



ISLAM IN MALABAR (1460-1600):
A SOCIO-CULTURAL STUDY

BY

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ABSTRACT

This research is a study on 16th century Malabar Muslims and their approaches to religion and culture in a multi-faceted society. Malabar, situated in the most southern state of India called Kerala, is a unique coastal region, which was reached by Islam at the time of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). This study explores how Malabar Muslims maintained a moderate methodology to continue peaceful coexistence in the region. The 16th century was an era of reformation in Malabar with a number of specialties like the establishment of its first graduate school in Ponnani by Zainuddin Makhdum I, the composition of the first history book by a Malabari scholar, Sheik Zainuddin Makhdu II, and the earliest poems in the Malayalam language (the mother tongue of the region) by the Muslim judge and sage Qazi Muhammed. The century also witnessed a remarkable inception of naval activities in India pioneered by Malabar Muslims. Moderation, a reflecting terminology used several times in the Holy Qur'an, was a prime agenda of Malabar Muslims in the 16th century, executed by prominent religious leaders who led a dazzling moral life, which became a model for generations. This study probes the realities of Malabar Muslims, who profusely used traditional lifestyles, food habits, songs and architecture to incorporate the general public to their realm of belief. The moderate approach of the Malabar society created a unique Muslim folk culture, representing a great attempt to Islamize the traditional culture of Malabar. In this context it is very important to bring out a study on the time-tested moderate approaches of Islam, which paved the way for the wide acceptance of Islam in Malabar.

ملخص البحث

هذا البحث هو دراسة عن مسلمي مالابار ومنهاجهم في الدين والثقافة في أوجه متعددة في المجتمع في القرن السادس عشر، تقع مالابار في أقصى جنوب الهند وتسمى كيرلا، وهي منطقة ساحلية فريدة، والتي وصلها الإسلام في زمان الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم، وهذه الدراسة تكشف عن كيفية محافظة مسلمي مالابار على المنهجية المعتدلة لمواصلة التعايش السلمي في المنطقة. كان القرن السادس عشر عصر الإصلاح في مالابار بوجود العديد من التخصصات والمجالات مثل إنشاء أول مدرسة للدراسات العليا في بوناني على يد زين الدين مخدوم الأول، وتأليف أول كتاب تاريخي من قبل العالم المالبياري الشيخ زين الدين مخدوم الثاني، والقصائد المبكرة باللغة المالبيارية (اللغة الأم للمنطقة) من قبل القاضي المسلم الحكيم محمد. شهد القرن أيضا بداية رائعة من الأنشطة البحرية في الهند، رائدها مالابار المسلمين، والاعتدال الذي يعكس المصطلحات المستخدمة عدة مرات في القرآن الكريم، كان الغالبية لمالابار من المسلمين في القرن السادس عشر، وقامت على سواعد الزعماء الدينيين البارزين الذين قادوا حياةً خلقية مبهرة، والتي أصبحت نموذجاً للأجيال. هذه الدراسة تستطلع الواقع لمسلمي مالابار، الذين استخدموا بغزارة أساليب الحياة التقليدية، والعادات الغذائية، والأغاني والهندسة المعمارية لضم الناس العامة إلى عالمهم الإيماني، وسلكت منهج الوسطية والاعتدال في مجتمع مالابار فخلق ثقافة شعبية مسلمة فريدة، تمثلت في المحاولة الكبيرة لأسلمة الثقافة التقليدية لمالابار، في هذا السياق، ومن المهم جداً إخراج دراسة عن الوقت الذي عاصر النهج المعتدل للإسلام، والذي مهد الطريق لقبول واسع من الإسلام في غرب الهند.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

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This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents

