



Apjir/ e-ISSN: 2602-2893

Cilt: 5, Sayı: 2, 2021, ss. 188-217/ Volume: 5, Issue: 2, 2021, pp. 188-217

Journal homepage: <https://apjir.com/>



## ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ/RESEARCH ARTICLE

### INDIAN MADRASAS: EVOLUTION AND GROWTH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KERALA MODEL

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#### Abstract

This study unveils the history of madrasahs from the beginning to the present level educational revolution in India, not the least, in Kerala. Form the time of Prophet (d.632 A.D ) to this day even, the tradition of madrasah has undergone many changes in curricula, infrastructure and other related aspects of learning and teaching methods. The pre-colonial period had some origins of madrasahs while Mughals (1526-1857) made it a golden period of Islamic education until the octopus clinch of British rule (1757-1947) shackles this nation. Under the shadow of western education, they crippled the religious, cultural, economic and educational base of Indians. Muslim scholars resisted well with the shield of religious learning which they have acquired from the traditional learning (ders) system of masjids. This study clearly focuses the traditional growth and timely changes and nuances of religious education in Kerala. Through various periods, with concerned systems, this reveals how madrasahs and its classic form of Masjid-Ders systems shaped the religious and educational platform of India in general and Kerala in particular.

**Key Words:** Madrasahs, evolution, growth, India, Kerala

#### HİNT MEDRESELERİ: KERALA MODELİ ÖZELİNDE DEĞİŞİM VE BÜYÜME

##### Öz

Bu araştırma, Hindistan'da, özellikle, Kerala'da medreselerin başlangıcından günümüze kadar devam eden eğitimdeki usulündeki değişim tarihini gözler önüne sermektedir. Peygamber efendimizin zamanından şimdiye kadar, medrese geleneği müfredatta, altyapıda, öğrenme ve öğretme yöntemlerinde birçok değişikliğe uğramıştır. Hindistan'da Sömürgeciliğin başladığı Babürler (1526-1857) döneminde medreselerin birtakım temellerini bulmak mümkündür ve İngiliz egemenliğinin sonuçları bu milleti sarana kadar İslami eğitimin altın bir dönemi mevcuttu. Batı eğitiminin gölgesi Hindistan'ın üzerine düşünce dini, kültürel, ekonomik ve eğitimin temeli bozuldu. Bu dönemde Müslüman alimler, geleneksel Mescit-ders sisteminden edindikleri dini ilimlerin gücü ile şiddetli bir şekilde Batı'nın itirazlarına direnmeye çalıştılar.

Ayrıca, bu araştırma açıkça Kerala'daki dini eğitiminin geleneksel büyümesine, çağlara bağlı değişimlere ve farklılıklara odaklanmaktadır. Çeşitli dönemler boyunca, ilgili yöntemlerle birlikte, medreselerin ve onun klasik şekli, mescit-ders sistemi genel olarak Hindistan'da ve özelde Kerala'da dini ve eğitim sistemini nasıl şekillendirildiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Medreseler, değişim, büyüme, Hindistan, Kerala

**Atif / Cite as:** Unais Koduvayakkal. "Indian Madrasas: Evolution and Growth with Special Reference to Kerala Model" *Apjir* 5/2 (Aralik 2021), 188-217.

## Introduction

There is deep connection between India and Islam even at the time of Prophet(s). In India, many rulers had hierarchically remained in power. The trade was a major cause of transmitting culture and religion in those days. Arabs, known for their excellent sea-trades and excavations, landed in India too. As the sea trade grew deeply, people gradually got influenced by the culture and attitudes of the Arabs. *Banapperumal*<sup>1</sup> was at the helm when some caravans from Arabia came India in around 7<sup>th</sup> century. The king was in deep thought as he witnessed the miraculous 'moon-split'<sup>2</sup> event of the Prophet. He met Arab merchants and was rightly answered about Prophet and Islam. consequently, he went secretly to Arabia in 628 A.D. and embraced Islam being the first ever Muslim in India. From that event on, the history of Islam, not the least the establishing of masjids and madrasahs in different parts of India, began to mount to a new prospect. But Kerala, the southern part of India, boasts of this religious entities and innovations more than any other states do.

Kerala, being ruled by independent Hindu kingdoms, was the heaven of Hinduism until Banapperumal embraced Islam. Since then there was a historical change in growth of Islamic tradition and culture. Re-named as 'Tajuddin' (crown of the faith) by the prophet himself, he suggested his subjects and followers in Kerala to follow the teachings of Malik ibn Deenar d.748.A.D who came to Kerala with his family members to preach the teachings of Islam. Being deeply-connected with Hinduism and thier cultural creeds, Kerala resembles the other states of India. By the contacts of Arabian merchants even before the time of Prophet, and other European travellers, Kerala was the land of a combined multi-cultural hub. As these relation grew in abundance, soem of the Arabian merchants married the Kerala women whose children known to be the 'Mappilas' which later was a collective name for Kerala Muslims. Sincce the conversion of many Keralites( Kerala Peole) they accostomed to the Arabian culture, tradition and educational systmes that later led them to the formation of Masjid-Ders systmes as had been prevailed during the time of Prophet and the generations that ensued.

In south Asia, the meaning of madrasah refers to an educational institution that offers instruction about learning of *Qur'an*, *hadith* (the narrations of the Prophet Muhammad), *fiqh* (jurisprudence and Islamic law) and related religious discourses. From elementary

<sup>1</sup> Believed to be the first ever Muslim in India who witnessed the miraculous 'split Moon' of Prophet (s) and went along with Arab merchants, met Prophet (s) and embraced Islam in around 628 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> When the people of Makkah challenged the Prophet to show any miraculous mark of prophet hood, he bisected the moon as they ridiculously demanded it. In no time to be wasted, he cut it into two pieces placing on the summit of mountains. As he rendered it into its previous form, the puzzled people, claimed meaningless response.

level to university this term can be attributed. So, from primary, secondary to tenth grade, the learning system, undergoes subtle changes locally and according to educational managements that govern these institutions. However, in Kerala, the definition of madrasah means imparting religious education from primary to plus-two level. Widely in different parts of India, the educational institutions offering curricula equivalent to eleventh and twelfth grade called 'Dar al-Uloom' (literally means the abode of knowledge) while the curricula for colleges and universities called 'Jami'a'. In this way, Kerala is an exemplary region where the classic *Palli-Ders*<sup>3</sup> system still prevails with new model madrasahs, Arabic Colleges<sup>4</sup> and even private Islamic universities. The main structure of innovative movements are connected with the 'Mahallu' system of Kerala which is a well-run organization of Muslims in Kerala for their educational, cultural and religious activities as it operates as an independent contribution under Samastha.

### The Alteration of Madrasah Systems in India

Islam reached in India by trade, migration, preaching of Sufis and different military invasions of Turkish and Afghan rulers. The northern parts of India invaded by *Muhammad bin Qasim*<sup>5</sup> in 711.A.D. and Mahmud Ghazni<sup>6</sup> in 11<sup>th</sup> century. 'Sindh'<sup>7</sup> was attacked by Qasim as a revenge to then king *Dahir* who looted Muslim pilgrims to Makah. In Bengal, the eastern part of India, many Sufis, saints and religious men came in 7<sup>th</sup> century and the reflection was high. *Debal* and *Mansura* cities in Sindh had many scholars in between 728-738.A.D. who built many Islamic structures here like in *Damascus*. Scholars taught *hadith*, *tafseer* (exegesis of Qur'an), *fiqh* and *adabiyat* literature. But this might have influenced in other parts of India too.

*Muhammad Gori*<sup>8</sup> led the foundation of Turkish rule in India around 12<sup>th</sup> century who built a madrasah in Ajmer in 1191.A.D. This known to be the first institutionalized madrasah in South Asia. (Kaur 1990:18, Sikand 2005:33.) The first madrasah in Delhi was established by *Shamsudeen-Iltumish*<sup>9</sup> (1211-1236) or *Altumish* which named " *madrasah-i-muizzi*. This way, Delhi Sultans (1201-1528) erected many masjids and madrasahs in and out of their capital

<sup>3</sup> Palli-Ders in local parlance means the learning systems done in masjids. 'Palli' in Malayalam means 'masjid'.

<sup>4</sup> This refers to the learning institutions with a blended syllabus of religious and material subjects. Separately for boys and girls after the successful completion of 5<sup>th</sup> class in madrasahs. Every Arabic College will have its own syllabus, methodology of teaching and conferring of certificates.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad ibn Qasim al- Thaqafi (695-715 A.D.) also known by the nickname of Imad-dDin. He was an Arab military commander of Umayyad Caliphate as he conquered Sindh and Multan.

<sup>6</sup> Yamin-ad-Dawlah Abdul-Qasim Mahmud ibn Sebutegin (971-1030 AD). He was the first independent ruler of Turkic Dynasty of Ghaznavids which was a Turkic *Mamluk* origin (977-1186 AD)

<sup>7</sup> It is Romanized and written as 'sind'. More than being a province in Pakistan, it is called 'Bab-ul-Islam, the gateway of Islam

<sup>8</sup> Mu'izz ad-Din Muhammad Ghori (1149-1206 AD) was an important sultan of Ghurid Dynasty which was converted Sunni Islam from Buddhism before. He considered to be founder of Muslim rule in India.

