COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL CAPITAL: A STUDY OF THE EDUCATION OF MUSLIMS IN SOUTH MALABAR

Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MUHAMMED HANEEFA A.P.

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

NEW DELHI 110067

INDIA

2017

जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

ntre for the Study of Social Systems
hool of Social Sciences

Tel.: 26704408

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis "Communities and Social Capital: A Study of the Education of Muslims in South Malabar" submitted by me at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy, is my original work and has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree of this university or any other university.

DATE: 21 July 2017

MUHAMMED HANEEFA A.P

CERTIFICATE

This is to state that MUHAMMED HANEEFA A.P. has worked on the thesis titled "Communities and Social Capital: A Study of the Education of Muslims in South Malabar" for the award of the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy from the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Therefore, I recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. Vivek Kumar
(SUPERVISOR)

Professor
Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067

Prof. Nilika Mehrotra
(CHAIRPERSON)

Chairperson
CSSS/SSS
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

Table of Contents

Chapter III

Status, Occupation, and Endogamy: Social Stratification among Muslims in South Malabar

Chapter IV

A Discussion on Education, Occupation, and Networks of the Head of the Households

Chapter V

Caste, Gender, and Networks: Impact on Higher Education……….............194

Illustrations

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abbreviations

FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
G1	Parent Generation
G2	Present Generation
GnA	Graduate and Above
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
KNM	Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen
KSBBA	Kerala State Barbers and Beauticians Association
MOS	Muslims from Other States
MYS	Mean Years of Schooling
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
OBC	Other Backward Class
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCs	Scheduled Castes
SKIMVB	Samastha Kerala Islam Matha Vidyabyasa Board
SKSSF	Samastha Kerala Sunni Students Federation
SRC	Socio-Religious Categories
SSF	Sunni Students Federation
SSLC	Secondary School Leaving Certificate
ST	Scheduled Tribe
STs	Scheduled Tribes

Glossary*

A.P Sunni	one of the two major fractions of Sunni Muslims of Kerala who favours and supports Kanthapuram A.P. Aboobacker Musliyar
ahl al-bayt	'the people of the house'; the Prophet's household: the Prophet himself, 'Ali and Fatimah and their sons Hasan and Husain and their descendants, also spelled variously as *ahlul-bayt* and *ahl bait*.
aqiqa'	the ritual ceremony performed after the birth of a child, including sacrifice of an animal and his/her first head shave
ayats	verses from the Quran
bid'ah	heretical innovation not ratified by the Qur'an and Hadith, which mujahids use to condemn many practices of the Sunnis
dars	traditional Islamic institution set up in masjids for religious learning
ddiyan	a self-description used by the 'lower castes'
deen/din	religiosity/ the religion of Islam
dhikr	'remembrance' of Allah, Sufi practices
dini	religious/pious
dini-ilm	religious knowledge/education
duas	prayers
dunyavi	wordly
dunyavi-ilm	worldly education
E.K Sunnis	one of the two major sections of Sunnis in Kerala, who supports and favours late E.K Aboobacker Musliyar
fajr prayer	first compulsory prayer of the day, should be performed before the sunrise
fiqh	Islamic jurisprudence
gulfukaran	the Gulf migrants
guruthwam	blessings of teacher/ustadh
haram	any act that is forbidden in Sharia
Ibadat	worship and devotion to Allah

isha prayer	last compulsory daily prayer at night time
jumuah/jumuah	Friday prayer
kafa'ah/kufu	rules set to achieve compatibility or parity between partners in marriage, blocking of marriage alliance between certain occupational groups, the prohibition upon Sayyid women against marrying men of lesser social/religious rank
kalyanam	wedding
kitab/kutub(pl)the	religious text
koottathil-koodilla	the attitude and belief of certain groups and individuals that those who are outside the group will not fit into their group
kufuokkal	the matching and parity in marriage selection
kuripp	prescription note
kuziyan/kuzhiyan	the one who digs the grave
madhhab	any one of the four schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence
mahallu/mahals	the parish, refers to a congregation of Muslims who live in the same locality and within the jurisdiction of one main principal mosque
mahshara	the place of Assembly/ Judgment place
makrooh	any act that is inappropriate undesirable in Sharia
mudikalayal	headshave
Mujahid	A religious sect among the Muslims of Kerala, also known as *salafis*
Mukkuvar	Fisherfolk of Kerala
mukri	the caretaker of a masjid, and the one who calls for azan and helps the imam of a majid in religious matters
mundu	traditional loincloth of Kerala
musliyar	a religious scholar
nee	singular form of you
nigal	plural of you
nikah	the Muslim marriage bond, in South Malabar a wedding is usually called *kalyanam*
Niskaram	Islamic prayer
Othupallis	a traditonal educational institution that imparts religious education

palliyileqazi	the one who leads prayers in the masjids
Qabila	tribe (different Thangalfamilies claim their status based on affiliation to specific Qabilas)
Sabeena	a text that contains various devotional verses, *duas* and *dikrs*
Sayyidah	refers to a lady of a *Sayyid* house
Shari'ah	Islamic canonical law
Shirk	sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism
stridhanam	Dowry
Sunnah	established custom and normative precedent based on the example of life of the Prophet Muhammad
Swalath	praise of the Prophet
Tawfiq	the grace bestowed by Allah
tharavadu'	ancestral home, both in matrilineal and patrilineal system
Ulama	The learned scholar, singular ālim
ustadh	a Muslim cleric, prayer leader in masjids, or a madrasa teacher
wa'alu	mass religious teaching programme, organised with the intention of imparting Islamic religious knowledge

*although many of these words may have different meanings in different contexts, the meanings given here are reflective of how the present author uses them in the thesis.

Introduction

The relationship between social capital and educational achievement, to the best of the author's knowledge, has not been discussed within the realm of caste, specifically Muslim caste, in sociological research. This is not surprising, as the vast majority of the literature on social capital and educational achievement have focused on societies in the west (Coleman and Hoffer 1987, Bianchi and John 1997, Helliwell and Putnam 2007, Teachman, Kathleen and Karen 1996), where caste as a system of social stratification does not apply. Pioneer advocates of the predominant social capital theories, Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1975, 1988) interpreted the relations between social capital and educational attainment in the light of social class and race as social stratification systems respectively.

In the Indian context, any discussion of social stratification would be incomplete without a proper understanding of the role of caste in various aspects of social life. However, there have been very few works that have focused on the relationship between caste and social capital (Das 2002:150, Jadhav 2012, Kumar 2014: 40, Vaidyanathan 2012, Vijayabaskar and Kalaiyarasan 2014), and on the relationship between social capital and educational attainment (Mythili 2002, Iyengar 2001, Harinath 2013), and hardly any previous work exists which has examined the three-dimensional relationship between caste, social capital and educational achievement.

The sociological literature on caste is largely synonymous with the Hindu religious ideology due to its origin in- and interconnectedness with the latter. Caste-like groupings among Muslims of Kerala have been reported, albeit limitedly, with some authors preferring to use the term 'caste,' and others arguing against it. In addition to the reason mentioned earlier, the hesitation to address the existing social stratification among Muslims as 'caste' may be attributed to the overwhelming belief that 'Islam is an egalitarian religion' and to the lack of complete parallels with the Hindu caste system and its features (Ahmad, 1973, 2015, Trivedi et al., 2016).

Not surprisingly, therefore, there exists only limited research on the nature and experience of caste groupings and education among the Indian Muslims (Ahmad 2014, Azhar 2012). Osella and Osella's position is clear when they say that "While Malayali

Muslims do not talk (as in north India) about the *ashraf* and *ajlaf* or use terms like *sharif*, still they make several grades of the local distinction between status groups" (Osella and Osella 2013: 145). This work argues that caste is embedded within the Muslims' social structure in India, and it is a largely unacknowledged and 'unreformed' aspect of Mappila societies. Within the Muslims of Malabar, there exist group divisions, some of whom claim higher status because of their descent and others who are considered as 'low caste' due to their occupation, birth, and religious conversion.

The present study is particularly interested in the educational achievement and social capital possessed by the caste groups among the Kerala Muslims, particularly Muslims from South Malabar. The Kerala Muslims poses an interesting anomaly in what is otherwise considered by many to be a 'successful' Kerala model of development. This is because, compared to other religious communities, the Muslims in the South Malabar region of Kerala have been lagging behind in education, employment and other social indices like health and the participation of women in the occupational sector, and they also top the list of highest number of child marriages.

This study identifies four major caste groups among the Muslims in South Malabar: Thangals (also referred to as Sayyids), Malabaris, Barbers, and Fishermen. Hitherto research works have used the terms 'Ossans' and 'Puslars'/ 'Puslans' to denote the Barbers and Fishermen respectively. Several community members of these two groups told the present author during fieldwork that they find these terms derogatory and humiliating. Some even reported that they left their jobs because of the humiliating suffixes people add and call along with their names. No doubt, as noted by Guru, for many, caste surnames are disrespectful and demeaning, it affects their self-respect and also causes moral hurt and pain, and it also brings economic disadvantages for the oppressed castes (Guru 2009).

Considering these factors, therefore, this thesis will refer to these groups from here on as Barbers and Fishermen[1].

With respect to these four caste groups, the present study aims to document and examine the experience of caste and its consequences among the Muslims in Kerala, specifically South Malabar. In addition to this, the work aims to understand the differential impact of caste on social capital possessed and its relationship with educational attainment among Muslims in South Malabar. The backwardness of Muslim women in higher education is of particular interest in this study. Apart from the ''structural' factors such as the scarcity of higher educational opportunities, the researcher treats child marriage as one of the most important 'internal reasons' for the higher educational backwardness of Malabar Muslim women. This is because, according to the 2011 Census, 67.6 percent of Kerala Muslim women are married off before the age of twenty and above forty percent of Muslim women in Malappuram are married off before the legal age of eighteen. Amidst these alarming rate of child marriage, the Kerala state government issued a circular on June 14th, 2013 (hereafter referred to as the 2013 circular) permitting the marriage registration of Muslim women between 16 and 18 years.

Unsurprisingly, the controversial circular has resulted in fierce debates regarding the progress and development of Muslim women in the state. On the one hand, many religious leaders and malestream scholars support the government's move because it upholds Shariat law and prevents prostitution and child sex abuses (Bappu 2013, Hamza 2013, Musthafal 2013, Mundupara 2013, Salam 2013). On the other hand, many activists and organizations have also expressed concern that this will further hamper the educational progress of Muslim women (Kunjammu 2013, Shoukath 2013, Sulfath 2013).

In the four years since the controversial 2013 circular was published, there has been no detailed analysis of the relationship between the incidence of child marriage and the

---

[1] Recent debates point out that even the usage of the word 'barber' is politically incorrect. Therefore, many advise the use of the word 'beautician' and 'hair stylist' instead of the term barber. For a recent interview, U.N Thampi, the secretary of the Kerala State Barbers and Beauticians Association, formerly known as the Kerala State Barbers Association established in 1969, hinted that the association will further change its name to fit the new job title (Basheer 2015). But even within the barber community, the usage of the word 'salon' or 'beauty parlours' is not common. During the interview, the community members asked the author never to address any person using the term 'ossan'.

educational progress of Muslim women in the state. In the last section of the fifth chapter, strong ties,[2] the absence of the 'strength of weak ties', 'homophily networks'[3], 'thin agency,'[4] lesser higher educational opportunities and patriarchal norms are all discussed as factors contributing to the practice of child marriage.

Gulf migration has resulted in the absence of male adults in the family and the emergence of single-parent families, which in turn has further resulted in what Coleman referred to as the 'structural deficiency in family social capital' (Coleman 1988: S111). Coleman described the concept thus, "one or both parents work outside the home, can be seen as a structurally deficient, lacking the social capital that comes with the presence of parents during the day" (Coleman 1988: S111). In South Malabar, the fathers in many families are not absent for a day, but for a year or more than two years. They generate economic capital for the households, but their absence for a long time produces structural deficiencies in the families. The notion of social capital suggests that "better connected people enjoy higher returns" (Burt 2000: 348). Does the inability to stay connected with their children for long and poorly connected networks produce lower returns in such families? Considering these theoretical orientations, the thesis will examine the relations, connections and amount of social capital in families and how it relates to the overall higher educational status of the four caste groups. In addition, the role of the above mentioned factors in the educational backwardness of women in the locality will be elaborated in the last section of the fifth chapter.

---

[2] The author borrows the concept of weak ties and strong from the work of Granovetter (1973), where he argued that weak ties should be "seen as indispensable to individuals' oppertunities and to their integration into communities". According to him, strong ties involve "breeeding local cohesion, lead to overall fragmentation" (Granovetter 1973: 1374). In short, strong ties lead to local cohesion through local networks i.e kinship and immediate family relations, and weak ties enable wider or global integration through wider networks.

[3] Homophily (love of sameness) is the tendency of people with similar traits (including caste, class, cultural, and attitudinal characteristics) to interact with people who have the same interests, dispositions and embodied orientation, because this makes their interaction easier and more enjoyable than interaction with people with dissimilar traits (For more see McPherson, Lynn Smith and Cook 2001, Centola 2007, Bourdieu 1984, Crossley, et al.2015). In Sociological research, the term was popularized in 1954 by social scientists Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton (see Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton 1954).

[4] 'Thin agency,' following Klocker, refers to decisions and actions that are taken in highly restrictive contexts, characterized by few visible alternatives, and is opposed to 'thick agency,' which refers to actions and decisions taken with less restriction and within a broader range of options (Klocker 2007: 85).

Caste among the Muslims of South Malabar: an Ethnographic Experience

The best thing fieldwork did, was to give me the opportunity to listen to stories that I had never heard before. "It all started with the food; the delicious food eaten by the *ustadh*"[5], Jaleel began to narrate his story. He was the third son of Muhammed, the barber. He recounted his personal stories only when we got quite close, that too when I visited him for the fifth time in his barbershop at Manjeri. He started the conversation talking about his childhood and went on to explain why he is never nostalgic about the past because he believes that there were no good days for the marginalised; they have been suffering throughout history. This time we are meeting to discuss caste, Muslim caste. When I asked him about caste, he said, "If there is no caste! Who are we? The barbers! I firmly believe that caste exists among Kerala Muslims, and we are one of the victims of the system."

He narrated the story of *ustadh*. Every night after having delicious dinner from various houses in the *mahallu*[6], *ustadh* spends time with his friends in the village. He was the newly appointed madrasa teacher. He gets food three times a day from various houses in the *mahallu,* either the families send the food to the madrasa, or he goes to the houses to have food on time. His closest friend in the village is Shihab. They sit on the madrasa veranda every night after *isha* prayer for casual talks. On one such day, as a routine question, Shihab asked, 'Who brought the food today?' 'Ossans, from the Ossan's house' *ustadh* replied. 'Ossan' is a colloquial, but derogatory, usage to describe individuals belonging to the Barber community. There was only one family of barbers in the village, so Shihab did not need to ask the question, 'which Barber?' *Ustadh* further said 'the food was delicious! I had chicken biriyani, beef fry and sweets. They always serve tasty food. But what to do, Allah will never reward them for that!' This was new information for Shihab, and he asked, 'Why! Why will not they get rewards?' Ustadh replied, 'the *kitab* says so!'

---

[5]Although the word Ustadh is a term generally used to address a Muslim cleric, imams in masjids, and madrasa teachers, in this context, it means madrasa teacher.

[6] Mahallu is the Muslim equivalent of what the Christians refer to as a parish. Muslims living in South Malabar, as elsewhere in Kerala, are categorised into mahallu entities. A group of people living under a common major masjid who share a common burial ground, masjid rules and regulations can be categorised under one mahallu. A mahallu may have a major masjid and many small masjids (srambis). The mahallu and mahallu committee, popularly known as *palli* committee, have an important role in the life-cycle rituals (birth, marriage and death) of a mahallu inmate.

It was almost ten in the night; *ustadh* went to sleep in the madrasa, where he shares a spacious room with his colleagues. Shihab left for home. On his way home, Shihab met his friend Jaleel, the son of Muhammed, the barber. Being a close friend of his, Shihab told Jaleel what *ustadh* had said. It was an utter shock to Jaleel. He was furious. He went home and told the story to his father, mother and other family members. Jaleel's mother, who cooked the delicious food for *ustadh*, began crying, 'even after having such a delicious dinner, how could he say something like that?' Muhammed could not sit in the house peacefully. On the very same night, with his three sons, he walked to the house of the madrasa president. As a guardian of the madrasa, the president said, 'We will discuss the matter with *ustadh* right now; I do not think he would say that'. They all went to meet the *ustadh*.

Within the presence of Muhammed and his sons, the president asked the ustadh, 'Why did you say that Allah will not reward Barbers for serving food to others?' The half-asleep ustadh was shocked to see that Muhammed came to know what he had said. He never thought it would reach their ears. He sensed the problem. Though he was shaken, he replied politely, 'though I do not believe it fully. Still, the *kitab* says so.' A furious Muhammed tried to slap the ustadh. However, the president stopped him. Muhammed complained vociferously, 'What *kitab?*' The ustadh replied that he learned such rules in *dars* and later in in the Arabic college and further added that 'even the *Fath-ul-Meen* propounds such standards and regulations.' In his defence, he took the translation of the book and showed it to the President and Muhammed. He explained that 'the *kitab* considers barbering as a disgraceful job, one that does not need to be paid for. It is their service, and we are taught that they will not get rewards for any of their services.' A shocked Muhammed could not say much but before leaving with his sons said, 'I will not accept such a ridiculous interpretation of Islam.'

Narrating the story to the author, Jaleel said, "that night I felt less of a Muslim. Born in a barber family, I have had many other humiliating experiences, but I never knew that even a prominent text of Muslims considers my job as disgraceful, one that is culturally inferior." Jaleel is not wrong about the inherent religious discrimination against his

occupation, *Fath-ul-Mueen*, one of the most taught and venerated *kutub* among the Sunni Muslims of Kerala[7], describes the job of a barber as a disgraceful one.

In chapter nine, *Fath-ul Mueen* describes barbering, tailoring/weaving, shepherding as disgraceful jobs, and as culturally inferior (Makhdoom 2015: 349). The hierarchical division of labourers and placing a low value on manual labour can be seen throughout the text. Later, during interaction with the Muslim exegetes in the field, the author noted that none of them completely negate the hierarchical grading of some occupations. However, most of the exegetical commentaries of *Fath-ul-Mueen* were silent on the discriminatory remarks against Barbers and other 'low grade' occupations. The text also discourages other Muslims from having a marriage alliance with such families, and it argues in favour of status homogamy based on occupation.

In his *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar argued that 'even today caste has its defenders', and they defend it by describing it as another form of division of labour'. However, he countered such an argument by saying that "caste system is not merely a division of labour. It is also a division of labourers". He also argued that "the caste system is not merely a division of labourers—which is quite different from division of labour—it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other" (Ambedkar 1979: 47). In a similar vein, there are many defenders of *Fath-ul-Meen,* who say that it is a description of the division of labour, but the truth, to borrow Ambedkar's argument, is that this text supports the grading of labourers one above the other, and treats the job of manual labourers as disgraceful and culturally inferior.

Other interpretors of the text say that the text only suggests rules for the marriage compatibility (*kafa'at*) between the bride and groom[8], but it also sets rules for marriage avoidance with people who follow certain professions. *Kafa'at,* according to Ziadeh, is

---

[7] *Fath-ul-Mueen* was written in sixteenth century by Zainuddin Makhdoom, the second. There are many studies both in Malayalam and English that point out how Kerala ulamas depend on Fath-ul-Mueen as the final or 'authentic' (*aadhikarika*) source for issuing fatwas. For more on this, see (Afsal 2010). The June 2017 issue of the magazine Thelicham (Vol.30, No 18), published by the Darul Huda Islamic University, Kerala, mainly discusses the relevance of the various interpretations of the text, and its importance in Kerala and outside.