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Firstly, it is my utmost pleasure to dedicate this work to my dear parents and my family, who granted me the gift of their unwavering belief in my ability to accomplish this goal: thank you for your support and patience.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| Abstract | ii |
| Abstract in Arabic | iii |
| Approval Page | iv |
| Declaration | v |
| Copyright | vi |
| Dedication | vii |
| Acknowledgements | viii |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem | 3 |
| 1.3 Significance of the Study | 5 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 7 |
| 1.5 Research Objectives | 8 |
| 1.6 Primary Sources | 8 |
| 1.6.1 Original Manuscripts of Sixteenth Century Malabar | 9 |
| 1.6.2 Published Resources from Sixteenth Century Malabar | 10 |
| 1.6.3 Folk Songs of 16 th Century Malabar | 13 |
| 1.6.4 Sixteenth Century Portuguese Writings | 14 |
| 1.7 Literature Review | 14 |
| 1.8 Theoretical Framework | 21 |
| 1.9 Methods and Procedures | 22 |
| CHAPTER TWO: MODERATION AS A FEATURE IN MALABAR | 24 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 24 |
| 2.2 Advent of Islam in the Region | 30 |
| 2.3 Early Malabar Mosques and Adaptation of Hindu Architecture | 42 |
| 2.4 Integration of Regional Names | 49 |
| 2.5 Food Habits and Dress Codes | 53 |
| CHAPTER THREE: ROLE OF MUSLIM COMMUNITY LEADERS IN PROPAGATING MODERATION | 60 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 60 |
| 3.2 Muslim Traders and Moderation | 70 |
| 3.3 Muslim Admirals of Hindu King | 79 |
| 3.4 Zamorin Sought Support of Muslim Leaders | 97 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: MODERATION AND MUSLIM SCHOLARS | 102 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 102 |
| 4.2 Moderation in the Writings of Sheikh Zainuddin I | 108 |
| 4.3 Moderation Promoted by the Two Abdul Aseez | 125 |
| 4.4 Moderate Strategy of Kozhikode Qazi | 127 |
| 4.5 Moderate Views of Sheikh Zainuddin II | 134 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| CHAPTER FIVE: MODEL OF MODERATION FROM ART AND CULTURE | 141 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 141 |
| 5.2 Moderation in Islamic Ritual Arts and Literature | 145 |
| 5.3 Model of Moderation from Local Festivals | 157 |
| 5.4 Moderate Strategies of Pattu..... | 167 |
| 5.5 Models from Ethnic Folk Arts..... | 172 |
| 5.6 Models of Moderation from Muslim Culture | 174 |
| CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION | 185 |
| 6.1 Research Findings..... | 185 |
| 6.2 Possible Area of Further Research | 192 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 195 |
| APPENDIX I: MAP OF 16TH CENTURY MALABAR FROM CALICUT ARCHIVES | 210 |
| APPENDIX II: PICTURES OF OLD STRUCTURE OF MALABAR MOSQUES..... | 211 |
| APPENDIX III: TRANSLATION OF <i>TAHRIDH AHLUL IMAN</i> | 220 |
| APPENDIX IV: PICTURES OF KUNHALI MARAKKAR HOUSE..... | 232 |
| APPENDIX V: OLD PAINTING OF 16TH CENTURY CALICUT..... | 233 |
| APPENDIX VI: OLD COPY OF MANQ'US MAWLID | 234 |
| APPENDIX VII: PHOTOS OF MAPPILA ART FORMS | 235 |
| APPENDIX VIII: MANUSCRIPT OF <i>FAT'HUL MUBIN</i> | 237 |
| APPENDIX IX: MANUSCRIPT OF <i>KUTHUBAT AL JIHADIYA</i> | 239 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Malabar,¹ situated in the most southern state of India called Kerala, guarded by Western Ghats² mountain range, is a unique coastal region with abundant natural resources. In 16th Century, Malabar was a strategic coast for international trade and commerce and was a land of spices, especially pepper and ginger. The rich produce of spices, timber and other valuable forest products of Malabar were exported to various port towns of Arabia from where they were further transported to Europe. Malabar was a premeditated point for traders as their second home for this was one of the most famous as well as secure ports of the world. During that era, for the sake of trading, peaceful life was very important, and for that reason travelers and traders liked Malabar very much. Ibn Battuta (1304-1377 CE)³ who visited Malabar in the 14th century, clearly depicted the security he enjoyed in the area in the following words, “I have never seen a safer road than this.”⁴

A thriving Islamic culture had developed in these various trading ports of Malabar by Arab traders, who widely influenced the nooks and corners of the Malabar region. Furthermore, this was achieved with the support of mosques and members of the *Ulama*⁵, who came from various centres of Islamic learning in Makkah, Madina

¹ Importantly, Malabar is a region in south India, positioned in the coastal line of the Arabian Sea.

² The Western Ghats, UNESCO world Heritage Site, are a mountain range that runs almost parallel to the western coast of Indian peninsula.

³ Ibn Battuta, Moroccan traveller, wrote much about his experiences in Malabar coast, where he had lost his family and all other subordinates in a crucial shipwreck, when he was about to leave for China.