<sup>9</sup> Shamsud-Din Iltumish (d.1236 AD) was third sultan of Mamluks and was the first Muslim sovereign to rule from the famous Delhi and was the founder of the Delhi Sultanates.

city. In *Tughlak Daynasty*<sup>10</sup> (1290-1302) Mahmud bin Tughlak (1325-1351) established many madrasahs in different parts of his province. It is of extreme astonishment that there were nearly 1000 madrasahs in Delhi at his time. (Ahmed: 1968, Kaur 1990:21, Sikand 2005:33) the purpose of some of these madrasahs were educating people for state employment. Not only religious subjects but Physical and natural sciences along with linguistic discourses were given in some madrasahs. To be specific; grammar, literature, Islamic law and principles, *mantiq* (logic), Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, Mysticism, *falsafa* (religious philosophy) were mention-worthy. Texts were followed the Bagdad school which was the famous center of Islamic revival and education. Texts from *Bukhara* and *Khwarizm*<sup>11</sup> schools also were applied. (Nayyar: 2013-219)

Educational curricula of the madrasahs followed Hanafi School. After the Abbasid Daynasty crumpled down, many scholars were sheltered in India and they also made many madrasahs but with some differences according to the governing body and the location. In south, the independent Muslim Kingdom of Deccan<sup>12</sup> was emerged and lasted magnificently for almost 200 years. They also had built many madrasahs in different parts of their kingdom to make Islamic learning on high demand. The first one built in this way was in 1378 by *Mahmud Shah*. Under the guidance of *Khawaja Mahmud Gawan*, he ordered to build an important madrasah at *Bidar*<sup>13</sup> in 1472 AD. He was the prime minister of *Shams Uddin Muhammad Shah Bahmani* (known as *Mahmud Sha III-1463-1482*) but this was focused on the ideologies of Shiism not the traditional Islamic concepts and organised with a Persian structure and style<sup>14</sup>. The syllabus was combined by religious and secular subjects and the first madrasah of *Mahmud Sha* offered free education and hostel facilities for orphans. State itself paid and granted subsidies for educational boards.

In Bengal, the institutionalization of madrasahs initiated by Delhi Sultanate. But the great foundation was done by Sufis and other sincere people so early. Sufis made many meaningful journeys and established *Khanqas* (place for worship and residence) which was akin to *Halqas*<sup>15</sup> of Arabia at the earliest times of Islam for the learning of Qur'an and Hadith. These *Kankhas* were run by Sufis and their followers, not by the state. Though, rarely even, some of the kings had made occasional visits to these centers. When Sufis left, this would be closed down and will in their next destination, be opened. Quiet interestingly, some of these *kankhas* were resembled to the regular centers of elementary education called '*maktabs*'. Some of the *maktabs* were done inside *masjids* while some were

<sup>10</sup> Tughlaq Dynasty (1320-1413 AD) referred also Tughluq of Turkic origin.

<sup>11</sup> Khwarezm or Khwarizm is large oasis area of land belongs by parts to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

<sup>12</sup> The Deccan Sultanates on the Deccan Plateau consisted of Ahmadnagar, Berar, Bidar, Bijapur and Golconda Muslim dynasties which founded in 1527 and dissolved in 1686.

<sup>13</sup> A hill top area of North-Eastern Karnataka, state in India, bordered to Kerala.

<sup>14</sup> This is mentioned in 'Karnataka: One State, Many Worlds-Department of Tourism-Home site.

<sup>15</sup> A group of people stay together in masjids or religious centers to recite salath, dikr and other religious chanting.

attached to it in a special tent-like room and some in the houses of Muslims who could afford food and space for the students.

It is of an extreme surprise that, there were some indigenous systems of education in Bengal even before the *maktabs* were introduced. Then came *Pathshala*<sup>16</sup> in 12<sup>th</sup> century with subjects like Linguistics, Basic Mathematics, Agriculture and Mechanics (boat-making etc...) there was 'toll' for the religious studies of Hindus with Guru as teacher. The same system went on until the military invasion of *Ikhtiyar bin Bakhtiyar Khilji*<sup>17</sup> in 1197 in Bengal. Since then the rulers helped extensively this educational initiatives. He made a city there in Rangpura and embellished it with many madrasahs (Kaur: 1990:30) *Khilji*'s followers were offered immense help in spreading madrasah education. The religious preachers of Islam also had spread the message of madrasah and made it into real existence. They were autonomous and both transmitted rational subjects were taught in this system. The graduates were given royal jobs and other high-profile recruitments.

### 1. Madrasahs under the Mughal Empire (1526-1858)

The Mughal period was the golden age of madrasah education in India. There were many reasons for the unprecedented growth. To be more specific; the helping of royal court, the political stability owing to the consolidated power (centralized bureaucracy), the growing influence of *ulamā*<sup>18</sup> and Sufis as the dominant religious leaders, receiving of grants and patronage for madrasahs and getting the respect and sincere support of common people.

During Mughal period, the education was wide open and the tradition of *Manqūlāt* (revealed or transmitted knowledge) was highly focused. The *Ma'qulat* (rational science) was comparatively least in importance. All the Mughal sultans were extremely interested in dissemination of knowledge (Law, 1916:190) in Royal Education of Babar (1526-1530), it is described that the consideration of education is the great duty of a state. Akbar (1556-1605) opened a department dispensing state patronage and grant to educational institutions and made many innovative reforms (Ikram, 1964:154). Meanwhile, Jahangir (1605-1627) stipulated a magnificent order that if a rich person dies without any heir, his entire wealth would be taken by state for the use of madrasahs and monasteries. Moreover, Jahangir had changed the dwelling places of birds and other animals into madrasahs and other learning centers, even if it dwelt for 30 years, and beautify this area with many students and teachers as explained by *Jan Jahan Khan* in his work *Tariki-jan-Jahan*.

<sup>16</sup> Pathshalas are the old traditional centers of educational institutions attached to temples run by Hindu community as the *maktabs* for Islamic education.

<sup>17</sup> *Ikhtiyat al-Din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji* or *Khilji* (d.1206 AD) was known also as *Bakhtiya Khalji*. He was a Turko-Afgan military captain who conquered the eastern Indian areas of Bengal and Bihar.

<sup>18</sup> A group Muslim scholars with great knowledge in Islamic theology, law, jurisprudence and what related. The singular form of *ālim* which means a scholar.

Shahjahan (1627-1658) on other hand, established the Imperial College in Delhi around 1650 (Law, 1916:190) royal people, noble men and even common men sincerely contributed to madrasah education and *Ulamās* in society got great respect and status even from the sultans. So, some *Ulemas* escorted them in military expeditions. To be serious, *Ulemas* influence over the community well as was in Ottoman and *Safavid* empires<sup>19</sup> (Metcalf, 1982:21-22). There was an allegation that Mughal emperors were indifferent to apply new technologies and new systems in their educational systems. (Sayyid Naqi, 2006:46). Akbar had rejected Printing Press presented by Portuguese Missionaries. As was Jahangir's resistance to Mechanical clock gifted by French Royal Delegation.

The indifference to foreign languages was the other thing to mention. But, the presentations of missionaries will suggest any misunderstanding or wild interpretation among the people. Moreover, the missionaries will use this as a golden opportunity to contaminate the minds of Muslims by the royal relation they might get from the sultans. So, better to be wary and cautious is a safe way of mature stance. The indifference to foreign languages may be because of trouble in application and practice as it takes a long journey to tackle. If missionaries could misuse this chance, they will secretly interfere to tarnish Islamic identity in a Muslim rule. The vice-versa can be really expected in same case of any country. Since 1500s, European Catholic and Protestant missionaries have been very active in India. It was during the time of Mughal sultan, Akbar(d 1605 AD) father Jerome Xavier (1549-1617 AD) presented the painting of Holy Virgin to the sultan not as a gift alone but with the intention of spreading thier religious message even in the court. As Akbar always encouraged religious tolerance, it was easy to spread thier hidden agenda. During Jahangir's (d.1626 AD) time, Father Rudolf Aquavia (d.1583), Father Henriques (d.1600 AD) had visited the court to be welcomed in Royal Quarters with every hospitality that they wanted. They presented the printed copy of polygot Bible and other Christian cultural images. The missionaries used this relation to have a pscycological advantage in approaching the Indian poeple with great amonunt of financial help from the European countries. This made the ways very easy for the East India Company of Britian to influence the Indian people since 1600s.

The next step was to establish English Mediums with the 'English' is the communicative language. Gradually, after the decline of Mughal rule, they abolished the Persian language from the official recordings and English was brought in action. They planned to thwart the fluent system of madrasah education as the English education was supported in every field. Even the graduates of madrasahs thought differently as the scope of English was tremendously highlighted. Even after the independence, this trend is not totally changed while many scholars worked hard to acquire it and to use for Islamic preachings.

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<sup>19</sup> Safavid Dynasty (1501-1736 AD) was founded in the city of Ardabil in the Iranian-Azerbaijan area by sultan Ismail I (1501-1524 AD).

### 1.1. Akbar's Reforms and Controversies

Form all the Mughal sultans, Akbar stands with some difference. ("We see in Akbar, perhaps the first time in [Indian] history, a Muslim monarch sincerely eager to farther the education of Hindus and Muhammadans alike", Law,1916:160) In Akbar's madrasah, both Hindu and Muslim children learnt alike; they could learn their own culture and civilization. He conducted religious debates in his *ibadathkhana* (house of worship), he himself brought a new religion, *Din-i-ilahi*<sup>20</sup>(Divine Faith) for bridging the gap of religious differences and having a tolerant community. Besides, during his reign, the Ma'qulat got focused while the *Ulemas* like Abdul-Haq questioned this stance and eventually he made his escape to Hizaj as Robinson explained, 2014:14. The learning methods were changed at the elementary level as the revision of madrasah curriculum was done under the great presence of *Miir Feteullah Shirazi*. In *maktabs*, the mere memorization was demoted and learn by practice was promoted. Akbar (Ain-Akbari-1907) had a proposed system; care should be taken that he (student) learns to understand everything by himself, but the teacher may assist him a little. This clearly portrays the teaching methodology of Akbar even in that period.

During Akbar's reign, the educational system grew in galore. *Feteullah Shirazi* (d.1589 AD) was invited from Iran in mid-1500 and he revamped the syllabus with ethics, mathematics, astronomy, agriculture, medicine, logic and government, Linguistics, Vyakaranam (grammar) Vidyanta (philosophy) teaching of Path Anjali (Yoga) (Law, 1916:161,162- Sufi, 1941:53). Ali Azad Bilgrami, the 18th century historian, opines that, after Shirazi came to the court, the study of Ma'qulat took great strides towards popularity. As the royal court supported him well, this was not so surprising. Likewise, in Akbar's time the mental science; logic, philosophy and scholastic theory had great importance. (Ikram, 1964:238). But, Aurangzeb(d.1707 AD), the sixth Mughal ruler, changed the tradition of syncretism of Akbar and followed the traditional style. "For the sake of the true faith and the peace of the realm" was his stance and he tried hard for it in spite of some challenges. When Akbar promoted religious tolerance often against the Islamic perspectives, Aurangzeb was a staunch believer with strict Islamic practices leading a moral and polite life.

