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ISLAMIC Reform Movements In Kerala

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THE ISLAMIC REFORM MOVEMENTS IN KERALA

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Foreword

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the editor and all contributors for their dedicated efforts in bringing this volume to life. The depth of research and scholarship presented in this work reflects a profound commitment to exploring critical aspects of Islamic reform and its impact on our society. This collection is a testament to the collaborative spirit and intellectual rigor of our academic community.

I sincerely appreciate the editor's meticulous efforts in compiling, refining, and shaping these diverse contributions into a coherent and insightful volume. This work not only adds to the academic discourse but also serves as a valuable resource for future researchers, students, and anyone interested in the history, culture, and evolution of Islamic thought in Kerala.

On behalf of the Department, I thank everyone involved in this project for their hard work and dedication. Your contributions will undoubtedly enrich our understanding and foster further academic inquiry in this important field.

Shabeermon.M

Head of the Department, History

KAHM Unity Women's College, Manjeri

PREFACE

The Islamic reform movements in Kerala have played a significant role in shaping the religious, social, and cultural identity of the Muslim community in the region. Rooted in a response to the challenges posed by colonialism, traditionalism, and modernity, these reform movements sought to address issues within the Muslim community and adapt Islamic teachings to contemporary circumstances. Over the years, these movements have evolved, reflecting the changing socio-political landscape of Kerala and the broader Muslim world.

Islam has a deep historical connection with Kerala, dating back to the 7th century, when traders from Arabia arrived on the Malabar Coast. As Islam spread, it became intertwined with the local culture, creating a unique blend of Islamic and indigenous practices. By the 19th and 20th centuries, the need for reforms within the Muslim community became apparent, particularly in the face of colonial influence, economic challenges, and social stagnation.

The early Islamic reform movements in Kerala were primarily concerned with religious purification, social upliftment, and education. Reformers emphasized the importance of returning to the core teachings of Islam while rejecting superstitious practices and rigid traditionalism. These movements aimed to modernize the community through education, critical thinking, and social reforms that would bridge the gap between religious values and modern life.

Prominent figures such as Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi, Chalilakath Kunchahamed Haji, and Makti Tangal spearheaded these reform efforts. They played pivotal roles in establishing educational institutions, promoting literacy, and advocating for social change. These early reformers laid the groundwork for subsequent movements that would

further shape Kerala's Muslim community, such as the Mujahid Movement, which focused on eradicating un-Islamic practices and fostering a more rational and reform-oriented interpretation of Islam.

The Islamic reform movements in Kerala were not without their challenges. Traditionalists resisted many of the changes proposed by the reformers, and the movements faced opposition from various quarters. However, the reformers remained steadfast in their mission, and their efforts resulted in significant improvements in education, religious understanding, and social cohesion within the Muslim community.

In contemporary times, the reform movements continue to evolve, addressing new challenges such as globalization, technological advancements, and the need for gender equality. These movements have played a crucial role in shaping the identity and future of Kerala's Muslim community, ensuring that Islamic principles remain relevant in an ever-changing world.

This compilation of research papers delves into the profound influence of Islamic reform movements in Kerala, highlighting the individuals and institutions that played pivotal roles in shaping the religious, social, and educational landscape of Kerala's Muslim community. The collection reflects the collaborative efforts of various scholars, each offering a unique perspective on different aspects of reform, leadership, and the enduring legacies of key figures.

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1. Islamic Reforms in Kerala: A Historical and Contemporary Analysis

Mr.Shabeermon.M

Abstract

This paper examines the Islamic reforms in Kerala, tracing their historical origins, key movements, influential figures, and contemporary implications. Kerala, located on the southwestern coast of India, has a unique socio-cultural and religious landscape. The Islamic reforms in this region have played a significant role in shaping the Muslim community's identity, education, socio-economic status, and political involvement. By analyzing these reforms, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of their impact on Kerala's Muslim population and broader society.

Introduction

Kerala, with its long history of trade and cultural exchanges, has been a melting pot of various religions and cultures. Islam, introduced in Kerala as early as the 7th century through Arab traders, has undergone significant transformations over the centuries. Islamic reforms in Kerala have been influenced by global Islamic movements, colonial rule, and socio-economic changes. This paper explores the historical context of Islamic reforms in Kerala, key reform movements, and their impact on the Muslim community.

Historical Context

Early Islamic Presence in Kerala

Islamic presence in Kerala dates back to the 7th century when Arab traders established trade links with the region. The early Muslim community in Kerala was characterized by its

integration into the local society, with Muslims engaging in trade, agriculture, and other occupations. The Mappila (Muslim) community of Kerala developed its distinct cultural identity, blending Arab and local traditions.

Colonial Period and the Emergence of Reform Movements

The colonial period marked a significant phase in the history of Islamic reforms in Kerala. The British colonial rule brought about socio-economic changes that affected the Muslim community. The introduction of Western education, new administrative systems, and economic policies led to social stratification and marginalization of certain sections of the Muslim community. In response, several reform movements emerged to address these challenges.

Key Islamic Reform Movements

The Mappila Rebellion (Mappila Lahala)

The Mappila Rebellion, which took place between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was a series of uprisings by the Mappila Muslims against British colonial rule and the local Hindu landlords. The rebellion was fueled by economic exploitation, social injustice, and religious fervor. Although primarily a socio-political movement, it had religious undertones and highlighted the need for reforms within the Muslim community.

The Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham

The Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham (KMAS), established in 1922, played a pivotal role in the reform movements among Kerala Muslims. The KMAS aimed to modernize the Muslim community through education, social reforms, and economic development. It emphasized the importance of religious education, women's empowerment, and social unity. The KMAS also

advocated for the adoption of modern educational methods and the establishment of schools and colleges for Muslims.

The Mujahid Movement

The Mujahid Movement, which gained prominence in the mid-20th century, was another significant reform movement in Kerala. The movement, inspired by the global Salafi movement, aimed to purify Islam by returning to its original teachings and practices. The Mujahid Movement focused on eradicating superstitions, un-Islamic practices, and innovations (bid'ah) from the Muslim community. It emphasized the importance of Quranic education and the rejection of folk practices.

Influential Figures in Islamic Reforms

Sayyid Sanauallah Makti Tangal

Sayyid Sanauallah Makti Tangal was a prominent Islamic scholar and reformer in Kerala. He played a crucial role in promoting modern education among Muslims and advocated for the establishment of schools and colleges. Makti Tangal also emphasized the importance of women's education and social reforms. His efforts laid the foundation for the later reform movements in Kerala.

Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi

Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi was another influential figure in the Islamic reform movement in Kerala. He was a prolific writer, journalist, and social reformer. Moulavi's writings and speeches focused on the need for educational reforms, women's empowerment, and social justice. He founded several educational institutions and publications to promote his reformist ideas.

Contemporary Implications

Educational Reforms

One of the significant impacts of Islamic reforms in Kerala has been on education. The emphasis on modern education, both religious and secular, has led to the establishment of numerous schools, colleges, and universities catering to the Muslim community. This has resulted in increased literacy rates, higher educational attainment, and improved socio-economic status among Kerala Muslims.

Socio-Economic Development

Islamic reforms in Kerala have also contributed to the socio-economic development of the Muslim community. The focus on education, skill development, and economic empowerment has led to the emergence of a vibrant middle class among Kerala Muslims. The community has made significant strides in various fields, including business, politics, and the arts.