[8] *kafa'ah* can be defined as rules set to achieve compatibility or equality between partners in marriage. For the origin of *kafa'ah* and more, see (Ziadeh 1957, Sila 2015[1970]), for more on *kufw* (status) and evolution of Sharia law see (Engineer 2007: 100-108)

"developed in Kufah in a milieu which recognized social distinctions, and that the doctrine spread to other localities and was adopted by other schools at a later date" (Ziadeh 1957: 507). The author believes that the uncritical acceptance of the concept of *kafa'ah* in text and its justification by ulamas in later years in Kerala further resulted in the use of *kafa'at* as a support mechanism for social distinctions and social stratification[9]. In the *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar said (Ambedkar 1979: 48):

There are many occupations in India which, on account of the fact that they are regarded as degraded by the Hindus, provoke those who are engaged in them to aversion. There is a constant desire to evade and escape from such occupations, which arises solely because of the blighting effect which they produce upon those who follow them, owing to the slight and stigma cast upon them by the Hindu religion.

As argued by Ambedkar in the above passage, in the field, many Muslims and *ulamas* consider the occupations of a barber, weaver, and fishermen as degraded and despicable. Many barbers and fishermen said to the author that they felt the desire to escape from their occupation many times, but even after taking up new jobs free of the caste tag, they continued to be addressed with the caste surnames 'ossan' and 'puslan' by many.

A prolonged teaching and interpretation of everyday Muslim life on the theoretical basis of the *Fath-ul Mueen,* along with many other factors, has resulted in an aversion in the minds of many to marry someone from the Barbers and Fishermen communities, and in order to keep 'bloodlines pure,' Thangals follow strict *kafa'ah* rules, which has made them socially exclusive, endogamous and different from other Kerala Muslims.

Sociological studies on homogamy show that "there is more homogamy with respect to the cultural status of occupations than with respect to the economic status of occupations" (Kalmijn 1998: 409). Kalmijn's research further suggests that when

---

[9] After noting different traditions of *kafa'ah*, Farhat Ziadeh argued that "the 'Alawis of Hadramawt take an extreme view of kafa'ah and regard the marriage of an 'Alawi girl to a non-'AlawI as an insult to every descendent of the Prophet" (Ziadeh 1957: 515). He concludes the article by saying that, "In general, it would seem that the doctrine of *kafa'ah*, has ceased to be of major importance in determining or reflecting social stratification in Muslim society" (Ziadeh 1957: 517). The settlement of Hadrami diaspora, especially Alawis of Hadramawt, in Malabar was well documented (Dale 1997, Ho 2006:115), so it is not wrong to assume that, following the extreme form of their Hadrami *kafa'ah* tradition must be the one reason that further facilitated them to become an endogamous group in Kerala.

homogamy is considered, preferences to seek "cultural similarity plays a central role in the selection process. Such preferences for similarity can be understood as an attempt to develop a common lifestyle in marriage that produces social confirmation and affection" (Kalmjin 1994: 448). However, one important question that emerges is, how are different endogamous groups formed *within* a religious group, who live in similar localities, who follow the same texts, who have the same rituals and customs and have an almost similar lifestyle? Occupational gradation lies at the heart of the answer to this question. Occupational gradation paved the way for the selection of assortative mates by family status/occupation that further strengthened occupational homogamy among the Muslims. However, I would further argue that such occupational homogamy eventually formed endogamous groups that sustained over the years not just because of the influence of the Hindu caste system and its grading of occupations one above the other, but also because of the Islamic local religious texts, their teachings and practices, which tremendously contributed to the formation and preservation of endogamous caste groups among the Muslims.

There are many scholars and popular artists who argue that the social structure of the Mappila communities, aspects of their culture and literature such as *Mala pattukal* and *Mappila pattukal,* are influenced by traditions of Hinduism, particularly those of the 'lower caste' Hindus. Such an influence creates a Hindu-Muslim syncretism in the culture, customs and tradition of Mappila Muslims[10]. The present author, therefore, does not negate the influence of the Hindu caste system on the Muslims of South Malabar, most of whom are converts from 'lower castes' and, as argued by Miller, many of the new converts "typically retained many of their old habits and sentiments" (Miller 2015: 45). However, such a Hindu influence is not enough to sustain the caste based stratification and practice of endogamy among the Muslims. The ulamas, who interpret the religious texts, encourage

---

[10] For more on the syncretic nature of Muslim culture in Kerala see Miller 1976, Dale and Menon 1978, Mohamed 1981, Bayly 1989, Jeffrey 1992: 112, Burmen 1996: 1214, Khan 2013, Osella osella 2013. The Hindu-Muslim syncretic culture of Kerala and their shared customs, beliefs and practices are remarkable. As noted by Sila Khan, "the polarization of Hindu and Muslim communities perceived as two monolithic and hostile blocs is thus a comparatively new phenomenon" (Khan 2013: 78). Recently, popular artists V.K Kutty, T.K Hamsa suggested that many features of Mappila songs are heavily influenced by the songs of the Hindu 'lower castes'. See asianetnews. "Ente Keralam Malappuram Episode 8". Filmed [Apr 13, 2017], YouTube video, 22.09. Posted [Apr 13, 2017]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3whcgqprFkc.

occupational homogamy- "regarded as a form of group closure" (Kalmijn 1998: 396), which strengthens the practice of endogamy and prejudice against the 'low castes' Muslims. Over time, such an aversion towards the 'low status' occupations has paved the way for the formation of endogamous, 'enclosed classes' of Barbers and Fishermen, who now completely prefer marriage within their own communities.

The story that Jaleel narrated is not an exceptional one; there were similar or more compelling stories of caste discrimination, exclusion and humiliation that the author heard during three years of fieldwork among the Muslims of South Malabar. These include, but are not limited to, addressing the marginalised groups with the derogatory names such as 'ossans' and 'Puslars', calling the girls from Barber families as '*ossathi'* and fishermen students as '*da/di puslan*' in the classrooms, to the denial of marriage alliances with so-called upper caste Muslims, and other forms of humiliation in public and private spheres.

In the burgeoning literature on caste in India, a number of works have reported the existence of caste in various forms among the Muslims (Ambedkar 1990 [1946]: 228-230, Ahmad 1962, Ansari 1960, Dumont 1970: 205-210, Siddiqui 1974, Madan 2001 [1976], Ahmad 1973, Bhatty 1976, 1996, Lindholm 1986, Faridi and Siddiqui 1992, Fanselow 1996, Jamous 1996, Sharma 2002: 76-81, Sikand 2004: 20-43, Mathur 2011, Trivedi, et.al 2016). Nevertheless, deniers are more in number than the confirmers when it comes to the question of whether caste system exists among the Muslims. There are many reasons for the denial of caste among the Muslims, one of which, the author believes, is that of the mechanisms of knowledge production. As argued by Vivek Kumar, "the station of a researcher during fieldwork has a bearing on the quality and quantity of data out of which further production of knowledge takes place" (Kumar 2016: 36). No doubt, where the researcher stays, how he/she collects the data, whom did he/she talk to, who his/her informants are, are all important in ethnographic research.

Except a few previous works like that of Saidalavi (2017) and Mathur (1977) most of the research on Mappila Muslims either involved staying with the so-called upper caste or upper-class Muslims (usually with the affluent Calicut Muslims) during their field research or involved references to the colonial documents that were very uncritical of the system. The knowledge production in such contexts was highly uninformative and could

not fully capture the stories of those who were on the receiving end of caste discrimination such as the Barber and Fishermen Muslim communities. Most of such works failed to capture the caste system among the Muslims of Kerala, especially Muslims of South Malabar, where according to 2011 Census 32.56 percent of Kerala Muslims reside.

In this study, the author argues that the social stratification that exists among the Muslims of Kerala is nothing but caste when caste is understood from an Ambedkarite perspective. Unless and until there is a new lexicon developed, instead of using loose phrases such as 'caste-like', 'endogamous' and 'community division' to refer to the social stratification among the Muslims, the usage of caste would serve justice to the marginalised. This would help them to critique the system, and it would further help them to fight for justice with the other marginalised, discriminated and stigmatised groups in societies.

Objectives of the Study

In Kerala, as elsewhere in India, the overwhelming discussion and debate over the modernization of madrasas is a clear indication of the existence of a dual system of education among the Muslims. The educational dualism in India is a colonial construction. However, this educational system, 'traditional' or 'religious' and 'modern' or 'secular,' exists not only in India but also in many parts of the Muslim world (Hashim 1996: 3, Marsden 2005: 160, Sikand 2004). Many scholars have studied the system of religious education of Kerala Muslims in detail (Ali 1990, Pasha 1995, Shefi 2008, Sikhand 2004, Nazeer 2011, and Basheer 2016). It has been noted that neither the Census reports, NSSO data nor any other government department take the Kerala madrasa certificate as a valid document of educational qualification. Thus in the present work, religious education or the 'Kerala model madrasas' are not as greatly focused on as modern education and its institutions. In doing so, this work aims to assess the educational disparities and differences among the Muslim castes based on the existing educational indicators and parameters.

The work also seeks to study how social capital as a resource influences the educational development of the Muslim caste groups in South Malabar. This study takes a Colemanian perspective on social capital, which is treated as a resource, store, and credit that produces 'positive results' and 'benefits' for the individuals and group of individuals

in societies. According to Coleman, "social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible" (1988: S98). In the context of South Malabar, the degree of the possession of social capital is assessed via the following indicators- Parental education, parental occupation, sectarian differences and membership to organisations and associations –both religious and cultural.

In the wake of the highly controversial 2013 circular by Kerala State government, permitting the marriage registration of Muslim women between 16 and 18 years, the present study will look into the current educational status of Muslim women in South Malabar and understand the influence that institutions like religion, caste, marriage, and family have on their education.

Therefore, the major objectives of this study are:

- To understand the present educational status of Kerala Muslims in comparison to other religious communities in the state and more specifically, the present educational status of Muslims in South Malabar.
- To chronicle the experience of caste and its consequences among the Muslims in Kerala, specifically South Malabar. None of the previous works on Mappila Muslims has specifically focused on Muslim caste and/or its impact on education in the region.
- To analyse the differential impact of caste on social capital possessed and its relationship with educational attainment among Muslims in South Malabar.
- To examine the effect of early marriage on women's higher education among South Malabar Muslims in the theoretical light of the Granovetterian concept of strong ties, weak ties, and social capital.
- o What are the major reasons for the widespread practice of early or 'illegal marriage' in this region?
- o Are there caste based differences in the practice and prevalence of child marriage among the Muslims of South Malabar?
- o What are the impacts of child marriage and early marriage on the higher education of women in the region?

Some of the keywords in the title of this thesis require explanation. South Malabar, in this study, is defined as the geographical region that includes the erstwhile taluks of Malabar district and now part of Malappuram district, namely Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnani, all three of which are located in the Southern part of Malabar region. The word 'communities' refers simultaneously to the Muslim community in South Malabar as a whole, in particular, the four caste communities that characterise the social stratification system in South Malabar. Although all educational levels across caste communities-primary, high school, secondary are commented upon in this study, the focus is on higher education.

Methodology

The study will analyse how the differential possession of social capital influences the differential attainment of educational credentials by Muslims caste groups in South Malabar. From the beginning of Sociology as a subject, sociologists are well aware that the system of education is embedded in society and the opportunities for education are not equally distributed. Leading sociologist, Durkheim (1956: 117), argued that "It is evident that the education of our children should not depend upon the chance of their having been born here or there, of some parents rather than others."

Over the years, sociologists have interpreted the systems of education and the inequality and disparities therein differently. One of the pioneers in the field of the sociology of education, James Coleman, explained the differential educational outcomes of children living in society by arguing that "social capital in the family is a resource for education of the family's children, just as financial and human capital" (Coleman 1988:S113). Many theorists, including Coleman, point out that the educational system is neither independent of nor isolated from wider structures and processes, it is deeply embedded within the social structure and processes, and field of individuals (Coleman 1972, 1975 Bourdieu: 1974, Morrison and McIntyre 1971: 15-78, Alam 2012: 49). Regarding the kind of social capital that is a more significant predictor of educational outcomes, Stephen Heyneman (1976) argues that in developing countries, school factors are more important in deciding the educational outcome of a child than family background (Heyneman 1976). Contrary to this, one of the recent studies on social capital and

education, also, however, concluded like Coleman that "family social capital exerts stronger effects on academic achievement than does school social capital" (Dufur, Parcel and Troutman 2013: 17).

Based on Coleman's theory and the present author's own observations from a two-phase pilot study in South Malabar during the period between June 2012 to 2013 January, this study will focus on family and community background of a child as more important than school factors in determining his/her educational achievement. In this study, therefore, rather than focusing on school/college or any other educational institutions, the data is collected mainly via household surveys. Also, compared to school based-surveys, households provide a convenient unit for the collection of superior empirical evidence on personal and family background, in part because the respondents are normally adults in the families. The household focus is a descriptive and analytical tool that can provide insights into a range of social, economic, and cultural processes as they manifest themselves on different levels of analysis (Schmink 1984: 86).

Even though this work is on education, as mentioned above, I do not intend to make any educational institutions the focal points of study; instead, the ultimate units of this study will be the households. There is no common definition available for a household, and sociologists, historians, economists, and policy makers have differentially defined the concept on various occasions. For the present study, influenced by the works of Glewwe (2000: 135), United Nations (UNDY 2004:19-24), and NSSO (2014: 9), a household is broadly defined as a group of people usually living together as a family unit under one roof, pooling their money, and taking food from a common kitchen. It includes temporary migrants even if they have not visited the household for years. Because in South Malabar, many of the households have migrant labourers working aboard, mainly in the Middle East, who visit their home once in a year or once in two or three years. However, their monetary contribution to the household and their decision making power even in absentia is necessary for the running of households. Therefore, the temporary migrants have been included as members of the households.

When discussing caste and educational status of particular communities, and the 'tradition' of child marriage, the ethnographic methodologies- stories, conversations and

narrations of 'the qualities of "life as lived" (Abu-Lughod 1993), are not enough. The numbers too are important. Therefore, the micro-demographic community study approach[11] (both ethnography and survey methods combined) is used in the present study to locate the educational status of Muslims in Kerala, education of various Muslim caste groups within South Malabar, possession of social capital in families, interplay of caste, sects and gender in educational attainment, and reasons for child marriage among the South Malabar Muslims. The important features of the approach, according to Axinn and Pearce, is the "simultaneous use of rigorous survey and ethnographic methods, integrated in the field throughout the data collection" (Axinn and Pearce 2006: 140). Such an approach, the author believes, is necessary to study the complexity of Muslim caste groups and their education in South Malabar.

The micro-demographic community study approach is especially appropriate in order to study Muslim caste groups that have rarely been the focus of study in social sciences and to study the history of communities that have rarely been documented. This is because this approach gives the scope for "extensive informal discussions with members of the community" to narrate the 'local history' of the caste, and to set "culture specific" questions appropriate to the particular caste groups or society of study (Axinn and Pearce 2006: 133). This would further help to understand the detailed socio-cultural background and educational status of castes groups/communities within the culture. In addition, as Clifford and others (1986) argued in *Writing Culture*, a book, that he himself said, 'became burdened with significance' (Clifford 1999: 463), that 'every culture contains multiple voices'. Further, in the introduction of the same work, Clifford famously argued that at least in ethnographic research, 'we can no longer know the whole truth' (Clifford 1986: 25), but I hope, by using multiple but appropriate methods, I have tried my level best to provide more than the "partial truths". In order to capture the diverse voices within a culture, the present study also uses multiple data collection techniques.

---

[11] Axinn, Thomas and Thornton discuss this technique that combines survey and ethnographic methods at every stage of the data collection process to overcome the errors coming from using either survey method or ethnography (Axinn, Thornton and E.Fricke 1991, Axinn and Pearce.2006). They combined survey methods, observational methods, and less structured interview methods in a dialectic manner to study the social change, family process, and fertility within a single ethnic group in Nepal.

To understand the social stratification among the Muslims in Kerala, the differential distribution of social capital within families and its effects on education, the present study combines information from Census reports, NSSO, other governmental and non-governmental reports along with qualitative data collection, done primarly thorugh ethnographic fieldwork in one of the most marginalised districts in Kerala, Malappuram. The data sample for the study involves members of households, both from the present generation (G2) and parent generation (G1), from Malappuram district, where, according to 2011 Census, 45.30 percent of the Muslim population of Malabar lives[12].

The selection of the fieldwork site(s) "social cultural and physical-where ethnography must take place" (Abu-Lughod 2000: 262) is important in any ethnographic research. The fieldwork was conducted in Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnanni taluks of the erstwhile Malabar District, present day Malappuram district. There are demographic, historical and social reasons behind the selection of these three taluks as my field for research. Primarily, compared to any other districts in Kerala, the majority of the population in this district are Muslims, and they "were 'wretchedly poor' peasants and agricultural labourers" (Panikkar 1989: xi). Even though according to the 2011 Census, this area comprises 32.56 percent of the total Muslim population in the State, the existing literature on Kerala Muslims have neglected this area, its population, social structure, and their culture and education.

Secondly, the taluks of this district are interesting for historical reasons. Muslims in these taluks were described by the British administrators as 'fanatic zones,' as they constantly rebelled against the British and were vehemently critical of the imposition of their political and cultural rule and also the modern education they propagated. Hence, it would be interesting to study the present state of the Muslims in these areas with regard to how they have come to terms with modern education in the later decades.Thirdly, unlike

---

[12] The author includes six districts in the broad geographical category of Malabar (Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayand, Malappuram and Palakkad). According to the 2011 Census of India, the total population of Malabar is 14.66 million. Religion-wise data shows that 50.42 percent of the population are Hindus, and the Muslim and Christian populations are 43.50 percent and 5.81 percent respectively. Malappuram district has a population of 4.11 million, of which 2.89 million (70.24 percent) are Muslims. Taking the entire Muslim population in Kerala, 32.56 percent of them are living in Malappuram district. More demographic data of the district along with the educational details of the religious groups will be discussed in detail in the third chapter.

many other regions in Kerala, the social stratification among Muslims and its implications are very evident in these regions. Being a native of this region, the author is aware that caste as a system of social stratification is prevalent in this region which is likely to have implications for educational attainment in the region but this has not received much scholarly attention in the existing literature.

Fourthly, the 2011 Census data reveals that 36.1 percent of the female Muslims in Kerala are married before the legal age, and 67.6 percent of female Muslims got married before the age of twenty. This shows that before the completion of a bachelor degree, 67.6 percent of Muslim women in Kerala are married off. Most of these marriages were reported from Malappuram district. Child marriage is rampant in this region, and it adversely affects female higher education. So it is important to understand the reasons for child marriage and how it blocks the entry of females to higher education and their workforce participation. A detailed study, therefore, of the present educational development of Muslims in South Malabar and the influence that social capital has on their educational status is imperative to understand why this region lags behind all others in a state otherwise hailed for its high socioeconomic index.

Household surveys were carried out in forty households for each of the four caste groups under study, namely the Barber, Fishermen, Thangal and Malabari households. Therefore a total of one hundred and sixty households, with a total population of 1116[13], were surveyed. All the household respondents, except for the Fishermen community, were selected through the nonrandom "snowball sampling" method (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981, Handcock and Gile 2011)[14], starting with households in Nellikuth where I first went to conduct my pilot research[15]. Care was taken not to select more than three same caste

---

[13] Because of the focus of this study is on higher education, surveys were conducted with both the parent generation (G1) and the present generation (G2). However, from the G2, only people above the age of 20 are included in the study, except in the case of the female respondents in this cohort, many of whom were below the age of twenty but had been married before the legal age and dropped out of school/college and were therefore part of the sample.

