CHAPTER III
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Social resurgence in the community was essentially, connected with the religious reform as religion was the inspirational force behind the reform movements. In Islam, religion and society are identical and cannot be separated from each other.¹ So it is to be noted that all reform movements organized among the Muslims for their reformation have been essentially religious reform movements. They are social movements and religious movements at the same time.

In the religious field of the Muslim society in Malabar, superstitious beliefs and practices alien to Islam held sway. Reverence to holy men, seeking their intercession with God, worship at their tombs, offering nerchas (vows) to their shrines, holding celebration on their death anniversaries were purely unIslamic². The orthodox majority called Sunnis went to keep all such beliefs and rituals intact, but these practices were encouraged by the orthodox ulema probably for pecuniary benefits.

Muslims, who had been the torchbearers of learning in the middle ages had lost their vitality and progress through obscurantism of the orthodox

² A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1989, p.150.
ulema and had fallen into the abyss of ignorance and superstition. The orthodox ulema who were against progress put all kinds of obstacles to the education of the Muslim masses.

Modern education was declared anathema. Even learning the Malayalam language was considered to be heretical. Education of Muslim girls was interdicted. In the madrasas the kind of education imparted was only reading and learning of the Quran by rote and the elementary religious knowledge was imparted.

All over India, the Muslims remained backward in education due to their own neglect and indifference. They objected to the study of English because they believed that learning of English would undermine their religion. According to the Muslim law as expounded by the Sunnis of old tradition it was not lawful to learn English or the language of any other non-Muslim people except for the purpose of answering letters or combating of the religious arguments of these people.

The attitude weakened the position of Muslims generally. They began to lose all important offices. Muslims all over India passed through such a situation as a result of their refusal to accept education on English lines. But, it was a necessary passport to success. A young Muslim was not allowed to turn his thought to secular instructions until he had passed some years in going through a course of religious learning.
The Muslims of Malabar lagged behind in modern education. The anti-British attitude, ignorance, poverty and the existence of a separate script namely 'Arabic' Malayalam were some of the difficulties in spreading western education among Mappilas. The Mappila population was predominantly in large numbers in Malabar. Majority of them were extremely poor and backward. According to the District Educational Officer of Malabar in 1936, the wholesome influence of the hereditary Mulas and Musaliyars over the unenlightened and illiterate Mappilas was an important reason for the educational backwardness of the country. They called Malayalam as 'Aryan ezhuthu', the language of the Hindus and English as 'Narakabhasha' (language of the hell).

Muslims as a class were illiterate. 'Madrasa' and 'Dars' education was the system of education that was predominant in this community at the beginning of this century. The mosque is the centre of all spiritual and social activities. In those times Arabic was taught as part of Islamic religious instruction and this was only education the country acquired a hundred years ago. In the first instance, one is attracted to think that the Muslim community in general has failed in making a proper assessment of the value of modern secular education mainly because of the prolonged discrimination.

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4 Ibid.
and persecution it was subjected to as a result of the caste system prevalent in the country. In the darkness through which the community was passing, it became an easy prey at the hands of the orthodoxy. A superstitious hero-worshiping people gave little regard to reasoning and logic and completely neglected modern secular education finding refuge, in the heroes who they thought could protect them from all evils. Muslims in south India were badly educated beyond the primary stage. There was no enterprising minority such as the Parsis of Bombay capable of challenging the Hindus. The opposition to higher education blocked their progress and retarded the community economically and created a public image and private mentality of backwardness. It was from such a depressing state of affairs the community had to be salvaged. Thus, the social and religious reform movements inaugurated in the second half of the nineteenth century aimed at restoring pristine purity of Islam to relinquish all superstitious beliefs and un-Islamic practices. It also aimed at spreading modern education among the masses. The movement met with resistance from the orthodox section in many places on many occasions. The differences of opinion led to conflict between the two sections. 'Nercha' an unIslamic practice was practised by the Muslims of Malabar. It was influenced by the Sufistic ideology. Its influence was doubtful before 16th century A.D. But in the subsequent centuries, its

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influence was profound with the arrival of the Portuguese. Like the Hindus, Muslims at large, used to believe in astrology and its predictions are closely followed and acted upon. For every household ceremony, auspicious days and movements are selected by means of astrology. The 'Rahukalam' is strictly followed for undertaking any activity. So, the call for change first came from the more favourable surroundings of Cochin and Trivandrum, where the 'Aikyasangham' society was formed to promote the united upliftment of the community and to bring about reforms to improve their conditions educationally. So with this reform movement the Muslims of Travancore and Cochin were in a better condition than those of other areas.

Sanaulla Makti Tangal and Sheikh Hamdani Tangal were the early socio-religious reformers of Kerala. During the close of nineteenth century. Makti Tangal (1847-1912) toured the length and breadth of Kerala, disseminating the reformist ideas and leading a crusade against Christian missionaries. He exhorted the people to join school and receive both English and Malayalam education. He informed the British government that starting a separate school for Muslim girls was non-sense.

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He called upon the Muslims to acquire modern education and to understand the true Islamic injunctions and to eschew unIslamic principles and practices. He wrote books and pamphlets against the missionary propaganda for converting the Muslims by giving a distorted picture of Islamic injunctions.\textsuperscript{12} To counteract such activities he published his first book 'Kathorakutaram' and his second book entitled 'Parakalittaporkkalum' was published later.

He said that even though the people of Kerala differ in religious points of view there is a sense of unity and oneness among the people of Kerala from the geographical points of view. He raised his voice for female education among Muslims. He composed Arabic, Sanskrit, Malayalam dictionary and so on. He also encouraged the translation of Quran into Malayalam. The social system that existed in North Malabar among certain Muslim families was criticized by him as he felt it was not sanctioned by Islam.

Sheikh Hamdani Tangal (1922 A.D) who worked in the erstwhile Cochin state tried to spread education and religious ideas among the Muslim community. To give effect to his ideas, he established several social organizations for instance, 'Lajnat-al Islam' of Eriyad. He received his education from Lathifiya College, Vellur. He was well versed in Tamil Persian Urdu and Malayalam languages.

The greatest reformer that Kerala produced was Wakkom Abdul Qadir Moulavi (1873-1932). Born at Wakkom in Trivandrum district and benefited from economically comfortable life and intellectually excellent he became a scholar in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Malayalam. He began his career as relatively an orthodox Moulavi. He tried to integrate Islam and modern culture. He believed in the scripture and authentic Hadith and his efforts to establish a moderately rational approach altered the outlook of Muslims. He vigorously attacked Shirk or innovation. In course of time he became a noted theological social and educational reformer. He literally threw himself into the task of communicating clearly and widely this fundamental message of Islam in a way that would make it reach the common people. He gave an impetus to abandon the superstitious beliefs. He published several journals such as "Muslims and Deepika" in Malayalam and "Al Islam in Arabic". He founded "Islam Dharma Paripalana Sangham" and the "Muslim" Aikya Sangham" at Kodungallur, through which he tried to integrate Islam with modern culture. His mission was successful and injected social consciousness among the Muslims. The British Government authorized him to recommend suitable conditions for the post of Arabic teacher. He convinced the community the need to educate Muslim women. His reform-oriented

13 R.E. Miller, op.cit., p.270.
publications had their impact on the Muslims of Kerala which still continues to be felt.\textsuperscript{15}

Through his active patriotic journal \textit{Swadeshabhimani} he became engaged in journalistic criticism of existing structures until his press was closed down in 1910. Wakkom Abdul Qadir Moulavi is rightly described as the father of Muslim Renaissance in Kerala.

K.M. Moulavi (1886 - 1964) and E.K. Moulavi (1879 - 1974) of Tellicherry, had a long and distinguished participation in the Muslim reform movement in Kerala. The former published 'Al-Irshad', 'Al-Islahi' and 'Al Murshid'. He was the founder of "Jamiyyatt-ul-ulema." The latter authored a variety of important works entitled 'Al Islam', 'Islam and communism' etc. Both of them rendered many services to wage a crusade against superstitions.

The theological reform movement initiated by Wakkom Moulavi carried forward by his followers was basically a conservative reform movement.\textsuperscript{16} And that was probably the main reason for its advancement. The emphasis on "Tauhid" (unity of God) was the influence of Egyptian reform movement led by Mohammed Abduh (1845-1905) and his disciples.

