Chapter 4

SUNNI MOVEMENT
The word Sunni in Kerala context is a term used for a Muslim sect differed mainly from *Ahlu Sunnah Wa al Jamaah* having some peculiar features of beliefs and practices with them. The Kerala Sunnis are the followers of Shafi'i school in their juristic particulars, but are equally ascribed to the thoughts of Ahmad Raza Khan popularly known as Fazil-e-Barelvi (1856-1921) of north India in most of their ceremonial practices. The Kerala Sunnis are, however more constructive and engaged themselves in all the socio-political programmes of Muslim community. The Sunni Muslims are the most powerful group among the Muslim organisations. Its influence reached to all groups, rich and poor. The term Sunni is derived from the Arabic word, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-jama'ah* that means they accept the opinion of the *sahaba* along with Qur'an and the *hadith* as the authority in Islam\(^1\). In short they accepted the customs and traditions of the companions of Prophet, who lived in the 1\(^{st}\) century of Islamic era, as the part of Islamic *Shariah*\(^2\).

The same argument is provided by other Muslim organisations like *Mujahid, Jama’at-e-Islami and Thablighi Jama’ah*. The Sunnis do not include these organisations in the category of *Ahl al- Sunnah Wa al- Jama’ah* due to the following conceptual differences.

1) **Tauhid**

Explanation to *tauhid* given by Sunnis is based on the Holy Qur’an. According to Holy Qur’an, Chapter *Ikhlas* (112: 2) says *Allahu al- Samad* (Allah the Self Sufficient)\(^3\). This terminology as
explained by Ponmala Abdul Qadir Musliyar, a veteran leader of Sunni Muslims demands that ‘Samad’ means God is self-able or self-sufficient. If any one believes that this attribute is exhibited in any other creature of God, it is *shirk* and against the principles of Islam. If a person believes that the attributes of God are unchangeable and seeks help from a Prophet or saint or a holy man or makes the creature as an intermediary between God and individuals, he is not violating the concept of *tauhid* (4).

2) **Istighatha**

Allah has given some *Karamat* to his beloved people like *Awlia Allah* (5) This extra ordinary divine gift to a pious man does not cease with his death. It may continue even after his death if Allah wills. Muslims can seek help from the Prophet and *Awlia* even after their death. It is the belief of Sunni Muslims. The evidence to this belief was supported by the practices of the companions of the Prophet as the Sunni scholars claims.

Ponmala Abdul Khader Musliyar says that during the period of Umar, the second caliph of Islam, a person approached the grave of Prophet (SAW) at Madinah and asked

“O, Prophet people are in trouble, they are too sad due to the lack of rain. You may please pray Allah for the rain. It was heard by many of the companions of Prophet including Hazrat Umer. No one restricted him from such a practices”. (6) on this basis they say that *Istighatha* is permissible in Islam.
3) Tabarruk

'Barkat' means have Allah's favour by respecting and venerating pious people or respectable things like Qur'an and Hadith or the thing which is used or visited or touched by righteous and holy persons. This is the concept of Sunnis. They believe that this is on the basis of the traditions of the Prophet. Umm Sulaim collected the sweat of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Prophet made an enquiry about it. She replied that she attributes some Barkat. On hearing this Prophet replied you are right (7). Another tradition reported by Hasrat Asma that the shirt of Prophet Muhammad was used to recover the diseases of some of the sahaba(8). This is the main source of tabarruk one which is being kept as a long memory and association. They also believed in mantras for recovering the diseases. Bukhari and Muslim reported the Hadith that one day on the way the Sahaba treated a poisoned person by manthra (Holy hymns) and received a goat from him as gift which was eaten by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also. It was supplicating manthra on the ailing people. Another important contradiction between Sunnis and other Muslims in Kerala is that of performing taraweeh. Taraweeh is a special performance of supererogatory prayer in the month of Ramdhan just adjacent to the night prayer (Salat al Isha). The Prophet of Islam as quoted in the hadith used to form some additional rakah after the salat al Ishah paying a gratitude to Allah
who revealed the holy Quran in the month of Ramdhan and Who obligated the Muslims to perform fast during the whole month. The Prophet (SAW) was seen by the companions to perform sometimes eight rakats while other companions visited him performing twenty rakats. This is the marginal difference about the number of the rakats of Taraweeh. The Kerala Muslims unfortunately were trapped into severe differences or sometime clashes on account of this difference. Sunnis following Imam Abu Hanifa perform 20 rakats as taraweeh prayer. Some jurists and their followers perform 8 rakats as per varying dictates of the ahadith.

4) Women's Joining the congregational prayers

Another important aspect regarding Sunnis is entering of women into the mosques. Sunnis attacked other Muslims and scholars for their favourable arguments in case of women joining in the masjid. They urged on the basis of the tradition of the Prophet. Umm Humadini Sayidi sought permission for joining the Jumu'ah, within the mosque premises along with men, and was denied; she was told to perform prayer in her house(9). Sunnis also took some other traditions from Sahaba like Hazrat Ibn Masud and Hazrat Umar, who opposed of women joining in the prayer. On the basis of this Sunnis argued that the women could not be permitted to participate in jumua prayer or other congregational prayers in the mosque.
Apart from this there are some minor contradictions between Sunnis and the rest of the Muslims regarding the funeral such as

a) *Dikr* for dead: On the ways to the graveyard, Sunnis rehearse *La Ilaha Illa Allah* loudly and this is opposed by the rest.