*Mahem Begum* (d.1534 AD), who breast-fed Akbar, established a madrasah and masjid near Old Fort just against the west door. It was named 'Khairul Manazil'. The great Sufi scholar, Sha Wali- Al- Dehlevi (d.1762 AD) had taught in madrasahs from early morn to mid-day. His father *Shah Abdu Raheem* (d1719 AD.) had a built a madrasah and amassed great amount of students. During Akbar's reign, the spread of national science was

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<sup>20</sup> The Din-i- Ilahi known as Divine Faith was a syncretic religion founded by Akbar in 1582. It was a combined religion of Islam and Hinduism and other ideologies of different concepts to unite the people. But he was strongly criticized by Muslim scholars.

unpredictably out of control as it spread here from Europe. Irrespective of his religious framework, Akbar promoted every kind of change and progress.

During this time the spread of natural science was in growth's pinnacle as Akbar welcomed wholeheartedly every bit of knowledge without differentiation. This spread to India from Europe in guise of Western education. Europeans had divided the world as occidental (Europeans) and oriental (non-Europeans) for their purpose of shaping knowledge with mysterious plans. Akbar had a liberal mind as he did not confine himself often in the framework Islamic ideologies. He, being the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth1, had embodied the West in making schools, colleges and madrasahs for every locality irrespective of the race, religion and culture. He rather modified the syllabus according the mental capacity of students and harvested greatly. He opposed the traditional style of learning and teaching methodologies. He advised to free the students with debates, discussion and analyzing themselves while the teacher has to watch and observe the activities. Though, his liberal concepts and broadness invited fury and anger of many scholars, it somehow diminished his fame and name as a reformer.

### **1.2. Aurangzeb and His Contributions**

The other important ruler of Mughal Empire was Sultan Aurangzeb with his great contribution in disseminating knowledge and related educational progress. He had great taste in literature and religious subjects. The *Fatawi-Alamgeeri* was the collection of many fatwas of great Hanafi scholars which he named by himself. For being a staunch believer, critics and enemies vying to tarnish his image counting him as a fanatic. His efforts in Islamic education is of utmost significance as he had many masjids and madrasahs built in different corners of this country. This has been clearly mentioned in words of Bernier "Aurangzeb made innumerable madrasahs in his reign". (1914: 156). One of the main contributions of Aurangzeb was the patronage of *Farangi Mahal Model Madrasah* in Lucknow as the great institution of learning by that time. It was a beautiful and eye-catching mansion of European Merchant. He bought and handed over this building to *Mullah Qutubuddin Sihalwi* (d.around 1700 AD.) who was a leading scholar of rational science as his teacher's learning pattern leads to *Mir Fatahullah Shirazi*. This mansion had been given as a compensation for *Mullah Qutubuddin's* family as he was murdered by his rival *Usmani* clan. After his sad demise, his third son, *Mullah Nizamuddin Sihalwi* turned this center as the main educational hub of 18<sup>th</sup> century India. He modified the curriculum and re-named it as 'Ders-I Nizami' which later became the syllabus of this kind of learning.

All the other rulers of Mughal Empire did encourage and continue the systems of their forefathers. In last times of their rule, the Urdu language had its influence in different parts of India. This language believed to be originated from the Turkish word 'ordu' means army. For the military purposes, this language worked as uniting force among the different military men who comprised Indians and foreigners as well. The impact of this

language can be seen today even as most of the Indians outside Kerala are speaking this in daily life. So, many literary works were released then after. The base that the early leaders brought to action, was strong and out pure intention in making the people educated and to have a better society. After the death of the last powerful ruler, Sultan Aurangzeb, this Empire faced severe challenges in and out of the state, especially British and their supporting non- Muslims. This began to cripple the religious progress to some extent and gradually fading except in some particular areas. When they were weakened, the grants and donations to the educational systems were dwindled.

Generally, as every action could be, the strong base is gradually shaking and struggle to hold on with the same courage. This can be seen in the educational systems of Mughal Empire which was full-fledged and in full swing at the beginning, steadily and slowly, suffered the setbacks with numerous reasons. The glorious and golden days declined in the fluent rush of time. As unfortunate would have it, even the glories of that gold past, had in to oblivion's black web been thrown. Some sincere scholars and public people now playing their invaluable parts to renovate that old and traditional systems.

Akbar was very much liberal in religious matters even forming a combined religion of his own-Din-i- Ilahi- in the name of religious tolerance which brought great criticism and adversary from many Islamic scholars. He never practised the Islamic laws, rather was of broad mentality. On the other hand, Aurangzeb was very strong in practising Islamic Sharia and Islamic jurisprudence and encouraged the traditional way of learning while Akbar had invited Shirazi from Iran to establish a better system which was prevailed in Europe. During Akbar's time, woman education was very popular and they could learn in public places while at Aurangzeb's reign, women were not so encouraged to go out with out any restriction, rahter preferred to learn in home with the help of speical teachers. He was not against the woman education, but thought of the descipline they should have in life. The difference of mentality and approach towards every matter can be seen clearly in the life of the both rulers.

In short, the Mughal rulers did what was possible in this regard for the betterment of learning centers by establishing masjids, madrasahs, schools, libraries and even markets and cities for the same token. They rendered themselves the role models of education as authored many books on different topics. None will be avoided, each ruler has his own contribution economically, physically and above all as a religious duty. " their contribution is indeed significant in the Islamic world", (Jifri: 2006:51).

## **2. Farangi Mahal Model Madrasah**

This was established by the guidance and patronage of Sultan Aurangzeb at Luknow as a new venture of educational experiment. It was a huge building owned by a European merchant and this was bought and handed over to the family of Mullah *Qutubuddin*

*Shihalwi*<sup>21</sup> who was a leading scholar of rational science. He was given royal consideration and after his death, his third son, *Mullah Nizamuddin Shihalwi* turned this into a great center of learning in 18<sup>th</sup> century. He established a curriculum which was known later as *Ders-i-Nizami*<sup>22</sup> which mainly focused on rational science.

“By encouraging students to think rather than merely learn by rote the syllabus enabled them to get through the usual run of madrasah learning with greater speed, while they came to be noted for their capacity to get to the heart of the matter, to present an argument and to be flexible in their approach to jurisprudence.”(Robinson-2001:14-15) It was not formed as a madrasah till 1905, but this family members taught the students in their home those interestingly came there. Aurangzeb really supported this family in their candid service of spreading Islamic education along with the material subjects. So, the lodging expense of students was paid by the court with other primary needs and essentialities. This way, Aurangzeb had built innumerable madrasahs as Bernier, 1914:156, opines. Muslim students got stipends and other monetary grants as long as they pursue their study in madrasahs. There were many students out of Lucknow in Farangi Mahal with the help of this family and royal court as well. Even though it was traditional in its almost all activities, it has a new system that really captivated the hearts of students across India. The syllabus was outstandingly good blend of both rational and religious education.

### **2.1. The Reasons of Success**

There were some striking reasons behind the success of Farangi Mahal Madrasah; enabling the employments not the least in governmental affairs but in many other suitable departments, sincere and devoted teaching methods which made students attracted to this new system, and the selection of suitable students who really wanted to learn and have a prosperous future. This family had made many journeys in different parts of India in search of suitable students as explained by Robinson-2001:53.

Apart from the royal tag with reformed systems of learning, the other important reason for the success of Farangi Mahal was their constant effort to chase the teaching opportunity and finding the skilled students as possible as they can, especially from poor backgrounds. They enabled their students to get government jobs and other highly-demanded opportunities without much struggle and strife as most of the other students do. They travelled throughout the India from place to place in search good products. The

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<sup>21</sup> Mulla Qutubuddin Sihlavi was the head of the Farangi Mahal and had been killed by Khanazads of Sihali in 1692 A.D. The migrated family was helped and sheltered by then Mughal Sultan, Aurangzeb who initiated the foundation of famous Farangi Mahal model of education throughout India.

<sup>22</sup> Ders-I Nizami is study curriculum used in many Islamic institutions like madrasahs. This was originated in Indian subcontinent in 18<sup>th</sup> century by Nizamuddin Sihlavi (1161 H/ 1748 CE) from the Farangi Mahal ulema and named so then after. Sihlavi is a village in Utter Pradesh.

teaching was regarded as divine and a religious obligation as thousands of children went for working even without beholding the benches and desks. Such was the weight of the life that fate has on their young shoulders. Naturally, the attitudes of Farangi Mahal let increase the strength of students compared to other learning centers present at that time.

The other fascinating thing to mention in this regard that the graduates of this center worked in Lucknow court as *muftis*, *qāḍīs* (judges) and teachers in different learning centers, and even doctors at well-known hospitals of that time. It was an envious fact that almost all madrasahs of South Asia followed this 'Ders-I Nizami' though with slight modifications and changes suitable for their students, teachers and for other teaching and learning related reasons. The text of great scholars from Iran and Central Asia like *Sharah az-Zanjani* and *Al-Mukhtasar*<sup>23</sup>, *Sahih-al-Bukhari*<sup>24</sup>, *ihya-uloom-d-Din*<sup>25</sup> and *Tafseer-e-Nasafi*<sup>26</sup> were taught here with utmost pleasure and mental contentment as students really enjoyed it. For rational science, mathematics, philosophy and logic got considerable preference. When both these types were mixed and simultaneously given to students, they can refresh their more unbearable for our minds than monotonous discussions on same thing. So, this was great relief for students as they preferred selecting this institution. As the overwhelming weight of the minds is lightened, the absorbing and analyzing capacity of minds grow high and their effort will become fruitful.

