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## Modernization of Malabar's mappilas through religious studies and the function of the Maunathul Islam Sabha

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**Abstract :** The first commandment in Islam is to "READ." Islam promotes the idea of acquiring knowledge. It refers to the state of a society in a very different way and the progress that society has made from that state. Islam came to Kerala among the extremely poor and the socially oppressed. The idea of fostering such social advancement among them was well received because it was crucial for society to accept them. Islam's central principle of equality has been accepted by the vast majority, but it hasn't been able to advance society. Many social changes were brought about by the Makhdoom family's arrival in Malabar in the fifteenth century. In order to educate and uplift the neighbourhood, they held religious studies in mosques. For new believers, they set up special classes. People could easily attend because the education was entirely free. The modernization process that is bringing about the change in that society today includes this system. Here, the main point is how education helped a society become more mainstream. We talk about how well the transition from the feudal system to the human one went, the value of modern education beyond religious education, and the numerous efforts made to get there. The Maunathul Islam Sabha has changed a society into a revolutionary one by beginning as a religious organisation and introducing the populace to modern education. Despite the ongoing opposition, the church reached out to the community and gave the students the opportunity to participate in politics and other social and political issues as well as academic ones. This is the accomplishment of that institution. Later, some of their students even made it to the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

### INTRODUCTION

The Muslim community in Kerala was educationally backward until the nineteenth century because they did not understand the value of education. Their only source of instruction was religion. Because trade and fishing were the people of Malabar's main occupations, education was not crucial to those people's careers. The social climate in Kerala was very poor prior to the arrival of Islam. People were divided based on their occupations. It's possible that Kerala's population converted en masse to Islam and other Semitic faiths in order to be freed from it. We can see that there have been many changes even though the change in religion did not immediately affect the social climate. Keralans welcomed the Arab traders who came there for business. As a result, the relationship lasted for a very long time, and the Malayalee adopted all of their language and culture. The Arab traders who travelled by sea to Kerala were familiar with the local climate and planned their arrival and departure accordingly. They developed family ties in Kerala and the Arabs in Kerala as a result of having to stay here for half a year.

Islam thus arrived in Kerala via Arabs who enjoyed good relations with the state. Religious education was present even before Islam arrived and had a significant cultural and economic impact on Malabar society. However, that was not enough to alter society. The Makhdoom family arrived in Kerala during this time. The very foundation of Malabar society was altered by the centres of religious learning they established as a part of their Islamic propaganda. The Maunathul Islam Sabha of the 1900s served as their primary place of religious learning.

The Islamic Sabha placed a strong emphasis on modern education in addition to religious studies. One of the driving forces behind the era's educational revolution was MIS. Society can only be improved through education.

### SOCIETY AND EDUCATION IN MALABAR

Malabar has a long and rich history. Wherever Islam established itself as a powerful force for exchange and transfer, people started to become Muslims and traders, and as a result, civilization grew and spread. Islam arrived in Kerala through trade. The Malabar coast of southern India is where Islam first spread, according to the accounts of Muslim historians and Arab travellers. 1. Trade and exchange between various cultures have been significant throughout human history. Kerala's culture underwent significant change with the arrival of Islam and Christianity. Long before Alexander the Great left, Arabs began travelling to Malabar. 2. Because the Arabs and Kerala had trade ties before Muhammad, Islam arrived in Malabar. The Mappilas in Malabar may have been the first group to embrace Islam because of their stronger ties to the Arabs than other groups. 3. It arrived in Malabar during the global

spread of Islam. The Mappilas are thoroughly described in the book by Portuguese author Duarte Barbosa, who wrote about Malabar in the early sixteenth century. 4. Malabar residents, whether they were local or visitors, were traders. In Malabar society, trade was the most respectable profession. Merchants from Mappila had their own fleets and connections to other countries. Due to the Greek sailor Hippalass' discovery that ships could reach Kerala in about a month and a half with the aid of westerly winds from the lands of Siagros in Arabia in AD45, foreigners who came to Malabar for trade decided to settle there. Following this, more than 100 ships carrying cargo arrived at the shores of Kerala in the months of June and July due to favourable weather. When the wind blows after the trade, in December or January, the return voyage typically begins. They had to remain for several weeks or months while getting married to local women. 5. As a result, we discover that among the Mappilas, both converts and descendants of the Arabs come from the local women. 6.