⁴ Hamilton A R Gibb (trans.), *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (Delhi: Good word Books, 2000), 44.

⁵ Scholars in the Islamic religious sciences

and Baghdad.⁶ Modern studies also affirm the importance of 16th century Malabar and the influence of Muslims during the rule of Hindu King Zamorin⁷. Stephen Dale, for example, analyzed the situation in his detailed study on Malabar. According to him, “The Chinese Muslim, Ma Huan (1380-1460 CE), who accompanied the fleets sent out to South East Asia, India and West Asia, was convinced that the majority of people in Zamorin's dominions were Muslims.”⁸

By the 16th century, Muslims had started settling in the interior parts of the Malabar region. This is one of the reasons for the 16th century (1460-1600 CE) period to be selected for the study. This research, moreover, covers a time span (1460 to 1600 CE) starting from a few years before the birth of Shaikh Zainuddin Makhdum I (c. 1467-1522 CE).⁹ It was at the time when Islam had widely spread into the interiors of Malabar with the intellectual support of great scholars. The 16th century was a remarkable era of Malabar with a number of other specialties like the composition of the first history book by a Malabari scholar, Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdum II (1530-1583 CE)¹⁰ and the first poem in the Malayalam language¹¹ by Muslim judge, Qazi Muhammed.¹² Kunhali Marakkar,¹³ the naval chief of Zamorin, also represented 16th century Malabar Muslims.

⁶ Stephen F Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar, (1498-1922): Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 27.

⁷ Zamorin is English version of the Malayalam word Samoodiri, which is the hereditary royal title used by the rulers of the medieval Kingdom of Malabar.

⁸ Dale, 26.

⁹ The great religious scholar, who was renowned as the premier Malabari graduate from Al Azhar University, Egypt, and the principal Muslim reformer from the region.

¹⁰ The author of both *Fat'h-ul-Mu'een* (the text book, discussing the Shafi'i school of Islamic jurisprudence) and *Tuhafat-al-Mujahidin* (an authoritative history of sixteenth century Malabar and the grandson of Shaikh Zainuddin Makhdum I).

¹¹ The mother tongue of the Malabar region

¹² The author of *Muhyudheen Mala*, the first poem in Malayalam language, written using Arabic Malayalam script.

¹³ The title given by Zamorin to his naval chief.

Moderation,¹⁴ a terminology several times used in the *Qūr'an*, was a prime agenda of Malabar Muslims in the 16th century, executed by prominent religious leaders who led virtuous moral life and became role models for subsequent generations. The *Qūr'an* says, “Thus, have we made of you a moderate (*wasatan*, ‘justly balanced’) community.”¹⁵ This shows the core image of Islam, which is a religion of moderation, peace, justice, equality, harmony and tolerance, not of extremism and terrorism.

The 16th century Malabar Muslim history will be a model for current generations to analyze the better mode of coexistence with others. Arab delegations approached the coastline for their business needs and some of them married the locals from the region. Arab propagators of the time never tried to develop an Arab Islam in the region but they attempted to integrate the regional culture, language and architecture into Islam. Malabar also played a very important role in the 16th century trade and commerce between the Arab world and China. The recent archeological excavations in Pattanam brought out a number of solid evidence of south Indian trade links to the Arab world.¹⁶ Thus, it is very important to take the period as a case study to examine the life style, culture, literature and educational system which reflect the moderate attitudes of Malabar Muslims then.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study is a probe into the life and culture of 16th century Malabar Muslims and the use of traditional life styles, food habits, songs and architecture in incorporating the general public into their realm of belief. The moderate approaches of the Malabar

¹⁴ The English meaning of the Arabic term ‘*al wasatiyyah*’.

¹⁵ *Qūr'an*, Al-Baqarah 2:143.

¹⁶ P J Cherian, *Pattanam: Archeological Research, Fifth Season Field Report* (Trivandrum: Kerala Council for Historic Research, 2011).

society that created a new Muslim folk culture was a great attempt to integrate the traditional culture of Malabar into Islam. It is very important to bring out such an example of harmony, tolerance and co-existence of Muslims in Malabar in the neo-colonial situation which sidelines Muslims being accused of terrorism and fanaticism. There are various traditional cultural forms developed by Muslims of Malabar like Oppana, Kol Kali and Mappilappattu,¹⁷ living examples of cultural *quid pro quo*. The traditional food items prepared on some special occasions are very distinctive eateries of Malabar. Some of these food items are not seen now in the region for people have transformed much from the traditional culture and eating habits to neo-cultural influences.