## 2.2. The Syllabi of Farangi Mahal and Madrasah Raheemiya

The syllabus of Farangi Mahal incorporates 15 texts on logic, greek philosophy, mathematics, history, medicine, engineering, persian literature, arabic grammar, literature and rhetoric, official letter writing and calligraphy. Only two books on hadith, namely, *Mashariqul Anwar*<sup>27</sup> and *Mishkatul Masabeeh*<sup>28</sup> were included in this learning pattern. Only *Jalāleyn*<sup>29</sup> and *Bayḍāwī*<sup>30</sup> were consisted the syllabus for Quranic commentary, learning *Tafseer* and other due interpretational dexterities. *Fiqh*, (the Islamic Jurisprudence) was given much importance as it fetches a handy role in courts. So, altogether there were 79 texts in Nizamiya syllabus. The dearth of transmitted texts

<sup>23</sup> Both *az-Zanjani* and *Al-Mukhtasar* were authored by Imam *Al-Taftazani* (d.1390AD)

<sup>24</sup> *Sahih-al-Bukhari* was composed by Imam *Al Bukari* (d.870AD) in Prophetic hadith.

<sup>25</sup> *Ihya-Uloom-ad-Din* was done by *Iman Al-Gazali* (d.1058 AD) in Islamic Ethics and Philosophy.

<sup>26</sup> *Tafseer-e Nasafi* was compiled by Imam *Abu Hafz A-n-Nasafi* (d.1142 AD)

<sup>27</sup> *Mashariqul Anwar* was authored by Imam *Rami-u-d-Din Hasan Sagani* in Hadith and related subjects.

<sup>28</sup> *Mishkatul-Masabeeh* is an expanded version of *Al-Baghawi's Masabih-Al-Sunnah* authored by *Muhammad ibn Abdullah Khatib Al-Tabrizi*

<sup>29</sup> *Taseer-al-Jalalain* is a classical interpretation of *Qur'an* authored first by *Jalal-ad-Din al-Mahalli* in 1459 and finished off by his disciple *Jalal-al-s-Suyuti* in 1505. So, it was named 'Tafseer of Two Jalalains'.

<sup>30</sup> *Anwar al-Tanzil wa-Asrar al-Ta'wil*, better known as 'Tafseer al-Baydawi' is a popular Sunni *Qur'anic* interpretational work composed by Muslim scholar *Qadi al-Baydawi* (d. 1319 AD)

and the lack of significance towards it, never meant that Mullah Qutubuddin was utterly against to this kind of knowledge. He might have thought that, to learn the traditional Islamic style, there are many learning centers, but this structure of Farangi Mahal is totally different from traditional and conventional style yet, it never rejects the importance and value of tradition. They were Sufis and well-accomplished scholars. By the modification of syllabus and focusing on rational subjects as it may favor the material stability, they might have dreamt of Islamic activities and better life for students.

There can be seen a mixture of similarities and differences in syllabus of Farangi Mahal and Madrasah Raheemiya which was built by the great scholar and Sufi of his time, Shah Waliullahi d-Dehlavi<sup>31</sup> (1703-1762). He supported the Manqulat-tradition and made his own learning center where he had taught for 12 years constantly. His son, *Shah Abdul Aziz* took the helm after his father's demise and continued to shine in this way of teaching the traditions of Islam. In Rahimiya Madrasah, subjects like logic, fiq'h, hadith, tib (medicine), algebra, mathematics and oratory were seen with much importance. Shah Dehlawi even opposed the Ma'qulat and *bid'ath* (bringing any modern concepts of religion which contrast to traditional Islam).

Being a great scholar, he had translated Qur'an into Persian language. His son, Abdul Aziz, also followed his father while fighting against British cruel rule and their stance against Islamic learning. Sadly, at the fading times of Mughal rule, some changes began to loom large under the colonial powers of British rule (1858-1947). Even though Ulemas and common people tried hard for the continuation of this madrasah education, British government altered the syllabus and system. Both these madrasah stood for the dissemination of knowledge as a divine obligation but with slight difference and great semblance. Apart from the Ma'qulat (rational subjects) and Manqulat (religious subjects) there were no huge difference. But as far as the syllabus is concerned, the topics were included but they decided themselves which subjects would be focused and which would not be. (The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857, William Dalrymple)

### 3. Madrasahs under the Colonial British Rule (1765-1947)

Britain started their colonial power in India when they vanquished the Bengal Nawab in the battle of Plassey in 1765. Robert Clive was the British leader and that helped East India Company to directly dominate over the sovereignty of India. Bengal, Bihar<sup>32</sup> and Orissa<sup>33</sup> came gradually but steadily under their octopus clinch. The scope, resources and even the future of this nation began to be decided by the European power house. Indians

<sup>31</sup> Shah Waliullah Dehlevi (Shah Wali Allah) was the great Islamic Scholar of Delhi. His knowledge and wisdom made him a well-known Muhaddith, renewer and Sufi. His works are in galore as he widely acknowledged as the great Sunni leader in Hanafi Jurisprudence.

<sup>32</sup> Eastern state of India which is boarded by Nepal and divided by River Ganges.

<sup>33</sup> The other name is Odisha situated in the Eastern parts of India on the Bay of Bengal. It is rich with tribal cultures and many ancient Hindu temples.

suffered heavily and wriggled beneath the wretched shackles of slavery and suffocating anxieties. Not alone did it affect politically, but religiously, culturally and communally also. In such a context the future of madrasah education was a matter to be discussed.

### 3.1. Mysterious Agenda of British against Madrasah Education

Britain started many missionary works in India to contaminate the minds of the Indian people and as to recruit to Christianity. The first missionary school was established at Calcutta in 1759. They were very cunning without stopping the entire madrasah education at one step and in a sudden. Rather, it was an enticing and instigating the minds of students for governmental jobs and highly economical offering. They even erected the Calcutta Madrasah under the guidance of governor general of Bengal, Warren Hasting in 1780. But, it was politically motivated and they hatched their plans to diminish the importance of religious education in the minds of Muslims. In 1772, Warren and William Jones applied the law of Qur'an with respect to Muhammandans<sup>34</sup> and the Shaster<sup>35</sup> with respect to the Hindus.

The Calcutta Aliya Madrasah followed rightly the Ders-i- Nizami system till 1790 and then on some changes done with hidden purposes. English language was adopted in 1826 and continued until 1851. " We must at present do our own best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions who we grow, as class of persons; Indians in blood and colour but English in task and opinion, in moral and in intellect. (Macaulay's Minute on education, 1835:14) In 1835, Persian language was replaced by English in courts ringing the first death knell of Indian linguistics identity. The result was dangerous as learning Persian will not suffice to get government jobs. As was expected, Governor General Hardinge<sup>36</sup> proclaimed those with English language and knowledge would be given government jobs and other related advantages. It was the death of Persian language and a warning to many other signs of *Indianness*. (Being Indian) as was a clear threat to madrasah students.

The other important thing to mention was the 'westernization of education'. Some of the indigenous schools were transformed into western style by Charles Wood, the president of the Board of Control for India. This dramatic change known to be (Wood's Despatch of 1854). Their new curriculum focused on mathematics, science and language while religious subjects especially of madrasah education got little scope and attention. British conducted teaching training and applied in missionary schools with many other grants making a huge threat to traditional madrasah system. Traditional and secular educational systems such as *Pathashalas* in Bengal heavily suffered major blows as they attracted the minds of youths with better facilities and monetary funds. " Education might serve to

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<sup>34</sup> Followers of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), a Muslim who adheres to the principles of Islam.

<sup>35</sup> Originates from Sanskrit and means the rules for living for Hindus.

<sup>36</sup> Henry Hardinge (1785-1856) was the governor-general to India in 1844-1848.

prepare young minds for a conversion”, Seth-2007:30. To missionaries, education was a *Praeparatio Evangelica*<sup>37</sup>. This was their hidden plan of conversion under the shadow of western education. They excellently applied the ‘divide and destroy’ theory in education as bifurcating the strong base of knowledge and education in to two realms; secular and religious. This was the colonial agenda of imposing language and culture to defeat a community out of their past identity.

This was termed rightly by Yoginder Sikand as ‘*Educational Dualism*’ i.e. religion pushed to private sphere and termed distinct sphere of life and activity, neatly separate or separable from other similar defined spheres.( Sikand-2005:66) This difference made a huge gap in society as madrasahs consigned to provide religious education not the general one. Sacred versus profane or *deen*<sup>38</sup> (religious/sacred) and *dunya*<sup>39</sup> (temporal or profane) was the concept of some ulemas as they strongly opposed the western education, especially, the English language. Some took this difference as a cultural resistance against the colonial powers. Moreover, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, madrasahs played major roles in the identity politics of the Muslim community.

As mentioned earlier, Calcutta Aliya Madrasah was the first modern madrasah established in 1780 under British authority for connecting the colonial administration through the Ders-i-Nizami system. Some other madrasahs also were established with same intention at Hugli, Dhaka-Chittagong and other parts of West Bengal. (Colonial Education in India 1781-1945: Volume II) English was included and government grants also made available in these madrasahs. Meanwhile, Persian language was replaced and subjects like geography, history and physical education were followed as a new trend to enchant the swaying minds of students. These reformed models known to be the ‘Reformed or New-scheme Madrasah’. So, two types of madrasahs were seen; traditional and reformed or new-scheme while the government granted only this new model as it suited to their hidden agendas and demands. But, the ulemas came up with strong resistance against this meaningless differentiation as the new model lacks the Muslim consciousness, empowerment and their freedom of expression in education and religion.

### 3.2. The Counter Attacks of Muslim Scholars

The Muslim scholars had boldly rushed against the hidden agendas and westernized ideologies of Britain as they tried to shatter the educational base of Islamic learning. They welcomed the missionaries of their homeland and granted them immensely paving the ways for them to spread their Christian religion. At the same time, they brought many laws to restrict the freedom of Muslims in educational fields and gradually stop the

<sup>37</sup> It means ‘Preparation for the Gospel’ better known by its Latin title mentioned above. This was a work of Christian apologetics written by Eusebius in fourth century A.D.