[14] 'Snowball sampling' according to Patrick Biernacki and Dan Waldorf, is a method that "yields a study sample through referrals made among people wo share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981: 141). In my case those 'same characteristics' are caste identities of the individuals.

[15] Author's previous connection with the region was the major reason to select this region as the first site for fieldwork. During the early academic years, the author had opportunity to do research on the legacy of Variankunnath Kunhamad Haji, the prominent Khilafat leader at Nellikuth, and his teacher and mentor Ali

households from a *mahalu*. Among the caste groups, Malabaris form the majority population and their numbers compared to other castes are huge (Jeffrey 1992: 112). The Barber and Sayyid population are minorities: in most mahallus, one is likely to find three to four Barber and Sayyid households and in some cases, more than ten households. The Malabaris were selected from the immediate households of the Barber and Thangal families. Although the Malabari population is much larger than that of the other caste groups, the author has limited the sample size of Malabaris to the same as that of the other caste groups for better analytical purposes.

The *mahals* were, in turn, selected based on a systematic, stratified random sampling technique. However, in the case of the Fishermen community, two villages from Parappanangadi, a small town in Tirurangadi Taluk of Malappuram district were selected. I interacted with the male household members, formally and informally in different social locations, such as their houses, offices, shops, *majids*, shopping centres, football stadiums, beaches, and educational centres. From each household, I collected their phone number to in order to contact other household heads with the hope that I could expand the scope of further interviews. Multiple interactions with my subjects on various occasions and in various localities enabled me to build a more personal relationship with the participants and develop a mutual respect that helped them to articulate their experience of caste in everyday, mundane life frankly and without any hesitation. All the interviews were conducted in Malayalam and later translated and transcribed into English.

The sampled population were given a questionnaire that focuses on the information regarding the number of degree holders and ones with government jobs in different households, education of parents, mean years of college education, knowledge regarding higher education institutions, accessibility of education institutions, membership in associations and organisations, and contact and accessibility of teachers, etc. The questionnaire also included questions related to the number of married people in the

---

Musaliyar, another prominent Mappila leader, who was born here at *Nellikuth* in 1861. The warm relationship established during those days with the committee members of Ali Musliyar Smaraka Trust helped the author during field visits for present study. People of Nellikuth, inspired by Ali Musliyar, joined with Variankunnath to fight against the British colonial administration. Apart from its historical legacy, another reason for the selection of this site for my first field visit was that this region and its neighbouring village Velluvangad are famous for their heterogeneous social and cultural practices. These villages have a number of Barbers, Sayyids and Malabaris families, and many Islamic religious scholars.

households, nature of marriage, and the information regarding the marital age of girls in the family and women's education.

To understand caste, the types of questions asked included ones related to the household heads' occupation and its nature, how important respondents felt caste was for marriage, the importance of the *kafa'ah* to preserve the 'pure bloodline', for forming friendships, and generally for social and economic interactions with others. Questions were also asked about the membership of household members in various social and religious organisations, and the informants' religious sectarian affiliation. The head of the households (G1) and population who were above 20 years (present generation- G2), were the respondents in this study. In addition, from the total population of 1116 belonging to the four caste groups that I interviewed, there were eighty couples. Couples were interviewed in order to understand the reasons for child marriage. Apart from this, parents in the households, various religious leaders, leaders of caste associations, and teachers in schools and *imams* in various masjids were interviewed to arrive at a more comprehensive, multi-pronged understanding of the causes and consequence of child marriage in the region. Many of them provided useful information on marriage, the importance of caste in the selection of bride and groom, forces that block female higher education and related issues.

During the initial days of my fieldwork, I found that many people experienced difficulties putting their ideas in writing, but they were ready to give answers verbally. Open-ended questions were used keeping in mind the respondents' convenience to answer verbally rather than in writing. Respondents were more forthcoming with their views and opinions and spoke more openly when I visited their homes without any tools like paper and laptops. Some participants refused to allow their interviews to be recorded. In such cases, I had to rely only on my field notes to note down the important points.

Since one of the objectives of the present study is to examine the effects of early marriage on women's' higher education among Muslims in South Malabar, girls from each caste group who had married before the legal age were interviewed. Malappuram has a highly restrictive environment as far as social interaction between unrelated women and men are concerned, and so it was difficult to interact with girls. The author was

accompanied by his niece for the interviews with the young female participants, and many of the focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with their parents and husband. FGDs were conducted in families of girls who married before the age of eighteen where the mother, father, and sometimes brothers and sisters of the girls and her grandparents were participants. I have conveniently avoided the husbands' house to undertake FGDs with the conviction that married girl's voices are restricted in front of her in-laws, but they are more vocal in the natal families. Though there are various malestream interpretations to the issue of child marriage, hardly any voices from the 'victims' are heard. Through multiple interviews, interactions and stories, I have tried, like Malinowski said, "to grasp the native's point of view...to realize his vision of the world" (Malinowski 1922: 25). In strong agreement with anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1984), being a native of South Malabar, my field site, I was in a "far more advantageous position in understanding" the natives meaning to their actions, their emotions and daily routines (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984: 584). I was very well aware of where *not to go*, and how to interact with the locals.

On many occasions, women were sitting with us and actively participating in discussions. Sometimes, they countered the arguments of their husbands and questioned their perspectives and said 'he hardly cares for his child's education,' 'I know more about my child' and 'I did all the work'. In some of the Thanagal households, the women spoke from behind the walls. After my visit to these households with my niece, she would often joke on our way back home saying, "Today the researcher had a *Mathilukal* type interview". The use of the word 'Mathilukal' which means 'wall, in this context was also a reference to the popular Malayalam movie of the same name, wherein the male and female protagonists, both prison inmates, are divided by huge walls and never met but exchanged their love through their voices. The female protagonist never appears on the screen, but her voice is heard throughout. Though my niece intended it as a joke, it raised a methodological question, how people with different ascriptive characteristics, in my case different gender, can interview people who live in highly 'restrictive' environments. Based on my experience in the field, maintaining genuine contact with the community members and taking along appropriate mediators, in my case my niece, was found to be tremendously helpful in enabling a smooth and fruitful interaction with people with different identities. Many respondents requested the author not to mention their real names

or identities. Therefore, I have tried to use different names but tried to keep the place names original. The fieldwork was done in various phases from 2013 March to 2016 June.

The ethnographic writing style was influenced by the work of Lila-Abu-Lughod (1993, 2000) based on which the stories, conversation and narratives of the individuals have been given more importance. The field stories and narratives are organized around the following major sociological themes; Muslim caste experience, parental occupation, parental education, strength and weakness of ties, and age at marriage (child/early marriage). After examining literature related to Muslim caste and theories of social capital (Chapter 1) and the educational status of Kerala Muslims in the larger context of Muslims in the other states (Chapter 2), last three chapters of this thesis will focus, not exclusively, on the above mentioned themes. In general, the research findings will be discussed in the light of Bourdieu's, and Coleman's theories of education and social capital. Bourdieu's view of social capital is more pessimistic than that of Coleman's (Rogosic and Baranovic 2016) in that the former argues that social capital is unevenly distributed in society and is responsible for the reproduction of educational inequality whereas Coleman argues that education reproduces inequality in societies and social capital is an asset, if accessible to the families and communities, helps to reduce that inequality. This raises the larger question addressed in this thesis, that if social capital is unequally distributed and monopolized by certain caste groups in a stratified society like India, how will it impact on the educational outcomes of various caste groups?

Inside the Chapters

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter reviews the literature related to the genesis and development of modern education in South Malabar and explains why the thesis focuses primarily on the *dunyavi-ilm* (worldly education) than the *dini-ilm* (religious education) of the Muslims of the region. Then the chapter discusses the literature related to social stratification among the Kerala Muslims. It also discusses why the theoretical works of Bourdieu and Coleman are important in analyzing the relationship between education and social capital.

The second chapter questions the perception of Kerala Muslims having a 'better educational status'. Referring to the statistical sources of Census, NSSO data and other

reports, and focusing on educational indices such as literacy, mean years of schooling (MYS)/ percent of higher secondary holders, and the number of graduates, this chapter discusses the theme '*Satisfactory Inside and Backwardness Outside,*' to understand the present educational status of Kerala Muslims in relation to Muslims of Other States (MOS), and Socio-Religious Categories (SCR) in the state.   Further sections discuss the demographic character of the field followed by a detailed analysis of the present educational status of South Malabar. A detailed examination of educational data shows that the district of Malappuram lags behind other districts in higher educational opportunities and the number of graduates, especially with respect to women's education. This study, therefore, focuses on one of the most educationally marginalized regions in Kerala. The outcomes of this study are expected to have implications for the much discussed and venerated 'Kerala model' of development and the exclusion of certain regions and caste groups from this acclaimed model of development.

The third chapter, *Caste Division: Understanding Muslim Social Stratification of South Malabar*, discusses the nature and characteristics of the four Muslim caste groups of interest in this study based on their social status in the existing hierarchy, their traditional occupations and endogamous marriage relationships. This chapter also chronicles how the four groups experience the caste-based social stratification, and in doing so, narratives of individual stories have been used in order to give importance to the subjective experiences of the participants.

The fourth chapter analyses the data obtained from the respondents in the light of the educational attainment, occupation, and networks possessed by the heads of the households in each of the four caste groups. The chapter is divided into four sections in which the first part discusses the higher education of the parents of one hundred and sixty families, i.e. forty families from each caste group. It includes the literacy, primary education and higher education of the heads of the household. The second section analyses the parental occupation in five major categories, which includes a section on traditional occupation, agricultural occupation, and unskilled manual workers, government and salaried jobs and finally a section on Gulf migration. The third section of this chapter discusses the head of the households' membership in voluntary organizations and

community groups and the last section analyses the membership of household heads in political parties and the local sports clubs.

The fifth chapter is, broadly, divided into two sections and deals mainly with social exclusion and education. In the first section, the researcher analyses the intersection of caste, gender and religious sect and their impact on the higher education of Muslims in South Malabar. The second section will particularly focus on the triple social exclusion faced by women in the different caste groups. In this regard, it will examine the relationship between early marriage and higher education of women and the reasons for child marriage in South Malabar.

Chapter I

Education, Social Stratification, and Social Capital

In October 2011, the General Educational Department of Kerala issued a circular[16] inviting application from madrasas to help them provide quality general education in their institutions. This circular came close on the heels of the centre-sponsored programme Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM[17]). Apart from providing financial assistance for setting up new libraries and computer labs, and for purchasing Science and Maths kits, the scheme also includes funds for the appointment of instructors for teaching Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Languages, and Computer Applications. Each full-time instructor would be paid a monthly salary of rupees 6000 for graduates and rupees 12000 for Post Graduates/B.Ed. qualifiers. Each madrasa, under the scheme, was given an option to appoint a maximum of three qualified teachers; the essential qualification was a graduate degree in any of the subjects. While forwarding the application for the grant, every madrasa was required to fill in the names of two or three postgraduates.

The madrasa committee of Payyanad, one of the villages in Ernad Taluk in Malappuram district of Kerala, decided to apply for the scheme and the madrasa committee set up a three-member subcommittee to select the qualified candidates. Initially, their quest was limited to their village, for it had one hundred and ninety Muslim households after all. However, after searching incessantly for ten days, they were disappointed to find that there was just a single postgraduate in the village and that he had flown to Saudi Arabia in 2010. Left with no alternative, the Madrasa committee was forced to drop the plan. It was a shock for the madrasa committee to note that sixteen years after the formation of Kerala state, their village could not produce a single qualified teacher in order to apply for the madrasa

---

[16] See the complete circular here;
http://www.education.kerala.gov.in/Downloads2011/announcements/dpi_letter_22102011.pdf
[17] The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, initiated this particular plan, Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM) in 2009, with the major objective of modernizing madrasa education. For more on SPQEM, see An Evolution Study Report (2013) Published by MHRD, Government of India.
http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/SPQEM_0.pdf

grant. Payyanad is no exception. This is the case with many villages in South Malabar, where 32.56 percent of the Muslim population in Kerala lives today. There are other, more fortunate villages in the north of Malabar, with better educational opportunities and qualified teachers, advanced transport facilities and better health facilities. Payyanad, like many other villages of South Malabar, is renowned for its anti-colonial struggle. The British authorities classified or labelled three taluks, namely Ernad, Valluvanad, and Ponnani, as 'fanatic zones' in their colonial documents (Innes 1908, Logan 1887) and it is in the Ernad taluk that Payanad is located. This research will discuss the social stratification, the possession of social capital and educational outcomes of the different Muslim communities in the erstwhile 'fanatic zones.'

In general, the Muslims in India, like the Muslims in South Malabar, are characterised by their poor economic background, dumped with unfavourable academic environments and are forced to live in an inconvenient location. They have been historically 'othered' and cast as 'backward' and 'lagging behind' in contrast to the 'educated' and 'progressive' communities. The history of minority education in India, particularly within the context of educational backwardness largely deals with the case of Muslims, for the educational development of other minorities has always kept pace with the development of the Kerala society as a whole. Muslims are minorities not only in the statistical sense; they trail behind the other religious communities in social, educational, and economic spheres.

According to the 2011 Census, out of the total population of India, a religion-wise breakdown shows that only 5.24 percent of Muslims are graduates, but the corresponding statistics among the Hindus is 9.93, the Christians 13.99, the Sikhs, and Buddhists at 9.79 and 9.75 percent respectively. Another minority community, Jains, tops the list of the number of graduates based on religious denomination with 36.01 percent. Therefore, in India, religious minorities like Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists, with many exceptions, achieve similar or even better academic results when compared to the majority and their educational status is even higher than that of the society as a whole. Muslims in India, however, unlike the other religious minorities, are the most backward in education. Within the Muslim community, how the Kerala Muslims are different from other states will be discussed in detail in the first part of the next chapter.

As the author pointed out in the introduction to this thesis, the Muslim community in Malabar is far from homogeneous. The educational status of the community varies according to religious sects and regions. Even the educational system of Kerala Muslims is different, and that requires a separate discussion. Therefore, the first section of this chapter, titled as *Education of Kerala Muslims: a Review*, will discuss the education of Kerala Muslims in the light of hitherto existing works, and I will argue that there is a gap in the literature regarding the link between Muslim caste and education. Some have tried to explore the educational difference among the Muslims in Kerala by drawing the issue of religious ideology such as the Mujahid, Sunni, and Jamaat (Osella and Osella 2013). Little or no work has been done, however, on the educational differences within the Muslim community in Kerala based on caste,

Constitutionally and legally, it would be difficult to classify caste groups among Muslims in India, because no official classification of Muslim castes is available yet. However, in the limited previous research on Muslims in Malabar, there is some evidence that suggests the presence of caste groupings. Analysing the social stratification among the Muslims of Malabar, Victor D'Souza noted that in Malabar, the large majority of Mappilas is termed Malabaris or Malabaris, and the other sections include the Thangals, the Arabis, the Puslars and the Ossans (D'Souza 1959: 490). For the purposes of this study, four caste groups among the Muslims of South Malabar have been selected based on the strength of their population in the region, namely the Barbers, the Fishermen, the Thangals and the Malabaris. The Thangals, like the Sayyids of North India, trace their ancestry to Prophet Muhammad. The Fishermen are believed to be converts from the Hindu fishermen community called Mukkuvans. The Barbers are the community that traditionally follows the occupation of barbering and by virtue of their 'low occupation,' they are considered to be the lowest social group among the Mappila Muslims (D'Souza 1959).

As noted by D'Souza, there are other 'caste-like' groups among the Muslims such as the Arabis. Arabis or Arabs according to D'Souza are a small group concentrated mainly in Quilandy, a coastal town north of Calicut (D'Souza 1959). Here, the author overlooks this group primarily because of their negligible representation in South Malabar. Therefore, this study will not take any samples from this community and will focus only on the four communities mentioned earlier. The second section, *Social Stratification among the*

Mappila Muslims, further reviews the literature related to Muslim social stratification in detail. The third section of the chapter titled as *Social Capital: a Theoretical Orientation* will discuss major theoretical concepts relevant to this research. The last two sections will lay out the *Objectives* and describe the *Methodologies* adopted in this study.

1.1 Education of Kerala Muslims: a Review

It was around five in the evening when I got my chance to interview Thambanagadi Thangal, one of the most esteemed and venerated Thangals in the town of Pandikkad. In front of his house, there was plenty of space to park vehicles, and even the portico of his house was large enough to accommodate five to six cars. When I arrived, the Thangal was sitting on a wooden chair in the corner of the spacious veranda of his house. He was in his late sixties then. Being an avowed E.K Sunni leader, he believes that Thangals have a particular position in Islam. Dressed in a white shirt and *mundu*, he was listening to his visitors one after another. People were waiting for their turn to present their problems in front of Thangal. Everyone I interacted with believed that the time and money spent here was worth and meaningful. Many came there to invite the Thangal for their wedding, housewarming ceremonies and even simply to get his blessings.

Everyone who visits Thangals can experience what has been called their 'sacred hospitality'[18]. One woman, who arrived after I did, asked my permission to meet the Thanagal before my interview because she had to catch a bus to Kalikkavu, nearly 23 kilometres away from Pandikkad. Holding the hand of her ten-year-old son, she stands behind the curtain. Before she was leaving, she asked the Thangal to bless his son for his better performance at school. She said one thing repeatedly while Thangal put his right hand on the head of her son that "please pray for his *dini* and *dunyavi* education". Thangal prayed, "Oh Allah! Give him *tawfeeq* to study the knowledge that would be useful for this world and afterlife". Those around the Thangal said, Ameen! Later, the majority of the

---

[18]Louis Massignon developed the concept of 'sacred hospitality' to describe the lavish hospitality he received from the Muslims, especially from Alousi family in Baghdad, See (Gude 1996, Laude 2011). The Alousi family did not know him and they had every reason to be suspicious of him, but they treated him very well and gave him all the help that he needed. Similarly, during my fieldwork, what I have seen in Thambanagadi and other places is something similar; they are extremely hospitable to everyone even people of all faiths, castes, gender and region. They take it as their duty and believe that God will pay for their actions in the hereafter life.

household heads I interviewed during my fieldwork told me that they would like their sons and daughters to acquire both *dini* (religious) and *dunyavi* (worldly) education.

The urge to learn both the *dini-ilm* and *dunyavi-ilm* is easily understood when one looks closely at the educational system of Muslims in Kerala. Kerala Madrasas, the premediated religious institutions functioning in a way that accommodates both types of education, is different from the madrasas in other parts of India. Many scholars have studied the function of the religious, educational institutions such as *dars*, *othupallis* and madrasas in detail (Ali 1990, Pasha 1995, Shefi 2008, Sikhand 2004, Nazeer 2011, and Basheer 2016). In his detailed study of madrasa education, Basheer argues that:

> The Madrasa system that operates in Kerala is a highly effective machinery for imparting basic religious education to the growing generation up to plus two levels (ages 16-17), which is run in a smooth manner with well-defined aims and objectives supported by a well-planned curriculum, syllabi and other tools required for an educational system. It is designed in such a way that a student can pursue his or her religious studies together with a modern education in schools. Hence, in Kerala almost every Muslim child essentially passes through the Madrasa education system by the time he or she reaches the age of adolescence (Basheer 2016: 54-55).

As madrasas operate outside the school hours, Muslim children can attend and learn both *dini* and *duniyavi* education. This duality of religious education and the worldly education exists in various Muslims societies as noted by many (Hashim 1996: 3, Marsden 2005: 160, Sikand 2004). Two systems of education are predominant in Muslim countries; the traditional religious education and the modern secular education, and the conflict between the two systems is prevalent at the theoretical and at the practical levels (Ashraf 2011: xiii).

