the highest status because they claim to be Sayyids or descendents of the prophet through his daughter Fatima. The Arabs also form a very small group, concentrated mainly in Quilandy with which they had a long historic connection. There are off springs of Arab men

with native women. But they retained their Arab lineage maintaining their marriage relations with Arabs or Tangals. Consequently, they had a rank among Mappilas next only to Tangals.

The remaining section of Mappila Society constitutes what is known as Malabaris (people of Malabar). A few among them are aristocratic sections. They are called the Koyas of Calicut, the Keyis of Tellicherry and Arakkal 'taravad'. The Koyas and Keyis were the leading merchants of Calicut though they were aristocrats, they were next to Ali Rajas of Cannanore.

The Arakkal 'taravad' of Cannanore was the only Muslim family in Kerala. The women of Arakkal 'taravad' do not marry from Cannanore however respectable they may be, as the latter are considered to be their subjects so it is likely that they marry men from places like Tellicherry and Calicut. These men have invariably, to reside in the 'taravad' house. Men of 'taravad' however marry women of the locality. But they do not live in the 'taravad' house. They set up separate establishments in Cannanore and receive sufficient allowances from the 'taravad' for their maintenance. After the death of the husband the house is inherited by the wife and children. The daughters born of such marriage are usually married by members of the 'taravad'.

The two remaining section viz. Pusalans and the Ossans came from the lower Section of the Malabaris. The word Pusalan stands for Putiya Islam
(new converts to Islam) and they are commonly found on the coastal areas of Malabar. They are mainly converts from Mukkuva (Fishermen) caste of Hindu and they still continue their traditional occupation. It is possible that they follow the profession even after conversion. On account of the same occupation, the Pusalans and Ossans are allotted a low status in society.

It is true that Tangals and Arabis are given a higher social status than even the highest Section among the Malabaries but it is mainly on account of spiritual consideration. The social differences among the Malabaris may give their girls in marriage to Tangals or Arabis not because of their social status but because of their wealth, family connections and so on. This is proved correct as the Malabaries do not give their girls in marriage to poor Arabis.

Marriage customs among the Mappilas vary considerably from region to region and section to section. The marriage customs among the other mother-right Mappilas are performed with great pomp and show. According to usage, marriage takes place very early. In the past, pre-puberty marriage was the rule for the girls. The marriageable age of the boys was twelve to fifteen.

Among the mother-right Muslims the marriage proposal is made from the bride's side. The bride's family seeks a groom for her, the father sends a

person to find out a youth whom he considers suitable and the bride groom requires a present and a dowry in return for marrying the girl.\textsuperscript{60}

All the preliminaries being settled a day for betrothal is fixed. It is called 'Nischayam' or 'Vakkukodukkal'. Once the conditions of marriage are settled, betel is exchanged between the Karanavars of both sides as a token of acceptance of the terms. Before settling the marriage, neither the bride groom nor his relatives have the opportunity to meet the girl, because girls of marriageable age are under strict seclusion.\textsuperscript{61}

Once the marriage date is fixed the bride's side has to take great pain for arranging 'Kalyanam' (Marriage). The most important items of preparation is the decoration of the bridal chamber called 'Manavara' in the South. The cots are arranged beautifully in the bridal Chamber. Another function is the ceremony of applying of 'Milanchi' (Henna) to the nails, palms and feet of the bride at her house.

Women relatives and friends attend the function and they are given a feast. Fascinating entertainments like 'Oppana' preceding the marriage function take place. Those who attend the function are provided with betal leaves the bride puts on colourful costumes, adorned with ornaments, is sated in a prominent place, so that she can be viewed from different direction.

\textsuperscript{60} K.P. Padmanabha Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p.558-559.

\textsuperscript{61} A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, \textit{op.cit.}, p.183.
Women singers sing in chorus and dance around the bride which is called as 'Oppana'. At the same time in the bride groom's house the groom has to undergo a 'sham shaving' ceremony the actual shaving must have been done before hand, but the groom is seated in the midst of young men who keep on clapping while the barber pretends to give him shave.

Subsequently, the groom is seated in a prominent place when people present wedding gifts and is garlanded by the friends and relatives. The marriage procession is a grand procession which makes it way to the bride's house with accompaniment of Music and fire works. At the entrance on the bride's house, the wife's brother has to wash the feat of the bride groom when the groom is expected to drop a gold ornament or coin in the pot.