However, the impact was therefore felt and gave a new spirit to the Mappilas and the spirit was again strengthened as a result of the secular

\textsuperscript{15} E.K. Ahamed Kutty. \textit{op.cit.}, p.442.
\textsuperscript{16} R.E. Miller, \textit{op.cit.}, p.274.
education and influences of modern life. Although it differed from the aggressive Puritanism of the Arabian Wahabi reform, it was perhaps not unaffected by the spirit of that movement, mediated by the personal visits of Mappilas to Saudi Arabia. It remained closer in spirit to Egyptian but was a Kerala adaptation, which marked an insistent return to the Quran and a positive reaching out to the new world.¹⁷

The programme of reform which K.M. Moulavi had inaugurated was propagated by a large number of young erudite scholars well versed in Islamic theology and Jurisprudence. They formed an association for the propagation of religious knowledge, named Kerala "Nadvatul Mujahideen" (1952). The aim of the organization was to enlighten Muslims on scientific lines, until true injunction of Islam in the individual and social life free them from persecutions and to promote harmonious relationship with other religionists to create better mutual understanding for common welfare. The "Nadavat" stood for the propagation of doctrine of 'Tauhid' (unity of God) and opposition to such practices as reverence to saints, tomb worship, intercession of holymen and so on. They were also opposed to all forms of 'Bidah' (anti-Islamic) such as 'nerchas' and 'chandanakudam'. They rejected 'Taqlid' (blind acceptance of the views of earlier Imams) which helped to stagnate the progress of society and emphasised "Ijtihad" (independent decision based on Quran and Hadith). This movement is known as the Islahi movement.

¹⁷ Ibid.
The uncompromising stand of Islahi workers on the question of 'Tauhid' and unIslamic practices brought forth the stout opposition from the orthodox ulema and their blind followers. The opposition often ended in physical conflicts between the two factions.\(^\text{18}\) No doubt, they have succeeded to a great extent in weaning a large section of Muslims of Kerala away from the grip of the superstitions and unIslamic beliefs and practices to true Islamic teachings.

Mujahid Students Movement was founded with the object of imparting secular education without alienating Islamic principles. It conducts classes on 'Religion and Science which helps to explain the Quranic ideals from scientific points of view and thereby strengthening the faith of the young intellectuals.\(^\text{19}\)

In 1982 M.S.M. formed a Girls' wing called Mujahid Girls' Movement. It denounces the spurious practices like dowry system, bridal torture, extravagance in marriage, ceremonies and other social evils.\(^\text{20}\)

The one welcome result of the movement was that inspite of the opposition of the orthodox faction it was compelled to recognize the necessity for modern education. All the welcome changes introduced in Madrasa education had been copied by the conservative section also and regular

\(^{18}\) A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, \textit{op.cit.}, p.155.
\(^{19}\) M. Abdul Samad, \textit{op.cit.}, p.115.
\(^{20}\) \textit{Ibid.}\n
Madrasas and Arabic colleges were founded by them. Another change that had taken place probably as a result of Islahi criticism was the decreasing interest in saints and superstitions evinced by the conservatives. Finally, the substantial contribution of this movement is the encouragement given to female children to acquire modern education.

As a consequence of the part played by the socio religious reformers the 'Dars' education had improved considerably. Previously, the students lacked the knowledge of the present day world. It was in the beginning of the present century that a great turn had taken place. Some enlightened men of the community and ulema felt the need for re-orienting the 'Dars' system. They felt that scientific system of religious education with proper curriculum syllabus, text books and tools was necessary.

A definitely progressive movement in education was started by Muslims of Malabar just before the 50's of this century preceded by the second phases of the resurgent educational activity. Today, there are innumerable primary and high schools especially for imparting education to Muslims. There are many Arts and Science Colleges in Mappila pockets. Female education has taken a leap forward. Now, many pupils are going to these colleges to receive education.

A move in this direction was made by A.M. Koya Kunhi who founded the Madanul-Islam Madrasa in Cannanore in 1911. An important feature of
this madrasa was that it provided for the study of Arabic as well as Malayalam.

But the real founder of the madrasa movement was Chalilakath Kunhamed Haji. He was the only scholar who recommended his students to develop the habit of reading newspapers in order to understand the daily occurrence in the world and to acquire modern knowledge.

At a time when education of girls was positively discouraged he set an example to others by sending his own daughters to schools. He introduced modern subjects along with traditional subjects. For teaching new subjects he made use of teaching aids like globes, maps, charts etc. 'Darul-uloom-Madrasa' thus rose to be the best Madrasa in south India for its tradition of excellence and number of illustrious alumni it turned out.\(^{21}\)

Western education had spread in Malabar during the first half of the nineteenth century. But the Muslims had opposed western education from the beginning since it was introduced by the British. Opposition to the British rule found expression in a series of violent outbreaks that rocked Malabar intermittently in the 19\(^{th}\) century. It was this hatred against the British that created in their minds an unyielding opposition to all things western.

Consequently the system of education by the British was opposed on the belief that it strengthened to subvert the very basis of Islamic faith. As

W.W. Hunter observed "our system of public education which has awakened the Hindus from the sleep of the centuries and quickened the unenlightened masses with some of the noble impulses of nation is opposed to tradition unsuited to the requirements and hateful to the religion of Mussalman."  

Therefore they opposed the secular education vehemently.

As early as 1871, on the recommendation of a committee to look into the question of Mappila education appointed by Government, an attempt was made to popularize the study of Malayalam reading and writing and arithmatic along with religious education.  

This was to be done through inducements to the Mullahs of 'Othupallis' in the form of small salaries and grants. The progress was very slow. The Mullas were incompetent to impart the instruction in vernacular language. Further, a change to the vernacular from Arabic Malayalam that was in general use among the Mappilas was not altogether welcome.

The scheme worked for a time under the auspices of the local board. Improvement registered in the scheme on the whole was satisfactory. In 1894, the Mappilas of Ernad and Valluvanad were officially recognized as

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backward caste and became eligible for special Grants.\textsuperscript{24} Separate Primary Schools, both aided and run by Government were established.

A naive newspaper published from Calicut generally, approved of the idea of establishment of certain schools. But, there was a tendency among them to get themselves dropped out when they came of certain age. This had an adverse effect on the educational development of the female. So there was a demand on the part of the progressive minded people to fix the marriageable age of girls and boys. \textit{Darul Islam} remarks that, as far as the Muslims were concerned in as much as this evil practice of child marriage is not prevalent among Muslims of Malabar it is not considered objectionable. According to their religious principles a law for fixing the marriageable age is not indispensable as far as they are concerned. Besides, some definite rules have been laid down in their religious books governing marriage, divorce and succession. It will not be proper to try to bring laws like the one in question.\textsuperscript{25}

It was remarked by the newspaper \textit{Dravidian} the about the facilities that had afforded for the community to make progress in education as a result of the recommendation of the committee, appointed by the Government for suggesting ways and means for replacing the existing special schools for them by ordinary ones. The paper went on to remark that though the special


\textsuperscript{25} NNPR, \textit{Darul Islam}, Madras, 25\textsuperscript{th} January 1929.
schemes would entail a heavy expenditure on the Government, it is quite necessary in view of the tranquility and progress of Madras Presidency and the well being of Mohammedans.

The native paper *Kerala Kesari* pleaded for the abolition of sectarian schools like Hindu, Muslim and the like and throw them to all irregard of religion and caste, instead the government encouraged disunity among them and so the need of the hour was the spread of primary education to all alike.\(^{26}\)

There was also an appeal from *A1 - Amin* daily to realize the need for employing Moulavi teachers in Muslim Schools. The writer points that the matter was urgent as compulsory education was brought into force in certain parts. If education should be made compulsory without appointing Moulavis to teach religion, it would amount to an unarranged independence on the part of the Government in Muslim religious matters.\(^{27}\)

So there was an everincreasing rift between Hindus and Muslims due to the everincreasing unemployment problem and the tendency of the Government to fill the administrative services by the caste people and the costly administration of the Europeans and the lapse of Government to look after the welfare of the people.

\(^{26}\) NNPR, *Kesari*, Madras, 16\(^{th}\) September, 1924.

\(^{27}\) NNPR, *A. Amin*, 9\(^{th}\) July 1925.
The British Government was to reconsider the proposal of grants to the schools and technical colleges to receive vocational training to improve the skill and quality of education for removing the dangers and challenges to them. They seriously thought of giving education to female children. The education of girls received a great boost as the encouragement was forthcoming on the part of the Government in the form of incentives.

The first woman graduate of Laccadives is Dr. Rahmat Begum of Agatti. After the Malabar rebellion of 1921, the Government resolved to take further steps to encourage Mappila education. Muslim women were also religiously fanatical. They discouraged their children from attending schools. The fanaticism of these women was clearly reflected at the time of Mappila Rebellion of 1921. In the first incident at Pukkottur, it was the women who incited the small boys to do their part. It was one of those women who after the 1894 outbreak when her son was wounded, said, "If I were a man, I would not comeback wounded." Many of these women were inspired with the same feeling.

It was Variankunath Haji's mother, a fearless woman who carried on the work fairly in the years of his absence at home. It was through her that he was persuaded to live in Kondotty for some years after their house had been

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utterly destroyed near the bridge at Nellikuth. It is not surprising to find a few instances of women taking an active share.\textsuperscript{29}

Two women were known to have fought with men one at Pukkottur and the other in mosque at Olakara. When the men were in jail, it was quite common for the Mappila girls to set out on their own to visit their husbands or brothers in Cannanore or Calicut. These were girls who probably had never left the Eranad Taluk before. They frequently travelled by bus or train and many of them had to travel alone forty or fifty miles. Under these vicious circumstances, female children were forced to be at home without availing of the opportunities given to them by the Government to attend schools, and the economic condition of the community also became miserable.