b) Reciting of Holy Qur’an in the graveyard after burial function was over. Sunnis followed this on the basis of a tradition reported by Hazrat Ibn Umar, Prophet says

“If a person is dead, burry him as soon as possible, after he is buried recite Al Baqara near the grave of the dead”\(^{10}\).

c) Feeding the poor’s in order to console the dead. This is another custom practiced by Sunnis on the basis of the practices of *sahaba* (companions of the Prophet). Imam Twaoos (R) says, “Dead persons would be punished for seven days in their graves. So the *sahaba* used to feed the poor for the dead in these days”\(^{11}\).

d) Pray for dead: Sunnis pray for the dead persons on the ground Prophet Mohammed had prayed for the dead. Umme Salma reported that Prophet prayed “O! God forgive Abu Salma, raise his status to the rank of good personalities and enlighten his grave”.\(^{12}\)

e) *Qunoot* on morning prayer. Sunnis believe that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) practiced *Qunoot* in the morning prayer,
Hazrat Anas is reported to have said that the Prophet used to recite Qunoot in *salat al-fajr* till his demise.

All these practices of Sunnis were opposed by the rest Muslims. But the Sunnis claimed that they followed the practices of the Prophet, the *sahaba* and the *thabi’un* and called themselves as followers of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah* as predicated in the prophetic traditions.

**Historical Background**

Sunnis are rooted in the classical emergence of Islam in Kerala. It is the first and foremost organisation of Kerala Muslims in a systematic way. They have great influence upon the Muslims of Kerala and all of them worked together. A unity prevailed the Muslim community except occasionally like the contradiction between *Kondotty* and *Ponnani* groups, *Kaitharkam*, regarding bowing before the shaikh, not giving due importance to the rituals, mingling of men and women, and some kind of intoxications in the religious functions were some of the practices of Kondotty groups that were strongly opposed by great Sunni leaders like Makhdums of Ponnani, Jifri Thangal Calicut, Ummer Qadi and Saidalavi Thangal of Mamburam. They issued *fatwas* against these practices of Kondotty groups, which were the best examples of Sunni’s attitude against irreligious customs and practices. The Sunni leaders controlled the Muslim community wisely till the beginning of Malabar Rebellion in 1921. They worked for the propagation of Islam.
and upliftment of the Muslim community. 1921 revolt and its aftermath damaged the Muslims very badly and they were isolated from the rest of the stream.

During this period, different types of organisations were formed having inspired by the Muslim leadership from abroad. This inspired community in South India formed a Muslim scholars organisation called Majlis -al- Ulama. A special conference was convinced at Erode in Tamil Nadu on April 2nd and 3rd in 1921. And a suggestion was put forward in this conference to form an Ulama organisation for Kerala and it was strongly opposed by Qutubudeen Abdul Bari Musliyar. His argument was that such an organisation should be formed only after heavy consultation with all the scholars of Kerala (14). But the leaders who participated in the conference like K.M.Moulavi and Kattilassery Mohammed Moulavi agreed to the proposal of Erode conference. Consequently it led to form an organisation, Kerala Majlis al –Ulama on April 23, 1921 at Ottappalam with the support of Khilafath- Congress Conference (15).

Aim of this organisation was to introduce ‘Sunnath Jama’ath’ on the basis of four schools of jurisprudence (16). But most of the Sunni scholars did not accept it as their own and it created an urge to form a purely Sunni organisation. Following are the other reasons:

(1) **Spread of Ahmadiya Sect.**

With the help of British Government, the Ahmadiya Movement strengthened its influence among the Muslim masses, Sunnis
realized that the individual resistance was not sufficient to check Ahmadiya activities. They also thought that the group activity was the only way to attract the masses to Sunni ideology.

2) Deviant Tariqah

During the same period the Tariqah Movements like Noorisha Tariqah, Shamsiya Tariqah, Kondotti Tariqah etc. started to influence the Muslims of Kerala. To some extent their activities resembled the Sunnis and therefore some confusion were created. The common Muslims were spiritually exploited by these tariqah. To counter such fake Sufis, Sunni scholars decided to start a combined movement against them.

3) Reformation Movement in the Arab World

In the late nineteen century the intellectual condition was confined and conclusive for the growth of modern concepts mainly through the writings and statements of the Muslim reformers like Shaikh Muhammad Abduh (1849 -1905) Jamaluddin Afghani (1839-97) Qasim Amin (d1908) Muhammad Rashid Rida (d1935) etc. Their social, political and religious teachings inspired the Muslim world. The reformers followed the teachings of Ibn Taymiyah (d1327) in the condemnation of superstitions and accretions that had contaminated the faith. Their prescriptions accepted intellectual and political revivalism of religion together with political unification under one supreme head.
This revival movements reached and influenced common Muslims in Kerala. The Sunnis decided to counter them by the same coin and formed an organisation of Ulama called *Samasta Kerala Jami’at al-Ulama* in 1926.\(^{17}\)

4) **Formation of Muslim Aikya Sangam and Kerala Jami’at al Ulama.**

The Sunni scholars were favourable to the formation of *Muslim Aikya Sangam* and *Kerala Jami’at al-Ulama*, which formed in 1924 at Alwaye. In its beginning the great Sunni scholar of the age Pangil Ahmad Kutty Musliyar participated the second annual conference of *Muslim Aikya Sangam* and its Ulama Conference, as a delegate.\(^{18}\) He also prayed for its progress. But the *Aikya Sangam’s* activities created some doubts in the mind of Sunnis. Later they understood that *Aikya Sangam* and its Ulama organisation was against the Sunni ideology. So they decided to form a new organisation for defending the activities of *Aikya Sangam* and its Ulama Organisation.