There has been no study on the moderate approaches of 16th century Malabar Muslims. Most of the current studies highlight their rebellious movements and strategies. Even in the current studies on 16th century Muslims, their various fights against the Portuguese are highlighted. These types of approaches neglect the aspect of moderation in the lifestyle of Malabar Muslims, which existed despite the turmoil of the war era. This should not be prolonged just because there is a dearth of historic research on moderate approaches of Malabar Muslims, who followed excellent lifespans, contributing much to the nation. This research thus examines the main historic cause for the consequences and produces enough evidence of moderate Islam, which contributed much in building a strong society of Malabar.

The 16th century was also an era of turmoil on the soil and in the sea of Malabar due to the Portuguese invasion of the region. Vasco da Gama (c. 1460-1524)¹⁸ reached Kappad¹⁹ on 20 May 1498 with the help of African traders and

¹⁷ Very popular and exclusive social entertainments developed by Malabar Muslims.

¹⁸ The commander of first ship to sail directly from Europe to India.

¹⁹ The very old, famous beach near Kozhikode.

subsequently created much unrest in the peaceful realm of trade and travel of Malabar. In this context, it is very important to produce a study on the time-tested moderate approaches of Islam, which paved the way for the wide acceptance of the religion in 16th century Malabar. It is clear from the original writings of 16th century Malabar (primary sources), that Muslim scholars urged believers to fight against the Portuguese. *Tahridh*, a poem by Zainuddin I and *Tuhfat-al-Mujahidin* by Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdum II are two important works which prepared the Muslims to fight against the Portuguese and urged the people to strengthen the rule of the Hindu king of Calicut. *Fat'hul Mubin*, written by Qazi Muhammed and some religious Friday sermons by great scholars of the time also encouraged the Muslims to support the Hindu king of Malabar. Though these are all the realities, a study specifically on this scenario has not taken place.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are a number of studies on the Malabar Muslim communities and Mappila groups, but these studies never shed light on the moderate approaches of Muslims and the influence of moderation in the social and cultural realm of the region. This study identifies the Malabar Muslims' approaches to various walks of life and their real tradition of moderation. It is very important to highlight the formation of the Mappila community, which is an integration of both Arab as well as Malabar societies, with the incorporation of all cultural and social elements. There were a number of other provincial supporting circumstances, which paved a better way for the success and overall development of Muslims in the region.

The word '*jihad*' (from the root word, *juhd* – to 'struggle') was first introduced in written documents of Malabar that urged Muslims to protect the reign of the Hindu

king. This study analyzes how the word '*jihad*' became a tool of regional harmony and tolerance in Malabar, between the Hindu and Muslim communities. This research helps to develop an understanding of the meaning of *jihad* and how this terminology was used to support the Hindu king in the poems, history books and manuscripts of religious sermons by Muslim scholars in 16th century Malabar. The term 'moderation' has also been heaped with accusations that have diluted the Islamic belief and way of practice due to lack of awareness of its historic importance. 'Moderation' is not a call for watering down the faith but to keep a mindset to cope with fellow human beings for the common cause of the country, region and community. In this context, it is very important to teach the new generations how Muslims coexisted with other communities in the region.

Ponnani was the 16th century capital of Islamic knowledge and culture and was called the Makkah of Malabar. The theological traditions of Ponnani helped to pursue moderate religious practices in various walks of Malabar Muslims' life. Sixteenth century Ponnani scholars assimilated a number of regional practices with Islamic rituals, which helped the local community to understand Islam in a better way and to avoid alienation as an unknown or unfamiliar religion of another country or culture. It is important to note that the new script for Arabic Malayalam language was called Ponnani script in which they tried to develop a special set of alphabets that was much different from the original Arabic form but helped greatly to generate the idea of a user-friendly Malabar Muslim language called Arabic Malayalam. When Zainuddin I planned a big educational institution in Ponnani after his long studies in Egypt, he assigned the work to a local traditional Hindu architect. It is clear from his international exposure that he would be able to bring a Muslim designer from the Arab

world to design the new mosque. Zainuddin I impressively tried to incorporate the regional Hindu architecture into the big Ponnani mosque.