Women's Empowerment

The reform movements have played a crucial role in promoting women's empowerment within the Muslim community. The emphasis on women's education and social reforms has led to increased participation of Muslim women in education, employment, and public life. This has brought about significant changes in the traditional gender roles and norms within the community.

Conclusion

Islamic reforms in Kerala have had a profound impact on the Muslim community's social, economic, and cultural landscape. The historical context, key reform movements, and

influential figures discussed in this paper highlight the dynamic nature of these reforms. The contemporary implications of these reforms are evident in the improved educational attainment, socio-economic development, and women's empowerment among Kerala Muslims. The ongoing process of reform continues to shape the identity and future of the Muslim community in Kerala.

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2. The Role of Islamic Educational Institutions: Historical Significance and Contemporary Impact

Mr. Faizal TK

Abstract

This paper explores the role of Islamic educational institutions in shaping the intellectual, social, and cultural landscape of Muslim societies. Focusing on the historical development of these institutions, their contributions to knowledge and society, and their contemporary relevance, the paper highlights how Islamic educational institutions have evolved to meet the changing needs of the Muslim world. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the pivotal role these institutions play in the modern era.

Introduction

Islamic educational institutions, including madrasas, universities, and other centers of learning, have been central to the development of Islamic civilization. From the early days of Islam, education has been highly valued, with an emphasis on acquiring knowledge ('ilm) seen as a religious duty. This paper examines the historical roots of Islamic educational institutions, their contributions to various fields of knowledge, and their evolving role in contemporary society.

Historical Development

Early Islamic Education

The earliest form of Islamic education began in the mosque, where the Prophet Muhammad taught his companions. These sessions, known as halaqas, were informal gatherings where

religious and practical knowledge was imparted. As Islam spread, the need for more structured educational institutions became apparent.

The Rise of Madrasas

The madrasa system emerged in the 10th century as a formal institution for higher learning. The Nizamiyya madrasa, established in Baghdad in 1065, is often cited as one of the earliest examples. Madrasas provided instruction in religious sciences, as well as subjects like mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy. They played a crucial role in preserving and transmitting Islamic knowledge and culture.

Islamic Universities

Islamic universities, such as Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco and Al-Azhar in Egypt, are among the oldest continuously operating universities in the world. These institutions became renowned centers of learning, attracting students from across the Muslim world and beyond. They contributed significantly to the intellectual and scientific advancements of their time, producing scholars who made groundbreaking contributions in various fields.

Contributions to Knowledge and Society

Religious Education

Islamic educational institutions have played a vital role in preserving and teaching Islamic religious sciences, including Quranic studies, Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and theology. These institutions have produced scholars who have shaped Islamic thought and jurisprudence, ensuring the continuity and coherence of Islamic teachings.

Scientific and Philosophical Advancements

During the Islamic Golden Age (8th to 14th centuries), Islamic educational institutions were at the forefront of scientific and philosophical inquiry. Scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Al-Khwarizmi, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) made significant contributions to fields like medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy. Their works were later translated into Latin and influenced the European Renaissance.

Social and Cultural Impact

Islamic educational institutions have also played a crucial role in the social and cultural development of Muslim societies. They have been centers of cultural exchange, intellectual discourse, and social reform. These institutions have fostered a sense of community and identity among Muslims, promoting values of knowledge, ethics, and social justice.

Contemporary Relevance

Modernization and Reform

In the contemporary era, Islamic educational institutions face the challenge of modernization and reform. Many traditional madrasas and universities have undergone significant transformations to align with modern educational standards and the needs of contemporary society. This includes the incorporation of modern sciences, technology, and social sciences into their curricula.

Addressing Extremism

Islamic educational institutions have a crucial role in countering extremism and promoting a moderate understanding of Islam. By emphasizing critical thinking, dialogue, and a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings, these institutions can help combat radical ideologies and foster a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Bridging Educational Gaps

In many parts of the Muslim world, Islamic educational institutions provide access to education for marginalized and underserved communities. They play a vital role in bridging educational gaps, particularly in regions where access to formal education is limited. These institutions often offer scholarships and financial aid to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Case Studies

Al-Azhar University

Al-Azhar University, founded in 970 AD, remains one of the most influential Islamic educational institutions. It has played a pivotal role in shaping Islamic scholarship and continues to be a center for religious and academic learning. Al-Azhar has undertaken significant reforms to modernize its curriculum and address contemporary issues facing the Muslim world.

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

The International Islamic University Malaysia, established in 1983, represents a modern approach to Islamic education. IIUM integrates Islamic values with modern academic disciplines, offering programs in sciences, humanities, engineering, and law. It aims to produce graduates who are well-versed in both Islamic knowledge and contemporary fields.

Challenges and Future Directions

Balancing Tradition and Modernity

One of the key challenges for Islamic educational institutions is balancing the preservation of traditional Islamic knowledge with the incorporation of modern disciplines. Striking this balance is essential for ensuring that these institutions remain relevant and effective in addressing contemporary issues.

Global Collaboration

Promoting global collaboration among Islamic educational institutions can enhance the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Partnerships with universities and research centers worldwide can help foster a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to education.

Embracing Technology

The integration of technology in education is crucial for the future of Islamic educational institutions. Utilizing online platforms, digital resources, and innovative teaching methods can enhance the accessibility and quality of education offered by these institutions.

Conclusion

Islamic educational institutions have played a foundational role in the development of Islamic civilization and continue to be vital in shaping the intellectual, social, and cultural landscape of Muslim societies. Their contributions to religious education, scientific advancements, and social development are significant. In the contemporary era, these institutions face challenges but also have opportunities to reform and adapt to the changing needs of the Muslim world. By balancing tradition with modernity and embracing global collaboration and technology, Islamic educational institutions can continue to play a pivotal role in the advancement of knowledge and society.

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3. The Impact of Globalization on Kerala Muslims

Dr.Shiji KP

Abstract

This paper explores the multifaceted impacts of globalization on Kerala's Muslim community. Kerala, a southwestern state in India, has a significant Muslim population with a rich history of trade and cultural exchange. The paper examines how globalization has influenced various aspects of life for Kerala Muslims, including economic opportunities, social and cultural dynamics, religious practices, and political engagement. Through this analysis, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how globalization has reshaped the identity and socio-economic status of Muslims in Kerala.

Introduction

Globalization, characterized by increased interconnectedness and interdependence among countries, has profound effects on societies worldwide. Kerala, with its historical ties to global trade and its large diaspora, provides an intriguing case study for understanding the impacts of globalization. The state's Muslim community, known for its diverse socio-economic background, has experienced significant changes due to globalization. This paper delves into these changes, highlighting both positive and negative consequences.

Historical Context

Early Global Connections

Kerala's Muslim community has a long history of engagement with global trade, dating back to the 7th century when Arab traders established commercial and cultural ties with the region.

The Malabar Coast, where many Muslims reside, became a hub for spice trade, attracting merchants from across the world. This early globalization laid the foundation for the community's openness to external influences.

Post-Independence Period

Post-independence, Kerala's Muslim community saw significant socio-economic changes. The state's progressive policies in education and healthcare, along with land reforms, contributed to improving living standards. However, economic opportunities remained limited, prompting many Muslims to seek employment abroad, particularly in the Gulf countries.