Anybody who researches Muslim education will face the inevitable question of the type of education the researcher is interested in- *dini* or *duniyavi*, from not just the academic circle but also even from the general populace. The present author was no exception in this regard. In a state where many religious authorities are at the forefront of both *dini* and *duniyavi* education, the answer to such a question is complex and challenging. In this thesis, although I do not completely exclude madrasa education, the major focus is on *dunyavi* (worldly) education. When the present state of *dunyavi* education of Muslims is considered,

they are the most educationally backward religious community both in Kerala as well as in India as a whole.

This educational dualism in Muslim society was a colonial construction. Every education system, as argued by Foucault, is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriateness of discourses, with the knowledge and powers it carries with it (Foucault 1972: 227). The colonisers brought with them not only their culture, and political and economic policies but also their religion and a *new* kind of education. The British not only introduced a new education system but in the process also destroyed the old learning centres. In his work, *The case for India*, Will Durant argues that:

> When the British came, there was, throughout India, a system of communal schools, managed by the village communities. The agents of the East India Company destroyed these village communities, and took no steps to replace the schools; even to-day (*1930*), after a century of effort to restore them, they stand at only 66% of their number a hundred years ago. There are now in India 730,000 villages, and only 162,015 primary schools. Only 7% of the boys and 1% of the girls receive schooling; i.e., 4% of the whole ((Durant 2007 [1930]: 31, Italics added).

They tried to legitimise their rule upon the colonised through this *new* educational system, in which the master's language, culture, and religion were the locus. To establish their superiority over native culture and education, colonial masters legally branded the native culture and education as 'backward and childish,' 'repugnant to justice and morality' or as 'opposed to natural morality and humanity' (Asad 2003: 110-11).

Colonial rulers even projected that education on English lines was a necessary passport to success and "Muslim education was out of keeping with the requirements of the age - perhaps that Islamic belief itself was an anachronism" (Hardy 1972: 92). There was fierce criticism from the ulama class on the introduction of the *new* education. Yoginder Sikand, who studied the madrasa system in detail noted:

> The revolt of 1857, in which several Indian ulema are said to have played an important role, represented, in a sense, an effort on the part of the increasingly threatened ulema to defend their privileges. With the failure of the revolt, many ulema turned now to setting up a chain of madrassas, for it was felt that under alien rule Islam was under grave threat and that it was only by preserving and promoting Islamic knowledge that the younger generation of Muslims could be saved from sliding into apostasy and prevented from falling prey to the blandishments of the Christian missionaries. Because they perceived themselves under siege and saw Islam as under attack by the Christian British, the ulema seem to have adopted a

deeply hostile attitude toward Western knowledge. The "educational jihad" that they now launched to preserve traditional Islamic learning was seen as taking the place of the failed physical jihad against the British, and as working to train a class of ulema who would take revenge on the British for having overthrown the Mughals. Thus, the madrassas that they set about establishing closed their doors to modern knowledge, which was seen as somehow "un-Islamic," owing to its association with the British. This was the beginning of the great divide between what was now seen as "religious" (dini) knowledge, on the one hand, and modern "worldly" (duniyavi) learning, on the other, the two being seen as opposed to each other. Because of the way in which this hierarchy of knowledge was constructed, the curriculum of the madrassas came to be seen as almost entirely unchangeable, although in the past it had been subject to considerable change over time (Sikand 2004: 122).

In North India, as Sikand argued in the above passage, the ulamas adopted a hostile attitude towards colonial education. Similarly, the ulamas in Kerala believed that Islam was under attack by the British, and they too adopted an inimical attitude towards the *new* education (Muhammed 2007, Abraham 2014, Panikkar 1989).

During the colonial period, the colonial authorities and their *"eleves"* (a term historian Ranajit Guha (1988) used to refer to the dominant group in native society) constructed the category of 'fanatic' Mappilas to refer to the rebellious Mappilas who fought against the British. The fanatic, as pointed out by Ansari, "is commonly defined, 'normed', as a person excessively or abnormally religious; s/he needs to be controlled" (Ansari 2005: 38). Ansari elaborates further by saying that "the fanatic looks backward to the 'heathen,' or to the 'pagan'-one who believes in a different and 'primitive' religion - with the implication that s/he ought to have been better educated" (Ansari 2005: 38). The colonial authorities found English and secular education as an important weapon to suppress the revolutionary zeal of 'fanatic' Muslims.

Apart from trying to enforce English and secular education, the British also wanted to control the religious education that they thought acted as the catalyst for revolts in many parts of Malabar. However, the authorities soon realized that "any real attempt to control religious teaching and preaching would be viewed as persecution" (Dale 1980: 153). It was indubitably apparent that colonial authorities found the answer to what they called the 'Mappila problem' in secular education on the western pattern (Miller 1976: 204), and they believed that only through 'civilizing' Muslims can they solve the problem of 'Mappila

fanaticism.' Peter Hardy noted that the colonial authorities offered, slowly at first, "educational boons to Muslims in the hope that more Muslims would then become qualified to compete successfully for the official and professional employment created by British rule" (Hardy 1972:80). However, in Kerala, the introduction of modern education and the spread of western ideas should be viewed in the light of colonial authorities' policy to suppress the Mappila rebellions.

The British scholars suggested, "in the long run the best safeguard against a recurrence of Mappila outbreaks will be the spread of education in the caste" (Innes 1908: 300). However, Logan disagrees with Innes and others who advocate education as the primary strategy or an equally certain means to end the flourishing 'fanaticism.' He advisably proposed that "starving people are not easily taught, and, if taught, it would only lead to their adopting more effectual measures to obtain for themselves that secularity and comfort in their homesteads which it would be much wiser to grant at once" (Logan 2009 [1887]: 594). According to him, increasing comfort at home was more important. Without comfort, and with education, he said Mappilas' "discontent would only be increased" (Logan 2009). However, the British authorities made various programmes and policies to educate Muslims, only as an instrument of colonialism, to fulfil their needs, and to suppress the Mappila rebellions. Despite these British attempts to educate Muslims, Muslim ulama's antagonistic attitude towards colonial education continued, and they used their particular religious strategies to boycott the new educational centres.

As a response to colonial cultural imperialism, traditional ulamas of Kerala, constructed and taught the Muslims that English is the 'language of hell' (*naraga bhasha*), and modern education is 'a passport to hell' (Kunju 1989: 261, Ali 1990: 77, Mohammed 1995: 147). The British administration and the proselytizing activities of Christian missionaries, no doubt, forced the ulamas to view the *new* education with suspicion; it forced them to set up their own educational centres and strengthen the existing learning centres. Concisely, according to Abraham, "Mappila opposition to "modern" education was not attributed to any specific religious reason. It resulted mainly from their attitude toward the British and their policies" (Abraham 2014: 72). In such a scenario, it would not be ludicrous to argue that the colonial educational system was what created the dichotomy between 'religious' and 'secular', '*dini*' and '*dunyawi*', 'traditional' and

'modern', and 'Islamic' and 'un-Islamic' education; it was the colonial education system that bestowed prestige and privilege on the latter over the former. It is because of this that the spread of modern secular education is considered to be neutral, beneficial, progressive, and essential to survive in a modern society. Later, in post-colonial India, Muslims were excluded from the upper tiers of social class and underrepresented in professional employment because they were slower than Hindu elites to invest in English (Fernandes 2006:105, Sangari 2001:140).

The educational backwardness among the Muslims in India is not uniform in its character, and many scholars righty criticize the generalization. Sociologist I P Desai is of the opinion that "when we say that Muslims are backward in education, actually it is the lower class that we are referring to and we generalize from that for the whole Muslim community" (Desai 1981: 1923). However, a discussion of recent reports and an analysis of the 2011 Census report show that educationally, Muslims are the most vulnerable group in the country, even more, vulnerable than the lower castes and other minorities. In its fourth chapter, the Sachar report says that "Muslims are at a double disadvantage with low levels of education combined with low-quality education; their deprivation increases manifold as the level of education rises. In some instances, the relative share of Muslims is lower than even the SCs who are victims of a long-standing caste system" (Sachar 2006: 50).

The reasons behind the educational backwardness of Muslims are many. Broadly, we can classify these as problems what Coleman referred to as the 'within' and 'outside' factors. The 'within' factors include the problems within the religious community towards modern education. Scholars and many other 'reformists' in Kerala argue that educational backwardness of Muslim community, in Kerala and elsewhere, is attributed to their religious orthodoxy and 'negative' or 'outdated' attitude of traditional ulamas towards social reforms. These attitudes were, according to Fahimuddin, coupled with their emphasis on theological education with little effort to change the traditional education system and acquire knowledge relevant to the needs of the changing world (Fahimuddin 2004). From this perspective, Muslim community itself was solely responsible for their educational backwardness.

Contrary to the above argument, Asghar Ali Engineer pointed out that the main problem for educational backwardness among Muslims is poverty, not religion, or lack of will (Engineer 2001). Imtiaz Ahmad offers a balanced view to explain the educational backwardness of Muslims. Ahmad argues that:

> Muslims have failed to respond to secular education or take advantage of educational developments on account of their resistance to secular education, the emphasis placed among them upon sending the child to a traditional Islamic educational institution rather than to a modern, secular institution and their strong tendency to reject secular learning for religious education (Ahmad 1981: 1458).

At the same time, he acknowledges that this explanation alone is insufficient to explain the educational backwardness of Muslims:

> The Muslims are neither reluctant to take to secular education because of their preoccupation with religion and religious education, nor because of their minority complex. Their educational backwardness can be explained in terms of an invidious discrimination practiced against them which is reducing them to the status of hewers of wood and drawers of water (Ahmad 1981: 1458).

Many scholars argue that 'outside' factors and problems are much more significant than the 'inside' ones (Engineer 2001, Habib, Khan and Singh 1976: 68-69, Harman 1977). The educational backwardness among Muslims persists mainly because of economic backwardness, poverty, British education policy and programmes, the prevailing caste system in Hindu society, and its influence in Islam, the caste system in Islam and the exclusionary nature of the 'common' educational system. Here the value theory, according to which, different social classes have different value systems that influence their attitude towards the benefits of education (Hyman 1953), cannot be accepted as an explanation for the low levels of education.

To overcome the educational backwardness and to 'motivate Mappilas to embrace modern education', many scholars have initiated many movements across the state. Before and after Indian independence, institutionalised movements were kick started in Kerala, mainly by the children of the former privileged 'colonial *salarite* class', the elites such as Makti Thangal, Chalilakatt Kunhamad, and Vakkom Moulavi, with the aim of educating Muslims (Kunju 1989: 229-46, Abraham 2014: 22). The networks of relations that they constructed through various social capitals, with the help of colonial authorities and their

eleves, gave many Muslims a path to modern education. The educational movement of Muslims and 'low castes' such as Ezhavas in Kerala was organizational in character; it questioned the dominant authorities' collective control over socio-educational power, it also challenged the normality of power structure in education, and it helped Kerala Muslims along with 'lower caste' groups to gain a surer footing in education, unlike their counterparts in other states. Many scholars (Muhammed 2007, Lakshmi 2012: 107-31, Miller 1976: 204-11) highlighted this educational achievement of Kerala Muslims.

Religious education and institutions are the major sites that help to understand the heterogeneous nature of religions in particular societies. Therefore, a short discussion on madrasa or religious education would help us to understand two important features of Kerala Muslims. Firstly, it is impossible to include all the Muslims in Kerala in the same category, and the diversity in terms of religious ideology and practice is enormous and sometimes opposed to each other. To classify Kerala Muslims as one category such as Sunni Muslims or the followers of the Shafi School would be to forget the important differences that existed, and still exist, between the various sub-groups within the section of Muslims in Kerala. We must not only distinguish the 'Sunnis' or 'traditionalists' from the *Salafis* or *Mujahids* but also remember that in each of these broad groupings there were also important differences between sub-groups. Secondly, the proliferation of madrasas and its functioning in a multicultural society is an important indicator to understand the amount of social capital, such as networks, trust, and cooperation, possessed by the various Muslim organisations and communities in Kerala. The first point is straightforward to establish because the number of madrasas under different sectarian groups as well as their differing characteristics are an indirect indicator of the diversity of Muslim culture in the region.

Madrasas and Arabic colleges function outside the traditional setting of mosques but are often set up close to mosques or *srambis* (small Muslim prayer- Houses). Presently there are more than 11,000 such madrasas in Kerala, and they impart the basic religious education to Muslim boys and girls[19]. This number clearly negates the findings of some

---

[19] Author's calculation based on the data collected from the official websites and other documents of the various madrasa boards.

studies, which says that although some Madrasas of the 'traditional' type do exist in Kerala, they have been overtaken by a large and expanding network of reformed Madrasas that have incorporated 'modern' subjects and teaching methods of varying degrees (Sikand 2004, Jaireth, Shiraz and Siddiqui 2010). These studies are incomplete and misleading, and the 'North Indian definition' of madrasa is not sufficient to understand the peculiarities and complexities of Kerala madrasas. By 'reformed madrasas' these scholars meant the special institutions that impart both religious and modern education. However, in Kerala, such institutions have been called as Arabic colleges or Islamic colleges and universities. Madrasas in Kerala mainly function as part time religious, educational institutions which impart mainly religious education such as *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Al Aqaid* (belief in Islam), and the recitation of Quran, *Annahv-wa-Saraf* (Study of Arabic grammar and morphology), *Thaskiyat* (moral lessons) and *Thariq* (Islamic History). Kerala's part-time madrasa education that functions between 7.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. and between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. is the most well organised Islamic religious, educational system that operates alongside state education (Shefi 2008, Nazeer 2011, and Basheer 2016).

The primary aim of these madrasas is to educate the younger generation, to create and sustain an awareness of Islamic values and culture throughout their lives. All of the eleven thousand madrasas in Kerala are working outside of normal school hours, and because of this madrasa system, school education is not affected by religious instruction. Presently, Samastha Kerala Islam Matha Vidyabhyasa Board (All Kerala Islamic Educational Board- SKIMVB) under E.K Sunnis, and *Samastha Kerala Sunni Vidyabhyasa Board* (All Kerala Sunni Sunni Education Board- KSIMVB) under A.P Sunnis, KNM Education Board of Mujahids (The Council for Islamic Education and Research- CIER), *Majilis-ul-Taalimil* Educational Board of *Jamaat-e-Islami,* and Dakshina Kerala Islam Matha Vidhyabhyasa Board (DKIMVB) under Dakshina Kerala Jamiyathul Ulema work expeditiously to monitor the Madrasa education system in Kerala. All these boards, except Dakshina Kerala Jamiyathul Ulema, have their centres at Calicut. Currently, these educational boards control all the madrasas in South Malabar, all of which operate as part-time educational centres.

The proliferation of madrasas in Kerala can be attributed mainly to the birth of sectarian religious organisations. From the organisational point of view, the madrasa

system reached its highest point in Kerala after the 1950s when madrasas were systematically instituted, endowed, and maintained by various religious associations with diverse syllabi and pedagogical activities. When a local community with a specific religious ideology, such as Sunnis and *Salafis*, decide to set up a madrasa, they have to approach the concerned educational board for permission. If the educational board approves their request, they tend to provide other facilities such as sending a *Mufathish* (inspector) to test the standard of madrasas, and the board conducts the annual examination.

The traditional Muslim educational institutions and its fine-tuned functionality show that, traditionally, Muslims in Kerala have greater information, contact, trust, and cooperation with fellow community members, which benefitted them mutually. However, when it comes to the question of modern education, Muslims are far behind other religious groups in literacy, schooling, higher education, and workforce participation. The current educational and occupational status of Muslims in Malappuram district is in contrast to the 'Kerala model development,' where they are far behind in education even worse than the people who live in BIMARU states[20]. The educational status of Kerala Muslims, mainly focusing on their literacy, schooling, higher education, and workforce participation, in relation to other socio-religious categories (SRCs) in the state will be discussed separately in the second section of the second chapter. It should be noted that previous studies that examined the educational backwardness of Muslims fail to mention the educational status of the Muslim castes. In addition, the works that have discussed the social stratification of Muslims in the region have rarely addressed the relationship between their caste and educational status. Therefore, the next section will discuss the literature that deals with the caste system among the Mappila Muslims.

1.2 Social Stratification among the Mappila Muslims

The question, 'does caste system exist among the Muslims?' obtains more denials than confirmations, among academics and the public alike. Scholars are divided on the question of whether the social stratification that exists among the Muslims can be termed

---

[20] BIMARU is an acronym that refers to the Indian states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, which are considered the most socio-economically backward states in India. Educationally, according to the 2001 Census, the total percentage of graduates in BIMARU states is 6.53 (M.P 6.66, Bihar 4.90, U.P 7.71, and Rajasthan 6.83), but in Malappuram, only 5.30 percentage of the population are graduates.

caste or not, and many prefer substitute terms such as caste- like, ethnic groups, kinship groups, endogamous community, and *biradaris*. Imtiaz Ahmed articulates the reasons behind why many Muslims deny the existence of caste in their community:

> Those Muslims who argue that rather than caste some other word should be used to designate social divisions among them are guided by the anxiety that if caste was used it would betray affinity with the Hindus. The Muslim community was very substantially formed through conversion from the indigenous groups, and the fear that it might relapse back into Hinduism has prompted it all through history to clearly distinguish itself from Hindus through evolving diacritical distinctions that they feel are more Islamic and set Muslims apart from Hindus. Accordingly, while they are willing to admit that caste-like formations exist among Muslims, they would much rather like some other word to be used to designate Muslim castes. On the other hand, those Muslims who are prone to denying the existence of caste among Muslims altogether do so out of an anxiety for projecting the community as a monolith in the context of its standing as a minority in India (Ahmed 2015:2).

The above passage shows why there is still a dilemma in academic circles regarding what term must be used to describe the social stratification among the Muslims. Irrespective of whether we call it caste or any other name, the fact remains, as aptly pointed out by Hasnain, that "while Islam may not be having castes or caste-like groupings, the Indian Muslims do have" (Hasnain 2005: 85).

Even some of the most prominent works on Mappila Muslims elide caste and social stratification among the Muslims. The denial of the existence of caste among the Muslims is not just rejection of the ground reality of Muslims, but it also negates the discrimination and exclusion faced by the 'lower castes' among the Muslims. There are three major reasons, theoretical, practical, and moral/religious, behind the denial of caste stratification among the Kerala Muslims. Theoretically, the existing works that deny caste among Muslims, "…choose to theorise dalit experience standing outside the dalit experience" (Guru 2002: 5004), or in other words, those who deny caste ignore the experience of those who are on the receiving end of caste discrimination.

At the practical level, the major reason for such a denial is the lack of sufficient scholarly works on Muslim social stratification, which describes or explains the caste discrimination, exploitation, humiliation, and atrocities from a subjective perspective. As noted by Imtiaz Ahmad in the preface of *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims,* 'there have been few systematic attempts to examine caste among the Muslims,

because of the absence of first-hand field studies, the subject has been discussed on the basis of secondary, and often highly unsystematically collected, data compiled by early British administrators' (Ahmad 1973: ix). Even the available data and the source of knowledge production were confined to the 'upper caste' and 'upper class' Muslims of Malabar. Here the question raised by Vivek Kumar (2016) regarding issues in fieldwork, and in this case, where sociologists reside during their fieldwork, bears great significance. Vivek Kumar argues that "the station of a researcher during the fieldwork has a bearing on the quality and quantity of data out of which further production of knowledge takes place" (Kumar 2016: 36). In the Indian sociological tradition, it has been noted that most of the researchers on Mappila Muslims, except Saidalavi (2017) and Mathur (1977), stayed with the upper caste or upper class Muslims, mainly with the affluent Calicut Muslims, during their field research. The knowledge production is such contexts were highly uninformative and could not fully capture the stories of those who are at the receiving end of caste discrimination such as the Barber and Fisherfolk Muslims.