It is evident after examining the convicted ones that many children and women were dependent upon them and practically without any work.\textsuperscript{30} The British Government could note that all these problems were related with poverty. So, the Government expedited the work for encouraging the Mappila children to receive education.

By establishing schools with relevant methods of teaching, a new curriculum was set forth. A committee was constituted for preparing special text books. Compulsory elementary education was introduced in three

\textsuperscript{29} Hitchcock, \textit{A History of the Malabar Rebellion 1921}. (confidential Deport) Madras 1922, .150.

\textsuperscript{30} G.O. No.278 (confidential Report), Public Dept. 28\textsuperscript{th} March 1922.
municipalities of Calicut, Tellicherry, Cochin and in selected areas of Eranad, Valluvanad, and Ponnani Taluks. New schools were opened wherever necessary. A large number of pupils were admitted in these schools.

A Muslim training school was started in Malappuram to train Muslim teachers. Primary religious teachers called Mullakka masters were given special training there. This training school helped the popularization of education to a great extent to both males and females. To organize the teaching of Arabic the post of Mohammedan Inspector for Schools was created. Religious education was also encouraged to attract the Muslim students.

Another significant impact in the educational sphere was the establishment of a high school for Muslim girls in Tirur. At private initiative many primary schools sprang up in Calicut to impart religious education as well as secular education. In other parts of Malabar too Muslim education with emphasis on female education received a great impetus. Consequently, Farook College of Calicut, a college of Arts and Science which was founded in 1948 has developed into the biggest residential college affiliated to Calicut university. The college stands as a full-fledged institution for imparting educational services to both genders including non Muslims. Farook College, one of the oldest and largest educational institutions of Malabar had to wait for 13 years after its founding to admit a woman student. Currently,
more than 30 percent of the students in the college are Muslim women. Four of its seven hostels are reserved for women, most of the residents are Muslims.

In addition, the government in 1931, opened special school at Cannanore to train religious instructors in Mappila elementary schools. Although, the Mappila literacy rate in 1931 was only five percent there were 1,497 elementary schools for Mappila serving over 1,04,000 students which is an indication that progress had been made in this regard. In this total number however girls represented less than four percent. After 1940, the steps already taken to foster education were continued and no new measures were adopted. However, the impact of modern education began to be felt among the common folk more and more. Further the educated and philanthropist in the community began to take steps in establishing schools and institutions for higher learning for the benefit of the students of the community. Thus, gradually, education became widespread among the community in Malabar.

The educational condition in Travancore and Cochin was not as much bad as in Malabar, though, the orthodox ulema were determined to prevent the common folk from receiving modern education. The western education had spread so widely among other communities in Travancore and Cochin that it began to influence Muslim communities also.

32 R.E. Miller, *op.cit.*, .205.
Many of the progressive minded Muslims felt the need of reforming the society through English education so that the interests of the community would be safeguarded. It was at this wake that "All India Muslim Educational Conference" was organized to encourage Muslim education. The promoters of the Aligarh Muslim University scheme toured different parts of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. Their visit also gave an impetus to the educational effort of the south.

Ponnani claims to be the first centre in connection with the spread of Arabic Malayalam in Malabar. This trend had been initiated with the founding of the first press of its kind named 'Muhkiyal Garaib' by Ammu. – Ibn-u-Kunchipakku, a native of Tellichery. Subsequently many institutions sprang at in Ponnani. A large number of copies Quran with translation in Arabic Malayalam were printed and circulated among the people. Significantly books on 'Hadith', 'Mappila pattu' and 'history' began to be published by these institutions. Besides, the books in Urdu, Persian and Tamil languages were also published. In Arabic Malayalam. The first translation of the Quran in Arabic Malayalam was completed by Moyinkutty Elaya a member of the Kei clan married into the Arakkal royal family of Cannanore.

There are many leading organizations and institutions. Ponnani had long been the religious head quarters of Kerala "Maunnati-ul-Islam Sabha" was set up in 1900 A.D. at Ponnani. A meeting at Malappuram under the Presidentship of Putiya Maliyekka Pukkoya Tangal was held. To promote the welfare of the community the Sabha conducts an orphanage, several schools and weaving institutions. Several branches of the association have been opened all over south Malabar, Travancore and Cochin. A large number of domestic quarrels, divorce cases and partition cases have been settled through these associations.\(^{34}\) An elementary school was established in 1932. In 1940, it was raised to a middle school and in 1943 it was converted into a high school. Both boys and girls of the Muslim community flocked to this High School for their high school studies.

There are many Arabic Colleges in Kerala Madeemathul Uloom Arabic College, Pulikkal, Malappuram was one among them. It was founded and managed by the registered association of Kerala Jamiyyathul ulama. The college first started work on 20\(^{th}\) January 1947 at Trirurangadi.\(^{35}\) It was shifted to Pulikkal in the same year Vazhakkad Darul Uloom College was the forerunner of this college. It stands as perhaps the first of its kind opened in Malabar. But unfortunately, it was closed Abdur Rahiman Maulavi Sahib, the then principal of the Vazhakkad College took great interest in the students and


thought that the Vazhakkad college should be revived in some form or other to save the students in Arabic and allied subjects. With the help of Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulema this college was reopened.

Sullammsalam Arabic College, Areacode, (Malappuram) was founded in 1944. It was approved by University in 19 May 1955. Rawzathul Ulloom Arabic College was started in 1942 at Anakayam, a village near Manjeri. The founder was Janab Maulavi Abdussabah Ahmed Ali. Instruction in Islamic History, religion, science and literature was imparted through the medium of Arabic. It attracted much attention owing to its special features. It was a revolutionary step in Arabic education in Kerala, discarding the unsatisfactory and inefficient traditional methods of teaching. Now it is situated 2½ miles from Feroke railway station and about 10 miles from Calicut town. The Association constructed a permanent building for the Arabic college on the spot. Other Arabic colleges are Women's Arabic College Mongam and Islamiya College, Santhapuram.

As we all know education is the key factor for all round development of a society hence it is necessary to stress educational development. In fact, it would expand the mental horizon of the people. The Muslim women also put an implicit faith in this factor. The pioneering works of socio-religious reformers have yielded positive results. Consequent upon that, now many

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36 Ibid. p. 140.
Muslim women are attending schools and colleges. There are teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, politicians and social workers who favour the participation of women in prayers held within the mosques.37

The political, communal, economic and intellectual pressures set the community of Muslims who had evolved a settled faith and piety and it developed a frame work of customs and demonstrated a regular pattern of attitude and behaviour.38 It was a community with strong conviction and genuine commonness in its approach to God and truth, life and conduct. The understanding of the nature and the resources of the community is essential to the judging of its capacity to deal effectively with the challenges it faced and faces.

It must be recognized, however, that the tradition of the community is a changing one. The winds of change have touched the Mappilas lightly while the process of challenge and response goes on with the community. As a whole they continue their life apparently unaffected and unchanged except in externals.39 The encounter with modernity goes on in some measure of every level of life and there is no Muslim in Malabar who is totally free of its influence.

37 A. Sreedhara Menon, op.cit., p.268.
38 R.E. Miller, op.cit., 233.
39 Ibid.
It is a well known fact that Islam was instrumental in initiating social changes or giving an impetus to the already existing reform movements. The impact of socio-economic educational and cultural movements has been brought to hear upon this community. It was effective in changing the face of the community. As in the case of Indian society the influence of those factors such as the progress of industrialization, urbanization and to a considerable extent westernisation have influenced Muslims a lot.

The distinctive personality of the community with its own customs and culture had afforded it a backward position. It would be termed as medieval society and as a result of the peculiar socio-economic system that existed during the last so many decades, the outlook of the people became regional and their minds were fettered by orthodoxy, insularity and exclusiveness. On analyzing the development that has taken place in the first half of the last century we could see that many symbols of medievalism are vanishing.

At the outset, modern secular education has been accepted. In the social field due to the educational progress matrilineal system has been replaced by patriliny. Superstitions and age old taboos are giving way to pragmatic approach towards religion and beliefs based on scientific and rational outlook taking their place. In this process of development, the Mappila society to-day has changed and almost laid to rest the stereo typed customs of the society.
Modern education has come to them as a factor contributing for reformation. The whole process can be turned as a response to change. South India was looked into as the area of hope for the integration of acceptable modern principles received from the west into the thought world of Islam. Even though, the south Indian Muslims were not as educated as North Indians, they could welcome the challenge of a new culture and a new age and respond positively to it. While clinging to their fundamental religion and cultural traditions in secular life they would prepare themselves to meet its demands.\textsuperscript{40} It is an undeniable fact as South India is concerned. It may not necessarily be applied to the Malabar Muslims who had for many years an aversion to modern education. Here in Malabar it was a slow process as far as the response to cultural change was concerned.