**Formation of Samastha Kerala Jami’at al-Ulama**

Later in 19th Century, the activities of Sunnis in Kerala were initiated by the local *Mahallu* committees. They constructed madrasas\(^{19}\) and mosques which were the centres of religious education. After the 1921 revolt, they strengthened the activities of institutions to solve the problems faced by Muslim community and take steps to improve the religious education. *Asasul Uloom* and
Islah al Uloom at Thanur in Malappuram (Dist) were some of the such local organisations. These local organisations were early resistors of Tariqah and Ahmadiya trends. After the emergence of Aikya Sangam and its Ulama organisation, the Sunnis were compelled to form an organisation.

Pangil Ahmadkutty Musliyar and Verakkal Mullakoya Thangal decided to form an organisation for Sunnis. They assembled at Kuttichira Valiya Mosque near Calicut in 1925 and selected P.K. Muhammed Meeran Musliyar and Parayil Hussain Musliyar as president and secretary respectively, for newly formed Kerala Jami'at al-Ulama. On January 26, 1926 the official meeting held at Calicut Town Hall selected Varakkal Mullakoya Thangal and Pangil Ahmad Kutty Musliyar as its President and Secretary respectively. In 1934 it registered according to Companies Act as Samasta Kerala Jami’at al Ulama. Those who studied the classical Islamic books like Al-fiya, Fatha al Mu’een and Jalalaini were entitled for the membership. The anti-British elements could not join organisation since at the time of registration the founding members promised in his memorandum of articles that they will provide membership only to those who would support the British. It will not be correct to the claim that the Sunni supported the British only in the given situation. They had been always pro-government even before the registration of the organisation. The 6th annual conference held at Farook in 1933 opposed Indian National Congress and declared its
pro-government attitude. It caused to develop some anti-Sunni feelings among the Muslims but the majority of them continued their faith in the Sunni ideology because;

(a) they believed that the role of Samasta was to protect the Sunni ideology from the attack of rest;

(b) the majority of Muslim scholars belonged to the Sunni organisation and

(c) for the smooth running of *Samasta Kerala Jami’at al-Ulama* they constituted a 40 members *Shura* council which popularly known as *mushawara*, which would have issued *fatwas* against anti-Islamic activities and other contention issues. Moreover, this *shura* council was constituted of the eminent scholars and they controlled the day to day affairs of Samasta. Due to the above reasons, majority of Muslims followed Samasta and its council. They believed that it is the authentic organ of the Muslim Community.

S.K.J.U. concentrated on the orations of this scholars to be delivered to propagate the ideology. The religious speeches usually conducted in the night were helpful to common Muslims to understand the religion. They did not give much attention to publications in the beginning as the majority of the Muslims were illiterate. Moreover they did not pay much attention to provide secular education and this affected education of the Muslim Community.
Their main attention was to provide religious education and defend the other religious groups. They publically came out against Ahmadiya sect and issued a religious decree that the Ahmadiya sect is not Islamic one and its propagators and followers are not Muslims. Likewise they vehemently opposed the different Tariqahs like Kondotti, Chettoor, Noorisha, Shamsia etc. It issued a fatwa against these Tariqahs on the ground that their teachings were against Islamic ideology. They also criticized the ideology of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab the most popular reformer in the Arab world, whose followers in Kerala are known as Mujahideen. They passed a resolution in 1930 in its 4th annual conference held at Mannarkad that

“All kinds of relations with Mujahid Movement in Kerala should be stopped due to their ideological relations with Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab”.

The same policy was adopted by the Sunnis towards Jama‘at-e-Islami founded by Abul A‘la Maududi (d1979) and Tablighi Jama‘at founded by Mohammed Ilyas (d 1944).

We can see that before the independence, Sunnis mainly concentrated on preserving their traditional beliefs, customs and practices resisting the other newly established organisations. But after independence, in 1947 they made some modifications in their policies. Among these the most important was the formation of
Samasta Kerala Islam Matha Vidyabyasa Board (Islamic Educational Board).

**Samasta Kerala Islam Matha Vidyabyasa Board.**

Before the independence, Sunnis followed the traditional ways of religious education, they mainly depend on madrasas and mosques. These institutions imparted through their curricula, the reciting of the Holy Qur'an, some *moulids* or *baits* and some lessons of jurisprudence. The syllabus varied from place to place. But in 1940's Samasta reconstructed its syllabus and revised the methods of Madrasa system. In the 16\textsuperscript{th} Annual conference held at Kariyavattom in 1945, Sayid Abdurahman Bafaqi Thangal pointed out the importance of revising the Madrasa system on the basis of Sunni ideology, and requested to form a curriculum for school students up to the age of ten to impart religious education (28).

The following were the reasons to revise madrasa system:

1. The Ahmadies, Mujahids, Jama'at-e-Islami and Tablighi Jama'at established new religious institutions in modern ways and they modernised the existing traditional system of education in a systematic way which had attracted the common Muslims.

2. The urgent need of changing the educational system after independence.

3. The policy of government after independence caused to separate religious education from secular one.
Samasta took the issue of modernising the *madrasa* system. Seriously, *Samasta Mushawara* decided the following

a) to develop or create a syllabus on the basis of *Ahl al Sunnah wa al jama’ah*.

b) to publish text books for Madrasas and distribute them through Samasta

c) to develop a systematic curriculum for Madrasa \(^{(29)}\)

Later they realised that it is very difficult to develop a curriculum and syllaby without an expert committee. 19th Annual Conference of Samasta held at Vadakara in 1951 decided to form an educational board and appointed K.P.Muhiyudheen Kutty Musliyar as its convener \(^{(30)}\).