As for the moral reasons, many scholars believe that arguing the existence of caste among the Muslims will tarnish the image of Islam, which according to them, is an egalitarian religion that treats every individual as equal to the rest. Religious texts such as *Fath-ul Mueen* that the ulamas celebrate as a magnum opus work written by a Mappila Muslim favours caste discrimination. Due to religious constraints, many fail to understand the inegalitarian principles that are embedded in the social structure of Kerala Muslims, which favours a select few to gain power, privilege, and social prestige.

A few previous works on North Malabar have discussed the educational achievement of Mappila Muslims by highlighting the educational achievement of Muslim 'caste-like' groups in North Malabar (Osella and Osella 2013, Lakshmi 2012). However, South Malabar Muslims, despite being one of the most marginalized Muslims in Kerala, has not been received much scholarly attention. Similarly, successive governments that came to power in Kerala after independence clearly discriminated the region in the allocation of health, educational and economic resources.

M. S. A. Rao considered Mappilas the largest trading community of the region (Rao 1957: 57) but never mentioned the social, educational, or other institutions among the

Mappila Muslims. Instead, he highlighted Malabar Muslims on the basis of their revolts and called it as 'outrages', and said that in the 19th century, Malabar witnessed the outrages of Mappilas such as stabbing, killing, burning the Hindu temples and occupying their houses. He wrote a completely biased sociology and history of Mappila Muslims. Shareena Banu's (2007) work specifically focuses on the "relationship between education and 'construction' of the identity" of the Muslims in Malappuram. In her work, she overlooks the social stratification among the Mappila Muslims. Further, her 'school-based' approach has excluded the important factors such as family, kinship relations, and social capital of Muslims in the families, and its influence on the educational attainment and the 'identity construction' of Muslims.

Many scholars have studied the literacy development in Kerala and the particular socio-cultural reasons behind it (Gough 1968, Jeffrey 2010, Mathew 1999). However, such works hardly discussed the literate position of the most marginalized communities, such as 'low caste' Hindus and Muslims in Kerala. Some of the above-mentioned works considered Mappila Muslims as one of the progressive or educationally better off communities when compared to Muslims from other states, but they did not consider the internal paradoxes within the diverse Kerala Muslim community (Miller 1976, Lakshmi 2012, Hassan and Ritu 2005, Menon 1981, Muhammed 2007, Engineer: 1995, Hasan and Menon 2005a, Randathani: 2007). Others had considered them as 'fanatics,' 'uncivilised' and those who need not be represented in any field notes or history textbooks (Rao 1957). Such studies side with the colonial project of knowledge production, which projected the Mappilas such as Koyas, Keyis, and Sayyids, in general, the North Kerala Muslims, as 'gentle Mappilas' or 'progressive Muslims' and those who fought against British in entirety as 'jungle Mappilas' or the 'fanatics.'

Another study by K.P Faisal argues that the striking feature of Mappilas is that "unlike in North Indian Muslims, they are not stratified into caste-like *bratheries"* (Faisal 2010: 29). However, he made such a point without studying the subjective perspectives of the most backwards and socially humiliated groups in Malabar, the 'lower caste' Muslims such as the Barbers (Ossans) and the Fishermen (Pusalars) and the caste divisions that existed and still exists, among the Mappila Muslims. The present study aims to focus mainly on the educational profile of the so-called 'fanatic' or 'jungle' Mappila Muslims in

South Malabar and as to how different marginalised groups in the region became backward in education.

Muslims in South Malabar cannot be treated as a homogeneous entity, they have not only been divided into denominational and sectarian lines, but they have been stratified based on caste, social and occupational status. American comedian Emo Philip's 1985 anecdote, the "Guy on the Bridge"[21], which humorously captures the complex social structures and animosity within Christians, has been extended to the Muslim context by many. The anecdote is quoted here due to its indirect relevance to the point under discussion[22]:

The other day I saw a man on a bridge, about to jump. I said, "Don't do it, brother!"

He said, "Nobody loves me."

I said, "God loves you. Do you believe in God?"

"Yes, of course."

I said, "Are you a Muslim or a non-Muslim?"

"Muslim."

I said, "Me, too! Shia or Sunni?"

"Sunni."

"Me, too! What mazhab?"

"Hanafi."

"Me, too! Deobandi or Barelvi?"

"Barelvi."

"Me too! Tanzeehi or Tafkeeri?"

"Tanzeehi."

"Me, too! Tanzeehi Azmati or Tanzeehi Farhati?"

---

[21] See Philips (2015) to read the 'original version' of the anecdote.
Also see Vazcomics. "Emo Philips - Golden gate bridge (1987, official sub ita)". Filmed [July 2010] You Tube Video, 03.21. Posted [July 2010] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDmeqSzvIFs
[22] Several versions of the original anecdote have appeared on various websites, even books including in Arundhati Roy's (2017) most recent book, but many of these have cited the original author's name as unknown. The author has quoted a version of the original anecdote applied to the Muslim context by Zia H Sha on December 21, 2012 in *The Muslim Times*. See the link for more information
https://themuslimtimes.info/2012/12/21/the-other-day-i-saw-a-man-on-a-bridge-about-to-jump-i-said-dont-do-it-brother/

"Tanzeehi Farhati."

"Me, too! Tanzeehi Farhati Jamia-ul-Uloom Ajmer, or Tanzeehi Farhati Jamia-ul-Noor Mewat?"

"Tanzeehi Farhati Jamia ul Noor Mewat."

"Go to hell, kaafir!" I told him and pushed him off the bridge.

The above anecdote, humorous and insightful, shows the deep-rooted sectarian difference among the Muslims. Similarly, the divisions among the Kerala Muslims are deep-rooted and complex, and few researchers have very well documented their sectarian divisions (Abdelhalim 2016: 144-50, Osella and Osella 2013). There exist restrictions on marriage, friendship formation, learning Islam and other rituals including on how to offer *niskaram* on sectarian lines.

Many *Sunnis* believe that even saying *salaam*[23] to a *mujahid* is *makrooh*[24] (disliked) and not permissible and vice versa, mujahids, consider many of the practices of Sunnis as *shirks*[25] (Osella and Osella 2013: 146). Some ulamas the author interviewed believe that the food cooked by Barbers cannot be eaten and they will not get rewards for the food that they serve. Muslims are divided mainly into four caste groups in South Malabar. Though the social structure among the Mappila Muslims is not patterned exactly like the Hindus, it does not mean that there are no caste divisions among the Mappila Muslims. According to Beteille, caste is "characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system"

---

[23] *Assalamu alaikum* meaning 'Peace be with you', is a common greeting amongst the Muslims of Kerala. However, many Sunnis and *ulamas* believe that a sunni cannot greet a Mujahid or a *kafir* with a *salaam*. During the interview, one ulama (asked not to be named) told the author that "we sunnis never greet a person with salaam when he is relieving himself". He further said, "The rule is when one is in the toilet; Salaam should not be done to them or answered by them, because the place is considered as *najis* (ritually unclean)". Similarly, he continued, "a *mujahid* person also stays at *najis*, whenever he comes out from that situation a sunni can great him with salaam".

[24] In Islam, the word *makrooh* is defined as anything that is inappropriate and detestable. It is further divided into *makrooh tahrimi*, and *makrooh tanzihi*, those who commit the former will be punished and those who avoid the latter will earns goodness and reward, but will not be punished even if he/she commits *makrooh tanzihi*.

[25] Shirk (sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism) is considered as the association of anything or anyone with Allah or Allah's attributes. It is clearly defined as a violation of and departure from *tawhid*. According to Delong-Bas (2004: 62) *Shirk* is given great attention in the work of Abd-al-Wahhab, whose views the *Mujahids* of Kerala follow.

(Beteille 1965: 46). Sociologists see endogamy, a particular occupation or inheritance of occupations (Ambedkar 1979 [1916], Beteille 1965, Srinivas 1996, Jodhka 2012, Divya 2014), and its 'exploitative nature' (Kumar 2014: 29) as the core features of the caste system. However, when caste is defined in an Ambedkarite perspective as characterized by (I) endogamy (II) traditional occupations and (III) birth based (descent) status, the social stratification among Muslims in South Malabar is nothing but a caste system.

Whether we can describe the stratification among the Muslims as caste in the strict sense of Hindu caste is debatable, but the fact remains that these groups such as the Barbers, Fishermen, and Sayyids strictly follow the practice of endogamous marriage, rank each other on the birth-based status, and many of them follow their traditional occupations. Even if a person, from the Barber and Fishermen communities, merely mentions their traditional occupation like hair-cutting and fishing, another person in the locality can immediately identify the caste of the person as 'Ossan' or 'Puslan' respectively. Unlike other places, for instance, the Sikhera village studied by Meenakshi Singh, where 98 percent of the other backward classes deviated from their traditional occupation (Singh 2010: 113), in South Malabar, based on my ethnographic data, nearly 90 percent of these two groups (Barbers and Fishermen) still depend on their traditional occupations. More on their traditional occupation and why this study uses the term Muslim castes instead of terms such as 'caste-like' or 'endogamous group' will be explained in detail in the third chapter by analysing the marriage patterns, occupation and birth status of four Muslim caste groups. Before that, it is important to understand how previous studies have addressed the social stratification among the Muslims.

Sociologists and social anthropologists have rarely discussed the social stratification among the Kerala Muslims. However, ethnographic research shows that the caste based social stratification is still relevant in deciding their marriage, occupation, and social status. The existing research on Muslim caste system in India argues that caste stratification is something that has never been supported by any religious texts, mainly the Quran and Hadiths. However, the current religious discourse in Kerala clearly promotes the system of social stratification, and the ulamas' interpretation of various *Hadiths* places the Sayyids on the top of the hierarchal division. Such discourse shows that it is not only the Hindu caste system – the Hindu social customs and practices that have influenced the

initial formation of caste system among the Muslims – but also the Islamic texts and their interpretations that have largely contributed to the continued existence of caste among the Muslims. Such is the argument made by Imtiaz Ahmed who explains in his paper, *Is there Caste among the Muslims of India?*

> In the course of its journey through Persia, Islam had already imbibed the notion of social hierarchy. As such, by the time Islam entered India the notion of gradation of social groups into a hierarchy had already become a part of its cultural inheritance. It had no difficulty in incorporating the caste system in India. From this perspective, it would seem that caste among Muslims in India was not only a result of local Hindu influence but a form of social organization that had already become accepted as a result of its cultural contact with other Muslim cultures which had evolved hierarchical structures. It did not have any difficulty in adjusting to the Hindu caste system. My personal view is that in dealing with a complex institution like caste among Muslims, it would be futile to argue that caste among Muslims in India can be explained in terms of Hindu influence or Islam's contact with other cultures in the course of its journey into India. It would seem appropriate that the caste phenomenon among Muslims must be explained in terms of both external as well as indigenous influences (Ahmed 2015:10-11).

As is clear from his argument, Ahmed suggests that while studying caste among the Muslims, both factors, the Hindu caste influence and Islamic tradition, should be considered. Among the Muslims in India, those in the higher strata, who debate and interprets the texts, clearly benefit from the hierarchical social stratification. They are the one who denies the existence of caste among the Muslims but argues that Sayyids, the descendants of Prophet, have more power and prestige among the Muslims. This contradictory position can be seen in most of the writings and speeches of *Sunni* ulama classes, which will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter.

The work of P.R.G. Mathur is seminal in understanding the stratification of Kerala Muslims. He argues, "The Muslim caste system is part of the overall caste system in Kerala rather than a separate Muslim caste system" (Mathur 2011). He also observed that Muslim caste groups that claim foreign origins have higher social status compared to the local converts. Interestingly, he found ten distinct endogamous communities among the Muslims including Mappilas and all these groups on the basis of purity and pollution, foreign origin, and distinct lifestyle can be hierarchically ranked (Mathur 2011). The researcher would largely agree with his arguments; his work, however, does not discuss anything related to the educational profile of Muslim caste communities.

One of the oldest studies in the field, 'South Indian Musalmans', a dissertation submitted by Quadir Husain Khan in 1910, begins by saying that Musalmans of South India "do not form a compact homogeneous people, but constitute different races and tribes, which have at various times settled in the country or been converted from the native races and therefore the influence of Hindu environment upon them must have necessarily varied in nature and extent" (Khan 1910). In this work, he discusses the origin and Hindu influences of the Mappilas, Marakkayars, Jonagans or Labbais, and native converts. He points out that "indeed it will not be wrong to describe Musalmans at present as fast becoming welded into a homogeneous people in their earnest endeavours to approximate towards the Islamic ideal of brotherhood and practice their religion in its pristine purity" (Khan 1910: 93). Heterogeneity is the hallmark of Musalmans in the region and many groups hardly go for intermarriages.

However, except Saidalavi (2017), hardly any sociological or historical work deals specifically with the issues related to the Barber (similar to the Hajjams or Muslim Nai of North India) and the Fishermen communities in Kerala. In fact, very few studies have mentioned the presence of these communities in Malabar while discussing anything related to Mappila Muslims. Saidalavi argues that 'social divisions among Muslims in Malabar today do not derive primarily from acculturative influences of Hinduism' (Saidalavi 2017). Therefore, he negates the stratification among the Muslims in Malabar as caste and argues that there is an urgent need to come up with new terminology to address the social stratification that characterizes Malabar Muslims.

Discussing the marginal communities among the Muslims in India, M. K. A. Siddiqui (2004) briefly mentions the social condition and historical origin of the Barbers and the Fishermen in Malabar. He argues that the Ossans are of Yemini origin and arrived at Malabar Coast during the 17th century, but Siddiqui did not attempt to study further the economic and educational condition of the community or their social status in a stratified society like Malabar. Mattison Mines, who discusses these two communities in Malabar, correctly points out that, "The social distance among these subdivisions is very great. Each subdivision practices endogamy. In interaction, those of higher rank are treated deferentially" (Mines 1972:336). However, Mines is wrong when he argues that "the sections do not eat together and they have separate mosques, separate religious

organisations, and separate burial grounds" (Mines 1972:336). The Fishermen and the Barbers do not have separate mosques and burial grounds, and in most of the public functions like marriage, they eat together. However, there are separate mosques, distinct religious teachings, separate madrasas, and even separate burial grounds for different religious sects such as the A.P. Sunnis, E.K. Sunnis, Mujahids, and Jamaa'ts.

There is no statistical data available to discuss the total population of the Muslim caste groups in Kerala, and none of these caste groups are concentrated in any specific localities, but they are spread across the state. A detailed study of the social stratification of Muslims in South Malabar is essential to fully understand the structure and function of caste among the Muslims by focusing on how the local people in different caste groups perceive the social stratification. Therefore, the third chapter of this thesis is entirely dedicated to a discussion of the social stratification in South Malabar, and to how people from four communities, Barbers, Fishermen, Sayyids and Malabaris, perceive caste and its manifestations.

This study proposes that, unlike many previous studies, Mappila Muslims are not a homogenous community; their history, culture, economic and social condition and their educational status vary from to region to region and sect to sect and caste to caste. As far as social and economic policies are concerned, clubbing all Muslims as one homogenous community does a grave injustice to the oppressed castes because it will further marginalise the most marginalised sections among the Muslims. Hasnain, while discussing a separate sub-quota for Muslims OBCs and Hindu OBCs, negates the argument that the entire Muslim community is socially and educationally backward. He rightly points out that a separate sub-quota for entire OBC Muslims and Hindu OBCs is unjust:

> Some groups within each religious community are traditional 'forward' and socially, educationally and economically advanced as compared to the rest of their population as well as in the absolute sense of the term. The Sayyed, Sheikh and other Ashraf castes of north India, the Thangal, Arakkal, Koya and Keyi of Kerala Muslims, the Khatri and Jat among the Sikhs, the Syrian among the Kerala Christians and so on are the advanced higher castes. Thus, the argument that an entire religious community is socially and educationally backward negates the sociological reality and goes against the principle of social justice (Hasnain 2005: 89-90).

Given that Muslims in Kerala are not a homogenous community, it is surprising that previous research has not focused on whether there is a differential impact of the community's diversity on their educational outcomes. Are the Muslim 'upper castes', especially Sayyids and Malabaris of Kerala, socially and educationally advanced compared to the Barbers and Fishermen? The present study attempts to fill this gap in the literature related to Muslims in Kerala.

1.3 Social Capital: A Theoretical Orientation

Bonds and contacts between individuals and groups serve as central building blocks of a larger community edifice. In other words, as noted by Woolcock and Narayan the common aphorism "It's not what you know, it's who you know," sums up much of the conventional wisdom regarding social capital (Woolcock and Narayan 2000: 225). This debate, the use of 'social relations for expected returns' (Lin 1999), in sociology is old as the development of sociology as a subject in Western societies. Emile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of sociology, was deeply interested "in the way that people's social ties served as the thread from which a wider society wove itself together" (Field 2003: 11). Such bonds, based on mutual trust, cooperation, norms of reciprocity are essential for community cohesion in any society that fosters collective action for mutual benefits, and this forms the essence of the concept of social capital. In the later research on social capital, social relations, trust, co-operation, and networks are considered as its *core*.

Social capital has a wide variety of meanings; it is 'a genotype with many phenotype application' (Adam and Roncevic 2003: 158). Woolcock argues that due to "indiscriminate applications of social and other *capitals*" in social science, there emerged, "several theoretical and empirical weaknesses" (Woolcock 1998: 155). Referring to this situation, James Farr observes, "This concerns empirical theorists who seek stable referents and clear definitions" (Farr 2004: 7). In view of these observations, the researcher who deals with social capital should clearly state what they mean by social capital. Here in order to solve the definitional 'problem,' the present study will concentrate on the 'core theories' related to the concept and its empirical application in education.

The term 'social capital' first appeared in the writings of L. J. Hanifan in 1916. According to Robert Putnam, "the first known use of the concept was not by some

cloistered theoretician, but by a practical reformer of the Progressive Era- L.J Hanifan"
(Putnam 2000: 19). In his *The Rural School Community Center* (1916), Hanifan
conceptualised social capital as 'something different' or 'addition' to economic capital.
Moreover, even the first discussion of social capital was related to community cohesion
and the importance of contact with neighbours' in particular social settings. Hanifan
explained the emergence of social capital by saying that if an individual or his/her family
fails to satisfy his/her needs "he may come into contact with his neighbour, and they with
other neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital" (Hanifan 1916: 130).

Hanifan's argument is summarised in the following words; social capital is
functional, it helps community cohesion and solidarity, and the role of community is crucial
in the development of an individual. Later, Bourdieu defined capital broadly as
'accumulated human labour' (Bourdieu 1986: 241), which potentially produce different
forms of profit. According to his interpretation, unless one reintroduces capital in all its
forms, i.e. social, cultural, and symbolic and not solely in the one form recognised by
economic theory, it is impossible to account for the structure and function of the social
world. His definition of 'capital' thus makes it possible to outline the practice of the social
world as directed not only towards the possession of economic capital but of all forms of
capital.

In much of the social capital literature, the concept of social capital is defined from
a 'Bourdieuconomics' perspective, analysing both material and non-material forms of
capital (Svendsen and Svendsen 2009: 8). Bourdieu defines social capital as "the sum of
the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing
a durable network of more or less institutionalized relation of mutual acquaintance and
recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119). Bourdieu suggests that the outcomes of
possession of social or cultural capital are reducible or/and convertible to economic capital
(Portes 1998, 2000). While talking about social capital, it is necessary to understand
another concept introduced by Bourdieu called habitus. Bourdieu argues that an
individual's actions cannot be fully understood except in relation to the social context in
which those actions occur (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). His notion of habitus, a set of
attitudes and values and a link between structure and agency, explains the ways in which
individual actions and societal structures are linked (Sullivan 2002, Perna and Titus 2005).

Therefore, while analysing education of individuals and groups, it is necessary to understand the social structure that in which they are situated.