To start with, the study of Malayalam especially by Muslim women was opposed on the ground that it was the language of the infidels. Willim Logan, the author of Malabar manual and District Collector of Malabar, who wrote in the last quarter of the nineteenth century has regarded this community as a class nearly almost, if not altogether, illiterate. The only education received was a parrot like recitation of the Quran, which being in Arabic none of them understood.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{40} See S.M. Mohamed Koya, \textit{op.cit.}, p.77.
\textsuperscript{41} Logan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.198.
The Muslims of Malabar had been maintaining a defensive attitude against the changes that had been taking place in society and had been remaining especially pre-modern in outlook. It was their participation in political order that gave them intimate contact with modern life. In this connection it is pertinent to recall a great political leader and social reform activist, Mohamed Abdurahiman. Abdurahiman sahib a veteran leader of the freedom movement in Malabar gave a new life to the people of Malabar in the field of literature especially with the founding of 'Al-Ameen' press in Calicut. From 1924 onwards the activities of journalism in Malayalam provided an intellectual basis for the people of Malabar. Muslims of Malabar showed keen interest in learning Malayalam language because many books on Islam were published in Malayalam. Actually it enabled a logical thinking and gradually the superstitions began to vanish. Apart from that 'Al-Ameen' reflected the Congress politics which the people wanted to know more interestingly. So there was definitely a change in the attitudes of the people. This trend also influenced the Muslims women to go to schools and receive Malayalam and English education. The combined influence of modern education, communist critique and economic need has reduced the dominance of religious concern. The latter is being narrowed to a private matter while the public concern of the community is social progress.

42 T.K. Abdulla, op. cit., p. 74
The poor level of education of Mappila women has been attributed to the existence of matrilineal system, a unique social system of Kerala among the Muslims of North Malabar and mixed joint family set up that prevailed in the Muslim centres of Ponnani and Calicut and the system of the husband visiting at her house (Veetuputhiyapila system) which is really a variant of 'Sambandham' has resulted in the total absence of education among the Mappila women.

The existence of matrilineal system in the Islam of Malabar which is against the tenets of the religion had raised many eyebrows. It has termed as a stumbling block to the progress of the community as it was associated with the prevailing system of joint family. In course of time, Hindu joint families had broken up and the same trend is noticeable in the Muslim society of Malabar. In this new turn of events they tried to substitute patriliny in place of matriliny. Efforts have also been made by the progressive minded people to introduce legal measures to eradicate unIslamic trends in Muslim society and to uplift women from enslavement and confinement.

As far as Muslim women in Malabar were concerned they had no role in different spheres of life. Their main duty only to look after their husbands and children after their marriage. The privilege of western and secular education was denied to them. They were expected to be the slaves of their

husbands. Even those who were interested in receiving education were not allowed to go to schools. Those who received educational were considered as outcaste. They had to suffer all kinds of ill-treatment and oppression from their parents or society. This was due to the fact that Muslim society was completely under the control of the conservative section of the Muslim society.

Apart from this, the early marriages in Muslim society were also a contributory factor for their backwardness in the education field. Even if they wanted to continue their studies after, high school education, the parents thwarted their desire for they thought college education would endanger the moral standard of Muslim women. Again, the parents psychologically feared that unless the female children be given in marriage to their life partners when she came of age, she would bring curse or disgrace to their family. That is why early marriages were arranged in those days. Thus, they set up a society based on certain conservative concepts.

From the early decades of the twentieth century, Muslim women of Malabar have been experiencing a revolution that has radically altered their outlook. Now they are in the forefront making all attempts to liberate their sisters from the clutches of male domination. Many women liberation

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organizations have been organized in different parts of the country. They have raised their voice for female education and for their upliftment.

Despite their reluctance in accepting western education, there were many poetesses whose contributions to Arabic Malayalam are great. Amina and P.K. Haleema occupy a prominent place among the literary figures of Kerala. They themselves devoted their entire time learning Malayalam language and religious studies. The latter wrote some poems entitled 'Badarul Munir' 'Oppanapattu'. 'Porutham', 'Rajamangalam', 'By-Ayisha' etc. The Mappila literature is written in a mixture of Arabic and Malayalam languages written in Arabic script which came to be called Arabic-Malayalam. These Mappila pattus (songs) reflect the social perspective of Muslim society. Arabic Malayalam is very much still alive in Malabar. Arabic-Malayalam may perhaps be little known outside Kerala. Nevertheless, it is no exaggeration that a study of the history, culture and social life of Malabar Muslims cannot be seriously undertaken without an understanding of Malayalam.

Besides these, they have other contributions to their credit. The most notable being 'Fatah-ul-muin.' These works portray the general conditions of the Muslims. The increasing trend of Islamic literature in Malayalam has been the result of spread of literacy among them. Translation of Quran into

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47 Interview with M.C. Ibrahim, Calicut on 20.11.06.
Arabic-Malayalam enabled both Muslim men and women to grasp the interpretations of Quran and they began to rationalize their thoughts and gave way for the removal of un-Islamic practices from the society. In fact a new trend has thus begun to take shape in the society. In the early part of the century in Tellicherry, a centre of orthodox Muslims, Amina Hashim and Ayisha Roph, two sisters rose into prominence, the former as a social worker of repute in India and the latter as a prominent educationist in Ceylon. These are exceptions in Mappila history especially in the early past.

"Ntuppappakkoranentarnnu" (My grandpa had an elephant) by Vaikkom Muhamed Basheer has highlighted the impact of female education. The hero of the novel Nisar Ahamed marries Kunhupathamma an illiterate girl and he educates her through advice and instruction.

K.T. Mohamed playwright and short story writer through his career, lasting more than half a century (from early 1950's) has, time and again, spoken against superstitions and brought home the message of making women conscious and aware of responsibilities. He also stressed the need for women's education. Late N.P. Mohammed, U.A. Khader Moidu Padiyath, V.P. Mohamed, late P.A. Mohamed Koya Punathil Kunhabdulla the list of Muslim novelists and story writers go like that. All of them have emphasised the point of women's education. There are also women writers especially

novelists. B.M. Zuhra and Sarah Aboobeckar are examples. Zuhra, hails from a Mappila family of Calicut. Her ancestors were from North Malabar and emerged as a writer in her thirties. She writes on the resurgence of Mappila women who have emerged from a state of backwardness.

Regarding Muslim women's presence in Malayalam literature the names of late Thankamma Malik and Malliak Yunnes (Thankamma's daughter) in Travancore and Cochin may be mentioned in this connection, besides B.M. Zuhra from Malabar, a freelance journalist A.M. Khadeeqa, now associated with Tejas Daily has written short stories and articles. Dr. Mumtaz is also a novelist. Kalladi Mumtaz is a travalogue writes and Nilambur Ayisha and Zeenath are actors.

Unni Abdulla, wife of late V. Abdulla, writer and social cultural activist is the author of books on "Cookery". The book written by her on Mappila Cookery needs special mention. Now a days Muslim woman magazines besides journals like Vanitha and Grahlakshmi and those by Muslim press agencies. carry on notes on Cookery by Muslim women. These magazines are replete with short stories and articles by Muslim women writers, most of them from the Malabar side.

The beginings of writings by Muslims women of Malabar could be traced to the 50s of the last century. These pioneers wrote in Mathrubhumi and Chandrika weeklies. Sometime back one literary critic S. Saradakutty in
an article written in *Mathrubhumi* weekly in tone of sorrow stated that Muslim presence in Malayalam literature is not seen nor is she visible as author of novels and short stories in Malayalam.

Akbar Kakkattil has said in an article written sometime back in Ramzan supplement of *Mathrubhumi* that Moulana Azad helped a Muslim teenaged girl of Malabar interested in literary writing by making available to her books from the Education Ministry.

Apart from these writers, the name of Kamala Suraya, the literary genius who wrote short stories and novels, is a great contribution to literary and cultural treasure of Malayalam. Kamala Suraya, formerly Madhavikutty, who converted to Islam a few years ago is considered to be notable among the Muslim woman of Malabar. Vilayil Valsala a partner with V.M. Kutty, the famous Mappila Pattu composer and singer became Vilayil Faseela on conversion to Islam and she is an ace Mappilapattu singer.