Economic Impact

Remittances and Economic Growth

One of the most significant impacts of globalization on Kerala Muslims is through remittances from the Gulf countries. A large portion of the state's Muslim population migrated to the Gulf for better economic prospects, sending back substantial remittances that have transformed their households and local economies. These remittances have funded education, healthcare, housing, and small businesses, leading to overall economic growth and improved living standards.

Employment and Skill Development

Globalization has also influenced employment patterns and skill development among Kerala Muslims. The demand for skilled and semi-skilled labor in the Gulf has led to increased vocational training and education within the community. Institutions offering

courses in nursing, engineering, and other technical fields have proliferated, enhancing the skill set of the workforce.

Social and Cultural Impact

Changes in Family Structure

Globalization, particularly through labor migration, has led to changes in family structures within the Muslim community. Extended family systems are being replaced by nuclear families, with many households experiencing long-term separation due to migration. This has implications for social dynamics, caregiving, and gender roles within families.

Cultural Exchange and Modernization

Exposure to different cultures and lifestyles through migration and media has led to cultural exchange and modernization within the community. This is evident in changes in clothing, dietary habits, and social practices. While traditional customs and practices remain significant, there is a growing blend of traditional and modern lifestyles.

Religious Practices and Identity

Influence of Gulf Countries

The migration to Gulf countries has also brought about changes in religious practices and identity. Many Kerala Muslims have been influenced by the more conservative and orthodox interpretations of Islam prevalent in the Gulf. This has led to a revivalist trend within the community, with increased emphasis on religious education and practices.

Role of Religious Institutions

Religious institutions, including madrasas and mosques, have adapted to the changing socio-economic landscape. They play a crucial role in providing religious education, social services, and community cohesion. Some institutions have also embraced modern technology and methods to reach a broader audience and cater to the needs of the diaspora.

Political Engagement

Increased Political Participation

Globalization has led to increased political awareness and participation among Kerala Muslims. The community has become more active in local and state politics, advocating for their rights and interests. The influence of global Islamic movements and the diaspora has also contributed to shaping political discourse within the community.

Advocacy and Social Movements

Kerala Muslims have been involved in various advocacy and social movements, addressing issues such as minority rights, social justice, and economic development. Global networks and alliances have provided platforms for these movements, enhancing their reach and impact.

Challenges and Opportunities

Socio-Economic Disparities

Despite the economic benefits of globalization, there are significant socio-economic disparities within the Muslim community. Not all households benefit equally from remittances, and there are variations in access to education and healthcare. Addressing these disparities remains a challenge.

Preservation of Cultural Identity

Globalization poses a challenge to the preservation of cultural identity and traditions. Balancing modernization with the preservation of cultural and religious heritage is a critical concern for the community. Efforts to promote cultural awareness and education are essential in this regard.

Future Prospects

Looking ahead, the continued integration into the global economy presents both opportunities and challenges for Kerala Muslims. Enhancing education and skill development, promoting entrepreneurship, and addressing socio-economic disparities are crucial for ensuring sustainable development and social cohesion within the community.

Conclusion

Globalization has had a profound impact on Kerala Muslims, transforming their economic, social, cultural, and political landscape. While it has brought significant benefits, such as economic growth and modernization, it has also presented challenges related to socio-economic disparities and cultural preservation. Understanding and addressing these challenges is essential for the continued development and well-being of the community. By leveraging the opportunities presented by globalization and addressing its challenges, Kerala Muslims can continue to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

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4. Chalilakath Kunchahamed Haji: A Pioneer of Islamic Reform and Social Change in Kerala

Mrs.Jaseena C

Abstract

Chalilakath Kunchahamed Haji (1880–1944) was a prominent Islamic scholar, reformer, and social activist in Kerala, known for his commitment to education, social justice, and the empowerment of the Muslim community. His life and works had a profound impact on the socio-religious landscape of Kerala, fostering a progressive understanding of Islam that emphasized the importance of modern education and social reform. This research paper explores Kunchahamed Haji's contributions, his reformist ideas, and his enduring legacy within the context of Islamic leadership in Kerala.

1. Introduction

Chalilakath Kunchahamed Haji was an influential figure in the early 20th century Islamic reform movement in Kerala. His efforts to uplift the Muslim community through education and social reform were instrumental in shaping the identity of Kerala's Muslims during a time of significant social and political change. This paper aims to delve into his early life, key contributions, and the broader implications of his leadership for the Muslim community in Kerala.

2. Early Life and Education

Born in 1880 in the Malabar region of Kerala, Kunchahamed Haji hailed from a family deeply rooted in Islamic scholarship. He received a traditional education, studying the

Quran, Hadith, and other Islamic texts under the guidance of notable scholars. His early exposure to Islamic teachings instilled in him a passion for learning and a commitment to social justice.

Recognizing the need for modern education among Muslims, Haji pursued further studies, blending traditional religious knowledge with contemporary subjects. This dual focus on religious and secular education would later become a hallmark of his reformist agenda.

3. Contributions to Islamic Reform

Kunchahamed Haji emerged as a leader in the Islamic reform movement, advocating for a modern interpretation of Islam that addressed the needs of the contemporary Muslim community. He emphasized the importance of education as a means to combat ignorance and social backwardness. His belief that knowledge was essential for empowerment drove him to establish educational institutions that provided quality education to Muslim youth.

He was a strong advocate for women's education, recognizing that empowering women was crucial for the progress of the entire community. Haji's efforts to promote education for girls and women challenged traditional norms and laid the groundwork for future advancements in gender equality within the Muslim community.

4. Establishment of Educational Institutions

One of Kunchahamed Haji's most significant contributions was the establishment of schools and colleges aimed at providing a modern education rooted in Islamic values. In 1931, he founded the **Mappila College** in Malappuram, which became a center for higher education for Muslim students in the region. His vision for education extended beyond

academic excellence; he aimed to instill moral values and a sense of social responsibility in students.

His commitment to education was reflected in the curricula he developed, which combined religious studies with secular subjects. This holistic approach ensured that students were well-equipped to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world while remaining grounded in their faith.

5. Social Activism and Community Leadership

In addition to his work in education, Kunchahamed Haji was a tireless advocate for social reform. He actively participated in various social movements aimed at improving the living conditions of the Muslim community. His efforts to promote social justice included initiatives to combat poverty, improve healthcare, and empower marginalized groups. Haji was also involved in interfaith dialogue, emphasizing the importance of communal harmony in a diverse society like Kerala. He believed that fostering mutual respect and understanding among different religious communities was essential for social cohesion.

6. Legacy and Impact

Chalilakath Kunchahamed Haji's legacy is deeply rooted in his commitment to education, social justice, and community empowerment. His contributions to the establishment of educational institutions have had a lasting impact on the socio-economic development of the Muslim community in Kerala. The schools and colleges he founded continue to serve as vital centers for learning, producing generations of educated and socially conscious individuals.

Haji's emphasis on women's education and social reform has inspired many to pursue gender equality and social justice, making him a significant figure in the broader narrative of reform movements in Kerala.

7. Conclusion

Chalilakath Kunchahamed Haji stands as a pioneering figure in the Islamic reform movement in Kerala. His life and work exemplify a commitment to education, social justice, and communal harmony. As Kerala continues to navigate the complexities of modernity and globalization, Haji's vision for a progressive and inclusive Islam remains relevant, inspiring ongoing efforts to reconcile faith with the demands of contemporary society.