<sup>38</sup> Arabic word for religion and also related to divine concepts of Islam.

<sup>39</sup> Originates from Arabic, means this physical world and what it is related to it.

educational revolution of Islam which was in full swing during the rule of Mughals and Turkish-origin Muslim rulers. For this purpose alone, they established many English Mediums<sup>40</sup> promoting English language and job-oriented courses. The graduates of madrasahs were left with nothing while the graduates of these modern schools were the demand of time and society. Still, Muslim scholars fought against this unjust activities and modified their syllabus timely. Even the English language was added as it has acquired great importance being the global language.

When British changed the time of their schooling to clash with the madrasah times, scholars shifted the time to evening finding other possible ways to maintain the cahance of religious learning. Students who attend schools at morning will participate in evening classes of madrasah for religious studies. The parents were very interested in keeping both material and religious education simultaneously. (Samastha Thonnuram Varshika Smaraka Grandham, 2016) They knew that whenever a generation lost the knowledge of its religious fundamentals, they will be vanquished in every department of life. The religious knowledge is the backbone of Islam as the younger generation has to learn it in spite of every challenge. Shortly, even though British worked hard to cease the growth of Islamic education, they were not completely victorious in this mission as the later events of progress and leap rightly rectify this fact. Presently, the Muslim community are well ahead in their educational activities in different parts of the county, though they are facing some threats and intimidations from large group of fanatics and religious radicals.

#### 4. Deoband, Barelvi and Nadwa Model Madrasahs

At a critical juncture where religious education of Muslims was under threat, *Darul Uloom* was established at Deoband, 100 miles away from north of Delhi, in 1866 after the rebellion of 1857<sup>41</sup> against the cruel rule of British. (Madrasah in India: How 1857, British Crackdown on Muslims led to Founding of Pioneering Darul Uloom Deonand, Ziya Us Salam and Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz: 12/13/2019) *Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanutawi*<sup>42</sup>(1833-1877) and *Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi*<sup>43</sup>(1829-1905) were the prominent leaders behind its birth. The educational systems were not traditionally-accomplished. Rather, it was somewhat liberal in many concepts as Sunnis were in sharp contrast with their new model of educational system. The founders were Sunnis and later many conflicts occurred as the some leaders stood against the pure Islamic ideologies. However, they

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<sup>40</sup> It is an education system where English language is the medium of teaching, instruction and practice while this language is not the mother tongue of the students.

<sup>41</sup> The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was courageous fight of Indians against the cruel rule of East India Company. Even though, it was suppressed and caused the collapse of Mughal Empire in India, the Indians were at least aware of the resistance and counter attack against the common enemy.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi (1833-1880) was an Indian Sunni Hanafi scholar and a Sufi with many followers. He is one of the main founders of the Deoband.

<sup>43</sup> Rashid Ahmad ibn Hidayat Ahmad Ayyubi Ansari Gangohi (1826-1905) was Indian Deobandi Islamic Scholar, a leading jurist and scholar of Hadith.

could represent Muslims in whole and many accepted this system and enrolled to their institution. Many madrasahs were affiliated to their system and it grew in importance and value.

#### 4.1. The Educational Revolution of Deoband

Deoband was raised to the status of 'Uloom'<sup>44</sup> in 1867 as its resources and educational accomplishments were high. The syllabus was revised form of *Ders-i-Nizami* which followed *Shah Waliyullah's* concepts of *Manqulat* (revealed knowledge) rather than the rational one. *Fiqh* was the core of syllabus and it insisted on spiritual awakening and political emancipation of Muslim community. Anglo-Muhammadan College of Sayyid Ahmed Khan was rejected by many Muslims as it went far from the traditional concepts of Islam and deeply-rooted in liberal attitudes that he earned during his stay in Europe. His opponets alleged him that he had supported colonialism being a liberal Muslim leader. (The Religious Liberalism of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan : Dr. Hafeez Malik, Wiley Online Library 1964.) Deoband, on other hand, rejected Shia and Sufi tradition. It insisted on *Taqlid* (act of following a well educated religious scholar without considering any proof for what he claims, acts and believes) as any deviation was a serious crime in religious matters as it strongly believed that the gates of *Ijtihad* (an act of hard work for solution by thoroughly examining and interpreting the religious matters with great wisdom and knowledge) are absolutely closed. This concept grew the seed of difference between the 'Deobandis' (those who follow the values of Deoband) and 'traditionals' (those who insist on tradition of Islam)

In administrative level, Deoband was highly elaborated when compared to other weakly-organized educational systems as its infrastructure and governing body failed to attract students in galore. Rector (*sarparast*), chancellor (*muhtamim*), chief instructor (*sadar mudarris*) were the governing and authoritative body of Deoband. (Rahman: 2004) But, the application of this hierarchical structure is western-influenced as it demanded admission process with needed exams and tests for new enrollers, graduation systems, building and infrastructure facilities and above all a well-oiled bureaucracy. *Maulana Mahmudul Hasan* (1851-1920) changed this institution as the hub of socio-political movements. He was the first student of Deoband and respectably called, *Sheykul Hind* (the leader of India). *Samarathu-t Tarbiyat* (result of training) was his organization against British as *Jamiat-I-khilafat-I Hind* (all India Khilafat conference) *Jamiat-i- Ulema-i- Hind*<sup>45</sup> (association of religious scholars of India) also came in to force by the influence of Deoband to fight for the existence of Muslim identity. At *Saharanpur*<sup>46</sup> had such a replica of Deoband as in

<sup>44</sup> Originates for Arabic means for Universities where different kinds of subjects being taught. That is why Deoband named 'Darul-Uloom' (the abode of knowledge)

<sup>45</sup> Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind or Jamiat Umami-i-Hind is an organization of Islamic scholars belong to Deobandi school of thought.

<sup>46</sup> A city and a municipal corporation in Uttar Pradesh, it was named after the pious Shah Haroon Chishti.

many other parts of India where students quenched their thirst of knowledge and sharpened their tools of learning skills for a better and prosperous future.

#### 4.2. Barelvis and Traditional Systems

The Sunni Muslims, rather those who follow the traditional Islam with timely changes within the boundary of religion; they do *Ijtihad* by comparing the matters of present to the times of prophet or with interpretations of religious texts for the modern issues, strictly opposed some of the *Deobandi* concepts and began to think a solution for real traditional Islamic ideologies. *Deoband's* austere measures, strict stance on *Taqlid*, puritanism, over emphasis of correctness of interpretations of religious texts by themselves without much knowledge were the cause difference and arguments towards Sunni Muslims.

Emergence of *Ahl-e-s Sunnat Wal -Jamat* (people of Sunbath and the community) better called, '*Barelvis*<sup>47</sup>' under the auspicious guidance of *Maulana Ahmed Riza Khan* (1855-1921) who was born in Bareli, UP. Under the training of his father, *Moulana Naqi Ali*, he learnt *Ders-i-Nizami* system well to be a prodigious student even in tender age. His father was a great scholar of Hadith but without going to any structured madrasah; the traditional learning system can be learnt even in homes. *Ahmed Riza Khan* was proclaimed as the *Mujaddid* (the renewer) by great scholars of his time for scholastic and religious knowledge in 1990 at a special meeting in Patna, Bihar. (*Ahmad Riza Khan Bareilwi: in the Path of the Prophet*, Usha Sanyal-One Word Publication: 2005) In 1904, he founded *Manzarul-Islam Madrasah* at Bareli with traditional Islamic concepts and Prophetic conducts. So, traditional practices and Sufis were respected. *Pir* (religious guides) were common in Bareli and people showed great reverence towards them as they lead a simple and perfect religious life.

There were the battles of different opinions between the *Deobandis* and *Barelvis* as many fatwas were against the traditionalistic views of Islam. In 18,19<sup>th</sup> centuries, this religious fight for domination was a common event in society that somehow caused the progressive measures of Muslim community in general. *Barelvis* were conservatives hence strictly opposed to the colonial rule of British with every nail and teeth. So, they even kept distance on non-cooperation movement of *Deobandis* against the British government. The issues related Pakistan was of no importance for *Deobandis* as they never believe in the formation of such nation while *Barelvis* gave their full consent to this burning issue and to Muslim League<sup>48</sup>. The inner play of British in bifurcating the same community is their master trick of 'divide and rule' policy, by which they can easily destroy or at least

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<sup>47</sup> 'Barelvis' are attributed to Sunnis who follow the Sunni Sufi leader, Moulana Ahmad Raza Khan who was born in Bareli of Uttar Pradesh.

<sup>48</sup> All-India Muslim League is a political party founded in 1906 at Dhaka by then leaders, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Aga Khan III and other prominent leaders. The influence of this party in Kerala is high compared to other states.

weaken their enemies. Madrasah educational systems of both Deoband and Bareli played major roles in these battles as they revamped the syllabus according to their concept and opinions. 'Real Muslimnes' or 'True Muslimness' began to be termed on this educational system. Thus, the battle between the both continued without much solution until, to a little measure, the *Nadwa* is being introduced.

#### 4.3. Nadwa and its Roles in Society

To unite the both and as a bridging measurement, some scholars under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Ali Mungeri (1846-1927) established the Nadwathul Ulema (the council of Ulemas) in 1883. The main goals of the formation was to reform the curriculum and pedagogy of madrasahs, uniting of Muslim community and raising awareness of Muslim identity which began to be lost even among the common Muslims who struggle in every department of life. Interestingly, even the Shia representatives were included in this platform, though many other gave not their consent. But, Barelvis made scathing attack of this council as they established 'Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema' (*Nadwa*) in 1896. (Deobandi Islam vs. Barelvi Islam in South Asia, Martin W. Lewis- GeoCurrents-2010) This got much attention when *Shibli Noumani*<sup>49</sup> joined here who a teacher of Ali Garh<sup>50</sup> was before. *Nadwa* kept good contact with *Deoband* and never rejected western educational system; both were alike related to their way following western styles.