In this connection, it is noted that the various organizations founded during this period began to function under the auspices of eminent professionals. These organizations were primarily concerned with imparting secular knowledge to the Muslims. One among them is the Muslim Educational Society. It was founded in 1964 by a group of Muslims, mainly doctors and educationists exclusively for cultural, economic, cultural and
educational uplift of Muslims of Malabar. The movement began as a result of intense dissatisfaction in the progress of the community.\textsuperscript{49}

The founders of the movement led by Dr. P.K. Abdul Ghafoor a professor of medicine, were professional men, who had personally experienced the benefits of secular education. He said that MES was going forward to create a revolution in the mind of the people. He had noted with pride that thirty percent of the college students in Malappuram and Calicut districts were Mappilas a development of major significance.\textsuperscript{50}

By February 1967, it had laid the foundation of its first College at Mannarghat. They had opened up a series of service institutions and programmes designed to uplift their community. They opened four colleges at Mannarghat, Ponnani, Cranganore and Valancherry. When the Muslim Educational Society started a college at Mampad, the largest college at Malappuram district, in 1965, it had just 12 women students, only five of them were Muslims. It took another decade for the college to take the number of Muslim women in its campus to magical 100. It achieved this in 1976. But today nearly 500 Muslim women study on the Mampad campus which offers seven post graduate programmes. And according to college principal, O.P. Abdurahiman, more than half of his post-graduate students are Muslim

\textsuperscript{49} R.E. Miller, \textit{op.cit.}, p.211  
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, p.218.
girls. It is not just humanities or science courses that attract Muslim girls.\textsuperscript{51} For instance, they make up nearly 20\% of the students in the MES College of Engineering, Kuttippuram.

An All India Muslim Educational Conference at Feroke was held from December 25\textsuperscript{th} to 27\textsuperscript{th} of December 1970 which MES leaders regarded as a 'supremely important event for Kerala Muslims.' Those who presented papers based their conclusions on the question of relations of secular and religious education. They also took up the question of female education with broad based outlook.

As a result of the functioning of the ladies wing of Muslim Educational Society under Mrs. Fathima Ghafoor, Mrs. Khamarunnisa Anwar and other prominent women leaders, the question of Muslim women's education has been seriously taken up and the cause of women education has achieved a great success. They inspire them to receive education discarding the taboos and superstitions which had been in vogue in the community for a long time. Muslim women, therefore, are bound to accept education for all their betterment. The best examples are the schools and colleges that we see today in the cities and rural areas, where the Muslim female students are attending classes wearing colourful dresses to acquire modern and secular education.

\textsuperscript{51} *The Hindu, op.cit.*, p.10.
The community crowned its glory when Mrs. Amina Maricar became the first Muslim woman to secure the MBBS degree from the Madras University. From the aristocratic Mappila centre of Kuttichira, situated in the heart of Calicut with many high schools and several colleges the first girl graduated from an ordinary high school in 1964. The first college graduate of either sex received a bachelor's degree in 1939. Ayshumma, hailing from Areacode, situated in Malappuram district, was the first Muslim girl to pass SSLC degree in the midst of a storm of opposition from the orthodox sections of the society. She was working as a primary teacher in a near by school and later she provided all her children the best education that she could afford. Mrs Fathima Ghafoor in her article entitled 'Pavangal Pennugal' published in a souvenir (1990-91) has said that Quran never denies the privilege of education to women and also added that the position of Muslims was not less inferior comparing to the other states.

Mrs Khamarunnisa Anwar in the same souvenir entitled 'Etha Oru patha' has said that the Muslim Educational Society has improved the status of Muslim women. She further argues that in order to withstand the challenges in the modern world. Muslim women she must receive education. The number of female children attending schools and colleges in the rural areas

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52 R.E. Miller, op. cit., p.206.
has been increased considerably due to their relentless work. Mrs. Fathima Ghafoor is really a mastermind behind the upliftment of Muslim women of Malabar.

Muslim women have first to their credit, Mrs. Fathima Beevi, who was the first judge of Supreme Court. She was also the first ever women to become a member of the country's highest judicial body and was the first woman governor of Tamilnadu.

It is enumerated in the Kerala Muslim Directory that in Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palghat, the numerical strength of the Muslims is greater comparatively. It gives the statistical report that in 1980-90 the PSMO College, Tirurangadi, now running as a post graduate college, had the total strength of Muslim students at 1217, and out of this the female candidates numbered about 524. In addition to this college there are a number of colleges established in Malabar both in public and private sector. From the figures collected from Farook college and sister institutions in 2003, it is found that out of nearly 7,000 students attending various courses, 2225 were male and 2548 female Muslim students. In the seven MES colleges that were taken up for study 1449 were Muslim males and 1347 Muslim females during

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Both these sets of figures which reflect the community situation show that there has been of late very significant increase in the enrolment of both Muslim boys and girls. This can be directly attributed to the impact of modern education. To the credit of their community, there are number of Muslim women graduates and postgraduates who are working in reputed institutions.

A few more examples would reveal the fact that social changes are taking place in the Muslim community and especially among women. In the university examinations conducted for final year degree by the Calicut University in 2001-02 and 2002-03, some of the Muslim girls of Malabar have secured, creditable marks. T.K. Habeeba Hussain, a first rank holder in B.A. Sociology, and Nusaiba a second rank holder in statistics brought credit to a Farook College in Calicut district where they pursued their studies. Both of them were of the opinion that a systematic study helped them to reach the ladders of success. Though, they were married, their studies were not disrupted due to marriage but rather, their husbands and mothers in law encouraged them to carry on their studies. Sumayaya and Najma from the same college secured excellent marks in Arabic, Islamic History and Mathematics respectively.

58 *Aramam* (monthly), Calicut, August, 2003, pp.18-20.
These academically interested students were also active members of GIO, (Girls' Isamic Organisation) a women's wing functioning under the auspices of the organization called 'Jamat-e-Islami.'

Even in the grip of economic crisis girls like Rabia, who lives in Valluvanakkad village, Malappuram district, strove hard to acquire education. Apart from her economic miseries, she is also a physically handicapped girl. Here thirst for knowledge only enabled her to seek primary education from a nearby school and secondary level education from Government High School, in Tirurangadi.

Inspite of her joining PSMO college for pre-degree course, Rabia could not continue her studies due to her illness. She is the first to receive National 'Yuva Jana' Award from Malappuram district and third woman from Kerala state. Such an honour registered by her brought credit to her illiterate parents. A large number of Muslim women became literate due to the literacy campaign of the Government.

In the contemporary Muslim society the literacy rate has been increased. Today 60 percentage of the readers of magazines and weeklies in Malayalam are Muslim literate women in Malabar. They are anxious to know the women issues published in it. There are many Muslim women journalists. There is a woman journalist working in the Gulf edition of 'Chandrika' daily.

59 Joseph Nandilath, Chalanam, Ernakulam 1994, p.43.
Juvaina Faiz, a Muslim girl has obtained first rank in the medical degree examination conducted in 2005. She sets an example for the younger posterity. Fathima Beevi was the first woman circle inspector of Malabar.

There are also a good number of software engineers from the Malabar area, who are employed in many technoparks of Kerala and elsewhere in India. It is a usual sight that these young women wearing Purdha riding two wheelers, driving cars holding their mobile cells in their hands and going to their work places and this shows that they have undergone a process of social changes and they can even compete with their counter parts. These observations and conclusions would ensure the fact that a slow but steady the social change is deeply felt among them.

The changing status of Muslim women has been analysed on the basis of a random survey conducted among a few women of Mappila community at Kuttichira, Calicut, at Areacode, Malappuram, and also among different Muslim communities like Daudi Bohra women, Rawther and Dhakni women at Calicut and Palakkad respectively.

The analysis of the data reveals that, in Kuttichira, a great majority of the families are Mappila Muslims and most of them are retaining the matrilineal 'taravads' there. Most of the families, with an exception of a few are found to be in an average income group. The respondents say that 80 percentage of the girls are studying for +2 courses. Sixty percentage of
them are studying in Degree courses and 20 percentage are studying for professional courses. The study also reveals that 10 percentage of them are employed.\textsuperscript{60}

Regarding the male children it is found that 70 percentage of them are in +2 level and 40 percentage are attending the Degree courses and 10 percentage are studying for professional courses. The present study shows that male literacy is less than the female literacy in this area. The low literacy is due to the low income of the families. In an atmosphere of matrilineal setup, the male children are forced to look out for jobs. Some may seek jobs within Kerala or migrate to Gulf countries. They are accommodated in lower grade jobs. Their intention is to earn money because he is encumbered with a large family. This is also a reason pointed by them for not going for further studies. So, either because of lack of talents in them or because of financial constraints they do not prefer to go for higher studies. Another reason is that they want to project that they cannot afford the cost of the present system of education in the private institutions.\textsuperscript{61}

Daudi Bohras are usually found as microscopic minority community among the Muslims of Calicut. They belong to Shia sect. They are a trading group and presently, there are a few families distributed in the South Beach Road. The respondents of the families say that 70 percentage of the females

\textsuperscript{60} Survey conducted on 20.11.06.
\textsuperscript{61} Interview with Kalimabi on 21-11-06.
are attending the +2 courses and 50% are studying in Degree courses\textsuperscript{62} and only 10% of them are rich and affluent while the remaining 90% are in poor condition. They also add that marriages of the female children are usually conducted at the age of twenty or so.\textsuperscript{63} The study concludes with the findings that in literacy they remain still backward compared to the women of Mappila community.\textsuperscript{64}

Calicut Girls' Vocational and Higher Secondary School, Kundungal was established on 4.8.1958. The founder C.P. Kunjahamed was the brain behind the upliftment of the Muslim community educationally and socially. He was also closely associated with MES in its formative years.