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5. Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi: Pioneer of Islamic Reform and Social Renaissance in Kerala

Mrs. Rasha Fathim P

Abstract

Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi (1873–1932) is considered one of the foremost Islamic reformers and intellectual figures in Kerala. His vision combined a call for religious renewal with an emphasis on social, educational, and political advancement for Kerala's Muslim community. This paper examines the life, teachings, and enduring legacy of Vakkom Moulavi, focusing on his contribution to Islamic reform, education, journalism, and his role in awakening Kerala's Muslim community to modern ideas while remaining anchored in Islamic values.

1. Introduction

Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi, also known as Vakkom Moulavi, was a towering figure in the intellectual and religious life of Kerala's Muslim community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At a time when Kerala's Muslims were mired in backwardness and illiteracy, Moulavi emerged as a reformist leader who advocated for a return to the purity of Islam through the rejection of superstitions and innovations (*bid'ah*). He was also an advocate for modern education and political awareness, making him a key figure in the socio-religious renaissance of Kerala. This research paper explores Vakkom Moulavi's life and his multifaceted contributions to the reform and modernization of Kerala's Muslim society.

2. Early Life and Background

Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi was born in 1873 in Vakkom, a small village in the southern part of Kerala (then part of Travancore). He was born into a family of merchants,

and although his family was not particularly religious, Moulavi developed a keen interest in Islamic studies from a young age. He received his early education in traditional madrassas, studying the Quran, Hadith, and classical Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). He later traveled to various Islamic centers of learning in Tamil Nadu and further deepened his knowledge of Islamic theology, history, and philosophy.

Moulavi was deeply influenced by the global Islamic reform movements of the time, especially the ideas of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, who called for a reinterpretation of Islam to meet the challenges of modernity. This intellectual exposure shaped his vision for reforming Kerala's Muslim community.

3. Islamic Reform and Religious Renewal

Vakkom Moulavi's primary concern was the religious degeneration he observed within the Muslim community in Kerala. He criticized the widespread practices of superstition, Sufi mysticism, and what he regarded as un-Islamic innovations that had crept into the faith. Drawing inspiration from the broader **Salafi movement**, which called for a return to the authentic teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, Moulavi emphasized the importance of religious purity and rationality in Islam.

His reformist ideology sought to purge Islam of practices that had no basis in the Quran or Hadith, such as the veneration of saints, tomb worship, and reliance on charms and talismans. Instead, he advocated for a form of Islam that was rooted in reason, knowledge, and a direct understanding of the scriptures. Moulavi's message was met with resistance from traditionalists and Sufi leaders, who saw his reforms as an attack on their authority. However, he persevered, using education, writing, and public speeches to spread his ideas. His critique of the prevalent religious practices in Kerala drew parallels with the global Islamic reform

movements that were underway in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and other parts of the Muslim world.

4. Educational Reform and the Importance of Modern Knowledge

Vakkom Moulavi recognized that ignorance and illiteracy were major barriers to the progress of Kerala's Muslim community. At a time when the literacy rates among Kerala Muslims were significantly lower compared to other communities, Moulavi championed the cause of modern education. He believed that Islamic education and secular education should go hand in hand to prepare the community for the challenges of modern life.

Moulavi was a staunch advocate for **English education** and the establishment of modern schools. He argued that knowledge of modern sciences and English was essential for Muslims to compete in the rapidly changing socio-political environment. However, he also emphasized that secular education should not come at the expense of Islamic values. His vision was for an integrated educational system that combined religious instruction with modern subjects like science, mathematics, and history.

In 1913, he founded a school in Vakkom, where students were taught both Islamic and modern subjects. This was a groundbreaking move at a time when religious and secular education were often seen as incompatible. His school became a model for other institutions across Kerala, and his educational reforms played a key role in the socio-economic upliftment of Kerala's Muslim community.

5. Journalism and the Spread of Reformist Ideas

Vakkom Moulavi was a pioneer in Islamic journalism in Kerala. He recognized the power of the press in shaping public opinion and saw it as a tool for spreading his reformist

ideas. In 1905, Moulavi founded the **newspaper "Swadeshabhimani"** (The Patriot), which became one of the most influential newspapers in Kerala at the time. Although the newspaper primarily focused on political and social issues, it also provided a platform for Moulavi's religious and educational reformist agenda.

Through "Swadeshabhimani," Moulavi criticized the British colonial administration in Travancore, the corruption of the local government, and the social inequalities prevalent in Kerala. His bold and uncompromising stance on these issues earned him both admiration and enmity. In 1910, the newspaper was banned, and Moulavi was exiled by the Travancore government for his outspoken criticism of the authorities.

However, Moulavi continued his journalistic efforts, founding other periodicals such as "**Al-Islam**" and "**Deepika**". These publications were dedicated to promoting Islamic reform, education, and the socio-political awakening of Kerala's Muslims. Moulavi's use of the press to further his reformist message made him a key figure in the history of Malayalam journalism and a voice for the marginalized Muslim community.

6. Political Engagement and Social Reforms

While Moulavi is primarily remembered for his religious and educational reforms, he was also a significant political thinker. His early political activism was closely tied to his role as the editor of "Swadeshabhimani," where he championed the cause of self-rule and democracy. He believed that political empowerment was crucial for the advancement of Kerala's Muslims, who had long been underrepresented in the political arena.

Although Moulavi himself did not play a direct role in electoral politics, his ideas influenced future generations of Muslim leaders in Kerala. He laid the groundwork for the **Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)**, which would later become a major political force in

Kerala. His emphasis on education, social justice, and political participation helped raise political consciousness among Muslims in Kerala and paved the way for their active engagement in the democratic process.

7. Legacy and Influence

Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi passed away in 1932, but his legacy continues to shape the religious, educational, and social life of Kerala's Muslim community. His contributions to Islamic reform and education have had a lasting impact on the intellectual and socio-political landscape of Kerala.

Moulavi's work inspired subsequent reform movements in Kerala, including the **Mujahid movement**, which carried forward his call for a return to the purity of Islam and the integration of modern education with religious values. His ideas about Islamic reform, education, and political engagement continue to resonate with contemporary Muslim leaders and thinkers in Kerala.

Moreover, Moulavi's role in shaping modern Malayalam journalism remains significant. His fearless critique of social and political issues set a precedent for future journalists and reformers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in Kerala.

8. Conclusion

Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi was a visionary leader whose contributions to Islamic reform, education, journalism, and political thought left an indelible mark on Kerala's Muslim community. His call for a return to the purity of Islamic teachings, coupled with his advocacy for modern education and political engagement, helped lift Kerala's Muslims out of social and educational backwardness. As one of the early champions of Islamic reform in

India, Vakkom Moulavi's life and legacy continue to inspire efforts towards religious renewal and social progress in Kerala and beyond.

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6. Sayyid Abdurahman Bafaqi Thangal: The Guiding Light of Kerala's Muslim Community

Mrs. Shahabas Banu M

Abstract

Sayyid Abdurrahman Bafaqi Thangal (1906–1973) was a pivotal figure in the socio-political and religious history of Kerala's Muslim community. His leadership extended across spiritual guidance, education reforms, and political engagement, shaping the trajectory of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and the Muslim population of Kerala. This paper delves into the life, contributions, and legacy of Bafaqi Thangal, highlighting his role in educational and social reforms, as well as his enduring impact on Kerala's Muslim community.