The convener called an educational conference in 1951 at Valakulam and decided the following:

1) to establish Dars and Madrasas

2) to prepare curriculum, syllabus and text books

3) to start class room divisions.

4) to conduct annual examinations.

5) to appoint the qualified teachers to *Madrasas* and *Dars*

6) to provide in service courses to teachers, and

7) to grant the affiliation \(^{(31)}\)

For the smooth running of the Board, a committee was constituted consisting of K.P. Muhyadheenkutty as President,
K.P.Usman Sahib as the Secretary and Syyid Abdul Rahman Bafaqi Thangal as its treasurer.

In the beginning the Mahallu committees did not favour to register their Madrasas under this Board. But Samasta convinced them the need to register. They also modernised the Dars system by establishing an Arabic Colleges\(^{32}\) Jammiya Noorriya at Pattikkad, near Perinthalmanna in Malappuram District like the model of Baquiyath al Salihath Vellore\(^{33}\)

Within a short period, after the formation of educational Board, Samasta played an important role to provide systematic religious education and they started a number of madrasas in different parts of Kerala which helped them to achieve their goal. As per the documents of the Sunni organisation, the Samastha is now supervising 7700 madrasas and the Sunni groups under Shaikh A.P. Abubaker musliyar supervising around 5000 madrasas.

**Samasta Kerala Sunni Yuvajana Sangam**

*Sunni Youvajana Sangam* was an independent organisation in its beginning and was formed in 1954. The main objective of this organisation was to spread the ideology of Sunnah Jama’at among the Muslim youth and prepare the youngsters to resist the Ahmadi trends, Tariqahs, Mujahids, Jama’at-e-Islami and Tabligh. Apart from this, they also protected poor and orphans, and worked for the peace and tranquility.
Samasta approved it as a subordinate organisation on February 6th, 1961. Relief activities, awareness programmes, educational and cultural activities are the important programmes of Samasta Kerala Sunni Youvajana Sangam for the progress of Muslim community. Markaz Educational Complex was established in 1978 at Karanthur near Calicut and it was the best example of their contribution to the promotion of education. After that many institutions were established following the model of Markaz in different parts of Kerala.

The educational programs and social cultural activities helped to develop the awareness of Sunni ideology in Muslim youth. Moreover the youth coming out of their institutions were the strong promoters of Sunni ideology which made a decisive impact on the Sunni group to exceed in number than the other Muslim groups and to preserve the age old Sunni tradition.

**Sunni Students Federation**

Before 1970’s religious education is not generally imparted in the Muslim managed modern institutions and students admitted there were not supposed to be sensitive towards their moral values and good contact in general. This was the situation when Samasta decided to form a student organisation to impart Sunni ideology - based on education among the Muslim students. They held a students conference at Pattikkad in connection with the Jamia Nooriya Conference in 1973 and formed a student organisation.
They conducted a lot of religious and organisational programmes in different parts of Kerala. They played an important role in spreading religious literature among the Muslim students. The religious institutions like madrasas and dars, arts and science colleges etc. in aided and un-aided sector, run by Sunni Muslims, were the main centres of their activities. The organisation is popularly known as SSF which published Risala in the form of weekly. Besides it also had published a lot of books and CDs on general socio-cultural issues and theological basis of Islam.

**Dakshina Kerala Jami’at al-Ulama**

During the 1940's Mujahid, Jama’at-e-Islami, and Tablighi Jama’at started their movement in the North and South Kerala. Samasta decided to extend their activities in the south and sent Pangil Ahmad Kutty Musliyar and Kuttubi Muhammed Musliyar to the South Kerala to discuss the problems with Sunni Ulama and decided to form an Ulama organisation for the south[37]. On the basis of above discussions the first meeting of Ulama in south was held at Kollam on June 22, 1955 and appointed an adhoc committee with Shahabudheen Moulavi as its convener. This was called Travancore Cochin Jami’at al Ulama [38]. Due to the efforts taken by Shahabudhin Moulavi a large convention was held at Thiruvananthapuram on August 2 in the same year. In this meeting convener explained the needs and necessities of such an organisation to be approved by Ulama who assembled at V.J.T.Hall.
The convention appointed a committee under Yunus Moulavi as president, Ummerkutty Moulavi as its secretary, Shahabudheen Moulavi as its vice president and OBT Fareed Moulavi as its treasurer. This was the third Ulama organisation in Kerala.

"Travancore Cochin Ulama Organisation decided to conduct a state conference at Changanacherry in 1955 November 12 to 13 which was presided by Kutubi Muhammed Musliyar and the first working committee was held at Kayamkulam. In 1956 January 15, after the formation of Kerala State in 1956 November 1st, this organisation was registered as Dakshina Kerala Jamia't al-Ulama.

To expand their activities in south Kerala they formed the following organisations.