It is crucial to properly study the 16th century as it was the period of the first European invasion of Malabar. The impacts of the resistance of Kunhali Marakkar against colonial invasions in the 16th century and its mode of moderation are also discussed in this study. Malabar was an international port during the medieval period but lost its name and fame due to the advent of the Portuguese and their encounters. The spirit of resistance was always kept alive by the House of Kunhalis, who sacrificed men and money for this purpose. Furthermore, the leadership on the basis of an anti-Portuguese ideology was praiseworthy and coastal settlements in small towns by this community were defended against all exploitations by the Portuguese.

It is clear that the Muslims were a major force in trade and commerce as well as the cultural realm of Malabar. Malabar Muslims had contributed much to develop the language and literature of the current generation and they also created a combined culture of Islamic traditions in Malabar. This study on the social and cultural history of moderation practised by Malabar Muslims is necessary and will help Muslims and non-Muslims to realize the relevant historic examples that laud the moderate view of 16th century Muslim scholars of Malabar.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are answered through this research:

1. To what extent was moderation a feature of the Muslim community in Malabar?
2. How successful were the Muslim community leaders in contributing to a harmonious society?

3. How successful were 16th century scholars in promoting moderation in Malabar?
4. How successful were the Muslim artisans, performers, writers and lyricists in contributing to a moderate Islamic society in Malabar?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To discuss the extent of moderation of the Muslim community in Malabar.
2. To highlight the success of the Muslim community leaders in contributing to a harmonious society.
3. To analyze the role of sixteenth century scholars in promoting moderation in Malabar.
4. To investigate the success of Muslim artisans, performers, writers and lyricists in contributing to a moderate Islamic society.

1.6 PRIMARY SOURCES

The primary sources reviewed for this study are mainly of four types, all from the 16th century. The first are manuscripts by Malabar Muslim scholars, followed by various published works, folk literatures of Malabar and finally, the researcher will examine the Portuguese writings from 16th century to get an outsider's views and arguments on the Malabar Muslims.

1.6.1 Original Manuscripts of Sixteenth Century Malabar

Zainuddin Makhdum I, *Tahridh Ahlil Iman*. In this research, the primary sources (the original manuscripts preserved in the Ponnani Juma Masjid Library), are specifically analyzed, for example, the famous work penned by Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdum I, popularly known as *Kabeer, Tahridh Ahlil Iman*. There is no evidence for the exact year of this writing but from the narrations in the *Tahridh* we can assume that the necessity of this war poem was just after the second arrival of Vasco da Gama in 1502 when the Portuguese brutally attacked the Malabar Muslims. The war poem, written in Arabic, comprises of 177 lines, which encouraged Muslims to partake in a struggle against the Portuguese. Thus, it is very important to study this literature that was a driving force behind the Muslims' naval force, which developed in 16th century Malabar. This work was very inspirational to the Muslim society in disseminating new thoughts. It tried to develop an utmost obligation of protecting the country as well as the rights of the people to live in the land of Malabar, practising Islamic religious teachings. It is also the first literary work, which encouraged Malabar Muslims to resist the Portuguese atrocities.

Zainuddin Makhdum II, *Ahkam al Nikah* and *Irshad al Alibad*. Other manuscripts of crucial importance to this research are *Ahkam al Nikah* and *Irshad al Alibad*, both by Zainuddin Makhdum II, sourced from the old Masjid manuscripts of Thanur Juma Masjid. *Ahkam al Nikah* concerns the Islamic law and its jurisprudence, especially with regard to matrimonial law. This work allows us to understand the Islamic family and social institutions of marriage among 16th century Malabar Muslims. Although both of these writings are from the 16th century, these are not specifically dated. *Irshad al Alibad* is really a treasure, assisting the reader to develop an acute understanding of the Sufi tradition of Malabar in the 16th century. Zainuddin

Makhdum II wrote this book to stimulate the minds of the people of Malabar by teaching the lesson of a blessed, pious culture from amongst the mystical traditions of *Taswauf*. One book is concerned with the intellect of 16th century Malabar Muslims, while the other, their hearts. Upon serious reading, one thing is clear: these are the writings which formed manifestos of 16th century Malabar Muslims.