In Bourdieu's definitions, interestingly, the phrases like 'connections,' 'durable network' and 'membership in a group,' are important links that connect with the 'first known definition' of social capital given by Hanifan. For instance, Hanifan discussed how an individual or groups contact with neighbours (connections), and they with other neighbours (durable network) help a community (membership in a group) to accumulate social capital. More interestingly, Bourdieu and later theorists like Coleman and Putnam and many other social capital theorists emphasised the 'connections' and 'networks' as some of the more important features of social capital.

American sociologist James Coleman's work on social capital has had a tremendous influence over the educational research in sociology. In a time, when Bourdieu's works had limited access to the English-speaking world, Coleman had found a strong readership in mainstream educational studies. Especially his work *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital* (1988) is the most frequently cited work in the literature on education and social capital. As part of a wider attempt to explain social systems, Coleman uses social capital as a tool to explain social order and as a 'resource for persons', and he further believed that "both social capital in the family and social capital in the community play roles in the creation of human capital in the rising generation" (Coleman 1988: S109). He examines the usefulness of the concept of social capital in a particular context, that of educational attainment. He defined social capital not as a single entity but "a verity of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors whether personal or corporate actor- within the structure" (Coleman 1988: S98).

Coleman relates social capital to other forms of capital and, like Bourdieu, he also classifies capital mainly into three forms. However, unlike Bourdieu, he relates social capital to physical and human capital instead of economic and cultural capital. By arguing that 'social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible,' Coleman treats social capital as a resource, store, and

credit that produces 'positive results' and 'benefits' for the individuals and group of individuals in societies.

There is no doubt that Coleman's understanding of social capital, for its owners, is a positive resource or outcome. At the same time, he said, "social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions might be useless or even harmful for others" (Coleman 1988: S98). Therefore, there is not only a 'positive' and 'useful' social capital, but there is a 'negative' and 'harmful' one. For instance, the control over social and cultural capital by certain caste groups has helped them to achieve tremendous wealth and prosperity in South Malabar. With extraordinary political power, religious authority, and social prestige, Sayyids have been the biggest beneficiaries of the system of social stratification in South Malabar, and therefore they have been zealously guarding the perpetuation of the system. This will be elaborated in detail with evidence in the fourth and fifth chapter.

In another work, *Equality, and Achievement in Education* (1990), Coleman treats education as a means to an end, not an end in itself. Coleman Report (Coleman et.al 1966) of U.S and Plowden Report (Peaker 1971) of U.K strengthened the argument in the sociology of education that "family background was more important than school factors in determining children's educational achievement (Buchmann and Hannum 2001: 82). Such theories argue that the inequality in family structure would reflect on the educational outcomes of the children. Like Bourdieu, Coleman also notes that the educational system produces unequal opportunities in stratified societies. However, Bourdieu from a conflict perspective views education as a tool to reproduce inequality in society, while Coleman, from a functionalist perspective, considered possession of social capital as a mechanism for the 'reduction of inequality' in families and communities, and a powerful tool that encourages social mobility of the individuals. Such a perspective helped Coleman to theorise the role of education in any society as a "means to an end, not an end in itself, and equal opportunity refers to later life rather than the educational process itself" (Coleman 1975: 28). This theoretical understanding of education by Coleman is based mainly on his detailed study of the educational development of American society and his project on the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study in 1966, known as *The Coleman Report*.

If the equal educational opportunity is a myth, how do we address the question of 'equal educational opportunity'? How does one solve the issue of inequality in educational attainment? It is a fact that every educational institution is embedded in societies in which social and economic resources are unequally distributed. Therefore, the existing systemic inequality in any society reproduces the unequal educational outcomes. In such scenario, the very concept of 'equality of educational opportunity' is mistaken and misleading. This theoretical understanding forced Coleman to find an alternative term for educational achievement and opportunities in education. He uses the term 'reduction in inequality' rather than equality. According to him, "such a formulation would properly connote the fact that the initial state in which schools find children, and the continuing environments outside the school that competes for the child's time, are unequal" (Coleman 1975: 29). In such a situation, "the school's task is, besides increasing opportunity for all, through what it imparts, to reduce the unequalising impact on the adult life of these differential environments" (Coleman 1975: 29).

From the above discussion, it is clear that both Bourdieu and Coleman see education and educational institutions as linked to the unequal social structure. Nevertheless, both discussed the role of education in various contexts and different theoretical milieus. Bourdieu found that educational institutions like school, college and universities reproduces the unequal social structure, works as a mechanism to maintain status quo in societies, and they are manipulated to create and sustain inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, Sullivan 2002: 144). Coleman, on the other hand, discusses the educational institutions as a mechanism, that helps to reduce the inequality in societies. However, both of them acknowledge, "social capital consists of resources embedded in social relations and social structures, which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposive action" (Lin 2001: 24). They agree on a common point that, those possessing a higher amount of social and cultural capital in a stratified society enjoy higher educational outcomes and achievements when compared to those who have a lesser amount of social and cultural capital.

Social capital works differently for different communities and fields, and as noted by Nan Lin, not all individuals or social groups uniformly acquire social capital or receive expected returns from their social capital (Lin 2000:786). Even those groups who have

social capital but fail to credit it further as political or economic capital can hardly benefit from their social capital. The theory propounded by Cleaver argues that "social capital is not automatically created from association, trust *does not* magically emerge from repeated interaction…without specific attention to linking the social with the political, to the need to transform institutional arrangements, and to challenging systemic sources of power, social capital remains weak as a policy tool" (Cleaver 2005: 904, emphasis original). However, it is quite clear, based on my fieldwork, that Sayyids' diverse networks and their capacity to credit social capital as political and economic capital, the lack of 'weak ties' amongst the Barbers and Fishermen and their strong 'homophily networks', and men's wider networks compared to women clearly reflects in their higher education. Such an influence of social capital on education within the various Muslims caste groups and the gender difference in it, majorly focusing on Bourdieu and Coleman's theory of social capital, will be analysed in detail in the fourth and fifth chapters.

Conclusion

This study takes the position that there exists caste and caste-based social stratification among the Mappila Muslims of South Malabar. Mappila Muslims are far from a homogeneous entity; they vary in terms of religious beliefs, rituals, and customs and social life that are mainly shaped by their affiliation towards to particular religious sects and caste groups. One cannot limit the division among the Muslims of Kerala only to the Sunnis and Shias (the large majority of the population are Sunnis), the sectarian divisions among the Mappila Muslims are more prominent, and it takes front seat while discussing the differences within the Mappila community where the Sunnis, the Mujahids and Jamaat and many other groups have their own educational institutions, associations, and organizations.

Along with these sectarian divisions, there is a clear caste-based division among the Muslims that can be mapped out by looking into the sociological features of caste such as endogamous marriage, traditional occupation, and birth based statuses. The ulama class and the existing educational institutions, especially in the form of religious teaching in madrasas and *wa'alu* programmes, function as the agents who reproduce the dominant social structure where the Thangals or the Sayyids always have a whip hand over the other

caste groups. Somehow, the other three caste groups through their religious socialisation have internalised that the Thangals are superior to their castes and they should be respected under all circumstances. They also believe that the support and love towards them should be unconditional.

While many existing studies have looked into the sectarian differences within the communities, the social stratification and caste composition of Mappila Muslims have been largely overlooked. It is hoped that the present research will fill that gap, arguing that caste and social stratification not only play a vital role in the marriage alliance, selection of traditional occupation and distribution of social status, but it also plays an important role in the educational attainment of different communities. Considering the importance of the field of study and its characteristics, the next chapter will provide detailed statistical data on the educational status of Muslims in South Malabar, including literacy, schooling, and higher education.

Chapter II

Literacy, Schooling, and Higher Education of Muslims of South Malabar

Safwan, the second son of Abdulla, had passed the higher secondary exam in 2014 with 84 percent marks. Abdulla has two sons and one daughter. Safwan's brother, Shareef, was an auto driver in Manjeri, one of the major towns in Malappuram district. Safwan majored in commerce in school as he wanted to pursue an undergraduate degree in finance. One month after the results were declared, he applied for B.com Finance in different colleges under Calicut University as well as the two autonomous colleges in the area, Mambad College, and Farook College.

According to the University rule, a person can select a maximum of 20 colleges, and if he/she obtains admission in the higher opted colleges, the lower options get canceled automatically. In 2014, 36 government colleges and 56 aided colleges were affiliated to Calicut University, and out of these 92 colleges, only 38 colleges offer a B.com degree in Finance (GKER 2014)[26]. That year, the cut-off percentage for admission to the two autonomous colleges was 90%, and so Safwan waited to hear the result allotment of Calicut University. Five times, in the period between July and August, the university published the list of students who were selected for admission to the different colleges for higher studies. The first allotment result came on 5th July and the fifth and last one in mid-August 2014. Despite scoring 84 percent marks, Safwan failed to make it to the list of students who were selected for B.com in any of the 38 colleges that offered the course. The only option left was for Safwan to join one of the private colleges under the University, which unsurprisingly involves a high tuition fee and is, therefore, a matter of great grievance for his family. Safwan still enrolled himself at one of the private colleges in Manjeri. His brother used to pay his college fees, but when his auto met with an accident, his brother was unable to support him further. In September 2015, while studying for his graduation,

---

[26] The data obtained from Economic Review, published by the State Planning Board of Kerala, is cited throughout the thesis with an abbreviation as GKER (Government of Kerala Economic Review) with respective year.

Safwan joined as a part-time salesperson in a textile shop. When he was asked about his higher education, he had only one response, "*athonnum namukku paranjathalla athokke paisa ullavarkke pattu*," (higher education is not meant for me, it can only be afforded by those who have money). Safwan had not been able to pay his college fees for five months, and he could continue his studies further only if he incurred a debt. Safwan was in a dilemma about whether to continue his college education or to take up the salesperson job full-time. Safwan is not alone. In a state, where average expenditure per student in current academic session (one year) is rupees 15430 for graduate education (NSSO 2014: A274)[27], acquiring an education is a difficult task for poor families. Every year, more than thousands of students in Malappuram district are faced with a similar fate as that of Safwan.

Under Calicut University, the number of government and aided colleges are very few, and many of these have stagnated in quality over time, whereas the number of self-financed colleges has increased. 60 self-financed colleges currently offer a degree in B.com Finance. The number of self-financed colleges offering B.com in Finance is higher (22 more colleges) compared to both the government and the aided colleges combined. The number has been increasing over the years. The private colleges not only charge an exorbitant amount of tuition/course fees but the other expenses such as transportation, uniform, and hostel accommodation in such colleges are enormous. In such a scenario, educational opportunities for the people of South Malabar appear to be unequally distributed, varying largely according to the economic background, social class, and geographical location.

Interestingly, the field data shows that the caste background of the Muslims, furthermore, influences their educational attainment, especially higher education. Before exploring the nature and degree of the effect of caste on higher education in the South Malabar, a review of the educational background such as literacy, schooling and higher education and a short discussion of the demographic profile of the region are imperative. Because of the varied culture, religious beliefs and rituals, the Muslims of South Malabar

---

[27] In India, during the 2013-14 academic year, the average expenditure per student pursuing general course for graduation is 13478 rupees. The expenditure varies based on whether the students attend colleges run by government, or that which is private aided or private unaided. In India, the average expenditure per student attending a graduate degree course in government institutions was 9700 rupees, private aided was 14000 rupees, and private unaided was 25000 rupees. For more see (NSSO 2014: 84).

are not only distinct from Muslims belonging to other parts of India, but also from the Muslims hailing from other regions of the state. However, from a macro perspective, what happened after the Sachar committee report was that many of the political parties along with some of the research studies and newspaper articles have claimed that Kerala Muslims fare better when compared to Muslims from other states. However, this argument is very complex and paradoxical in nature. The first section of this chapter titled as '*Analysing the Paradox Situation: Satisfactory outside Backwardness Inside'* will address the paradox that characterizes Kerala Muslims and present a comparative analysis of the educational status of Kerala Muslims with Muslims from other states. The first section will also compare the educational status of Muslims in Kerala with the other socio-religious categories (SRCs) within the state.

It is a fact that, inequality is embedded in the much celebrated 'Kerala model' of development, wherein there are significant differences in the educational and social development of communities and religions, castes and classes, and regions. In the introduction to *Social Inequality,* Sociologist Beteille discusses two aspects of social inequality; one is distributive that refers to "the ways in which different factors such as income, wealth, occupation, education, power, skill, etc., are distributed in the population". The second is the relational aspect; "in which individuals differentiated by these criteria are related to each other within a system of groups and categories" (Beteille 1969: 13). Here the author is more interested in understanding the second, relational aspect of inequality. Therefore the second major section of this chapter titled as '*From Kerala's Positive to South Malabar's Negative Trend*,' will discuss the demographic and social characteristics of South Malabar, one of the most backward regions of the state. In this region, Muslim women, triply disadvantaged, firstly as females, secondly as Muslims and thirdly as South Malabar women, face a systemic and institutional discrimination in the social and educational sphere, and they lag behind their male counterparts in all educational indices. It is further noted that Muslims who live in South Malabar, in general, are the most educationally disadvantaged sections of Kerala society with minimum educational opportunities, and a low rate of both higher secondary and graduate holders. Therefore, to understand the educational backwardness of the region, the third and last major section,

titled as *Educational Profile of South Malabar*, will discuss the overall literacy, schooling and higher education of Malappuram district, in comparison to other districts of the state.

Indicators used for the Study

Sociologists have been using educational indicators to understand, measure, access and evaluate the educational development and progress of particular societies. Educational indicators are usually expressed as statistics or numbers, which tell us something useful or shed light on the fundamental aspects of the nature and development of education, whether at the national, state, local, school, or classroom level (Smith 1988, Scheerens 1990). There are mainly four types of indicators to analyse and evaluate the educational performance and profile of societies, communities, schools, and families: (i) input indicators; (ii) access indicators; (iii) output indicators; and (iv) outcome indicators (Vos 1996: 3-4, Scheerens 1990). However, the choice of indicators that any researcher uses to study the educational level of a particular society should be based on the existing educational system of that society. For instance, to assess the quality of school education in India, NCERT uses the following indicators: percentage of villages having schools; towns or cities having facility of a school stage; net enrollment ratio; enrollment in secondary education; student classroom ratio; number of children who can access schooling; infrastructure of the schools; number of teachers; schools having library facility; and student–teacher ratio etc. All of these indicators are represented in numbers and can be further used for analytical purposes.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse all the educational indicators that underlie the overall educational profile of the regions under investigation. Therefore three vital primary output indicators that 'reflect the *immediate* objective of education' (Vos 1996: 5), and have been consistently used to measure the educational development and progress of families, communities, and regions in India, have been chosen for the purposes of this study. These three social indicators of education are (I) literacy, II) mean years of schooling (MYS) and the number of higher secondary graduates III) the number of graduates[28]. There are mainly three reasons to use these output indicators. Firstly, these

---

[28] Social indicators of education, according to Scheeren, describe educational aspects of the population, whereas educational indicators describe the performance of the educational system. For more, see Scheerens (1990) and Herpen (1989).

macro-level data encompass the core features of an Indian education system. All the government and non-government reports on education in India tend to use these indicators to understand the educational level of Indian states, regions, religions, communities, and families. Secondly, the indicators are comparable across caste/religious groups and geography, and as well as help to understand the inaccessibility of educational facilities in particular localities and for particular communities. Lastly, this information is valid, feasible to collect and can be used for comparison with the educational profile of various regions, castes, and religious communities. The combination of these indicators is also widely accepted as a tool to examine the educational development/backwardness, and accessibility/inaccessibility in any educational spectrum. The next subsection will, therefore, discuss the literacy, mean years of schooling (MYS) and the number of graduates among the Muslims of Kerala and among the twenty most Muslim populated states in the country.

2.1 Analysing the Paradox Situation: Satisfactory outside, Backwardness Inside

Admitting the reality of social exclusion in education is the first step towards an inclusive educational policy and research. Social exclusion in education will be understood only if a comparative study of the educational position of communities is analysed within the specific historical period and geographical context of communities. A study that takes out a community or group outside its geographical locality, social context and historical milieu and makes a comparative study of communities with another extremely different social context and historical epoch cannot argue that the specific communities that are compared thus are backward or forward. The present author, therefore, compares the educational status of communities within in a specific era and a geographical locality. First, a comparative study of the education of Muslims in Kerala with Muslims living in other states of India, and secondly, a comparison of Muslim education with other socio-religious categories (SRC) within Kerala is done to understand the status of Muslims in the education in Kerala.

Most of the discussions on Muslim education in India often embrace a sketchy phrase 'but Kerala Muslims (*Pakshe Kerala Muslims)* to emphasize the 'exceptional' or

what Sachar Committee (2006) has called the 'satisfactory character' of educational achievements of Kerala Muslims. The hitherto works (Muhammad 2007) have argued that Kerala Muslims are educationally more contented, empowered and enjoy a higher position among the Indian Muslims. However, this popular perception at least in part created by the elite political class to get mileage for their political movements is only partially true.

In this study, the author will show why another sketchy phrase that should gain attention in discussions of the educational status of Muslims in Kerala is 'but Muslims within Kerala' (*Pakshe Keralathil Muslims)* to denote their backwardness of in education compared to other SRCs. The author here argues that, when compared to Muslims in other states, educational status of Kerala Muslims is satisfactory at the lower educational levels such as literacy and mean years of schooling, but they are much behind Muslims from other states in higher education. Also, educationally they are the most deprived religious community in Kerala, and their higher educational development is almost equal to that of the scheduled castes of Kerala, who have been suffering from centuries of caste discrimination. The most important point regarding Muslim education in Kerala is that discrimination does not begin at a young age. From the beginning of schooling to the tenth standard, most of the children get relatively equal opportunities in education, though the scale of the opportunities provided, quality and easy accessibility of educational centres are different. However, by later years, the marginalization and exclusion begin, enforced by the state through the unequal and uneven distribution of higher educational resources and opportunities among the various regions.

2.2 Education of Muslims: A comparison of Kerala and other States

This section will analyze the literacy, schooling and higher education of Muslims in Kerala and Muslims in twenty other states that have a large Muslim population.

2.2.1 Level of Literacy

Literacy is one of the critical components in analysing the educational standard of any community. Literacy rate and formal education are closely linked to one another. Even though the former cannot be seen only as a consequence of the latter, the latter can exert a strong positive influence on literacy results. Furthermore, literacy is, as noted by British anthropologist Gough, 'for the most part, an enabling rather than a causal factor, making

possible the development of complex political structure' (Gough 1968: 153). Therefore, literacy can be seen as a prerequisite tool that connects people together, and it enables efficient interaction between individuals.

The 2011 Census Report of India defines literacy as follows, "a person aged seven and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate" (Census 2011: 99). Since 1991, 'effective literacy rate' has replaced 'crude literacy rate' as a measure of literacy in India. The literacy rate that takes into account the total population in the denominator is called 'crude literacy rate' in contrast to 'effective literacy rate' which takes into account the population aged seven and above in the denominator. The effective literacy rate of India in 2011 was 74.04 percent. It shows the number of people lacking basic literacy in India is 273 million.

There is a great 'literacy gap' that exists in India on the basis of gender, religion and caste identities. For instance, the data from the 2011 Census Report on the educational levels of religious communities and was published by Census Commission of India on October 31st, 2016, reveals that educationally Muslims are the most marginalized community in India who occupy the last position in literacy, primary education and in the number of graduates according to their population.