At present, the total strength of the school is 2836.\textsuperscript{65} The school consists of upper primary, High School, Vocational and Higher Secondary sections. The school is maintaining an excellent academic result. It has recorded 76% pass during 2005-06 out of 350 students appeared for the SSLC exam.\textsuperscript{66} Twenty five percentage of the students are from rich background and others are from poor families. Majority of the students, teaching and non-teaching members are Muslims.

\textsuperscript{62} Survey on 21.11.06.
\textsuperscript{63} Interview with Alifiya on 21.11.06.
\textsuperscript{64} For history of Daudi Bohras see Asgar Ali Engineer, \textit{The Bohras}.
\textsuperscript{65} Souvenier, \textit{Innolam} (Malayalam), 2003, p.207.
\textsuperscript{66} Interview with Headmistress of Calicut Girls Vocational Higher Secondary School, Kungal, Calicut, on 20.11.06.
The Higher Secondary section has kept up the same pass percentage. Presently, no married students are studying in this institution. This was not the situation earlier, say, twenty - twenty five years ago. At that time students used to get married while studying in the school. Now, some of the students are attending the coaching campus with the intention of joining the professional courses. A few of the ex-students are working as teachers in High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools. Currently, Sumayya an ex-student is doing her medicine.

The survey conducted among a few women of Rawther families at Parakunnam, Palakkad, reveals the fact that the growth rate of literacy is lesser than that of Mappila women. Among them, the literacy rate in the +2 level is 40%. It is also found that there are also drop outs in this category due to their marriages. And in the Degree level, the literacy rate is found to be 55%. Drop outs are also found in this category. Two percentageof the students are studying for post graduation or professional courses. The study also reveals out that male children are having a low literacy rate comparatively. Most of the families are in low income group two women are in the governmental service. Another striking feature is that migration to gulf countries are not very common here.

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67 Ibid.
68 Survey as 16.9.06.
As regards Dhakni (Pathan) families, their status is still worse. They are numerically inferior to other communities. At present in Palakkad town, some two hundred families are distributed. Basically, they are from Mysore region. The respondents say that only 40 percentage are attending +2 courses and 20 percentage are studying in Degree courses and 1 percentage of them are studying for professional courses. Only 2 percentage is employed.\textsuperscript{69} As far as male children are concerned, their literacy rate is lesser than that of females. But dropouts do not occur unlike Rawthers. In this community marriages do not take place in the teenage.

Gulf migrants and their income contributed become the income of the family. But due to low educational status they are employed in inferior jobs. As the gulf migrants possess only low posts, their survival in such places is an acute problem. Some of them are returning to the original homes. The rehabilitation of such people is a serious problem today.

In short, it is summed up that the women of Mappila community of erstwhile Malabar are relatively better in educational and socio-economic conditions. The status of women of other Muslim communities of the Malabar region is still worse and the male literacy is far from satisfactory than the female literacy.

\textsuperscript{69} Survey on 20.9.06.
The on the spot survey conducted by the present author in Areacode, a centre of Islamic resurgence caused by Islahi (Mujahid/Salafi) movement, reveals an interesting information on the socio-educational status of Muslim women.

Till the early 1920's the Muslim belt of Malappuram district was cut off from the main stream of the society. It was a backward area where the main occupation of the people was agriculture. Eranad and Valluvanad, the two historically significant places of South Malabar reminiscent of the historic Malabar Rebellion of 1921. This badly needed the Government interference and the British Government now took measures to nullify the effects of a series of outbreaks that occurred in this region.

William Logan, a popular administrator made a detailed study on the economic and social issues of the Mappilas of this region and he came out with his magnom opus *Malabar Manual*. This significant work identified the rural poverty and agrarian tension of the region in the colonial context as cause of these outbreaks. That is why the British declared south Malabar as an educationally and economically backward area.

Thus, the British took initiative to start schools particularly for the Mappila community. The schools thus established and which were called Mappila schools have passed more than 80 years as of now after their establishment.
Geographically, Areacode lies to the northern part of Manjeri which is in the Eranad taluk, a venue of political activities during the freedom movement in Malabar. Approximately, Areacode is 17 kilometers away from Manjeri. Presently, Areacode consists of 13 wards and it is located in a hilly region blessed with scenic beauty. Each ward will have at least 1000 families.\(^{70}\) It is overwhelmingly occupied by the Muslims.

The service minded philanthropists under the auspices of their organization named Jam-i-y yathul Mujahideen Sangham did yeomen service for uplift of the community from their salvaged position. In this connection the founder N.V. Abdussalam Moulavi needs a special mention. The idea struck to his mind at first to bring the people of this region to give proper religious awareness so as to prevent them from ignorance and superstition. He and his associates like N.V. Ibrahim master and others led the people in the campaign to secure secular education.\(^{71}\)

It was for this purpose a number of schools and colleges, both Arabic and Arts and Science Colleges were established in this area. These institutions actually remain as a source of inspiration for the younger generations. One among them is MEA Sullamussalam college, Areacode. It was started in 1995 in which both male and female students are studying. At

\(^{70}\) Interview with K. Safarullah, Superintendent. MEASS, College, Areacode, on 7.12.06.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.
present, the total strength of the college is 557. Out of them 65 percentage of them are female students. The college here stands proudly with its unique distinction of having secured 100 percentage pass results in the academic pursuits of the students during 1995 - 2006.\(^{72}\)

The survey specifically made clear that 100 percentage literacy rate is found in the +2 level classes among the Muslim girls and there is at least 70 percentage Muslim females attending Degree courses in the Areacode area. It is further noted that 20 percentage of the Muslim girls are attending the P.G courses including the professional courses.\(^{73}\)

In this college, 100 percentage students are Muslims and 70 percentage of them are Muslim girls Mr. Safarullah, the superintendent of the college says that from 1960's to 1990's, it is an efflorescence period in the history of Muslim education of Areacode area. Apart from its achievements it has reserved 20 percentage seats in the colleges, exclusively for Muslim girls to attract the girl students to study in this institution. In addition to that, employment opportunities are provided to the students who pass out from these institutions.

The Sullamussalam college was upgraded by starting P.G. courses in 2000. It is noted that some posts are filled with the Guest Lecturers. Though,

\(^{72}\) College Annual Report, 2005-2006.  
\(^{73}\) Survey on 7.12.06.
there are sufficient qualified hands to compete for the posts, there is a delay in the regular appointments. The delay is on the part of the Government.

The list of the girls students who passed out with distinction is given below. Abida Farooq, has secured I rank in M.A. English literature in the examinations conducted by the Calicut University during 2004-2005. Sajeena, E. is placed in II rank in computer science and Adeeba, P.M. in III rank in the same subject during 2003-2004. Two of the students, a boy and a girl were placed in Vipro software company in Bangalore.

As the principal, Dr. K. Mohamed Basheer has left for Mecca, the principal, in charge supplements the data by his remark that for the last five years, there is a change in the attitude of Muslims. This is reflected at the time of admissions. The seats are thrown open to the students. However, all the seats could not be filled up. This he says is due to the reluctance of Muslim parents to send their daughters for the college course. In few cases, the students prefer to go for job oriented courses or to get married. This explains the shortage of girls in the college now-a-days. There are also cases of Muslim girls migrating to gulf counties with their spouses.

Arabic colleges and High schools are functioning in and around the campus. It is run by the same management. Seventy percentage of the employees in these institutions are Muslim women, hailing from Areacode

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74 Interview with E.P. Abbas, Principal in charge, MEASS, Areacode on 7.12.06.
75 Ibid.
Panchayat. As far as Sullamussalam Oriental High School is concerned, 90% of them are from Areacode.

Regarding the social structure, the respondents say that they strictly adhere to the principles of Islam. They do not have any traits of matriliney as it is found in Calicut. The women of the area are strictly under Islamic dress code. Most of the women are found wearing purdha and are moving about and engaging themselves in their day to day activities. The respondents say that the female students of the college are strictly under instruction to wear Churidar with Slitless tops and a head veil (makkana). This is the prescribed uniform of the college for them.\textsuperscript{76}

Female members of the teaching and non teaching staff are to wear Sari with long sleeved blouses and a head veil. According to the respondents, the purdha weavers are on the rise. But, this increase in their view is not a part of religious fundamentalism. It may be due to religious awareness. They say that polygamy and 'talaq' do exist marginally among both educated and uneducated families of Areacode. It is said that it is existing under the compelling circumstances.\textsuperscript{77}

The aforesaid institutions are running under the influence of Mujahid movement and so they practise its ideology imposing it on the pragmatic life of the people. At any cost, they discourage superstitious beliefs, ceremonies,\textsuperscript{76} Interview with K. Safarullah, Superintendent. MEASS, Areacode on 7.12.06. \textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
nerchas, and sophisticated marriage functions. They exhort the people to lead
a simple life based on love and affection within their own communities and
other communities of the society.