The chief religious ceremony in marriage is called 'Nikah'. The 'Nikah' may be performed either on the day of the nuptials or before it. The Quazi makes the bride and the groom repeat the necessary formula in the presence of two competent witnesses. Generally, in Kerala the marriage ceremony called 'Nikah' is conducted at bride's house or groom's house and it is conducted on the wedding day itself. Marriage in the early times were

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62 Ibid., p.183.
63 C.A. Innes and Evans, Madars District Gazateer, Malabar, Madras, 1951, p.193.
solemnised at night. When child marriages were common among the Muslims, 'Nikah' was conducted some years earlier than the actual marriage.⁶⁴

In those days in Malabar the marriage ceremony is conducted in two stages. They are 'Nikah' (the legal marriage) and 'Veetukuttal' (the bride and bride groom beginning to reside together). In North Malabar especially, at Cannanore and Tellicherry the two functions take place the same day in such cases. 'Nikah' is performed first followed by the ceremony of leading the bride groom to the bridal chamber. In many places the groom ties 'tali' (necklace) around the neck of the bridal chamber. But in the case of a Rowther and Dakhni community, 'tali' is usually, not tied by the groom but some elderly female members tie around the bride's neck. But the rest of the custom are identical. But the number of customs in latter community are in plenty.

After the Marriage ceremony, the bride offers milk or betel to the groom and groom makes a present in cash according to the group states of the bride's family. The marriage festivities used to last for forty days but are now limited at the most to seven days during which period the groom spends his time in the bride's house, where he is visited by friends and relatives of both houses. After that, the groom can visit his wife at her house without special invitation or anyone accompanying him. Among the father right Mappilas

of interior Malabar (Cochin and Travancore) the marriage is celebrated only in lesser scale. A few days later, the bride and bride groom are ceremonially taken to the groom's house and back and festivities end with it.

The payment of 'Mahr' to wife is implicit in the marriage formula. But it is not paid or reduced to a token amount. On the other hand, the payment of "Stridhanam" (dowry) has taken its place the 'Nikah' is a valid marriage. But the Mappilas consider that the marriage is not complete without Kalyanam there are certain conditions to be fulfilled during the time of marriage. (1) The partners to the marriage have to be given their full consent (2) the husband should pay a contracted amount called Mahr to the wife before the marriage is consummated (3) The Nikah should be solemnised in the presence of witnesses.

But some of them are violated for instances, though the full consent of the arties to the marriage is recognised, the consent of the bride is not sought, it is taken for granted. Women wear the best and colourful attire in accordance with their ages. The youngsters wear silk dresses with brocades and brocaded veil is always thrown over head. The aged women wear a cloth of dark blue colour, reaching from the waist to the ankles to and a loose jacket
of thick white cloth with long sleeves the seams of which are often edged with 
red and which reach a few inches, below the hips.65

The Muslim society followed several alien and indigenous visual art 
forms and made some contributions towards it and made some changes in it. 
Among them, the popular art are the 'Aravana' (Duff-Muttu), 'Kolkali' and 
'Oppana'. Some are disappearing with the advent of modern entertainments.

The 'Aravana' or 'Duff Muttu' is a musical instruments of Arabian 
origin. In this form of art the players are usually six in number, stand or sit 
facing each other, sing songs, swing their body in different direction and 
produce rhythmic sounds by striking with their palms or fingers on the 
"Duff." The "Duff Muttu" differs according to the type of drums used. This 
form of art is now confined to ceremonies connected with certain mosques 
'ratibs' held in honour of Mohiyuddin Sheikh. The "Duff Muttu" is also used 
to be held during marriage festival which extended for forty days.

'Kolkali' with its first bodily movements and corresponding vocal 
expressions is a kind of entertainment very popular at the time of social 
gathering such as marriage and other functions. The players acting in pairs 
strike the 'Kols' (Sticks) held in their hands in a systematic manner in tune 
with the song sung in a captivating style.

65 L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyyer, The Cochin Tribes and Castes, Vol.II, USA, 1969, 
p.477.
Thus, the intermingling that has taken place between the followers of Islam and local Hindus, many traditional social customs and practices got mixed up in the Muslim society of India. The caste system had its effect on the ethnic and religious communities like Muslims, Christians and Parsis.

As has been pointed by some historians a study of Muslim Customs, especially, those relating to marriage and child birth would probably, show that Hindu customs and ideas had a greater hold on Muslims that the Islamic doctrines and practice. But there were no dominant traits nor fully Islamic system adopted by them, this integration set a pattern of culture at least a cultural synthesis in the level of collective consciousness embracing both Muslim and Hindu customs so it is better to name the community Muslim Malayalees rather than Malayalee Muslims.66

Thus Malabar Muslim women, had fallen victims to such male dominated frame work. She remained in confinement and seclusion and they were not even permitted to take to education. She was always relegated to the background without having any knowledge of what was happening around her. The decision of Muslim males got upper hand in every aspect of life where Muslim women were enslaved under them. In this back drop, a study on the position of women in Islam will help us understand the status accorded to her by Prophet Mohammed.