1. Introduction

Bafaqi Thangal was one of the most revered leaders of Kerala's Muslim community in the 20th century. Known for his spiritual lineage and political activism, his contributions toward the educational and socio-economic upliftment of Muslims remain significant. He was not only a spiritual guide but also a reformer who sought to modernize the community while retaining its Islamic heritage. This research paper explores his leadership in Kerala, focusing on his efforts in political mobilization, educational development, and communal harmony.

2. Early Life and Background

Sayyid Abdurrahman Bafaqi Thangal was born in 1906 in Kodungallur, Kerala, into the renowned Yemeni-origin Bafaqi family. The Bafaqi family, known for their religious scholarship and spiritual leadership, played a significant role in guiding the Muslim

community in Kerala. Bafaqi Thangal's early education took place in traditional Islamic madrasas, where he learned Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and Arabic.

In addition to his Islamic education, Bafaqi Thangal traveled to the Middle East, furthering his religious studies in places like Mecca and Medina. His exposure to both traditional and contemporary Islamic thought influenced his later work, particularly his emphasis on blending religious knowledge with modern education.

3. Religious Leadership

Bafaqi Thangal inherited his position as a spiritual leader and gained the trust of Kerala's Muslim population due to his deep religious knowledge and piety. He was highly regarded as a scholar and a guide in matters of Islamic law, morality, and community leadership. His influence transcended Kerala, earning respect among Muslims both locally and globally.

As a religious leader, Thangal focused on modernizing Kerala's Muslim community, which had long been marginalized educationally and economically. He believed in the importance of integrating Islamic principles with modern education, advocating for both religious and secular learning. His leadership was instrumental in dispelling backward practices and promoting progressive Islamic values within the community.

4. Educational Reforms

One of the hallmark achievements of Bafaqi Thangal's life was his role in revolutionizing the educational landscape for Kerala's Muslims. He was a visionary who recognized that education was the key to the socio-economic advancement of the Muslim

community. At a time when the community was grappling with low literacy rates, Thangal advocated for the establishment of modern schools and colleges.

In 1945, Bafaqi Thangal was appointed as the President of the **Muslim Educational Association (MEA)**. Under his leadership, the association expanded its network of institutions, especially in the Malabar region, which had a large Muslim population. He played a critical role in founding several educational institutions, including the **Farook College** in Kozhikode, which became one of the most prominent Muslim educational institutions in Kerala.

Thangal believed that modern education should not come at the cost of religious education. He encouraged the development of a balanced curriculum that included both Islamic studies and secular subjects, ensuring that students were prepared for both worldly and religious responsibilities.

5. Political Leadership and the Indian Union Muslim League

Bafaqi Thangal's political career was closely tied to the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), a political party that represents the interests of Muslims in India. Thangal became the President of the Kerala State Committee of the IUML in 1956 and held the position until his death in 1973. Under his leadership, the IUML became a formidable political force in Kerala, advocating for the rights and welfare of the Muslim minority.

Thangal's leadership was marked by his ability to balance religious concerns with political pragmatism. He ensured that the IUML engaged with broader issues affecting all communities in Kerala, while also focusing on the specific needs of the Muslim population. His political strategy involved aligning the IUML with the **Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF)**, which enabled the party to secure a substantial political presence in the state.

His leadership helped the IUMML become a key player in Kerala's coalition politics, ensuring that the Muslim community's concerns were addressed within the larger political framework. He also used his political platform to advocate for communal harmony and to resist communalism, earning him the respect of leaders from other religious communities.

6. Social Reforms and Community Welfare

In addition to his contributions to education and politics, Bafaqi Thangal was a strong advocate for social reforms within the Muslim community. He spoke out against regressive practices like dowry and early marriages, urging the community to embrace progressive values. Thangal also emphasized the importance of women's education and social empowerment, recognizing that the upliftment of the entire community required the active participation of women in all spheres of life.

Thangal's social activism extended to philanthropy as well. He established several charitable organizations aimed at providing healthcare, financial assistance, and social services to the underprivileged sections of the Muslim community. His holistic approach to community development, which integrated education, social reform, and welfare, left a lasting impact on Kerala's Muslims.

7. Contributions to Communal Harmony

One of the most remarkable aspects of Bafaqi Thangal's leadership was his commitment to maintaining communal harmony in Kerala. The state is known for its religious diversity, with Muslims, Hindus, and Christians coexisting peacefully for centuries. Thangal played a key role in promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation between different religious communities.

At a time when communal tensions were rising in other parts of India, Bafaqi Thangal's leadership helped preserve peace in Kerala. He frequently called for unity among all religious communities and condemned any acts of violence or intolerance. His efforts to foster communal harmony earned him the respect and admiration of leaders from various religious groups, further cementing his legacy as a unifying figure.

8. Legacy and Influence

Bafaqi Thangal passed away in 1973, but his legacy continues to shape the lives of Kerala's Muslim community. His contributions to education, politics, and social reform have had a lasting impact on the community's progress and development. The institutions he helped establish continue to provide quality education to thousands of students, while the IUML remains a significant political force in Kerala's coalition politics.

Thangal's vision for a modern, educated, and socially responsible Muslim community continues to resonate with leaders and reformers in Kerala today. His emphasis on blending religious principles with modern progress serves as a model for future generations of Muslim leaders, not only in Kerala but across India.

9. Conclusion

Sayyid Abdurrahman Bafaqi Thangal was a towering figure in Kerala's Muslim community, whose contributions transcended the boundaries of religion and politics. His leadership was instrumental in advancing the educational, social, and political rights of Kerala's Muslims, and his commitment to communal harmony set an example for future generations. Through his tireless efforts, Bafaqi Thangal laid the foundation for a modern and progressive Muslim community in Kerala, one that continues to benefit from his vision and dedication.

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7. Makti Tangal: A Pioneer of Islamic Reform and Intellectual Awakening in Kerala

Mrs. Rafeena P

Abstract

Makti Tangal (1847–1912), one of the most significant Islamic reformers and intellectuals in Kerala, played a pivotal role in awakening the Muslim community from centuries of stagnation. His contributions extended beyond religious reform, touching on education, social justice, and the intellectual empowerment of Muslims in Kerala. This paper aims to explore the life, reformist ideology, and contributions of Makti Tangal in shaping modern Islamic thought and socio-political awareness among the Muslims of Kerala, emphasizing his enduring legacy in the state's Islamic reform movement.

1. Introduction

The 19th century was a period of transformation for the Indian subcontinent, particularly with the advent of colonial rule, the rise of Western education, and the burgeoning global Islamic reform movements. In Kerala, Muslims faced social, educational, and religious challenges, marked by stagnation in education and economic backwardness. **Makti Tangal** emerged during this time as a reformist voice, calling for change within the Muslim community through intellectual engagement, religious reform, and advocacy for modern education. His reformist message, influenced by both global Islamic reform movements and local socio-cultural conditions, made a lasting impact on the religious, educational, and social development of Muslims in Kerala.

2. Early Life and Background

Makti Tangal was born as **Sayyid Muhammad Tangal** in 1847 in the town of Kodungallur, Kerala. Hailing from a prominent family with Arab lineage, Tangal was exposed to Islamic scholarship from a young age. His formal education included studies in traditional Islamic sciences, such as Quran, Hadith, and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), but he was also deeply influenced by the global intellectual currents of his time, particularly the Islamic modernist movements.

The title "Makti," meaning "liberator" or "emancipator," reflects his role in leading a renaissance among Kerala's Muslims. Tangal's intellectual journey was shaped by his exposure to both traditional Islamic scholarship and modern ideas circulating through the Indian subcontinent during the British colonial period. He was particularly influenced by the works of **Syed Ahmad Khan**, **Jamal al-Din al-Afghani**, and **Muhammad Abduh**, who advocated for the integration of Islamic principles with modern education and rational thought.