**Dakshina Kerala Islam Matha Vidyabiyasa Board**

D.K.J.U. played an important role to impart religious education to Muslim community in South Kerala. For this purpose they established a large number of madrasas and dars. To spread the religious education, at first they co-operated with local organisation like Lajanat Islamiya started by Abubaker Labba at Alwaye. To popularise the religious education in south Kerala, they constituted Dakshina Kerala Islam Matha Vidyabiyasa Board following the model of Samasta Kerala Islam Matha Vidyabiyasa Board in 1968. Later they amalgamated Lajanat Islamiya to this Board and Alavi Kunchumoulavi was nominated to the post of Chairman. After the
efforts taken by Ulama of the south, almost all the madrasas were affiliated to this Board. They prepared syllabus, curriculum and text books for these madrasas. They started a teachers organisation called \textit{Lajanathul Mu'allimeen} to promote madrassa system effectively. Later they divided madrasas in 34 ranges. The objectives of these are to work for the welfare of Madrasa teachers and provide technical training to the teachers of madrasa. They established a welfare board to attain this target. As per the documents, Dakshina Kerala now supervising two thousand madrasas in the southern parts of Kerala.

**Dakshina Kerala Muslim Youvajana Federation.**

Kerala Muslim Youvajana Federation was formed in 1978 May 20 as a subordinate organisation of D.K.J.U. The main objective was to spread Sunni ideology among the Muslim youth. They conducted discussions, seminars, conventions etc. for creating religious awareness among Muslim youth. For this purpose, they arranged religious speeches and study classes. They established Islamic libraries in different parts of the southern Kerala to create and spread Islamic awareness among the Muslim youth.

**Kerala Muslim Jama’at Federation**

D.K.J.U. merged all these local jama’ats under one organisation called \textit{Kerala Muslim Jama’at Federation} which was formed at Kollam in 1981 under P.K.Abdul Azeez Moulavi. They strongly opposed uniform Civil Code, family planning, Mappila – Muslim
division. More over they did their best to get the benefits of Mandal Commission reports. Shortly their activities among the Muslims brought them into an inevitable and reputed front of Muslims in the south Kerala.

**Educational and literary activities of Sunni Muslims**

The Sunnis in Kerala mainly concentrated on the promotion of religious education. Before independence, both secular and religious education were given through the religious institutions centres. But the Sunnis in Kerala did not concentrate and promote secular education through their religious institutions. They gave more importance to religious education and the same was continued even after the independence. The first step for the modernisation of education started in 1963 by establishing an Arabic college at Pattikkad in Malappuram District.

From 1980 onwards they started to think differently. They began to start secular educational institutions. In this regard the most significant step was foundation of *Markaz al Saqafathi al Sunniyyah* in April 1978. Within a short period of 10 years it became an educational complex including High School, Hostel for boys and girls, orphanages, Sharia’th College, Higher Secondary schools, Industrial Training Centres, Arts and Science colleges etc.

The split in the Sunnis in 1989 culminated into the emergence of more educational institutions. Between 1990 to 2000, the Sunnies group led by A.P. Abubaker Musliyar established 76 educational
complexes in different parts of Kerala, including Arabic Colleges, Madrassas, Orphanages, Technical Institutions Arts and Science Colleges, Para Medical Colleges and a large number of da'wah colleges\(^{(46)}\).

The Sunni groups led by E.K. Abubaker Musliar also established many educational Institutions called Majlis. They recently established an Engineering College under Jamia' Nooriya Arabic College near Perinthalmanna.

D.K.J.U. also took keen interest in the promotion of secular education among the Muslims. For this purpose they established Mannaniya Islamic University in 1986 at Varkala\(^{(47)}\). They also established Arabic Colleges, Hifz Colleges, Arts and Science Colleges, residential Madrasa's and Orphanages. Apart from these they started a large number of educational institutions like Engineering Colleges, Nursing Colleges, Arts and Science Colleges in aided and un aided sector.

To sum up we can say that a number of institutions were run by Muslims in Kerala. 84 Arts and Science Colleges have been affiliated to the Calicut University and most of them are run by Sunni Muslim Management. It is the best example of improving attitude of Sunnis towards secular education today.

Apart from the field of education, Sunnis did not give much attention to the promotion of publication earlier. The first step in this regard was the publication of \textit{Al-Bayan}, a magazine in Arabic-
Malayalam in 1929\(^{(48)}\). In 1950 its medium was changed into Malayalam from Arabic-Malayalam\(^{(49)}\). After then the youth organisation of Samasta started *Sunni Times* in 1962, later changed its name to *Sunni Voice* in 1977. Apart from this, *Al Mua-llim, Sunnath, Al Mubarak, al Da’wah, Al Irfan, Risala, Sunni Afkhar, Pookavanam, Kudumbam* etc. are the other publications of Sunnis. SSF also started a publishing bureau called Islamic Publishing Centre at Calicut. From 1984 onwards Sunni Muslims started a daily called *Siraj* from Calicut. Now it is being published from more than four places including Dubai. All these are the examples of changing attitude of Sunnis towards the literary and media activities.

**Split in the Sunnis.**

The most important body of Sunnis Muslims, Samasta, had faced split in three times. The first split took place in 1966, under the following Ulama, who defected: Shaik Hassan Hazarath, Kaipatta Beerankutty Musliyar, Abdul Rehman Fadferi and Kutti Musliyar better known as Hazrath K.C.Muhammed Moulavi Pangil. They started a new organisation called *Akhila Kerala Jami’at al Ulama* and published a magazine namely *Jamiyyath*. Reason for the split was the decision of *Samasta Mushawara* that the *Tablighi Jama’at* held an innovation in the religion (*Bida’at*) and therefore it was described as anti-Islamic one.\(^{(50)}\) The second split was due to the use of loud speaker in Friday *Khutba*. *Samasta Mushawara* permitted to use
loud speaker and this was opposed by its president Sadakathullah Moulavi \(^{(51)}\). He and Thazhekkode Kunnalavi Moulavi formed a new organisation called *Samastana Kerala Jam'at al-Ulama* and they were appointed as secretary and the president. They also formed a youth organisation and educational Board to which many madrasas were affiliated \(^{(52)}\). But both the splits did not much affect the activities of Samasta.