Both Deoband's syllabus was based on the 17th-century curriculum of Dars-e-Nizami. The main topics were Islamic law (Shariah), Islamic Jurisprudence (fiq'h) and traditional Islamic spirituality (tasavvuf) for Sufism) along with a two-year diploma in English was also included later. The curriculum of *Nadwa* was not too much different from Deoband but the mode of teaching was in Arabic while Deoband focused On Urdu language. *Nadwa*'s syllabus was evolved around the topics like, Qur'an, diniyat, arabic literature and grammar, hind, english, mathematics, fiq'h, hadith and tafsir etc. ( *Nadwat-al-Ulema, Nisab-e-Ta'lim*;1892). Deoband followed the Hanafi school of Islamic law while *Nadwa* was a mixture of both as it was established to the fill the conspicuous gap between Deoband and Barelwis. Under the guidance of *Shibli*, there were conducted many Arabic debates included by many scholars from Egypt whom *Shibli* got in contact with in 1892 from Africa and Middle East. He was wrongly influenced by Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905) who was a *Salafist*. (Hartung, 2006:14). After *Shibli*, *Nadwa* naturally kept their bond intact with many *Salafi* scholars of Egypt and got an Arabic Journal for spreading the ideologies of 'Salafiyya' (all *Salafi* ideologies which vehemently opposed traditional Islamic views). Though they have *salafistic* concepts, their educational practices were relatively good with resourceful library and a syllabus included by Modern History, Spoken Arabic and

<sup>49</sup> Shibli Noumani (1857-1914) was an Indian scholar during British rule. He founded Shibli National College in 1883 and Darul Musannifeen (the house of the writers).

<sup>50</sup> Aligarh Muslim University established in 1920 is a public Central one in Aligarh, India. This was founded originally by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as the Muhammad an Anglo-College in 1875.

encouragement of intellectual debates instead of 'mere memorization and blind adherence to the teachers.

The Daobandis and Barelwis almost rejected the British educational systems of 'Westernization of Europe', yet they promoted learning English for its scope and reach in modern times. But on the other hand, Naddwa, always encouraged and included this language in their syllabus. The main reason that racked their brains was the changing mentality of the community as they wanted to learn this language and get high profile-jobs rather shrinking themselves to the walls of madrasahs and other small educational institutions. The British utilized this chance well by offering good jobs for the learners of English thus they could some how destroy the base and intention of traditional madrasah education. Rather than directly involving, they supported the missionary workers and their religious-oriented western education.

Apart from the internal conflicts among Muslims, the Christian missionaries and Arya samaj were the two blocking challenges for madrasah education. Being in power with colonial imperialism, missionaries could easily put forward their plans while, being majority in population, Arya samaj could do their religious activities quiet easily without much problems. But the history and growth of madrasahs were not alike in every state; rather it depends upon the locality and harmonious existence of community without any racial, religious and cultural segregations. Kerala, known to be the best haven for Muslims and all Islamic activities. The madrasah system works independent but completely well-functioned with great success and envious result. Being in the southern parts of India, Kerala had deep roots with Arabian merchants even before the advent of Islam. As Arabs were very interested in exploring journeys and trades, the extensive coast and the abundance of spices attracted them to the land. Teh constant contact of Kerala with Arabs made them so close to the Arabian culture and even marriage relations. As the Malabar Coast is covering the most parts of Kerala, it known to be 'Malabar Region' as many historians including Al Biruni mentioned it.<sup>51</sup>

The traditional Islamic educational system of India has undergone many significant transformations throught out the history. The pre-colonial structure of education was shaped by different Muslim rulers and mainly by Mughal Empires. The Farangi Model was a better systematic one followed by Deoband, Barelwi and Nadwa styles eventhough with slight variations of syllabus, mode of teaching and administrative body. This traditional way of learning was challenged by obtacles like British sovereignty and thier ruthless approach towards Muslims supporting the missionaries to mashroom and flourish at thier will. Even with some challenges of liberal and modern aspects of westernization of knowledge, this way of learning stood proudly especially in Kerala even to this day.

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<sup>51</sup> Arab relations with Malabar Coast From 9<sup>th</sup> TO 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries, K.M.Mohamed 226-234 P, Indian History Congress.

## 5. Kerala Model Madrasahs

The deep connection of Kerala, located in the southern parts of India, to the arrival of Islam is well-known. The first Muslim of India is believed to be from Kerala as mentioned earlier. The merchants from Arabia, Yemen and Oman were the occasional visitors through the sea route and transmitted their cultural and religious activities in coastal areas of Kerala. Even from the time of Prophet (s) to this day, Kerala keeps such religious prosperity by Islamic educational entities like madrasahs, *Masjid Ders Systems*<sup>52</sup>, Arabic Colleges<sup>53</sup> and Islamic Universities.

*Ahmadul Baladur*, the Muslim historian mentioned in his *Fethu-l Bilad* that from the first years of Hijra Muslims had reached Kerala. *Farishta* (1552-1623) also revealed the great event of Perumal in his seminal work of *Tarihul-Hind*. Moreover, Evans, Logan<sup>54</sup> and works like *Tuhfatul Mujahideen*<sup>55</sup>, *Malabar Manual*<sup>56</sup> and *Malabar Gazetteer, Keralolpathi*<sup>57</sup> (the Evolution of Kerala) and *Malabarile Mappilamar*<sup>58</sup> (Mappilas in Malabar) had this realities clearly explained. Portuguese traveler and historian, Barbosa in 1516 had well written this event in his work. As the famous historian Albiruni<sup>59</sup> says that the life styles of Muslims made non-Muslims got attracted to the peaceful shore of Islam. The Hindu kings like 'Samuthiri'<sup>60</sup> (Eranadu Swami Nambuthiri Thirumulpadu) had helped Muslims well in their religious, cultural and political activities. If a Muslim carelessly avoids Friday Juma, he shall be punished as there was (*Khisas*)<sup>61</sup> for the murderers. The death and related rituals were according to the Islamic rules for Muslims. Even the conversion to Islam was legally acknowledged.

<sup>52</sup> This called the Islamic learning system prevailed in Kerala in any masjid. This was the pre-structure of madrasahs. Generally called 'Ders'.

<sup>53</sup> These were a new model of educational system as both of the rational and religious subjects were given in a separate building where students stayed with free accommodation and food.

<sup>54</sup> William Logan (1841-1914) was a Scottish officer Madras Civil Service under British Government. He had also been appointed as Collector of Malabar.

<sup>55</sup> *Tufatul-Mujahideen fi Ba'd Akhbar al- Burtughaliyin* is a historical work by Zainuddin Makhdoom II on the battles between the Mappila Muslims of Malabar and South Canary and Portuguese colonial powers in 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>56</sup> A famous book by William Logan.

<sup>57</sup> *Keralolppathi* is believed to be the contribution of Tunchathu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan, a 17<sup>th</sup> century scholar of Malabar region. It dealt with the origin of the land of Kerala.

<sup>58</sup> *Mappilamar* means many Mappila people. Mappila Muslim or often termed as moplak/mopla is generally used for Muslim community in Kerala and Lakshadweep people.

<sup>59</sup> Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (973-1048) was an Iranian scholar and termed as the "father of a Comparative Religion". He had been to India during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Ghazni in the second decade of 11<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>60</sup> The Zamorin of Calicut is other famous name to be mentioned. This hereditary kingdom ruled in Calicut, Kozhikode on the Malabar Coast of India. As Kozhikode was the main sea-trade hub of that time, its influence was great on different aspects.

<sup>61</sup> The Arabic word for taking due Islamic punishments according to the intensity of the crime as suggested by Islam without the intervention or interpretation of the followers. It is divinely fixed.

With the conversion of Hindu king *Perumal* and his candid support for Malik Bin Deenar<sup>62</sup> and his family in spreading Islam here in Kerala by sincere propagation, building masjids and religious learning centers considered to be the primary and major steps in this regard. They made ten masjids in different parts of Kerala after the conversions of two Perumals, one in Prophet's time whose event is being reported in *Musthadrak of Hakim*<sup>63</sup>, "As an Indian king presented a ginger-box to Prophet (s). I myself was lucky to get one piece as He distributed this gift". *Al thabari*, 9<sup>th</sup> century historian, pointed out in *Fidousil-Hikmet* that, this king stayed 17 days with Prophet (s). Shankar Varma or Chenka Perumal<sup>64</sup> (621-642 AD.) changed his name to *Thajuddin* and his grave is believed to be in *Shahar Muqalla* while *Cheraman Perumal* was *Abdurrahman Samiri* whose grave is at *Dufar of Salala* in between 827-832<sup>65</sup>. So is believed the conversion of another Samuthiri Kind in between 644-656 A.D. due to the propagation of Mugeerath- bin Shu'ba, the great follower of Prophet(s). Naturally, some differences in dates are mentioned yet the reported event are real as many historian proved these facts.

Kerala known as 'Malabar' derived from the words, 'Malei' means mountain and 'nad' means populated areas or country. Kerala Muslims called normally "Mappilas" means 'maha pillai' i.e. Great men. Mainly Arabian traders and Sufi scholars from Yemen and other countries made this land a religious haven for Muslims. 'Kodungallur' was the capital of the Malabar in olden days. The Jews had settled their in the times of Prophet Suleiman (a) under the leadership of Joseph Rabban. The Christianity prevailed here in .A.D. 52. Then came the golden entry of Islam guiding the people to calm and peaceful shores of Islam in times of Prophet (s). The then Ceylon<sup>66</sup> which was in India, had been blessed by the holy feet of Prophet Adam (a). Arabs who visited this feet landed in Kerala, especially, in Kodungallur made this land very fertile for the spread of Islam. Malik bin Deenar<sup>®</sup> and his family settled in different parts of Kerala and made many masjids in Panthalain, Thalasseri, Ezhimala, Mangalore, Ponnani, Chiliasm, Mahi, Dharmapattanam, Kasargod, Thanur, Chavakkad, Kayal pattanam, Kochi, Kovalam and Thiruvananthapuram.<sup>67</sup>

The first Ders- which can be considered the old models of early madrasahs-established in Kerala was in Tanur( 675 H) under the leadership of Asheyk-ul Fadil Muhammad bin Abdullah-il Hadrami Al Khahiri as it was followed by Chaliyum and Calicut by the guidance of Asheykul- Kazi Ramazan Asshyaliyathi and Aaheyik Fahrudin Abi Bakar Al-

<sup>62</sup> Malik bn Dinar (d.748 CE) was one of the first known Muslim came to Kerala for Islamic propagation after the death of the converted king, Cheraman Perumal.