The Mappilas converted to Islam alongside the Arabs with the rise of Islam. As a result, a new Mappila culture emerged, and many of the traditions and cultures practised by Arabs and Keralites were adopted by Muslims. The Muslim settlements had substantial differences in terms of clothing, daily necessities, and luxuries compared to the Kerala society that was prevalent in Malabar at the time. In such centres, pottery and other Chinese utensils were frequently used. In a world where akil, sandalwood, earthenware, and incense were all used as perfumes, oud and its descendants from the Arab world arrived later. The distinguishing feature of Muslim centres was the availability of the goods and services needed for a civic life. Muslims in Malabar did not appear to adopt communications for their trade or religion prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. Multinational and multicultural merchants made up the neighbourhood. Therefore, in order to survive and advance in such a society, a secular outlook was necessary. For this reason, the Malabar-based Islamic merchants had chosen to maintain a friendly attitude toward the hosts. Portuguese attempts to monopolise maritime trade resulted in ongoing hostilities with Muslims. As a result of society's resistance, they have suffered many losses, including those related to education. History has demonstrated in a variety of ways how important these Sayyids were in organising the local resistance to European colonialism. 7.

As soon as Islam spread throughout Kerala, Islamic education began. Probably not scholars or teachers added the early religious touches. Malik Bin Dinar and his college founded the first Islamic school in Malabar. With the aid of Hindu kings, they also constructed mosques throughout Malabar. In towns like Quilon, Sreekandapuram, Madayi, Kasargode, Mangalore, and Kodungalloor, mosques were constructed and pilgrims were welcomed. The early is close to their mosques. Islamic schools gradually produced a group of students who were knowledgeable in the Qur'an and hadith as well as other Islamic subjects. As a result, during a time when there were no formal educational institutions, mosques played a significant role in religious education. The Mappila Mosque is built in the traditional Jain manner. Girls were not allowed to attend schools in the early days of Islam and received their religious education at home. Early Islamic education was mandatory for Muslim boys. Some primary-educated boys went on to receive higher education. In mosques at the time, very few men received this type of education and went on to participate in religious activities and teach religion.

Through the Othuppallis, Malabar saw its first formal religious education programme. These mosques were mostly found in areas with a large Muslim population. In this Othuppalli, admission was initially granted to boys and then later to girls. As the girls grew older, they stopped attending the public mosques and instead continued their home education. The religious schools in the Namboodiri community of Malabar were confirmed by the Mappila Muslims from Othupalli. Some Muslims received their education in what are known as chekor kalaris, which are Hindu institutions. 9. The teacher, known as "Mullakka" or "Mulla", or simply "Mulla," would recite the lesson and instruct the students to repeat it until they had memorised it. This is how the namboothiris learned to recite hymns. 10. The namboothiri mausoleums, who sang hymns in Sanskrit, had an impact on the development of the Mappila Muslims othupalli.

The Mappila Muslims have created a curriculum for religious education that is distinct from that of other Muslim communities over the course of the last four to five centuries. Among the Mappila Muslims, the Dara's system was a revered centre of religious learning. Dara's is Arabic for "school," and they are typically built close to mosques. For the Dara's, there was a sizable curriculum. But over time, for a variety of reasons, Dara's broad curricula narrowed and became restricted to Arabic grammar, the Quran, prophetic traditions (hadith), and law (fiqh). 11. Mukhdum Thangal respectfully addressed the person who assumed control of Ponnaniyapalli and the Muslim spiritual leadership in the year 1498, when the Juma Masjid at Ponnani established the renowned Dara's by arranging for higher education

## MAKHDUM FAMILY

The Makhdums are where the Maunathul Islam Sabha got its start. The Makhdoom family's arrival contributed to Ponnani becoming a hub for Islamic learning. Sheikh Zainuddin al Madani, who founded the training facility at in the 15th century, is honoured by having Makhdoom Thangal bear his name. 12. In Malabar, they built the first mosques for prayer. The Great Jumaat Mosque evolved into a hub for Islamic studies during the first Makhdoom itself. Numerous other regions used to send hundreds of students here to study.

The Makhdoom family originated in Yemen, and their roots eventually spread to Malabar. From there, they travelled to Kayalpattana and Keelakkara in Tamil Nadu. In Madurai, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, and Nagercoil, the family had a significant influence on the spread of Islam. The Zamorin were advised by the Makhdooms of Ponnani. 13

Early in the nineteenth century, Sheikh Zayn al bin Ibrahim bin Ahmed brought the first makhdoom to Ponnani. He was Sheikh Zainudhin Mukhdum I's paternal uncle. Since ancient times, Ponnani has conducted business with the Arabs. After Makhdoom began his religious and educational activities, Ponnani became known as the Mecca of the Muslims of Kerala. Ponnani assumed control of Kerala's Muslim community's religious leadership. In Ponnani, Sheikh Zainuddin constructed the well-known Valiya Jumah mosque and instituted their religious instruction there. One of the most well-known mosques in Malayalam, the mosque was constructed in the year 1510 AD. 14.