3. Religious Reform: Revivalism and the Call for Ijtihad

Makti Tangal's primary objective was the **religious revival** of the Muslim community in Kerala, which, according to him, had fallen into decline due to the dominance of un-Islamic practices, superstitions, and innovations (bid'ah). He argued that the local Muslim community had strayed from the true path of Islam by adhering to local customs that had no basis in the Quran and Hadith.

Tangal was a proponent of **Ijtihad** (independent reasoning) and opposed the blind following of traditional religious scholars (taqlid). He called for a return to the fundamentals of Islam, encouraging Muslims to directly engage with the Quran and Sunnah for guidance in

their daily lives. His reformist message was in line with the broader **Salafi movement**, which sought to rid Islam of any accretions that had crept into the religion over centuries.

Tangal was particularly critical of the Sufi practices prevalent among Kerala Muslims, especially the veneration of saints and the use of charms and amulets. He viewed these practices as contrary to the monotheistic essence of Islam and sought to reform the community by advocating for a purer form of Islamic worship, free from superstition.

4. Advocacy for Modern Education

One of Makti Tangal's most enduring contributions was his advocacy for **modern education** among Kerala's Muslims. He recognized that education was the key to social and economic upliftment, and that the Muslim community's backwardness was largely due to their lack of access to modern educational institutions. Tangal's call for educational reform was influenced by the broader Islamic modernist movements of the time, particularly the ideas of **Syed Ahmad Khan**, who had established the **Aligarh Movement** with the goal of promoting Western-style education alongside traditional Islamic learning. Like Khan, Tangal believed that Muslims needed to embrace modern science, English education, and rational thought to compete in the changing socio-political landscape of British India.

At a time when the Muslim community in Kerala was largely indifferent to modern education, Tangal advocated for the establishment of schools that combined Islamic teachings with modern subjects such as science, mathematics, and English. He was instrumental in encouraging the Muslim elite to support educational initiatives and worked tirelessly to convince the community of the importance of modern education.

5. Social Reforms and Political Thought

In addition to his religious and educational reforms, Makti Tangal was deeply concerned with the **social conditions** of Kerala's Muslims. He was a vocal critic of the caste-based hierarchies that persisted within the Muslim community, as well as the oppressive treatment of women. Tangal's reformist agenda included a call for **social equality**, justice, and the improvement of the status of women in society.

Tangal's writings and public speeches frequently addressed the issues of **poverty, illiteracy, and social exclusion** that plagued Kerala's Muslims. He called for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden and criticized the local Muslim leadership for their complacency and failure to address these issues. His advocacy for social justice was rooted in his Islamic beliefs, particularly the Quranic injunctions to care for the less fortunate and to strive for equality and fairness in society.

Politically, Tangal was an early advocate for the **empowerment of Muslims** within the broader political context of British India. Although he did not engage directly in political activities, his ideas laid the groundwork for future political movements among Kerala's Muslims. He was particularly concerned with the political marginalization of Muslims in Kerala and called for greater representation and participation in the colonial administration.

6. Literary Contributions: A Voice for Reform

Makti Tangal was not only a religious reformer but also a prolific writer and intellectual. He used his writings as a powerful tool for spreading his reformist ideas and reaching a wider audience. His literary works, written in both Arabic and Malayalam, addressed a wide range of topics, including religion, education, politics, and social issues.

Tangal's most notable works include "**Mashariqu'l Anwar**" (The Dawning of Lights) and "**Tanbih al-Ikhwān**" (A Warning to Brothers), which provided a critique of the prevailing religious practices among Kerala's Muslims and called for a return to the true teachings of Islam. He also wrote extensively on the importance of modern education and the need for social reform within the Muslim community.

His writings were widely read and discussed among Kerala's Muslims, and they played a crucial role in shaping the intellectual discourse of the time. Through his works, Tangal sought to awaken the Muslim community to the need for reform and modernization, while remaining grounded in Islamic values and principles.

7. Opposition and Challenges

Makti Tangal's reformist ideas were not universally accepted within the Muslim community. He faced significant opposition from the traditional religious establishment, particularly the **Sufi leaders** and local ulama (religious scholars) who viewed his critique of popular religious practices as an attack on their authority.

The traditionalists accused Tangal of being a heretic and an innovator, and he was frequently subjected to personal attacks and vilification. Despite this opposition, Tangal remained steadfast in his reformist mission, continuing to advocate for change through his writings and public engagements.

His legacy, however, outlasted the opposition he faced. The seeds of reform that he planted would later be carried forward by other reformers, such as **Vakkom Abdul Kader Moulavi**, who built on Tangal's ideas to further the cause of Islamic reform and modernization in Kerala.

8. Legacy and Influence

Makti Tangal's influence on Kerala's Muslim community cannot be overstated. His call for religious reform, modern education, and social justice laid the groundwork for the **Islamic reform movements** that would follow in the early 20th century. His emphasis on *ijtihad*, the rejection of superstitions, and the integration of modern education with Islamic values made him a pioneer of reform in Kerala.

Tangal's ideas also influenced the **Mujahid movement**, which emerged in Kerala in the 20th century and continued his call for a return to the fundamentals of Islam. His advocacy for modern education helped pave the way for the establishment of schools and colleges that would educate future generations of Kerala's Muslims.

Today, Makti Tangal is remembered as one of the key figures in the **intellectual renaissance** of Kerala's Muslim community. His contributions to Islamic thought, education, and social reform have left an enduring legacy that continues to inspire reformers and thinkers in Kerala and beyond.

9. Conclusion

Makti Tangal was a visionary leader who sought to uplift Kerala's Muslim community through religious, educational, and social reform. His call for a return to the fundamentals of Islam, coupled with his advocacy for modern education and social justice, helped awaken the Muslim community from centuries of stagnation. Despite facing significant opposition, Tangal's ideas had a profound and lasting impact on the intellectual and socio-political development of Muslims in Kerala. His legacy as a reformer, thinker, and leader continues to inspire efforts towards religious renewal and social progress in Kerala and beyond.

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8. Hamdani Thangal: The Legacy of Islamic Reform and Leadership in Kerala

Mrs. Amina Meetheen

Abstract

Hamdani Thangal (1871–1955) was a significant Islamic leader and reformer in Kerala, known for his efforts to modernize the Muslim community through education, social reform, and religious revitalization. His contributions helped reshape the cultural and religious landscape of Kerala's Muslims in the early 20th century, providing them with the tools to confront the challenges posed by colonial rule, socio-economic deprivation, and communal divisions. This research paper explores the life, reformist ideals, and enduring legacy of Hamdani Thangal in the context of Kerala's Islamic reform movements.

1. Introduction

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were periods of significant transition for Kerala's Muslim community. The challenges posed by colonial rule, stagnation in religious education, and socio-economic marginalization created the need for visionary leadership. **Hamdani Thangal**, a prominent Islamic scholar and reformer, emerged during this era, providing intellectual and spiritual guidance to Muslims in Kerala. His advocacy for Islamic reforms, modern education, and social justice placed him among the key figures of Kerala's Islamic reform movement.