<sup>63</sup> Al- Musthadrak is five volume Hadith collection authored by Hakim al-Nishapur, Iran.

<sup>64</sup> This event is mentioned in *Tarikh Zuhur al Islam fil Malibar*, one of the early manuscripts on Islam, authored by Muhammad bin Malik.

<sup>65</sup> Mappila Community of Malabar-History and Growth, Randathani Hussein

<sup>66</sup> The old name of present Sri Lanka, the island country in South Asia which liberated from the colonial British rule in 1948.

<sup>67</sup> *Sunni Afkar*, 2012 June

Kalikuti. Then was the famous Ders in Ponnani in 9<sup>th</sup> century in the great masjid of Ponnani which was established and reached to height of great success and fame as it called the 'the Makah of Malabar'. Such was the importance of Islamic education at that time.<sup>68</sup>

### 5.1. The Role of Samastha Kerala Jameyyathul Ulema in Kerala Model Madrasahs

The historical events took place in the wake of Malabar Revolt in 1921<sup>69</sup> reminded the Muslim community of a cultural, religious and educational revival. Besides, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab<sup>70</sup>, Rashid Rida<sup>71</sup>, Muhammad Abdu<sup>72</sup> and Jamal Uddin Afghani<sup>73</sup> like westernized liberal leaders were influenced in Kerala, though the mainstream of Muslims remained as traditional Sunnis. They made 'Kodungallur' as their center and established 'the Organization of Muslims in Kerala' in 1922. In this critical juncture, the great scholar, *Asheyk Ahmed Kutty Musliyar* (pang) with Sufi scholar *Asheyk A-s-sayed Abdurrahman* and with some other prominent scholars of traditional Sunnis discussed seriously of an organization for Muslim education and eventually, Samastha Kerala Jameyyaetul- Ulema (All Kerala Ulema Organization) was formed in 26/06/1926 at Calicut<sup>74</sup>.

Samastha mainly focused on preaching of traditional Islamic ideologies, resisting the liberal Islamic ideologies that deeply-rooted in Western and European ideologies internally, guarding the rights of Muslim community, imparting Islamic education in a suitable and systematic method and doing everything positive for the progress of all Muslims keeping the harmonious structure of Kerala. In this way, Samastha formed a sub wing for the unity and order of madrasah teachers (Jameyyathul Mudarriseen). Malabar area has a great number of madrasahs, students and teachers who in together may exceed other states of India in impeccable execution, application of timely changes and reaping great result in religious and cultural aspects of Kerala Muslims.

### 5.2. The Routines and Syllabi in Masjid-Derses

Nobody can reject the old Islamic educational systems and the sincere efforts of common people in spreading the importance of knowledge that paved the way for the present

<sup>68</sup> Samastha Thonnuram Varshika Smaraka Grandhm, 2016

<sup>69</sup> The Malabar rebellion happened in August 20 of 1921-1922 in Malabar regions of Kerala as a resistance against the cruel British rule and turned to be as communal violence out of many misunderstandings.

<sup>70</sup> Muhammad ibn Abd-al Wahhabi ibn Suleiman at-Tamimi (1703-1792) was born in Najd of Arabia and he was the founder of Wahhabism.

<sup>71</sup> Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) a scholar, reformer and revivalist. Influenced by Islamic Modernism which was founded in Egypt, he made many controversies.

<sup>72</sup> Muhammad ibn Abdu (1849-1905) was an Egyptian scholar, theologian and writer. He was also influenced by Modernism movement.

<sup>73</sup> Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) known as Sayyid Jamal-al-Din Asadabadi was a political activist and Islamic ideologist influenced by Modernism Movement.

<sup>74</sup> Samastha Thonnuram Varshika Smaraka Grandham p 356-415;2016

educational revolution. The routines in a Ders were of extreme interest and importance; students will wake up even before the fajr aḍān (call to prayer) for *Tahajjud Prayer*<sup>75</sup> and recitation of holy Qur'an. From early morning to the evening, students will be engaged in classes with different subjects. The regular refreshment hours are very useful for their primary needs of food, washing, clothing and other related things. The self-learning practices, writing exercises along with revision and memorization process would be carried out after the *Magrib Namaz*. The syllabus which was rife in India was mainly Ders-i- Nizami of *Asheyk Al Mullah Nizamuddin* from *Farangi Mahal*. There were many rational and philosophical topics and foreign languages included in this curriculum. Those who graduate will be conferred the degree of '*Al Pahlavi Al Alim*'- the equivalent degree of Bachelor while those who pursue higher studies may be awarded '*Al Maulavi Al -Fadil*' equivalent to the master level in secular subjects. The curriculum that followed in Malabar areas were of Madina and Makah which better called '*Assilsilat-ul-Fahriya*'<sup>76</sup>. This system was aptly organized by *Fahrudin Abu baker Al Kalikuty* (d.895 AH)

The same curriculum was followed until the influential scholar, Kuchimhammad Chalilakat<sup>77</sup> added many rational subjects like mathematics, Engineering and philosophy; a rightly mixed curriculum of Ders-i- Nizami and *Silsilat-u Fahriyya*. Since then this model curriculum was prevailed all Malabar areas slightly being different in madrasahs and Masjid-Derses. The common topics covered in this Ders system were *fiq'h*, *usulul fiq'h*, *tafseer*, *hadith*, *istilah-ul hadith*, *al-Kalam*, sufism (*tasawuf*) *tajweed* ( the rules and regulations of reciting holy Qua'n) arabic language and literature, *mantiq*, mathematics, engineering, philosophy, debates, history, urdu and english Languages and modern technologies.

There were many students' organizations controlled by students themselves for the overall progress and skill. Literary wing, writers' wing, library wing, IT and information wing, arabic debate council, wing for tajweed and Qur'an memorization, medical board- especially, *tibu-n nabawi*, diploma for arabic and urdu Languages, help desk for improving the quality of studying and for informing the governmental and non-governmental job oriented courses and 'Fests' in literary contests among students to bring out the hidden qualities of students<sup>78</sup>. Samastha Kerala Jameyathul Ulema and Samastha Kerala Islam matha Vidyabyasa Board (S.K.I.M.B) revolted against the puritanical concepts of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab, the *salafism* of Rasheed Riza, and Modern Islamic and liberalist views of Muhammad Abdu and Pan-Islamic ideologies of Jamaluddin Afghani. Thus, Samastha brought a really traditional and Sunni ideological concepts in this new educational experiments.

<sup>75</sup> The supererogatory prayer that can be done, even after at least a wink, before the time of Fajr adan.

<sup>76</sup> Harkat-u-t-Tadrisi fi Masajidi Malaibar, p44

<sup>77</sup> Moulana Chalilakath Kunhammad Haji (1866-1919) was the Malayali Sunni scholar and the reformer of the orthodox Madrasah system in Kerala.

<sup>78</sup> Harkatu-t-Tadrisi fi Masajidi Malaibar, C.K.Muhammad Abdurahman Al-Faidi, p103-110;2015

S.K.I.M.V.B, being the first sub-wing of Samastha worked as greatly to unite more than 10000 madrasahs in and out of Kerala, especially, in neighboring states of Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Andaman and Nicobar and in foreign countries like U.A.E, Oman, Kuwait and Malaysia. From mere *Othupalli*<sup>79</sup> and *Palliders*, Samastha could work very effectively even in foreign countries resulting greatly in religious and cultural atmosphere of Kerala. They conducted public exams in 5, 7 and 10 classes with impeccable timing and immaculate systems that challenge the regular activities of government and other highly-acclaimed private institutions. Many inspectors, *Mufatish*<sup>80</sup> and tutors are racing against the time to improve the quality of teachers and facilities of students. They even meet the management for the infrastructural and basic environments. Some madrasahs have plus one and plus two according to the availability of students while some have low level classes. Still, the local people are considering the religious education very compulsory and moving whatever possible for this purpose<sup>81</sup>.

Some graduates of these institutions of Samastha are perusing their higher studies in Deoband, Nadwa, Baqiyat<sup>82</sup>, jamiya Nuriya<sup>83</sup> and Nizamia<sup>84</sup> while many graduates of Drau Huda Islamic University<sup>85</sup> and Wafi<sup>86</sup> background are busy with their higher education in J.N.U, Ali Garh, Jamia Milliya, Hamdard, and some famous universities of India. Some are doing their doctoral studies in Malaysia, Turkey, Canada, England, Scotland and Poland etc... The madrasah system to Arabic College experiences make these students competent in every department of educational dexterities. Even though the *Jama-t-e Islami* and *Mujahid* factions have madrasahs, the traditional Sunnis are far more ahead with majority and extremely good result. They had focused on the empowerment of women education in a systematic way, but Samastha has now great number of such institutions and reaping the fruitful harvest with great success as this kind of educational empowerment and progress cannot be seen in other states of India commonly.

### 5.3. Madrasahs and Arabic Colleges

When this Ders System lacked its sheen and elegance as people did not show much interest due to many reasons. From such a context, Arabic Colleges were established with a mixed syllabus of material and immaterial subjects. The first among this list is 'Darul

<sup>79</sup> A temporary shelter or an attached room to masjids for teaching students.

<sup>80</sup> An Arabic term for inspector. A teacher with the responsibility to inspect particular madrasahs and the learning level of students. Samastha will send them region by region.

<sup>81</sup> Harkat-u-t-Tadrisi fi Masajidi Malaibar p 230-232

<sup>82</sup> Madrasah al-Baqiyat-us-Salihah, established in 1857 by Shah Abdul Wahhab at Tamilnadu

<sup>83</sup> Jamia Nooriyya Arabiyya was founded Sayyid Shihabuddin Imbichikkoya Thangal in 1963.