Sheikh Muhammad al Ghazali, the third son of Zainuddin I, had Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdoom II as his first child. Sheikh Muhammad al Ghazali served as Northern Malabar's qadi qudah (chief of religious judges) and mufti, or scholar who renders religious judgments and opinions. The ValiyaJumah mosque in Chombal, which is now Mahe, was constructed by him. He served as this mosque's first qadi and khatib (preacher of the Friday sermon). His wife, Zainudhin's mother, belonged to the Khilayakat Taraketti Tarawad of Chombal and was a very pious and upright woman. Some people think Zainudhin was born in his father's hometown of Ponnani. However, neither of these opinions can be supported by any documentary evidence.

In his family, Zainuddin was raised in a religious environment. His parents, who were academics, provided him with his primary education at home. Zainuddin attended Valiyapalli's daras for further education after finishing his primary education at home. He was instructed by Sheikh Abdul Aziz Makhdom, a renowned scholar, and his paternal uncle there. Zainuddin memorised the entire Qur'an in addition to studying other subjects to become a Hafiz. He embarked on a cargo ship for Mecca after completing his education at Ponnani in order to study and perform the Hajj. He spent about ten years studying in Makkah after returning from Madinah following the Hajj. Directly from the Makkah scholars, he was able to learn more in-depth information about Islam. He was given the title of Mahadith because of his extensive knowledge of Ahadith.

Zainuddin opened a madrasa at Ponnani Mosque after realising the Muslim community needed modernization and education after returning from Makkah.

The first genuine history book in Kerala is thought to be Sheikh Ahmad Zainuddin Ibnu Ghazali's Arabic work Tuhfatul Mujahideen, also known as cheriya Zainuddin Makhdom, the grandson of the first Makhdom. The conflict between the Portuguese and the Zamorin in the 15th and 17th centuries is thoroughly described in this book. The book was originally written in Arabic and later translated into numerous foreign and Indian languages. 15. The author's work is dedicated to Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur, who was engaged in a life-or-death battle with the Portuguese to retake Goa. 16. Among the Arabic-language Malayalam books that found success outside of India were the following: Zainuddin Makhdom is the author of Hidayathul Azkiya. 17.

Non-Muslims looking to convert to Islam visited Ponnani, a renowned centre of Muslim learning and the residence of numerous eminent Muslim scholars, including members of the Makhdom family. The Makhdom family initially welcomed and helped these individuals to disseminate fundamental information and training in religious doctrines and practises. In the beginning, they were able to accommodate people travelling from a great distance thanks to the madrasa system. Over time, they altered the way that the new believers studied as well. Makhdoms was involved in propaganda and conversion there, and the locals were very supportive. Initially only for men, but later for women as well, all amenities were made available to those who came to study there for no charge. In order to plan and carry out these initiatives, the Maunathul Islam Sabha was founded in the year 1900.

## MOUNATHUL ISLAM SABHA

More than 300 distinguished individuals (Sadath-Ulama-Umara) from domestic and international locations gathered in Malapuram, Ponnani Valiya Jara Sriyara, thanks to the tireless efforts of Kunjan Bava Musaliyar and local leaders. The top Muslims of Malabar met in Malapuram on September 9, 1900, to discuss issues of common concern. 18. At this ceremony, Syedali Hydrose Pukkoya presided and the Maunathul Islam Sabha was established. The other two well-known members of the Maunathul Islam Sabha were Janab c. Saidali Kutty Master and Janab Mundayaparambath Bava Moopan. 19.

Pookoya Thangal and Kunjan Bava Musaliyar were chosen as the president and secretary of the 12-person ad hoc committee, respectively. A forty-member management committee chose Muhammad Thangal as president at a meeting on February 19th, 1901. With the assistance of numerous big and small organisations, the institution advanced during this time. During that time, the institutions were very well run.

Despite the British Government's unfavourable policies. The Sabha has been a government-recognized organisation ever since it was registered on January 1st, 1908, under Section 26 of the Indian Companies Act, 1882. The association's main goal was to "teach new converts about Islamism." 20. The main objectives were to make every effort for the welfare of Muslims by fostering education and dharma, to dispel myths and spread Islamic principles within the community, to find solutions to the project-related problems of the Muslim Community, to reconcile differences among Muslims, and to conduct Islamic studies without charge for the benefit of neo-Muslims.