Anonymous, *Qissat Shakarwati Farmad* is another important manuscript available in the British Library manuscript collection (MS, IO, Islamic 2807d). This is an important document giving valuable information on the advent of Islam in Malabar. This narrates the story of the Great Indian King Cheraman Perumal, who embraced Islam, influenced by the Prophet's (PUBH) miracle of splitting the moon. This manuscript also provides clear idea on the first few mosques of the region, including the date of their construction and the pieces of land acquired for each mosque. Identical copies of this manuscripts also are found in the personal libraries of Malabar scholars like Sheikh Ahmed Koya Shaliyathi and Pangil Abdurahiman Musliyar. These copies are used for this study and some special notes by these scholars and owners of the manuscripts are also analysed.

1.6.2 Published Resources from Sixteenth Century Malabar

Zainuddin Makhdum I, *Hidayat Al Adhkiya*²⁰. It is very important to review the original literature of the 16th century, which was an age of abundant Malabar literary traditions. It is evidently proven that the tradition of Makhdum I, who graduated from Al-Azhar University Cairo,²¹ established the systematic religious educational system in Malabar by setting up his own graduate college in Islamic studies. Zainuddin

²⁰ Zainuddin Makhdum II, *Hidayat al Adkiya Ila Tarikhatil Auliya*. (Chelari: Islamic Vidhyabhyasa Board, 1976)

²¹ In the Al-Azhar Mosque of Cairo, even in 2013, I was able to identify the special place for their settlement and study.

Makhdum Ibn Ali Maabari (1467-1522 CE) wrote a mystic poem, *Hidayat Al Adhkiya Tariq al Awliya* which was another manual of Sufism that helped the researcher to understand the nature the Muslim society of the 16th century. This book has been used as an authentic orientation text for theoretical Sufi studies in Malabar Theology Schools for centuries.

Zainuddin Makhdum II, *Tuhfat-al Mujahidin*²². Another important primary resource widely used for this research is *Tuhfat-al Mujahidin*, the famous work by Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdum II. This primary resource describes the Portuguese atrocities in Kerala along with the native measures adopted against them from 1498 to 1583. It also provides an analytical account of the Portuguese by a native historian of Malabar. He promoted the idea of moderation as a motto of 16th century Malabar Muslim community. The Manuscript *Tuhfat- al Mujahidin* is available in the British Library, but has also been printed and published multiple times by various publishers; a number of translations are also available in Malayalam and English. ²³

Zainuddin Makhdum II, *Fat'ih-ul-Mu'een*²⁴. This is the famous book on Islamic jurisprudence penned by Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdum II and is specially designed to intensely analyze the needs of the Malabar Muslim community. The review of this book reveals the reality that the 16th century Muslim community of Malabar was active and was sufficiently intelligent to discuss various legal problems effective ways. The same text is used in modern Malabar as an authentic source on Islamic jurisprudence. This textbook seriously discusses various problems of the Muslim

²² Zainuddin Makhdum II, *Tuhfat al Mujahidin*, British Library, MS, IO, Islamic 2807e

²³Zainuddin Makhdum II, *Tuhfat- al Mujahidin* English translation by SM Husayn Nainar, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, Calicut: Other Books 2005 and Malayalam translation by C Hamza, Kozhikode: Al Huda Book Stall, 2012.

²⁴ Makhdum II, Sh. Z. *Fat'h-ul- Mu'een*. (Tirurngadi: Amirul Islam Press, 1983) The text book of Islamic jurisprudence. It was taught in some of the most renowned Islamic Schools and used as an authentic Islamic legal reference even in contemporary Malabar community.

society and dictates the solutions in various chapters. Even in the modern era, the Malabar Muslims consider this as an authentic text to ease their doubts on the code of ethics and etiquettes.

Qazi Muhammed Abdul Aziz, *Muhayiddin Mala*²⁵. The first poem in Malayalam language, *Muhayiddin Mala*, was penned by Muslim scholar, Qazi Muhammed Abdul Aziz of Calicut²⁶ and it was a eulogy to Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Sheikh of the Qadiri Sufi order. The oral tradition of Malappattu²⁷ should be reviewed for this research for being the famous poems by Muslim folks of the region. Qazi Muhammed was a great poet, who composed more than 12 works.