The major split in Samasta outbursted in 1989, due to which it was divided into two major blocks under two prominent leaders, e.g. A.P. Abubakar Musliyar and E.K. Abubaker Musliyar. In earlier times these leaders of Samastha worked together as president and secretary of Markaz group of institution and in the ulama organisation. The reason for the split was mere political that the Muslim League interfered in the internal matters of S.K.J.U. and forced to accept a lenient attitude towards non-Sunni organisations. And it also forced to stop the conference of S.K.S.Y.S. which was decided to be held at Ernakulam in 1989. The S.K.S.Y.S. under A.P. Abubaker Musliyar defied the decision of parental organisation and conducted the conference as was scheduled\(^{(53)}\). It was proved to a great success and became an immediate reason for the split. The Sunnis who supported Muslim League remained under SKJU and are known as E.K. Sunnis and those who opposed the S.K.S.Y.S. group and supported A.P. Abubaker Musliyar were known as A.P. Sunnis. But both groups had no ideological differences in deep

111
but in political matters and some religious issues they have some slight differences.

The group under A.P. Abubaker Musliyar formed a youth organisation called Sunni Yuwajana Sangam and their student organisation was known as Sunni Students Federation. Moreover they formed an Ulama organisation on the same name.

Assessment

On evaluating the activities of Sunnis we can say that they controlled and guided the majority of Muslims for a prolonged period. They gave clarifications on the religious stand of Sunni Muslims opposed by the other sects and they were successful to some extent in this regard. They mainly concentrated on how to counter the activities of Tariqah, Ahmadis, Mujahid and Jama’at-e-Islami and protected the Sunni ideologies against them.

In the end of 19th Century, the Muslim scholars checked individually the advancement of Tariqah movement like Noorisha Tariqah at Kondotty and the Ahmadiya sect. Later they realised the need of an Ulama organisation for Kerala Muslims to offend these movements collectively. The Ulama of Kerala, who had participated in the Majlis al Ulama Conference held at Erode in 1921 raised the argument for an Ulama organisation in Kerala for the first time and decided to form it after the due consultation with all the Muslim scholars in Kerala. In 1921 the Khilafath conference held at Ottappalam formed an Ulama organisation which was firstly called
Muslim Majlis al Ulama (55). The Sunni scholars like Chalilakathu K unnahammad Haji, Kattilassery Muhammed Ali Musliyar etc. participated in this conference. This Ulama organisation followed all the four schools of jurisprudence. But lack of co-operation from the side of other Muslim scholars, deviation from the basic principles of particular school led to the failure of this Ulama organisation. The first generally accepted Ulama organisation in Kerala was the Kerala Jamia’at al Ulama that worked with the Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangam.

But in 1926 the Sunnis formed their own Ulama organisation because of KJU’s so called inclinations towards the wahabis. The majority of Muslims obeyed the religious decrees of Sunni Ulama organisation and boycotted the rest of the organisations. They stood with samasta on the ideological issues, though they were not much educated in the secular education.

Majority of ulama in Kerala are the members of the Sunni Ulama organisation called S.K.J.U. It became one of the important factors for gathering the Muslim mass under them. The Ulama in this organisation lived with the Muslim society and always were accessible in their difficulties. Whenever Samasta issued any resolution against anti Sunnis it was accepted by the majority of Muslims. In 1930 they passed a resolution that

“Chettoor and Kondotty Tariqah, Ahamadiyas and Wahabis are deviated sects from the actual ideal of Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jama’ah
and they were not the real followers of it. The Sunni Muslims should not maintain relationship with them and that there were against Islam\(^{(56)}\).

This religious decree was accepted by the Muslim community at large.

Some of the policies of samasta persuaded to change its attitude towards other Muslims and become lenient. One of them was the its favouritism towards British Government. It caused to develop a dualism in the Muslim community supporting the Samasta on Sunni causes and co-operate with others in their anti-colonial struggles. The argument of Samasta regarding their attitude towards the British government was due to the existential problem of that time. But it was not acceptable because they followed a pro-British attitude in its beginning. They not only showed pro-British attitude but also opposed Indian national congress and other nationalists struggle which created a dissatisfaction in the mind of common Muslims. Because they witnessed the anti-colonical and anti-imperialistic attitude of Umar Qadi, Mamburam Thangal, Fasal Pookoya Thangal, Ali Musliyar, they declared all kind of supports to the struggles against the British. The Muslim community gave preference to freedom struggles than opposing the other Muslim sects. They felt that the love of the country was the part of their faith. They got inspiration from Malapattu like Badar Mala, Uhad Mala, Mohiyudeen Mala, Malappuram Khizza of Moieenkutty Vaidyar
etc. It created a soft corner towards the Muslim leaders who fought against the British Rule. Moreover they also witnessed the cooperation between Kattilassery Muhammed Ali Musliar and Ali Musliyar with E.Moidu Moulavi and Muhammed Abdul Rahman Sahib who were the leaders of anti Sunni movement and the Muslim leaders of the freedom struggle in Kerala[57]. These policies of Samasta caused the growth of other Muslim sects in Kerala.