To the credit of the movement, they said that recently, some marriages
were conducted without encouraging dowry. Regarding birth control, they
never adopt family planning methods generally, the families are having large
number of children, however educated they may be. They consider
restraining the number of children is anti-Islamic. No financial constraints
block their path towards progress in all ways. The Gulf impart has eased their
financial difficulties. They are all in better condition now.

Finally, the study concludes with the remarks of the informants. They
say that the students of the college do not have any financial difficulties.
Now, the financial constraints would not stand as a bottle neck to force them
to discontinue their studies. The reasons are listed as (1) The parents are
educated and are employed (2) Many of them are employed in Gulf and
settled with their spouses (3) The organization also sponsores many
scholarship schemes in favour of those who cannot afford to.

Ibrahim Masters' Foundation is also providing coaching to the students
from sixth standard onwards so as to equip the students to participate in the
civil service examinations. But, unfortunately not even a single student from
both genders has achieved this covetuous post, though the training imparted by this organisation is meant for giving training to prospective candidates for the posts in all India services.

In this connection it is worthy to mention Arakkal Beebis. The only Muslim royal family of Malabar, the Arakkal dynasty at Cannanore provides for succession through female line as per matrilineal rules. In Arakkal royal family the senior most male or female member in the female line becomes the head of the royal house with the title Arakkal Sultan (Ali Raja) or Arakkal Beebi as the case may be. In majority of the cases in Arakkal Royal house females have occupied the seat of head of the house. The present head of the house is a lady. Her immediate predecessor is also a member of the women folk. This system led to the empowerment of Muslim women in Malabar.

The Muslim women are participating in political field. K.P. Mariyumma was a senior lawyer and a social worker and the only woman district President of Malappuram during 1995-2000. Noorbina Rasheed, an advocate was a corporation counsellor of Calicut. P. Kulsu, is at present the member of women commission.

Kamaruninisa Anwar was the Chairperson of Social welfare Board, Government of Kerala. She was Muslim league activist also. Later she was designated as the chairperson of Women's Development Corporation. V. P.
Zuhra championed reforms in Muslim personal law to do justice to Muslim women.

As per the new regulations governing election of representatives to Municipal bodies and three tier panchayat committees Muslim women candidates have been returned to these bodies. This factor has added to empowerment of Muslim women in Malabar.

For example Thottiyal Kunhi Beevi and C. H. Jameela were the chairperson presiding were as the everyday lives of thousand of people. One is retired Government official in her late fifties and other school teacher in her thirties. Never, before they had any public speeches in life nor holding a public office. Still they assumed the charge of chair person of municipalities of Malappuram and Tanur when the states were reserved for women.

Kunhi Beevi was daughter of a Musaliyar (religious teacher). To be fair this was the third battle against her own circumstances. The first was in her childhood when she wanted to study beyond primary school. She said she was a bright student but girls were not expected to study much, I was lucky that I was daughter of locally influential Musaliyar and they did not dare to do much here.79

Thus during her poll campaign she had to cope with local hardcore sunni segment who were against Muslim women entering in public life. By

79 Sundary Express, Cochin, 12th December, 2000.
dint of her courage and efficiency she entered into public life. She said that having nothing to do after retirement she entered the public scene.

Jameela is quite candid about her own reason for joining this service. She said "I and my husband have no kids, I was feeling bored after the few hours spent teaching in the local school. I wanted to pass time better." She admitted that if not for women's reservation, there would have been no chance of getting this position. Her entry into the local bodies was opposed by the orthodox section. But still she never declined the post and she took over the charge of administration with courage and confidence.

It is also to be noted that a silent revolution is taking place in Tanur. Muslim women are coming out of their shells to empower themselves. With the help of Kerala "Sastra Sahitya Parished" they have become experts in repairing fans and other electrical goods. All this would show how a social change is working wonders for Malappuram's hitherto shy women. It is the ability of women to live with dignity to acquire independence of mind and spirit and will to face life's nagging problems. Muslim dominated Tanur in Malappuram district is witnessing a silent revolution of all sorts quietly but forcefully. Illiterate housewives are now literate with their own efficiency in day-to-day life especially in the energy sector. Now they are not afraid to handle to the electrical equipments at home. If we ask Mundathode Razia,

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80 Ibid.
why a bulb gets illuminated when it is switched on, she will give many reasons.

The underdeveloped regions of Tanur are all in a ferment as the women have dared to come out of their shells. It is a positive development, says Nirmala Kumari, the worker of 'Samastha,' the sister organization of Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad. stepped in instructing them and helping them to find an identity of their own. The untiring efforts of these organization have attracted many Muslim housewives and the activists have organized many awareness programmes.

Saleem says that they took this job because the electricians were pocketing huge sums.\footnote{The Indian Express, (daily) Cochin, 15\textsuperscript{th} August, 1998.} But the silent revolution has affected the scores of electricians in the place. They are afraid of this trend. If it spreads to other districts, the electricians would launch agitations against them for getting protection for them. This was said by one of the reputed electricians named Manikandan K.B. This is women's empowerment in its purest sense.

Not only the western education has played a prominent part in raising the educational, social and economic conditions of Muslim women, but certainly, some other factors are also to be accounted. The West Asian migration has played a crucial role in enhancing the literacy rate especially among women of Malappuram area.
The awareness among the ladies was due to their conscious efforts to get involved in communicating with their counterparts at Gulf. Further, in order to deal independently with banks, they became conscious of the need for learning to read and write. They have learnt to fill withdrawal and deposit forms. It was found that 22.7% of illiterate women tried to become literate only for the purpose of communicating with their husbands in Gulf countries.\footnote{K.T. Aboobeeker Siddique, 'Impact of Gulf life of Malappuram district' (unpublished, Ph.D. thesis), University of Calicut, 1992, p.193.}

There is mushrooming growth of residential schools. As the boys are out of control, the mother used to accommodate them in residential school and kindergarten schools are also growing considerably in rural and urban areas of Malappuram district. From these facts it is clear that Muslim women are conscious of their duties to be performed in the absence of their husbands.

Some striking changes have been noticed in the day to day life. As we all know that in almost all the societies of the world there are two sections Haves and Have-nots. One section remains rich, affluent and economically independent with their engagements in their trade and commerce. The children of such families would have the benefit of education. The children of the poor are denied this privilege. Poverty stands as impediment too difficult to overcome. Now, there is a change in the conditions of the poor
due to the inflow of Gulf money. To a certain extent, poverty does not stand as an obstacle in acquiring education.

A lot of changes have taken place in other fields also. In the realm of marriage, the Gulf money has exerted a profound influence to a large extent. Not only in Malappuram but in other parts, the parents think that it is their duty to conduct the marriage of their daughters with much pomp and splendor as they can afford. It is reported that an amount of Rs.3 lakh has been spent for the marriage of a 'Gulf daughter'.

It may be mentioned that since the marriage of a girl usually involves heavy expenditure in connection with dowry and such other things, a marriage is preceded by a 'Kurikalyanam' especially among the poorer sections which is a notable custom prevalent among them.

Any man who is hard pressed for money conducts a 'Kurikalayanam'. Friends and relatives are invited and they are given some light refreshents. The assembled guests are expected to give a sum of money to the host. The amount given varies according to the status and financial position of both the parties. This is a good way of acquiring a lump sum of money. Those who have given money on each occasion will invariably get a lump sum when they

83 Ibid., p.198.
conduct the 'Kurikalyanam'. This is really a great boon to the people especially to the poor.

However, the custom is not confined to the poor and the unwritten law is that those who secured a lump sum in this way should give back a similar or higher amount. Being a rough and an instant way of self help, it binds people one another with self interest.

The Muslims generally followed monogamy here. But dowry system exists in almost all the communities in Malabar. The dowry is always paid in cash, property and Jewellery. The Muslims, the Christians, and Namboodiris suffer from most of the time honoured evils. Parents belonging to middle class particularly and even lower income groups therefore find it very difficult to marry their daughters. Inspite of the fact that many social reformers have worked hard to do away with this evil it is not uprooted. Mutual marriage alliances have increased.

Among Muslims the institution of 'Mahr' which is compulsory has also undergone a change accordingly. Its value has increased tremendously. Consequently, the status of the bride has been enhanced. The Gulf migrants give generous financial contribution for meeting expenses of poor girls. Hence, their position has also improved in the society. As the financial condition is stabilized the educational and social status of Muslim women has also risen.
Changes have also been noticed in the dressing pattern. Either due to West Asian migration or continuous exposure to the city life women have changed their dressing pattern. The girls who were wearing pavada (skirt) and jacket are now wearing, salvar kamiz, churidar and also sari. Even though, the purdhawearers are few in number it has become fashion among the college teenagers. It may be due to the demonstration effects of the Gulf migrants.

Until a few decades ago, only extreme orthodox sunni Muslim women were wearing Purdha in Malabar and elsewhere in Kerala. Women of high class Muslims kept and hid their face when they went out and held an umbrella so as to hide their faces from the vulgar eye. But they never used purdha. Its popularity is increasing now-a-days partly due to the realization that it less costlier than sari. Here comes the cost factor for using purdha.