Qazi Muhammed Abdul Aziz, *Fat'hul Mubin*.²⁸ His composition, *Fat'hul Mubin*,²⁹ is a historical poem, which affirmed that the poet was an observer to various milestones of 16th century Malabar. This book also renders a better outlook of 16th century Malabar. His composition of *Fat'hul Mubin* is of a historical theme and it seems that he was an eyewitness to the events which determined the course of the Portuguese political power in Malabar. This war poem was written between 1579 and 1607CE. In fact, the text was a criticism of communal disharmony and the atrocities committed by the Portuguese in Malabar. He was the Qazi of Calicut; the poem also reflected his loyalty to Zamorin as it was dedicated to him. The poet praises the heroism of the Nayar³⁰ soldiers. It further narrates that the ruler will not attack any other country without a reason and he will not confiscate the property of anyone. The hero of the poem, in the poetic concept, was Zamorin and the villain was the

²⁵ Qazi Muhammed, *Muhayiddin Mala*, (Tirurangadi: Tirurangadi Bookstall, 1985)

²⁶ A famous Muslim scholar, from Kozhikode.

²⁷ Traditional eulogies, written in Malayalam (or old Tamil) mixed Arabic Malayalam.

²⁸ Manuscript is available in British Library MS, IO, Islamic 2807f and latter it was translated in to Malayalam by Mankada Abdul Aziz and published by Calicut: Al Huda Book Stall, 1996.

²⁹ A poem encouraging Muslims toward the virtues of *jihad*, to support the Hindu King against Portuguese colonialism.

³⁰ A special Hindu caste, who were soldiers of Zamorin.

Portuguese captain, Antonio. It is interesting to note that at the early stages of the battle, there were several setbacks to the soldiers of Zamorin. Then Zamorin himself marched to a nearby hill and proclaimed that he will go on a starvation till the fortress was captured for him. The Mappilas then declared *jihad* against the Portuguese with a single intention that their ruler should not live without food and prolong his vow of starvation. Here, *jihad* was declared to support the local ruler, who was a follower of Hinduism. It was not to crown a Muslim ruler or to turn a *Darul Harb*³¹ into a *Darul Islam*.³²

1.6.3 Folk Songs of 16th Century Malabar

Anonymous, Folk literature, *Kunhi Marakkar Shahid*,³³ or *The Ballad of Kottuppalli*, The legendary folk songs of *Kunhi Marakkar Shahid* or *The Ballad of Kottuppalli*,³⁴ highlight anecdotes of the Portuguese era in Malabar. Every year festival, where these songs are played, is conducted by the local Muslim community. The ballads, or song-rituals, should also be scrutinized to get a picture of 16th century Malabar. Similar events are reported in the local history of Kolathunad³⁵ that should be analyzed as a case study to understand the origin and growth of the popular culture of Islam in the northern region of Malabar. The martyrdom of three Muslims in their fight against the Portuguese is also recorded. The folk stories and poems on this incident can be reviewed to get a clear picture of the subject.

³¹ Country of non-Muslims.

³² Country of Muslims.

³³ A martyr, who fought against the Portuguese, in the sixteenth century.

³⁴ A composition, praising the valour of great Malabar warriors.

³⁵ Northern Malabar.

1.6.4 Sixteenth Century Portuguese Writings

Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*. Portuguese writings of the time are also important sources to identify the atrocities and troubles experienced by Malabar Muslims after the Portuguese invasion e.g. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa* (Vol. 11, Alvaro Velho, Roteiro Da Primeira Viagem De Vasco Da Gama, edited by A. Fontura Da Costa, Lisbon: Agencia Geral Do Ultramer, 1969) is an important literature reviewed in this study. There are a number of factual errors in describing the Islamic society and Muslim cultures of Malabar. Portuguese writings were widely depended upon in the study of 16th century Malabar by most European writers and researchers. This research sheds light into the factual errors of 16th century Portuguese writings and the disadvantages of specific references used in the modern studies on Malabar Muslims.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher reviews important modern studies on 16th century Malabar Muslims to address this subject accurately and adequately. Secondary sources, which are assessed for this research include modern writings on 16th century Malabar by various scholars from Malabar, Europe and America.

William Logan, *Malabar Manual*. The text *Malabar Manual*,³⁶ has to be taken as a secondary source to identify the resources of Malabar. This is an authentic statistics record of Malabar. This book is used for various studies on Malabar Muslims. Logan, in this book, tries to unveil a number of Muslim terminologies and life styles. It is an exhaustive volume giving details on the geography, the people, their religion and castes, language and culture and really helps readers to understand the Muslim

³⁶ William Logan, *Malabar Manual* (Madras: Asian Educational Services, 1887)