<sup>84</sup> Jamia Nizamia is an old Islamic seminary of Sunnis founded by the 7<sup>th</sup> Nizam of Hyderabad in 1876.

<sup>85</sup> A private Islamic University founded by three great sincere men, D.r. U. Bapputty Haji, M.M. Basheer Musliyar and C.H.Haidaroos Musliyar in 1986.

<sup>86</sup> Wafi systems established in 2000 work under Coordination of Islamic Colleges (CIC) in Kerala. It has a combined syllabus of religious and rational subjects.

*Uloom'at Vazhakkad* built by Muhammad Kutty and it reached to heights of fame when the great scholar and reformist, *Kunhahammad Haji Chalilakath*<sup>87</sup> blessed here with his great service in 1871. A.D. This followed by *Islahul Uloom* at Tanur under the guidance of Ahemed Kutty Musliyar (PANG) in 1930. Even in this times, the Ders system has been in action but mainly confined only to religious studies. Thus, the number of Arabic Colleges began to mount as *Rahmaniya* (Kadameri), *Anwariya* (Pottichira) and *Markazu-t Tharbiyatu-l Islamiya* (Vallancheri) were affiliated to *Jamia Nuriya Arabic College* at Faizabad of Pattikkad. Then every college became independent with special mixed curriculum and graduation degree and related issues. This system continued somewhat normal in this periods until *Darul Huda Islamic University* established by the great visionaries and Sufi scholars like D.r. U. Bapputty Haji, M.M.Basheer Musliyar and C.H.Haidarus Musliyar in 1985.(*Harakat-u-t-Tadrisi fi Masajidi Malaibar* p,211-219)

Since then the history of Kerala Islamic education was related to *Darul Huda*. Its superbly applied syllabus, entrance examinations, strictly-instructed routine practices, availability of dexterous teachers and above all, the envious support and contribution of the mass, made it on the helm. After it was upgraded a Private Islamic University, recognized by many foreign Muslim educational boards and universities in Malasia, Turkey, Morocco and Tunis, its educational system has rocketed to great stardom. In this way, In 2000, the introduction of CIC (co-ordination of Islamic curriculum) better known as 'WAFI' the scope of this model grew much importance and opulence. This system focusses on the education of women simultaneously<sup>88</sup>. Kerala, definitely, comes atop in imparting Islamic education for women folk whole in India. *Wafiya*, *Zahrawiyya*, *Mahdiayya*, *Fadila* and *Fadeela* are the best among this list. For the male graduates from main Islamic institution of Kerala are as follow; *Faizy* (*Jamia nuriaya*) *Darimi* (Nanthi Darussalam) *Anwari* (*Anwariya College*) *Rahmani* (*Rahmaniya College*) *Yamani* ( *Yamaniya College*) *Wahabi* (*Wahabi College*) *Ahsani* (*Ihya-u-s-Sunna College*) *Sa'adi* ( *Sa'adiyya College*) *Saqafi* ( *Markazu-s-Saqafathu-s-Sunniya*). The other famous Islamic Institutions like, *Baqawi* (*Baqiyyathu-s Swalihath*), *Nizami*, (*Jamia Nizamiya*, *Hyderabad*), *Qasimi* (*Darul Uloom*, *Deoband*) *Nadwi* (*Daru Uloom Nadwatul Ulema*) might have influenced the educational systems in Malabar and Kerala.( *Harakat-u-t-Tadrisi fi Masajidi Malaibar*,p,222)

#### 5.4. The Early Derses in Kerala and Transformation in to New Model

Kerala had witnessed for the Islamic revival of education since the time of Prophet. (s) Muslims were gathering in these old masjids and partaking in the great Derses of that time 'Like in the masjid of *Ezhimala* where a group of students were studying with the expense of masjid even the dining hall was made available for who come and stay there. Even the poor Muslims were given food free of cost" (*Rihlat-u Ibn Battuta*: 550 p). The famous masjid in Tanur was also historical as it was built in 800 AH. The very old library

<sup>87</sup> *Harkat-u-t-Tadrisi fi Masajidi Malaibar* p,48

<sup>88</sup> *Harakat-u-t-Tadrisli fi Masajidi Malaibar*,p.213-215

of this masjid has a wide variety of rare books and even today, it is a treasure-trove for every knowledge-seeker. In this way, the masjids at Thirurangadi, Parappanagadi, Moonakkal, Veliyankod, Kasaragod, Kannur, Kodungallur, Nadapuram, puthanagadi, Kappu, Malappuram, Ariptra, Irumpuchola, Thazhekod, Karuvarakundu, Alathurpadi, Kondotty, Pallippuram, Irikkur and the likes are a few to mention. Every masjid had a good Ders system of local and far-away regions students while the *Mahallu*, an autonomous private governing region of approximately containing 500-1000 Muslim homes under 'Samastha' for the religious, cultural, social and economic affairs of Muslims in that locality. (ibid, p, 235-237)

If we consider the growth of madrasahs in Kerala, its roots creep deep into '*Othupalli*' – Masjid Ders systems where in the teaching tenets of Islam and contents of revelation were imparted to students. The *Othupalli* is a southern Indian concept while in northern parts mainly used the term '*maktab*'. The first established madrasahs were in Nishapur, Khurasan and Nizamiya Madrasah in 11th century. But, miraculously, Kerala has this systematic study in masjids or adjacent buildings even at the time of prophet (s). Most of the masjids were built double-storied; the lower part for prayers and for 'ders classes' in non-prayer times while the second one was for accommodating the students who stay and learn there. The local people will feed these students by sharing the students according to their financial set ups. The Imam or the *Khateeb*<sup>89</sup> of the masjid will be the main teacher, rather called reverently, '*usthad*'. The *muaddin* or *mullakka* or *mollakka* or *Mulla* would be the assistant and the other teachers.

The teaching method was mainly oral; teacher will recite or convince the religious texts and students may keep in hearts. The syllabus was primary *Suras* of Qur'an, *dikr*, *hamd*, *swalat* and some *duas* from Quran and Hadith that are considered most basic for students. The class times would be after or before the school times. There was a special script of Arabic-Malayalam language by using Arabic alphabet to represent Malayalam letters and with local phonetics. This script later transformed to prose, poetry of *mappilappattu*<sup>90</sup> and *qissappattu* (Muslim folklore songs that describes the historical events of Islam and related issues).

Chalilakathu Kunjahammad Haji was one of the major reformists of madrasah education as he changed the monotonous and somewhat thus-far-unchangeable curriculum of Kerala model. He was the main teacher (*sadar mudarris*) of *Thanmiyathul Uloom Madrasah* at Vazhakkad and he dared to start higher education in his madrasah which was first in history of Kerala madrasahs. But the orthodox Ulemas denied this and did not show too much interest. Resultantly, he joined Sayyid Sanaullah Makthi Thangal (1847-1912),

<sup>89</sup> Originates from Arabic, means the scholar who offers the 'Khutubah' of Friday.

<sup>90</sup> Mappilappattu (Mappila Songs) are a folklore Muslim song genre rendered to lyrics, within a melodious style, in Arabi-Malayalam language by the Mappila Muslims of Malabar area. The religious and Muslim cultural themes would be the crux and essence of these songs.

Sheyk Hamadani Thangal (d.1922) Saidalikkutty master (1856-1919) K.M. Moulavi (1886-1964) but even he could realize his dream, he departed yet his concept of a revamped educational system was grown to the height.

When people showed much interest in material education as it suits the job opportunities, gradually, the old traditional way of learning religious education seemed matchless to the timely educational innovations of modernity. The westernized educational style also badly affected as many English Mediums and many foreign language courses mushroomed in different parts of Kerala-often as an educational business. People enrolled their children at their tender ages in these modern schools and some, very sad to say, are not getting the basic religious education. Even though the old traditional Ders system is not common in Kerala, the new model of madrasahs, Arabic Colleges and Islamic Universities have bridged this gap absolutely and molded a young generation with great caliber and advanced educational qualities. This is an undeniable fact that these Ders and Madrasah systems which known to be the fore-runners of today's educational revolution in Kerala, have great impact and will be so in coming years. It is really praise-worthy that HADIA<sup>91</sup> spreading this Kerala model all over the India with great planning and success. Gradually but steadily the importance and scope of Islamic education is returning back to its glory.Hadia has been doing excellent works in imparting religious education to the poor children of different states of India by providing free books and other study materials. There are 785 moral madrasahs and 35152 students under Hadia in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir where sufficient madrasahs are not available. Joining hand with Samastha, Hadia prepared texts according to the state language based on Hanafi school of law as most of the Indians-except for Keralites-are Hanafis.

## Conclusion

The great legacy of Islamic education in India which started at the time of prophet (s) and spread across India through various dynasties, has reached in this modern time to a decisive stage. In a democratic country like India, the evolution of the madrasah education was of utmost significance as it started by the Muslim rulers in pre-colonial eras, shaped by Mughals, progressed by other Muslim leaders to be on a decisive stage during the British period in India. Being the minority of a democratic country, Islamic education has undergone many challenges and even great changes till today. From the old Ders systems to *maktebs*, madrasahs, Arabic colleges and even Islamic universities this educational revolution has been trying to regain the golden legacy of Islam. At a time, when the democratic values are in danger, and many challenges are looming around, the future of this educational system should be impeccably well-organized and timely but

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<sup>91</sup> Hadia is the alumni association of Darul Huda for educational and social activities based in Kerala but has been excellent in spreading the educational revolution across India.

really rooted in the traditional concepts. At this critical juncture, the role of Kerala model is considered to be the lone hope for thousands of students across India as the madrasah project, On web academy, Read online Islamic School, Himaya course for women and other religious and cultural programs are being prepared to be practised in sundry parts of the country. By the light of such an educational progress initiated by Kerala, the entire Muslim community in India hopes for a glorious existence and growth in spite of every suffocating challenge.

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