But the predominant factor is the editorial support given by the women publications and the patronage of the community organizations, says a noted writer and progressive critic on Muslim women's issue. Purdha is a recent phenomenon in Malabar and other parts of Kerala.

Now, they can be spotted everywhere in colleges, markets and other places. Observers are unable to pin point one single factor responsible for the rapid spread of Purdha in such a short time. One factor may be due to the

86 Recorded in Website (internet)
demolition of Babri-Masjid and the subsequent tendency of the community members to become introverted by becoming fundamentalists.

The conversion of the famous writer and poetess Kamaladas alias Madhavikutty to Islam three years ago triggered another boon for burqa market as publications devoted dozens of features on the celebrity in purdha. It was an almost war-like campaign, to attract more and more buyers for new and newer brands. A number of shops selling buqas sprang up in Calicut, Kasargod and Malappuram. Now more than twenty companies are manufacturing burqas in Kerala. And all of them get the quota of feature support from these magazines.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Calicut University, 10 women's magazines carried 143 reports and features and 23 of them on covers to promote Purdha. 'Aramam' tops the list with 23 Purdha features to its credit. 'Pudava' and 'Poonkavanam' also published 19 and 10 articles respectively.

Two relative new comers, 'Mahila Chandrika', a sister magazine of 'Chandrika' publication owned by the Indian Muslim league and 'Tejas' fortnightly, carried three Purdha features. The survey also reveals that the number of Muslim women who wear Purdha in the five districts of Malabar region increased from 3.5 percentage in 1990 to 35 percentage in 2000. Purdha House and 'Hoorulyn' sell Purdhas in large numbers. 'Madhyamam' news
paper has emerged as third largest newspaper in the state and it has organized debates on the promotion of Purdha and published more than fifty letters to the editor in its columns defending the spread of Arabian dress code.

In olden days, the ordinary dress of the Mappila men was 'Mundu' or cloth, generally with a purple border, but sometimes orange or green or plain white. It is tied on the left by a waist string. A small knife was usually worn at the waist. Women wear 'mundu' of some colour cloth (dark blue was most usual) and a white loose bodice more or less embroidered and a veil or a scarf on the head. In the case of the wealthy, the 'mundu' might be of silk of some light colour. Women of the higher classes were kept secluded and hide their face when they went out. The lower classes were not particular in this respect.

Women’s jewellery was of considerable variety and was sometimes costly. It took the form of necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets and auklets. Muslim women had their holes bored and lobe of the ears was pierced and a bit of lead inserted and flap distended. Incredibly, large sums were spent on female ornaments. For there were five or six sorts, for the waist five or six sorts, all made up of gold. As strict sunnis, the boring of the nose was prohibited. Now they are using new types of ornaments.

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87 quoted in Edgar Thurston, The Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. IV, New Delhi, Madras, 1909, 1487.
88 Ibid., p.488.
89 K.P. Padmanabha Menon, op.cit., p.554.
A new trend in the dress pattern of the people of India began to appear in India. The influence of the same trend was found among the people of Kerala in the later half of the 20th century. Prior to that, the lower castes were in the grip of caste rigidity. The women of lower castes were not privileged to wear the upper garments where as higher caste women were entitled to such dresses. Any attempt by the lower caste women to emulate the upper caste would be penalised. The type of undergarments like 'onnara' and 'kacha' used to be worn by females and males respectively were all connected with the then physical exercises.⁹⁰

But today, with the influence of European ways of living and dress pattern, traditional garments are replaced by the new westernised dresses. Not only as a result of westernisation but urbanisation and migration to metro towns of India and the Gulf countries, the dress pattern has undergone tremendous change. This change has had an effect on Muslim women also.

Some decades ago, Muslim parents married off their children when they attained puberty. The children were sent to school till they reached puberty. This trend did not free girls from the vicious circle of early marriage. Consequently, on a account of this trend, in those days, high rate of infant and maternal mortality occurred. Most of the women in

Malappuram especially were grand mothers by the time they reached their early thirties. Now the approaches and concepts have been changed, with the help of secular education, financial stability due to Gulf impact and such other factors. So, the marriageable age of the females has also gone up.

As the number of men migrating to Gulf countries has increased, majority of the houses have become female dominated in their absence. They have been forced to play larger roles at home and outside. Now, a good portion of household goods are left with them to be managed by them. The entire responsibility of looking after the other members of the family vests with women them in the absence of male members. What is seen enhancing her status is the authority in her hands to make decisions in the domestic sphere. The schooling of the children is considered to be an exclusive duty of the household women in the absence of their spouses. Muslim women's participation in manual work in Malappuram district depends upon the economic status. It is observed that they not only employ labourers and supervisors for work but they are well acquainted with agricultural operations. They know about high yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc.

When the Gulf money has brought a boon in their economy, they tended to withdraw from the work force and the social mobility of women began to be increased. They have come into contact with a wide network of institutions. There has been increasing recognition of these women in local
circles also. Neighbors treat them as mediators in solving their mutual problems. Their decisions are largely accepted by the local people. The education has emancipated them. Educated Muslim women gained economic independence which further consolidated their positions in the family.\textsuperscript{91}

Because of the sudden jump in the economic positions and greater recognition of their social status, girls of migrant families have an increased demand in the marriage market. Thus, the magnitude of the migratory streams is such that there are bound to be some impacts on social, economic and other aspects of life of the district. The migrants are in affluent position with their increased landed possessions which they accumulated after their Gulf migration. There is a marked difference between migrants and non migrants with regard to the amenities and pattern of living\textsuperscript{92}

The economic boon has created a new class of landowners among the depressed class and tenant labourers. The enhanced economic condition has reduced the social distance between the former aristocracy and low income groups which has led to the undermining of old social order and facilitated the prospects of greater social freedom. Women accompanying their husbands to the Gulf do not wish to while away their time at home and this is contributing to an increase in the number of Malayali Muslim women working in Gulf

\textsuperscript{91} Renjini, D. \textit{Nayar women Today, Disintegration of Matrilineal system and the status of Nayar women in Kerala}, New Delhi, 2000, p.43.
\textsuperscript{92} K.T. Aboobecker Siddique, \textit{op.cit.}, .173.
countries. Not with standing obstacles such as early marriage, neither higher education nor employment is a taboo in today's Muslim community.

Even the orthodox sunnis have changed their attitude towards higher education of women. In 1930's, says M.N. Karassery, writer and Professor of Malayalam at the University of Calicut, sunni scholars of Kerala had proscribed education for Muslim women. It is a welcome sign that those who shut off their women from education have opened the doors of higher education for women.93

The income and expenditure pattern decides one's own social status. Social mobility of the low and middle class people has made them easier to get an access to better facilities of housing transport, health and break down of their economic dependence affected the equilibrium of the society.

Along with significant changes in the social, political and economic institutions, religious institutions also witnessed, revolutionary transformation.94 Muslim women are not prevented from prayers in almost all mosques despite, the fundamentalist objections. The recent workshop on 'Islam' and 'Feminism' organized by US consulate in Chennai was oblivious of these facts. The venue of the workshop was initially proposed to be Farook College. But in the wake of strong protests from Muslim student's bodies the

93 *The Hindu, op.cit.*, p.10
venue was changed. It was conducted in a hotel situated in the heart of the city of Calicut.

The auditorium was filled with some invited ladies from the elitist inner circle of urban Muslim community. Several meetings and debates had been held by various Muslim organizations in the region clarifying Islamic perceptions of women status. There is no such term called 'Islamic Feminism' as has been stated in a resolution adopted by the Islamic Students Movement (ISM) at a debate held at Calicut. The resolution observed that while giving due respect to women, Islam provides gender equality to women.

After analysing how social changes have effected the Muslim women it can at best be inferred that these women have established an identity in the society after passing through many challenges that encircled them. The courage and confidence instilled in her an urge to come to the fore. It is in fact, due to the impact of modern secular education, the profound influence of social reformers, Middle East life, the expansion of trade and commerce, new economic opportunities and more contacts with outside world have brought fundamental changes in the social structure of Muslim women.

The Muslim women have of late come to their own. They are now in the mainstream of society with the introduction of reservation for women in local self government bodies. Many Muslim women have found their way to the forefront of such bodies. There are similar avenues which have provided
them with opportunities to come up to positions in the society along with the members of other communities.

In any society in transition, whatever be the ideological perspective for the social set up, one cannot completely snap the relationship with the past. The necessity of change is acutely felt with the movement in the social base. But conservatism or orthodoxy may not cope up with pressures for genuine change. Moreover it kills what is creative best in human beings.

The Muslim community and women of Malabar have come to the present with a legacy of the past. Passing through the old traditions, they have reached a new destination, a point beyond their past. Now, we see them in a new environment, one modified by the lessons of the past experience. No community is an exception to change. So is the case of Muslim women of Malabar.

In the next chapter we discuss the trends of the community - Muslim women of Malabar - with reference to specific issues.