Table: 2.1 Religious Wise Literacy Rate of India- 2011

Sl. No	Religion	7 Years+ Population (%)	(%) of Male	(%) of Female
1	Hindu	73.27	81.70	64.34
2	Muslim	68.54	74.73	62.04
3	Christian	84.53	87.70	81.47
4	Sikh	75.39	80.03	70.31
5	Buddhist	81.29	88.31	74.04
6	Jain	94.88	96.78	92.91
7	Other religions and persuasions	59.90	70.89	49.07
8	Religion not Stated	74.69	81.95	67.31
9	**India**	**72.98**	**80.88**	**64.63**

Source: Author's computation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India.
Note: Total population is calculated excluding children below seven years

Table 2.1 shows that based on religious affiliation, Muslims are the most illiterate community in India today. Out of the total population, 31.46 percent of the Muslims are

illiterate. Jains are the most literate religious community in India with literacy levels of 94.88 percent followed by Christians and Buddhists. The gap between the most literate community, Jains, and the least literate, Muslims, is 26.34 percent. The above table reveals that the percentage of Muslim literacy is below the national average and below that of all the other six major religious communities. In Table 2.2, the states have been listed in descending order of percentage of literate Muslim population. The data shows that the literacy of Muslims in Haryana is abysmally low, but Kerala Muslims, with a percent of 93.29, have the highest literacy among the Muslims in India followed by Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh. With a percent of 53.39 percent and a gap of 22.16 percent points with the state average, Haryana has the least literate Muslim population.

Table: 2.2. State wise literate Muslims in India (descending order)
as per 2011 Census

State/ Union territory	Total			Muslims		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Kerala	94.00	96.11	92.07	93.29	95.85	91.08
Tamil Nadu	80.09	86.77	73.44	88.17	92.76	83.69
Chhattisgarh	70.28	80.27	60.24	84.55	90.34	78.46
Maharashtra	82.34	88.38	75.87	83.56	87.57	79.13
Gujarat	78.03	85.75	69.68	80.82	87.15	74.14
Odisha	72.87	81.59	64.01	79.95	85.40	74.26
Karnataka	75.36	82.47	68.08	78.89	83.53	74.12
Delhi	86.21	90.94	80.76	75.59	80.43	69.84
Madhya Pradesh	69.32	78.73	59.24	74.90	81.76	67.64
Andhra Pradesh	67.02	74.88	59.15	73.58	79.94	67.11
West Bengal	76.26	81.69	70.54	68.75	72.52	64.77
Jharkhand	66.41	76.84	55.42	66.21	75.38	56.43
Uttarakhand	78.82	87.40	70.01	63.18	70.46	55.07
Rajasthan	66.11	79.19	52.12	62.68	75.38	49.35
Assam	72.19	77.85	66.27	61.92	66.74	56.85
Punjab	75.84	80.44	70.73	61.88	67.40	55.40
Jammu & Kashmir	67.16	76.75	56.43	61.03	71.02	50.50
Uttar Pradesh	67.68	77.28	57.18	58.76	66.42	50.59
Bihar	61.80	71.20	51.50	56.34	63.81	48.36
Haryana	75.55	84.06	65.94	53.39	67.59	37.44

Source: Author's computation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Table 2.2 shows that in the list, among the top ten states with highest Muslim literacy, only three states, including Kerala, Delhi, and West Bengal, where the Muslim literacy rates are lower than the state literacy rates. Even though, in Kerala, the Muslims literacy rate (93.29) is below the state average (94.00), the difference is negligible.

Gender-wise examination of literacy also points out that the rate of female literacy in Kerala is higher than female literacy rates of other states. The gap between Kerala and Haryana, that is, the state with the highest rate of female Muslim literates and the state with the lowest rate of female Muslim literates respectively is 53.64 percentage points, but at the same time, the male literacy gap is only 28.26 percentage points. Table 2.2 also shows that Muslims in Kerala are far ahead in literacy compared to many Muslim populated states such as UP, West Bengal, Bihar, and Jammu and Kashmir.

In 2011, 93.91 percent of the people was literate in the state, registering a 4.31 percent increase from 2001 when the literacy rate was 89.61 percent. Kerala's literacy rate is 19.87 percent above the national average and 30.09 percent above Bihar, which has the lowest literacy rate with 61.83 percent. Historically, Kerala has been the most literate State in the country. The census report 2011 says, "An analysis of literacy data brings to light the fact that after a gap of 60 years, the literacy rate of the State has nearly doubled in 2011 Census from 47.18% in 1951 to 93.91% in 2011 Census"[29].

Furthermore, it clear that both in India and in Kerala, males are more literate than the females, but the gender gap is decreasing at a fast pace compared to the previous decade (See Appendix 1). For instance, among the Kerala Muslims, gender disparity in literacy in 2001 was 8.2 percent (2-3) [male literacy 93.7 percent (2), female literacy 85.5 percent (3)], but the gap was decreased to 4.8 in 2011. Among the Indian Muslims, gender disparity in 2011 is below the national average, but among the Kerala Muslims, gender disparity is above the state average. However, in many gender indicators, including the rate of workforce participation, Kerala Muslims are lagging behind Muslims from other states causing concern.

At the national level, the lack of literacy of Muslims is also reflected in their metric or secondary education. In 2011 Census, while the percentage of the national metric education level is 6.43, it is only 4. 43 among the Muslims but is 6.62 for Hindus, 10.31

---

[29] Provisional Population Totals 2011: Census of India, Kerala Series 33. Page 30

for Christians, 8.25 for Sikhs, 8.61 for Buddhists and 14.05 for Jains. Therefore, it will not be wrong to argue that the lack of literacy among the Indian Muslims is the one main reason for further educational backwardness. To summarise this section, the data collected from the 2011 Census reveals that out of the twenty states in India, Kerala Muslims are the most literate Muslims in the country both in male and female literacy. Next, the author would discuss the status of Muslims of Kerala and Muslims of other States in school education.

2.2.2 School Education of Kerala Muslims and Muslims of other States

In India, mean years of schooling is defined by the average number of years a person has attended school during the relevant age span. In India, this has been estimated for the age group 7 to 16 years corresponding to matriculation (Sachar 2006: 51). The Census of India 2001, for the first time, provides data that is somewhat amenable to the estimation of Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) according to socio-religious categories (Sachar 2006).

Table 2.3 States wise MYS of children aged 7-16 years, Muslims and All (2011 census)

State/Union Territory	All (No. of years)		Male (No. of years)		Female (No. of years)	
	All	Muslims	All	Muslims	All	Muslims
Kerala	5.75	5.62	5.65	5.50	5.85	5.74
Tamil Nadu	5.22	5.16	5.26	5.16	5.19	5.16
Maharashtra	3.82	4.64	4.08	4.66	3.55	4.63
Delhi	4.38	4.42	4.64	4.48	4.10	4.36
Punjab	4.35	4.29	4.61	4.48	4.06	4.09
Karnataka	4.46	4.26	4.62	4.25	4.29	4.27
Uttarakhand	4.00	4.13	4.30	4.21	3.70	4.05
Andhra Pradesh	3.62	3.79	3.92	3.85	3.27	3.73
Gujarat	4.76	3.78	4.74	3.73	4.79	3.83
Haryana	5.02	3.63	5.06	3.84	4.97	3.40
Odisha	3.73	3.41	4.08	3.83	3.36	2.97
Chhattisgarh	4.48	3.33	4.46	3.38	4.51	3.28
J & K	3.51	2.88	4.07	3.35	2.88	2.36
Assam	3.24	2.87	3.64	3.16	2.79	2.56
Madhya Pradesh	4.45	2.86	4.63	3.12	4.26	2.58
West Bengal	3.58	2.84	3.72	2.86	3.44	2.83
Rajasthan	3.64	2.64	3.72	2.67	3.55	2.60
UP	3.43	2.60	3.78	2.85	3.03	2.33
Jharkhand	2.69	2.07	3.07	2.32	2.24	1.78
Bihar	4.33	2.04	4.46	2.63	4.18	1.33
India	**3.95**	**3.26**	**4.18**	**3.40**	**3.69**	**3.11**

Source: Author's Computation based on Census Report 2001, Govt. of India

Like literacy analysis, here also, Table 2.3 of MYS is also arranged in the descending order of mean years of schooling of the Muslims. The data reveals that in India, on an average, a child goes to school for only 3.95 years. The MYS of Muslims is 3.26. The Sachar Committee made a comparison between the MYS of schooling of Muslims and other communities, and they made the argument that the MYS of Muslims is the lowest (about three years and four months). A comparison across socio-religious categories, both by gender and by place of residence, also reveals consistently lower levels of MYS for the Muslim community (Sachar 2006: 56). However, the case in Kerala is entirely different, and the MYS rates even lend support to the celebrated 'Kerala model' of development. It can be seen that, on an average, a child in Kerala goes to school for 5.75 years. In all the states, except Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Odisha and Andra Pradesh, MYS of Muslims is below the state average. The MYS of Muslims in Kerala is 5.56, which is far ahead of the national average and it is very high compared to the other states. Considering MYS as an important indicator for educational development, Kerala Muslims are far better in mean years of schooling compared to Muslims from other states in the country.

2.2.3 Higher Education of Kerala Muslims and Muslims from other States

Higher education is necessary for a community's stable social and economic development. In a country where free and compulsory education of children below the age of 14 is a constitutional right, higher educational status would be an effective tool to understand the overall educational status of communities. The latest census data shows that, like literacy, there are significant differences in the number of graduates among the six major religious groups.

Table: 2.4. Religious-wise percentage of graduates and above in India- 2011

Sl. No	Religion	7 Years+ Population (%)	(%) of Male	(%) of Female
1	Hindu	9.93	12.18	7.60
2	Muslim	5.24	6.51	3.91
3	Christian	13.99	14.42	13.58
4	Sikh	9.79	9.61	9.98
5	Buddhist	9.75	11.99	7.49
6	Jain	36.01	39.45	32.52
7	Other Religions and Persuasions	3.94	5.12	2.81
8	**India**	**9.51**	**11.54**	**7.41**

Note: Total population is calculated excluding population below 20 years old
Source: Author's computation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Table 2.4 shows that only 9.5 percent of the total population aged 20 years and above in India are graduates. Out of the total population, a community-wise breakdown shows that only 5.2 percent of Muslims are graduates and the same was 3.6 percent in 2001. In the decade between 2001 and 2011, only an increase of 1.6 percent points has been achieved as far as the higher education levels of Muslims are concerned. However, in the same period, the national average rose from 6.7 to 9.5, and the increase in percentage is 2.8 points. It shows that the growth rate of graduates among the Muslims is slower than the national average. As shown in Table 2.4, with 36.01 percent of graduates, Jains are the most educated religious community in India followed by Christians. Also, the rate of Jain graduates is seven-fold higher than the Muslims.

Table: 2.5. State-Wise Graduates in India and Muslims as per 2011 Census, (in %)

State/Union Territory	Total			Muslims		
	Persons	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**
Chhattisgarh	6.90	8.95	4.86	11.13	12.58	9.63
Delhi	26.13	27.41	24.67	10.59	11.62	9.33
Tamil Nadu	11.16	12.91	9.45	9.68	12.44	7.04
Andra Pradesh	10.20	13.43	7.03	9.55	12.14	6.94
Jammu & Kashmir	9.26	10.71	7.61	8.40	10.49	6.22
Maharashtra	12.03	14.06	9.90	7.25	8.26	6.14
Madhya Pradesh	7.88	9.76	5.90	6.60	7.53	5.63
Karnataka	10.30	12.64	7.95	6.38	7.67	5.05
Kerala	11.02	10.56	11.42	6.18	6.96	5.56
Odisha	6.87	8.98	4.73	5.61	7.33	3.78
Uttarakand	15.61	17.68	13.56	4.97	5.39	4.49
Jharkhand	7.43	9.94	4.81	4.82	6.58	2.94
Uttar Pradesh	9.11	11.31	6.75	4.70	5.53	3.84
Gujarat	8.55	9.92	7.10	3.96	5.17	2.71
Punjab	9.87	9.53	10.23	3.94	4.21	3.64
Rajasthan	8.17	10.92	5.31	3.61	5.00	2.19
Bihar	5.79	8.52	2.87	3.33	4.96	1.60
West Bengal	8.40	10.48	6.21	2.78	3.97	1.52
Assam	5.65	7.01	4.24	2.72	3.88	1.52
Haryana	12.39	14.00	10.66	2.51	3.44	1.48
India	9.51	11.54	7.41	5.24	6.51	3.91

Source: Author's computation Based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Table 2.5 provides a list of the states in India in descending order of the percentage of Muslim graduates. The interesting point is that Kerala, which topped both in Muslim literacy rate and MYS, dropped to the eighth rank in the rate of Muslim graduates. Chhattisgarh, the state was in the third position in literacy rates topped the list with the highest percent of Muslim graduates. Tamil Nadu which was second and third respectively in literacy and MYS also secured the third position here. In none of the other states, except Chhattisgarh, the percentage of Muslims graduates is higher than that of the states total graduate percentage. Chhattisgarh, which has 2.01 percent of Muslims, is the only state in the table that has a higher percent of Muslim graduates than the state average and this should be an interesting topic for further studies.

Kerala Muslims, although faring well in rates of literacy and MYS, fails to show the same trend in their rates of higher education. Only 6.18 percent of Muslims in Kerala

have a graduate degree and above when the state average is 11.02. There are many reasons for the backwardness of Muslim education in the region such as the rejection of English language and late entry into the establishment of community-wise colleges, early marriage of women, and fewer higher educational institutions in Muslim populated areas. Though Kerala Muslims are ranked eighth in the state-wise Muslim percent of graduates, in general, as noted by Sachhar committee, the overall educational condition of Kerala Muslims is satisfactory in comparision to other states. The next important question here is regarding the educational condition of Muslims within the state when they are compared to other socio-religious categories (SRCs) in Kerala. The following section will address this question in detail.

2.3 A Comparison of the Educational Status of Muslims in Kerala and other SRCs

In this section, the author aims to explore the present educational status of Muslims in Kerala and other socio-religious categories (SRCs). As mentioned earlier, Muslims in Kerala are not a homogeneous entity. They are not only divided along denominational and sectarian lines, but caste and class divisions also characterise them. Even the educational status of the community varies according to religious sects, caste groups, and regions. Some of the previous studies that have tried to explore the educational differences among the Muslims in Kerala based on religious ideologies such as those of the Mujahids, Sunni and Jamaat (Osella and Osella 2013). However, there have been no quantitative studies that shed light on the role of sectarian Muslim groups in the education of Muslims in Kerala.

By the end of the 20th century, the traditional opposition to secular education and colonial culture had placed the Muslims in an impossible situation: as noted by Miller, it had blocked their progress, retarded the community economically, and created a public image and private mentality of backwardness (Miller 1976: 206). The last section highlighted that Kerala Muslims are placed far ahead of Muslims in other states of India in lower levels of educational indices. However, while discussing their educational position with SRCs within Kerala, one thing is very clear that Muslims are the most

educationally backward religious group in Kerala. The next subsections will explain this point further.

2.3.1 Literacy of Muslims and SRC

As discussed in the earlier sections, Kerala has the highest percentage of literate Muslims compared to Muslims in other states in India. However, within Kerala, Muslims are the most backward religious community in literacy rates.

Figure: 2.1. Caste and Religious-wise literacy of Kerala (As per 2011 Census)
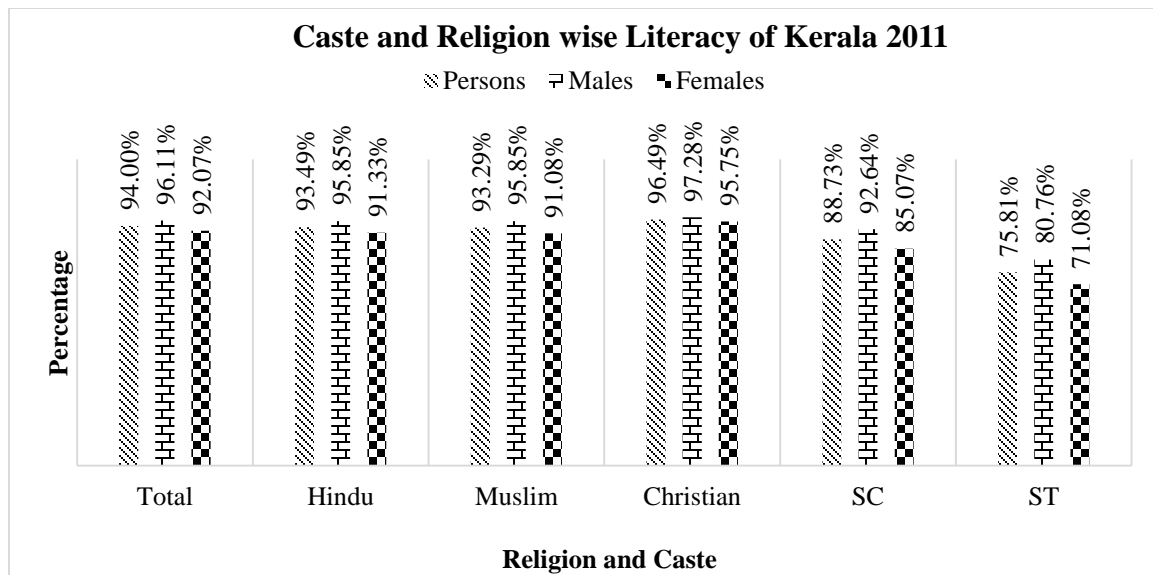
Source: Author's computation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India 2011

Figure 2.1 reveals that the total literacy rate of Kerala is 94.00 percent in 2011. Caste and religion-wise analysis show that Scheduled Tribe (ST) is the lowest literate group in Kerala with a percent of 75.81 percent. Religion-wise, Muslims are the most backward group in literacy. The difference is minimal when compared to Hindus, but it is 3.2 percent less compared to the Christians of Kerala. Analysing the literacy of Kerala, there is no wide disparity between socio-religious categories, except in the case of the Scheduled Tribe population. The difference between the least literate STs and most literate Christians in Kerala is 20.68 percent. Literacy-wise ST women (71.08 percent) are the most backward in the state compared to any other gender, caste, and religious groups. In India, the literacy gap between STs (59 percent) and total literacy (73 percent) is 14.03 percent points. However, in Kerala, literacy gap of STs and total literacy is (94.00 – 75.81) 18.19 percent points. This shows that the STs are the one group in Kerala who are most discriminated in

terms of literacy and primary education. However, amongst the religious communities, Muslims have the lowest literacy in the state.

2.3.2 Higher Secondary Education of Muslims and other SRC

The school education system in Kerala is more advanced and well organized than those in several other states in India[30]. The teacher-student ratio, physical amenities of schools like classrooms, toilets, and kitchen, electricity, and drinking water facilities are much better in comparison to many other states. It is also noted that most of the socio-religious categories, except STs, have better literacy rate and lower level educational qualification in Kerala.

Census data would help to understand the number of higher secondary graduates in different religions and caste groups. According to 2011 census data, in India, only 9.89 percent of the population above the age group of 17 and above has a higher secondary education. Gender wise data shows that 11.56 percent men and 8.16 percent women are educated above higher secondary level. However, Kerala fares far better in higher secondary education when compared to the national average. The total percent of the population having higher secondary education in Kerala is 19.92 percent. Also, the gender gap is only 0.26 percent points in Kerala when the national gender gap is 3.4 percent points.

Religion wise data (Figure 2.2) shows that Muslims have less percent of higher secondary graduates in Kerala. With 17.83 percent, they lag behind other religious groups.

---

[30] NCERT reports say that Kerala has the highest mean years of schooling and highest percent of girls' enrollment in rural areas (55.01 percent) in India. For more see NCERT (2007). In addition, many government schools of India are functioning in various types of kacha buildings, according to GKER (2016: 182), all the government schools in Kerala are functioning in pucca building.