This paper explores Hamdani Thangal's role in shaping the religious, educational, and socio-political life of Kerala's Muslim community. It examines his contributions to the reform of Islamic practices, his commitment to modern education, and his efforts to uplift the socio-economic conditions of Muslims in Kerala.

2. Early Life and Background

Hamdani Thangal was born in **1871** into a respected family of Islamic scholars in **Tirur**, Kerala. His family, which traced its lineage to the Prophet Muhammad, enjoyed considerable influence within the Muslim community of Malabar. From an early age, Thangal was exposed to Islamic scholarship, studying the Quran, Hadith, and Fiqh under prominent scholars in Kerala and abroad.

Hamdani Thangal's education was not limited to religious subjects; he was well-versed in modern knowledge and was particularly influenced by the global Islamic reform movements of his time. His travels to the **Arab world** and **North India** exposed him to the ideas of Islamic reformers like **Jamal al-Din al-Afghani**, **Muhammad Abduh**, and **Syed Ahmad Khan**, who advocated for the renewal of Islamic thought and the adoption of modern education. These experiences shaped Hamdani Thangal's reformist vision for the Muslim community in Kerala.

3. Religious Reforms: Advocating for Purification and Revival

At a time when traditional Sufi practices were deeply entrenched in the Muslim community, Hamdani Thangal became a leading figure in advocating for the **purification of Islamic beliefs** and practices. Much like his contemporaries in other parts of the Islamic world, Thangal believed that Kerala's Muslims had fallen into **religious stagnation** due to their reliance on superstitions, saint worship, and innovations in religious rituals.

Thangal was a strong proponent of **Tawhid** (the oneness of God) and called for the elimination of practices that deviated from the core teachings of Islam, such as the excessive veneration of saints and the celebration of un-Islamic festivals. He encouraged the

community to return to the fundamental teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and emphasized the importance of **Ijtihad** (independent reasoning) in interpreting Islamic law.

Thangal's religious reforms were closely aligned with the **Salafi movement**, which sought to rid Islam of innovations (bid'ah) and to promote a return to the practices of the early Muslim community. In Kerala, he worked to establish **madrassas** (Islamic schools) that focused on teaching the Quran and Hadith while discouraging practices such as the use of charms and the veneration of shrines. He believed that by purifying religious practices, Muslims could reclaim their spiritual and moral integrity and thus strengthen their collective identity.

4. Commitment to Modern Education

Hamdani Thangal's vision for reform was not limited to religious matters. He was deeply concerned with the **educational backwardness** of Kerala's Muslims, recognizing that modern education was key to the community's social and economic progress. In this regard, his views mirrored those of reformers like **Vakkom Abdul Khader Moulavi** and **Syed Ahmad Khan**, who emphasized the importance of integrating modern knowledge with Islamic values.

Thangal was a tireless advocate for the establishment of **modern schools** that provided both religious and secular education. He believed that Muslims should not only be proficient in Islamic studies but also in subjects like science, mathematics, and English to compete in the modern world. Under his leadership, several educational institutions were established in Kerala, aimed at providing comprehensive education to Muslim children.

His efforts in this regard contributed significantly to the **educational renaissance** among Kerala's Muslims in the early 20th century. The institutions he helped found continue

to serve as centers of learning and empowerment for the community, producing a generation of Muslims who were equipped to participate in the socio-economic and political life of the region.

5. Social Reform and Political Thought

In addition to his religious and educational reforms, Hamdani Thangal was a strong advocate for **social justice** and the upliftment of marginalized sections of the Muslim community. He was particularly concerned with the conditions of the poor and the oppressed, and his reformist agenda included efforts to address issues like poverty, illiteracy, and gender inequality.

Thangal's social reform efforts were rooted in his Islamic belief in **equality** and justice. He called for the **eradication of caste distinctions** within the Muslim community and worked to improve the status of women, advocating for their access to education and their participation in public life. Thangal's progressive views on women's rights were ahead of his time, and his efforts helped pave the way for greater gender equality within Kerala's Muslim community.

Politically, Thangal was a vocal critic of **colonial rule** and an early advocate for the **political empowerment** of Muslims in Kerala. He encouraged Muslims to engage in the political process and to demand greater representation in the colonial administration. His political ideas influenced future leaders of Kerala's Muslim community, including those who would go on to play key roles in the independence movement and in post-independence politics.

6. Literary Contributions

Hamdani Thangal was also a prolific writer and intellectual, using his writings to disseminate his reformist ideas. His works, written in **Arabic, Malayalam, and Urdu**, addressed a wide range of topics, including religion, education, politics, and social issues. His **fatwas** (religious rulings) and essays were widely circulated among Kerala's Muslims, helping to shape the intellectual discourse of the time.

Thangal's writings were characterized by their emphasis on **rationality and reform**. He believed that Islam was compatible with modernity and that Muslims could engage with the modern world without compromising their religious values. His literary contributions provided the intellectual foundation for the reform movements that followed, and his works continue to be studied and revered by scholars and reformers in Kerala and beyond.

7. Challenges and Opposition

Despite his significant contributions, Hamdani Thangal faced considerable **opposition** from conservative elements within the Muslim community. His critiques of traditional religious practices and his advocacy for modern education were met with resistance from **Sufi leaders and traditional ulama**, who viewed his ideas as a threat to their authority.

Thangal's emphasis on **Ijtihad** and his rejection of **taqlid** (blind adherence to traditional interpretations of Islamic law) were particularly controversial, leading to conflicts with the established religious leadership. However, Thangal remained steadfast in his reformist mission, continuing to advocate for change through his writings, speeches, and public engagements.

8. Legacy and Influence

Hamdani Thangal's legacy as a **reformer** and **leader** endures in the annals of Kerala's history. His efforts to reform religious practices, promote modern education, and address social injustices helped lay the foundation for the **Islamic reform movements** that would follow in Kerala in the 20th century. His ideas influenced subsequent generations of reformers, including the leaders of the **Mujahid movement**, who continued his call for a return to the fundamentals of Islam and the integration of modern education with Islamic values.

Thangal's emphasis on **social justice** and his commitment to the upliftment of marginalized sections of the community have had a lasting impact on the social and political development of Kerala's Muslims. His vision of a reformed and empowered Muslim community, guided by both Islamic principles and modern knowledge, remains relevant in today's rapidly changing world.

9. Conclusion

Hamdani Thangal was a visionary leader whose contributions to Islamic reform, modern education, and social justice helped transform the Muslim community in Kerala. His advocacy for the purification of religious practices, his emphasis on modern education, and his commitment to social reform were instrumental in awakening the Muslim community to the challenges of the modern world. Despite facing opposition, Thangal's reformist ideas left an indelible mark on Kerala's history, shaping the intellectual and socio-political life of the region's Muslims. His legacy continues to inspire efforts towards religious renewal, educational empowerment, and social justice in Kerala and beyond.

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9. Haidarali Shihab Thangal: A Beacon of Islamic Leadership and Reform in Kerala

Mrs. Sabna.P

Abstract

Haidarali Shihab Thangal emerged as a significant figure in Kerala's Islamic landscape during the late 20th century. As a leader of the Muslim community, he played a crucial role in advocating for education, social justice, and the revival of Islamic values. This research paper examines Haidarali Shihab Thangal's life, contributions, and the impact of his leadership on the socio-religious dynamics of Kerala Muslims. It highlights his commitment to modernization, education, and communal harmony, positioning him as a pivotal figure in the ongoing discourse on Islamic reform in the region.