Religious studies were taught in Sabha institutions in the beginning. In the first decade of the 20th century, the Sabha began offering religious classes. The Sabha institution began educating children in religion in 1930.

Arabi College was established on January 18, 1959, with the intention of uplifting the Muslim community, which was living in darkness and lacked adequate religious knowledge. The primary subjects included murkkan, grammar, discourse science, dispute science, role science, and history, among others. Sabha also decided to concentrate on contemporary education. There were not enough modern educational institutions in this significant Muslim centre at the time, likely as a result of the hostility of a sizable portion of the population toward the English curriculum. The Sabha seized control of Madaraskal Osmania Elementary School in 1941. Two Higher Secondary School, Kanjirmukku English Medium School, B Ed College, and Nursery School all advanced in terms of infrastructure and education during that time. A weaving institute and an Arabic school are also run by the Manunath. 21. Those receiving instruction not only receive free instruction in the principles of the new faith but also financial aid. 22.

The Sabha provided various forms of care for thousands of orphans and the poor as part of its moral obligation. The Sabha plays a magnificent role in educating children and helping them grow into responsible members of society. The Sabha did not abandon the orphans in the riots during that time, and the Malabar region was also hit by floods, both of which negatively impacted the regime led by the Sabha. Free rice was given to more than 25000 poor people, clothing and medical facilities were given to more than 700 nearly people, and 285 houses were rebuilt. An organisation called da vat thabli ul Islam was formed after the adoption of 70 kids. was established in 1992 to build the JDT orphanage in Kozhikode, as Kerala lacked any organised orphanages at the time. These projects were carried out alongside a few homes and mosques. However, none of them performed in accordance with a precise design. A historical inscription can be found on the side of the designamakkanakam tharavad near Valiya Palli under the Ponnani makhadanmur, where poverty alleviation took place. The Maunathul Islam Sabha was established to provide facilities for Indians who are preparing themselves to receive the light of Islam from the darkness of un-Islam. The Sabha had played a major role in teaching new converts the sunnah of the poor Muslim children and the burial of the poor. The oppressed, weaker castes of humanity are granted membership by the Sabha. The Sabha takes significant measures to protect the neo-Muslims' futures in addition to teaching them about religion. The neo-Muslims' bond with the school persists even after they finish their studies. The Sabha promotes additional research. In order for the mahal to be able to live with respect in the community after conversion, the Sabha concentrated on providing financial assistance for marriage and housing in addition to membership. For the new believers, the Sabha even constructed workshops. The handloom weaving mill, which was established in 1941 in partnership with the Sabha, also employed locals.

The Sabha's responsibility does not stop there. Because there were no organisations back then like there are now, the people took it upon themselves to bring the government's attention to their own problems through the Sabha. The Sabha quickly stepped in and addressed the issues raised by the upper committee's recommendation that the government hold meetings in various branches to

address the problems of the people. The Sabha was considered by the British government to be a group that represented Muslims at the time of its establishment, and the government also sought its advice on care issues affecting Muslims.

People in the Malabar region were greatly influenced by Maunathul Islam Sabha's significance. The Sabha's primary objectives are to advance Islamic education, charitable giving, the eradication of false ideals, the representation of Muslim concerns in politics, the recognition of Muslim differences, and the influence of Islam's most fundamental teachings.

## CONCLUSION

The upliftment of a society lies in the factors of work, culture and education. Factors such as work and culture can be changed through education. The first new culture to enter that socially oppressed society was Islam. A part of that culture included educating Muslims.

The Maunathul Islam Sabha, however, serves as a role model for delivering modern education that goes beyond religious education. We can trace the changes that the Sabha has brought to society over the ages since it first emerged as a system of religious education. The Sabha initially coordinated the expansion of Islam, but as time went on, their focus shifted to the expansion of the area. The Sabha was initially restricted to the Muslim community, but later we were able to observe their activities all over the region.

Since the MIS supports the study of the English language and acknowledges the need for modern education, it was passed down and taught to kids. As a part of modern education, LP UP schools were established and have been running ever since in the Sabha's central working area at Ponnani. As part of the effort to improve modern education, high schools were founded in the region as early as 1945. By offering modern education over time, Sabha has significantly contributed to changing that society. By recognising the value of higher education, the Sabha has contributed significantly to educating the younger generation about English education and modern education in addition to serving as a religious institution. The Sabha has always been so ingrained that it has promoted modern education, despite the fact that many education trusts arrived in Malabar during this time.

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