Samasta concentrated their activities mainly on the northern side. The role played by Vakkam Moulavi and his Swadeshabimani greatly influenced the Muslims in the South Kerala. He vehemently criticized anti-religious British activities of Muslims and fought against its imperialist policies. All these greatly influenced the Muslims of Kerala especially, in the southern side.

Educational policy of Samasta was another important factor for the backwardness of the Muslim community. In British India, both the secular and religious education were provided together. But Samasta and their institutions provided the religious education only. Moreover they discouraged the secular education as a part of their anti-imperialist policy but this argument was not acceptable generally due to their earlier policy of Pro-British attitude. Even after the independence of India they continued the same policy. In 1951 they established a religious educational board which concentrated only to provide religious education. They never showed any interest to promote the secular education till 1980's. This negligence caused
the isolation of Muslim community from the rest of people. According to the Reservation Commission Report in 1964-65 the percentage of Muslims in 1st standard was 100% but the students who reached in the 5th standard was 34.9% and the percentage of 10th standard was 6.3% which was lower than the scheduled castes and schedule tribes. If Samasta had showed interest to promote secular education it would have changed the history. If Samasta had used their institution for the promotion of secular education to Muslim it would have reduced the educational backwardness of Muslim community because they represented the majority of Muslims.

But the social changes started in 1980's forced Samasta to change their attitude. During this time the migration to gulf countries started largely and it caused the economical progress of Muslim community. They started to provide the secular education to their children and approached to the institutions started by other Muslim groups and communities. The changing attitude of Muslim community was accepted by Samasta and it started establishing secular educational institutions. From 1980 to 2005 they founded a number of institutions, which were more than the other Muslim groups established within a period of 60 years. This led to an educational renaissance among the Muslim community. They founded, Para Medical Institutions, Engineering Colleges, Art and Science Colleges, Technical Institutions, English Medium Schools, Higher Secondary Schools etc. and Islamic Daawa colleges by
providing M.A. in English, Economics and Commerce with Islamic Sharia'h Degree and issued a certificate called sanad. It raised the Muslims into the common strata. We can say that within the period of twenty years Muslims rised into the common sphere of Kerala Society where, they were educationally backward for last 60 years. In this regard the split in the Sunnis helped to spread the secular education. Both Sunni group competitively established secular educational institutions throughout Kerala.

Another important policy which affected the growth of Muslim community was the policy of Samasta towards women and their education. They believed that the women should not come out publically and there was no need to provide education except religious studies. They discouraged women education from the beginning. It became one of the important factors for the backwardness of Muslim women. But now their attitude is changed. They are giving admission and preference to Muslim women in their institutions.

On analysing the activities of subordinate organisations the most important is Sunni YuvaJana Sangam. Now its activities mainly concentrated on Dars and Arabic Colleges managed by Sunnis. They concentrated to attract Muslim youths through their institutions. But they failed to attract the Muslim youth to the Sunni organisation even if the youths coming out from their own institutions. They were not interested to become a member of this organisation except the
youths coming out from Dars and the Arabic colleges. The rest of the institutions produced only the Sunni sympathisers who were not worthwhile to the organisation and they never followed the Sunni ideology in its real sense. The reason for this failure is the lack of regular programs of its members and sympathisers. They do not properly function among their local committees. All these caused to reduce their influence in the Muslim community. Even then, the organisation is getting to is cadre form so that even after its popular leader A.P. Abubaker Musliyar, it could not function effectively.

Same was the case of its students organisation called Sunni Students Federation. Its activities mainly concentrated only at the madrasas, some schools and other institutions run by Sunnis. Their presence are nominal in the government and semi government institutions. The members of this organisation never showed their interest in the institutions of higher learning but they are active in some other organisations and continued as a sympathiser of Sunni movement in Kerala.

S.S.F. mainly concentrated on religious matters. They always came out only to defend the Sunni policies. They always abstained from public issues which were related to students. They conducted programs on birthday Celebrations of the Prophet (SAW) and charity programmes on Eid occasion. Apart from this they came out only for religion based issues. Another important factor is the lack of proper guidelines from the mother organisation. All these caused reducing
the influence of SSF among the Muslims of Kerala even though they represented the majority. After the split in the Sunnis, the splitted group started an Employee Organisation called *Sunni Employees Association* with an object of promoting Islamic ideology among the Muslim employee’s and checked the advancement of other Muslim sects in this area. But still it was in a paper form but unfortunately its activities are virtually in Kerala except some parts.

The formation of two Sunni organisations such as S.K.J.U. and D.K.J.U. are one of the obstacles in the growth of Sunnis. Ultimately it caused the loss of a United Ulama organisation for Sunnis. It weakened the Sunni movement. They existed as two organisations. Both Sunnis political views and dealings with other Muslim sects were different. While the northern Sunni Ulama strongly opposed the other Muslim sects, the southern Ulama showed some mildness towards non-Sunni organisation. Moreover the split in the north Sunni organisation did not much affect the southern Ulama organisation. All this split helped the growth of other Muslim sects in the Kerala and ultimately some other islamic movement were provide airing to flourish in kerala like Islahi Movement.
Notes and References

1. Ponmalla, Abdul Kadir, Musliyar, Padanangal Prabandangal, Ahl al-Sunnah Oru Thwathika Padanam, (Malayalam), (Studies and Research; Ahl al-sunnah, a Philosophical Study) Muhiyisunnah Silver Jubilee, Muhiyisunnah Books, Chemmad, nd, p.35

2. Interestingly all the Muslims of Kerala have firm faith in consensus of the Sahaba (Ijma of sahaba) as a third source of Islamic legislation. Muslims in general respect and follow the customs and the practices of sahaba in their life whole heartedly.