1. Introduction

Haidarali Shihab Thangal (1918–2009) was a prominent Islamic scholar and leader in Kerala who significantly influenced the Mappila Muslim community. As the successor of the revered Bafaqi Thangal, he inherited a legacy of religious leadership and reform. Throughout his life, he advocated for education, social empowerment, and a return to the core principles of Islam. This paper aims to explore Thangal's early life, his contributions to Islamic reform, and his role in shaping the identity and aspirations of Kerala's Muslim community.

2. Early Life and Education

Haidarali Shihab Thangal was born into a distinguished family in the Malabar region of Kerala. His early education was steeped in Islamic teachings, having been mentored by prominent scholars of his time. He received training in traditional Islamic sciences, which laid the foundation for his future endeavors in religious leadership.

His commitment to education was evident early on, as he sought to blend modern educational practices with traditional Islamic teachings. This dual approach would become a hallmark of his later work in reforming Islamic education in Kerala.

3. Leadership and Religious Influence

Upon becoming the successor to Bafaqi Thangal, Haidarali Shihab Thangal took on the responsibility of guiding the community during a period of significant socio-political changes. He emphasized the importance of education as a tool for empowerment, urging the community to pursue modern education alongside religious studies. Thangal was known for his inclusive approach to leadership, fostering inter-community dialogue and promoting harmony among different religious groups in Kerala. His ability to engage with people from various backgrounds helped to bridge divides and cultivate a sense of unity among Kerala's diverse populations.

4. Contributions to Education and Social Reform

Haidarali Shihab Thangal believed that education was the cornerstone of social progress. He championed the establishment of educational institutions that provided quality education to Muslims while remaining rooted in Islamic values. Under his leadership, several schools, colleges, and institutions were established, offering both secular and religious education.

His reformist agenda also extended to social issues, where he advocated for women's rights and empowerment. Recognizing the vital role of women in society, Thangal encouraged their participation in education and public life, challenging traditional norms that restricted their opportunities.

5. Advocacy for Unity and Communal Harmony

In a region marked by historical tensions between various religious communities, Thangal's efforts to promote communal harmony were particularly noteworthy. He actively engaged in dialogue with leaders of other religious groups, fostering mutual respect and understanding. His emphasis on peaceful coexistence and collaborative efforts for societal development earned him respect across communal lines. Thangal's commitment to unity was also reflected in his leadership during the communal riots of the 1980s, where he played a vital role in mediating and restoring peace between different factions.

6. Legacy and Impact

Haidarali Shihab Thangal's impact on Kerala's Muslim community and society at large is profound and enduring. His vision for education and social reform has influenced generations, inspiring many to pursue knowledge and engage in community service. His legacy continues to resonate in contemporary discussions about the role of Islam in modern society and the importance of inclusive leadership.

The institutions he founded and supported remain vital components of Kerala's educational landscape, ensuring that future generations of Muslims are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in a globalized world.

7. Conclusion

Haidarali Shihab Thangal stands as a towering figure in the narrative of Islamic reform in Kerala. His life and work exemplify a commitment to education, social justice, and communal harmony, offering a model for contemporary leaders in the Muslim community. As Kerala continues to navigate the complexities of modernity and globalization, Thangal's

vision and values remain relevant, inspiring ongoing efforts to reconcile faith with the demands of the present.

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10.Umarali Shihab Thangal: A Pioneering Figure in Islamic Reform and Leadership in Kerala

Mrs. Shahana P

Abstract

Umarali Shihab Thangal was a notable Islamic scholar and leader in Kerala, recognized for his efforts in the reform and revitalization of the Muslim community during the late 20th century. His contributions to education, social justice, and inter-community dialogue have had a lasting impact on Kerala's socio-religious landscape. This research paper examines Umarali Shihab Thangal's life, key contributions, and the significance of his leadership in fostering a modern, progressive understanding of Islam in Kerala.

1. Introduction

Umarali Shihab Thangal (1938-2009) was a prominent figure in the Islamic reform movement in Kerala, known for his dedication to education, social reform, and communal harmony. As a leader of the Thangal family, he inherited a legacy of religious scholarship and community leadership that played a pivotal role in shaping the identity and aspirations of the Muslim population in Kerala. This paper aims to explore his early life, major contributions to reform, and the broader implications of his leadership for the Muslim community in Kerala.

2. Early Life and Education

Umarali Shihab Thangal was born into the illustrious Thangal family, known for its deep roots in Islamic scholarship and leadership. He received a comprehensive education in both religious and secular subjects, training under respected scholars in Kerala and abroad.

His early exposure to Islamic teachings and modern educational practices shaped his worldview and prepared him for a life of service to his community.

His commitment to education was evident from a young age, and he believed that knowledge was essential for the empowerment of the Muslim community. This belief would become a cornerstone of his later work in reforming educational practices and advocating for modernity within Islamic frameworks.

3. Leadership in Islamic Reform

Upon assuming leadership roles in the Thangal family, Umarali Shihab Thangal became a vocal advocate for reforming Islamic education and practices in Kerala. He recognized the need to modernize religious education, integrating contemporary knowledge with traditional Islamic teachings. His approach emphasized critical thinking and social responsibility among students, enabling them to engage with the challenges of modern society.

Thangal also focused on promoting a more inclusive and progressive interpretation of Islam, countering extremist ideologies and encouraging dialogue between different faith communities. He sought to position Islam as a dynamic and relevant force in contemporary society, emphasizing its compatibility with modern values such as democracy, gender equality, and social justice.

4. Contributions to Education and Community Development

Umarali Shihab Thangal's most significant contributions lie in the realm of education. He played a crucial role in establishing and supporting numerous educational institutions that offered a blend of secular and religious education. Under his guidance, schools, colleges, and

universities were founded, aimed at providing quality education to Muslims while remaining grounded in Islamic principles.

In addition to formal education, Thangal emphasized the importance of community development initiatives. He actively engaged in programs aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the Muslim community, advocating for better healthcare, housing, and employment opportunities.

5. Promotion of Inter-Community Dialogue

One of the hallmarks of Umarali Shihab Thangal's leadership was his commitment to fostering communal harmony and dialogue among different religious communities. He believed that mutual respect and understanding were essential for social cohesion in a diverse society like Kerala. Thangal often participated in interfaith dialogues and discussions, promoting the idea that Islam encourages peaceful coexistence and collaboration among people of different faiths. His efforts to build bridges between communities earned him respect and recognition beyond the Muslim population, highlighting his role as a leader for all of Kerala.

6. Legacy and Impact

Umarali Shihab Thangal's legacy is deeply rooted in his commitment to education, social reform, and communal harmony. His visionary leadership has inspired countless individuals and institutions to pursue knowledge and engage in community service. The educational institutions he established continue to serve as vital centers for learning, contributing to the development of a progressive Muslim community in Kerala.

His emphasis on modernity, inclusivity, and social justice has had a lasting impact on the discourse surrounding Islam in Kerala, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of faith in the context of contemporary challenges.

7. Conclusion

Umarali Shihab Thangal emerged as a pivotal figure in the Islamic reform movement in Kerala, leaving behind a rich legacy of education, social reform, and communal harmony. His life and work exemplify a commitment to modernizing Islamic thought and practice, ensuring that it remains relevant and meaningful in today's world. As Kerala continues to navigate the complexities of globalization and social change, Thangal's vision for a progressive, inclusive Islam offers valuable insights for current and future leaders in the community.

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