3. Holy Qur'a'n, Chapter, Ikhlas, 1,2


5. An unusual event ascribed to any pious man occasionally, different from the mujiza which is exclusively attributed to Prophet only.

6. Dalail al Nubuwah 7/47, as quoted by Ponmala, op.cit., p.41: Dalail Nubuwa, Bhukhari, Al-jami al Sahih, Kitab Fadail Asshab Al Nabi, Bab Dikr, Abbas bin Abdu al Muttalib, hadith No. 3710, as narrated the hadith from Anas, the holy companion saying Uamr-bin-al khatab, during the days of drought used to pray Allah through the medium of Abbas –bin Abd al muttalib intercessing him. He prayed "Oh God, we pray you with the intercession of our Prophet You sent down rain for us and we
pray you intercessing the uncle of our Prophet (so You please send rain to us). The narrator says the people were offered the rain.


17. Koduvally, Abdul Kader, Prof. Samasta, Mullakoyathangal Mudal Shamsul Ulama Vare, (Malayalam) Ma’adanul Bayan, Kozhikode, 1990, p.7


19. The Maktaba system of education was ended with the beginning of reformation movement in the 20th century. Madrasas are an effective primary education system in modern Kerala. In this regard the first attempt was made by Chalilikath Kunahammed Haji (d 1919). Later this model of institutions were started in different part of Kerala. The emergence of Islamic movement helped to spread the madrasa system far and wide. Each organisation started there on madrasas. The syllabus became varied on the basis of ideological differences. The syllabi are almost covering the Quran, Aquaid, Fiqh, Tarikh, Akhlaq, Nahu. The study time generally began at 7.30am to 9.30 am. Sometimes the classes are scheduled in the evening after the school time. Now Kerala Jami’at al Ulama controlling 500 madrasas, S.K.J.U. supervising 7700 madrasas, Jama’at-e-Islami 1500 madrasas, A.P. Sunnis 5000 madrasas. D.K.J.U 1600 madrasa

20. Al Bayan Masika, (Malayalam) Book 1, Lakkam 1, P.15 quoted by Prof. Abdul Khader, op.cit.,

21. Kareem, C.K. Dr. op.cit., p.626


24. *Samasta Kerala Jami'at al-Ulama Memorandum*, Quoted by Baqavi P.K.M. Sunni Yuvajana Sangam, Souvenir, Ernakulam, 1989, p. 120.

25. Ponmala, *op.cit.*, p. 331

26. Koduvally, Abdul Kadir, Prof., *op.cit.*, p. 97


28. Samasta 16th annual report P.13, Quoted Abdul Qadir *op.cit.*, p.296

29. Abdullah, P.C. *op.cit.*, p.5


31. Koduvally, Abdul Khader, Prof., *op.cit.*, p.296

32. Arabic Colleges are sprang up as an alternative to *dars* which started as early 1891. The first in this regard was *Darul Uloom Arabic college* Vazhakkad. But it flourished after the emergence of different organisation. The Arabic colleges are now in two categories; Arabic colleges aided to government of Kerala and run by individual and different organisation committees. The course offered this institutions are *Afzal-ul-Ulama* which has now being equivalent to BA Arabic and it became the basic qualification for high school assistant in Kerala service. The
syllabi covers *Quran, hadith tafsir, fiqh*, and some philosophers like Gazali (d 1111) Ibn Khaldun (d 1406) Ibn Rushd (d 1198) and so on. The Arabic colleges run by Sunnis neither recognized nor affiliated to any universities. It deals with an independent syllabus. *fiqh* (jurisprudents), *mantiq* (logic), *maani* (Rhetoric), *hisab* (Mathematics) *adab* (Literature), *ilm kalam* (Theology), *hikmat thabiyat* (Physical science) *Jugarafiya* (Geography), *haiat* (Astronomy), and languages like Arabic, Urdu and English. The course has been semesterised into two phases as *mukhtasar*, the first session student spend at least three years and *mutawwal*, the second semester session completed with next two years. The student who passed the final examination conducted by this colleges will be awarded the certificate.

33. Abdullah T.K., Moulavi, *Islamic Educational Institution in India (Malayalam)* Sunni times special, Kozhikode, 1965, p.65

34. Abdullah P.C., *op.cit.*, p.57

35. *Ibid*, p.137


39. Kareem C.K. Dr. *op.cit.*, p. 629

40. Abdul Samad, Dr., *op.cit.*, p.138

124


43. Abdul, Samad, Dr., *op.cit.*

44. Kareem, C.K., Dr., *op.cit.*


47. Abdul Azeez, P.K., Moulavi, Jamia’H Mannaniya al Minnat Ma’adanul Balagha Sahitya Samajam, Mannaniya Islamic University, Varkala, 1993 pp.7-10


49. *Al Bayan*, March, 1951, Quoted by Dr.Abdul Samad , *op.cit.*, p.136


52. Kareem, C.K., Dr., *op.cit.*,p.60.

54. Vakkath, Abdul Latheef, *Varakkal Thangal Muthal Ullal Thangal Vare*, (Malayalam) *from Varakkal Thangal to Ullal thangal* Islamic Public Centre, Calicut, nd. p.14


56. *Ibid*, p.132