Figure 2.2 Caste-wise and Religion-wise Higher Secondary graduates in Kerala (As per 2011 Census)

Caste-wise and Religion-wise percent of Population with Higher Secondary/ Intermediate Education
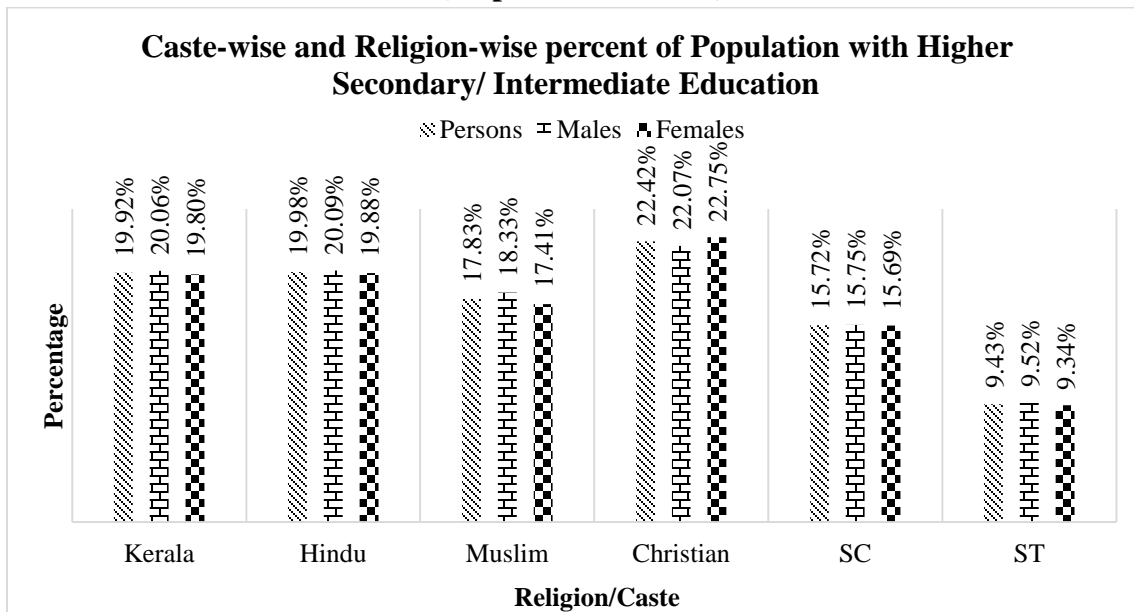
Source: Author's computation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India
Note: The data is calculated by excluding the population below the age of sixteen

Like in the case of literacy, here also the STs lag behind all other caste and religious communities. Gender, religion, and caste-wise analysis show that ST women have the least (9.34 percent) higher secondary graduates in Kerala, followed by SCs and Muslims. With a 0.92 percent point difference, the gender gap at the higher secondary level is greater among the Muslims than all other castes and regions. It shows that Muslim women suffer more discrimination in education when compared to their male counterparts. This observation is further strengthened when the gender gap in higher education is examined in the next sub-section, where the percent of Muslim women is found to be less compared to their counterparts in all other religious communities.

2.3.3 Higher Education of Muslims and other SRC

Higher education is necessary for a community's stable social and economic development. In a country where free and compulsory education of children below the age of 14 is a constitutional right, higher educational status is an effective tool to understand the overall educational status of communities. The latest census data shows that, like literacy, there are significant differences in the number of graduates among the six major religious groups in India, and Muslims lag behind all other religious communities.

Similarly, in Kerala too, they are the most backward religious community as far as higher education is considered.

Figure 2.3 Caste-wise and religion-wise percentage of Graduates in Kerala (As per 2011 Census)
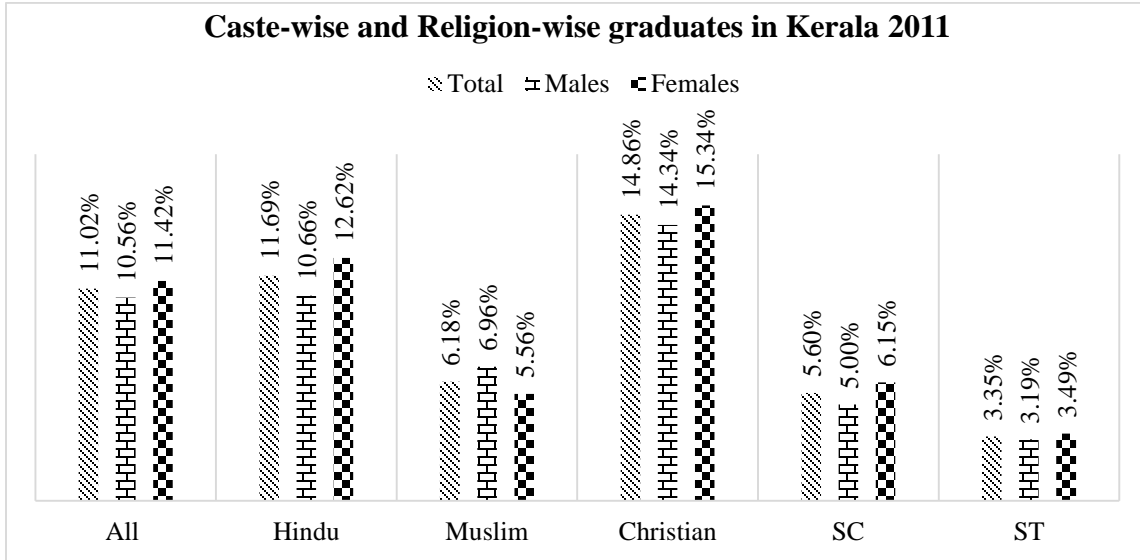
Source: Author's computation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Figure 2.3 shows that only 6.18 percent of Muslims in Kerala are graduates. In Kerala, 14.86 percent of Christians and 11.69 percent of Muslims are graduates. When considering the overall population, Muslims position in the state is even worse than that of the schedule castes. Only 3.71 percent of the total Muslims in India are graduates, and 3.95 percent of the total SCs are graduates. Moreover, the percent is 10.62 among the Christians and 7.58 among the Hindus. Another important factor that the above figure reveals is that it is only within the Muslim community in Kerala that the number of the male graduates outnumbers the females. Among the Muslims, 6.96 percent of males are graduates, but only 5.56 percent of females are graduates. In all other religions and caste groups, female graduate numbers are higher than that of their male counterparts. Child marriage is one of the major reasons for the low level of higher education among the Muslims, and that will be discussed in detail in the last section of the fifth chapter.

Overall, the point is that the Muslims of Kerala who performs better in educational indices when compared to Muslims from other states, however, lag behind in all educational indices mentioned above when compared to other religious communities within Kerala. Their higher educational status is below the SCs when the entire population

of both the groups is considered. However, when the population of twenty years and above is studied, Muslims have a slightly better percent of graduates compared to the SCs. While the last two sub-sections focused on the higher secondary education and higher education of Kerala Muslims as a whole in comparison to other socio-religious communities, the next sub-section will delve deeper into the Muslim community in Kerala and discuss why South Malabar Muslims forms the field of the present study. It will discuss the demography and social background of South Malabar in detail.

2.4 From Kerala's Positive to South Malabar's Negative Trend in Demography

Demography and education are known to influence each other directly. Studies argue that better educated men and women in society have lower mortality rates, have fewer children because of their lifestyle and knowledge of birth control mechanisms (Lutz and Samir 2010). Demographers have also pointed out that higher level of education in a society relates to low levels of fertility and fertility decline. Education and demographic changes are interconnected, and it is important to understand the demographic composition of the field to analyse the educational trends that underlie a community and the opportunities available to them. The demographic data explains the population of an area, trends in population, and it explains the very nature of the development/backwardness of a region.

Kerala, the southernmost state of India, spans a total area of 38863 square kilometres and forms only 1.27 percent of the total area of the country. Kerala's demographic data is an interesting topic of discussion for sociologists, demographers, and political scientists. This is because of the low population growth rate, higher sex ratio, higher literacy and the higher percentage of urban population, among other factors, characterizes a trend that is quite unlike that observed in several other parts of India. For instance, according to the 2011 Census, when the decadal growth rate of population in India was 17.64 percent, it was only 4.86 percent in Kerala. Literacy rate in Kerala is very high (93.91 percent) compared to India's total literacy rate (74.04); this would be explained separately somewhere in this chapter.

As per the 2011 Census, the total population of the state is 33.39 million, with 16.02 million males and 17.37 million females. Kerala is the only state in India that has achieved a positive sex ratio (1084 females per 1000 males) in the 2011 Census apart from the union

territory of Pondicherry. In Kerala, 17.45 million people (52.28 percent) live in rural areas, and the urban population of the state is 15.93 million (47.72 percent). The state constitutes 14 administrative districts, 75 taluks, and 1535 villages. Out of the total population of the state, 43.89 percent of its population belongs to the Malabar region. Malabar was an administrative district of the Madras Presidency during the British colonial period. Presently, Malabar is a term used to denote the erstwhile Malabar district under British rule or as an umbrella term referring to the northern districts of Kerala Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Wayanad and some parts of Palakkad.

While considering the educational development in Kerala, it is clear that Malabar was not only burdened with the two hundred and fifty years of colonial administration but also with neglect of the successive democratic governments that came to power after the independence. It has been argued by many that, there exists a clear regional disparity in the 'Kerala model' of development, where the districts of Malabar, and Kannur to a certain extent, lag behind districts from Travancore and Cochin (Chakraborty 1999, Leni 2006, Jacob 2014, Miller 1976, 2015, Dale, 1980). Within Malabar, Malappuram has ranked lowest in many of the human development indicators. Zhakariya, Mathew, and Rajan (2000) articulate the situation of Malappuram district as follows:

> Of all the districts in Kerala, Malappuram sent out the largest number of emigrants (270,000) and received the largest amount (Rs 2,892 crore) as remittances from abroad. Malappuram has the highest birth rate, the highest rate of population growth, the highest average family size, the highest proportion of illiterates, and the lowest proportion of persons with a secondary school certificate or a degree (2000: 54).

While demographic data of Kerala as a whole is interesting in terms of its positive trends in population, the demography of South Malabar is interesting for the opposite reason, because of the negative trends in population. Therefore, the demography of South Malabar needs a separate discussion.

2.4.1 Demographic and Social Profile of South Malabar

Malappuram has an area of 3550 sq.km with 12.31 percent of the total state population. The district is the second largest in terms of area and ranked first in population size. According to 2011 Census, the total population of the district is 4.11 million, which

constitutes 12.31 percent of the entire population of the state. The district has the highest number (13.4) of decadal population growth rate in Kerala followed by Kasaragod (8.18) and Palakkad (7.39). With 1094 females per 1000 males, the district ranked seventh in terms of the sex ratio of the districts. The total density of the population in Malappuram in 2001 was 1021 persons per square kilometer, and it increased to 1158 in 2011. In short, the district has 298 more inhabitants in a square kilometer when compared to the state average. At present Malappuram District consists of two Revenue Divisions, 7 Taluks, 135 Villages, 14 blocks, 5 Municipalities and 100 panchayats.

Another significant demographic trend of Malappuram district is that of its increasing number of urban population from 2001 Census to 2011 Census. Sociologists have argued that new promising jobs, better living opportunities, expectations for a better life and other factors pull people to cities. In that sense, the urbanization can be seen as a result of migration of people to cities due to sociological reasons. More than the sociological reasons, the reason for urbanization in Kerala is mainly geographical: here the increasing number of towns is an important reason for the growing number of urban population. For instance, in 2001, only 9.82 percent of the Malappuram's population was urban, and by 2011, 55.81 percent of the Malappuram's population is projected to be urban. It shows that within a decade, the percentage of the rural population of the district has declined to 44.19 percent from 90.18 percent. Comparing the rural-urban population of Kerala state and Malappuram district, the gap was 16.14 percent points in 2001 which reduced to -3.53 percent points during the period from 2001 to 2011. There are two possible reasons for the huge growth in urban population over the decade of 2001-2011. One reason must be the extent of migration from rural to urban centers, and another one is the emergence of various urban centers in the district. On analyzing the data, the second reason is found to be more prominent than the first because the number of towns in Kerala has increased manifold from 159 to 520 during 2001 to 2011.

As argued by many (Ramachandran 1992, Oommen 1999), in Kerala, it is tough to demarcate the distinction between the rural and urban. This is further attested by scholars like Sreekumar (1990: 1989), who have referred to the emergence of spatial forms in Kerala, due to various historical processes, that are "neither rural nor urban", which he terms "rurban" or "semi-urban". Most of the urban areas are closely connected and linked

to villages, and the rural people have quick and convenient access to urban facilities and the mode of life of rural people is not significantly different from the urban population. However, there are exceptions, especially in the hilly regions where the ceaseless interaction between these urban and rural social formations is minimal. However, a strong rural-urban continuum exists in Malappuram district as it does in Kerala in general. There is no strict social or cultural distinction between the village community and urban community in the region, and even the economic distinctions between both these communities are steadily diminishing. Thanks to Gulf remittance, many of the villages have palatial buildings, luxurious houses, and shopping centers.

Urbanization has not only helped families to find a convenient place to settle in, with much better facilities than rural areas, but it gives them the accessibility to better educational institutions, coaching centers, more efficient transportation and communication networks, etc. It has also helped parents to send their children to good schools without many difficulties. An increasing number of urban centers are not only beneficial for students to access educational centers, but it also provides the teachers, and nonteaching staff easy access to the educational institutions. As reported by many locals in the area of Ernad taluk, the emergence of urban areas like Manjeri, Pandikkad, Wandoor, Nilambur, Kottakkal, Parappanagadi and Kondotty towns provides them access to higher educational institutions, access to medical and engineering coaching centres, an array of goods and services and use of better transportation. Regular bus services organized by private bus owners are an important means by which rural people are connected to the urban centres. Most of the villages in the district lie within 15-20 kilometres distance from the nearest town and are fairly well connected.

Table 2.6 shows that the majority of the population in the district constitutes Muslims (70.24 percent), followed by Hindus (27.06 percent), and Christians (1.98 percent). It is the only district in Kerala that has a majority Muslim the population. Though the district tops the population tables, it ranks bottom in many of the social indicators such as the number of graduates, female education, and workforce participation

Table: 2.6. District-Wise Percentage of Religious Population of Kerala (As per 2011Census)

Districts	Percentage of Hindus	Percentage of Muslims	Percentage of Christians	Percentage of Others
Kasaragod	55.8	37.2	6.7	0.2
Kannur	59.8	29.4	10.4	0.3
Wayanad	49.5	28.6	21.3	0.5
Kozhikode	56.2	39.2	4.3	0.3
Malappuram	**27.6**	**70.2**	**1.98**	**0.2**
Palakkad	66.8	28.9	4.1	0.2
Thrissur	58.4	17.1	24.3	0.2
Ernakulam	46	15.7	38	0.3
Idukki	48.9	7.4	43.4	0.3
Kottayam	49.8	6.4	43.5	0.3
Alappuzha	68.6	10.6	20.4	0.4
Pathanamthitta	56.9	4.6	38.1	0.4
Kollam	64.4	19.3	16	0.3
Thiruvananthapuram	66.5	13.7	19.1	0.7
Kerala	54.7	26.6	18.4	0.3

Source: Author's computaion based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India.
Note: Others= Sikhs+ Buddhists+ Jains+ Others+ Religion not stated

In addition to this, the latest census reports have led to much debate and discussion regarding the profile of Malappuram district, especially focusing on its population 'overgrowth' compared to other districts. While the population growth rate of Kerala in 2011 was 4.86, Malappuram district registered the highest growth rate during the years between 2001 and 2011 with 13.39 percent points. However, it is equally noteworthy that Muslims in Malappuram have been reported to experience a significant fertility decline over the last 20 years. The decline was 2.0 children (from 4.4 children to 2.4 children) in Malappuram compared to just 1.2 children for Kerala (Rajan 2005). While discussing district level fertility, Rajan (2005) pointed out that the fertility estimate for Malappuram is around 3.0 children per women, which is lower than the all-India average of 3.2 children. This demographic trend of the district has led to argue the pioneers of population studies that Malappuram district is on the verge of completing its fertility transition (Zachariah, Mathew and Rajan 2003, Rajan 2005: 441).

The higher growth rate is a by-product of the low level of education and early marriage of women in the region. Early marriage produces early motherhood, and it further

increases the population growth rate. The primary reasons for early marriage, which will be discussed in detail in the last section of the fifth chapter, are low educational opportunities in the region, 'thin agency' of girls, and the existing socio-cultural norms and values. When women in the area have access to proper education and several opportunities for higher studies after the completion of higher secondary school, it forces them to marry later in order to complete their higher education. Educated women are more likely to have children later and have fewer children compared to uneducated women. Only through such an 'indirect method,' the state or other authorities can hope to control the 'overgrowth' of the population in Malappuram district.

During the fieldwork for this study, the present author came across many villages in Malappuram where more than 90-95 percent of the population constitutes Muslims. Some of the locals even joke saying that we live in a '*mini-Pakistan*,' because of its overwhelmingly Muslim population. However, when outsiders brand these villages as 'mini-Pakistan', many take it as a derogatory remark and not something to be proud of. They discourage any attempt to name their village based on their religious identity. The majority of the Muslims in the district follow the *shafi* thought of Islamic jurisprudence. However, it would be wrong to argue that Muslims in Malappuram follow the same sect of Islamic jurisprudence in all their rituals, religious beliefs, and practices. Among the Muslims, there are various religious sects and groups such as Sunnis, Mujahids and Jamaats[31] following different religious views, rituals, and practices. Some of the Muslims not only accept the practices of other *madhabs or* sects*,* but they consider many other Muslims as the practitioners of 'un-Islamic' beliefs.

Do the intra-religious differences among the Muslims also reflect in their educational attainment/background? For instance, Osella and Osella pointed out that the *Mujahids* also called as *Wahabis*, are much ahead in education and government jobs compared to the Sunnis (Osella and Osella 2008). Even though there are not many studies to prove such a claim, the present author also observed during fieldwork for this study that many *Mujahids* are well educated and occupy respectable positions in government jobs compared to the traditional *Sunnis*. The educational backwardness of the traditional Sunnis can likely be attributed to many historical reasons such as the boycott of colonial English

---

[31] Jamaats here are meant as the followers of the religious and political ideology of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind.

education and reluctance to accept the modern educational system proposed by the colonial administrators. A detailed discussion of the sectarian differences among the Muslims in Kerala and the educational differences amongst the different Muslim sects is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the focus here is on the caste differences among the Muslims of the region and their educational profile.

There is a large regional variation in the cultural, educational and in the religious practices and beliefs of the Mappilas of Malabar. Noting this point, Victor D'Souza has argued that "the social organization of the Mappilas has to be studied from the regional perspective, noting the difference between the regions" (D'Souza 1973:48). Within the region of Malabar, Muslims live with varied cultures, rituals and even religious beliefs. Heterogeneity of Muslims of Kerala should be considered while discussing any aspects of Kerala Muslims. Therefore, in order to understand the educational background and development among the Muslim communities in Malappuram, its regional variations and caste compositions in higher education, the region, and its population should be studied separately. Certain regions and districts in Kerala have higher educational facilities and opportunities compared to others, and the geographical locality of Muslims plays a vital role in their educational attainment. This unequal distribution of educational resources across the state has forced many organizations, neo-political parties and groups to demand the bifurcation of the district into two, mainly Malappuram and Tirur. Many movements and protests have been organized to demand higher educational institutions, health facilities and adequate state budget allocation for various developmental projects. Protesters have been arguing that the overwhelming population and unequal distribution of resources are the main reasons for the underdevelopment and the backwardness of the district. The recent government reports make their claims valid. Similarly, the spending on education is unequally distributed and has reduced over the years.

Even though the state income has increased over the years, the impact of this increased income has seldom reflected in the education sector. While in the 1960s, state income at constant prices was 462 crore rupees, it was 226208 crore rupees in 2014. However, the fund spent for education as a percentage of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has lessened over the years in Kerala. For instance, the percentage of budget expenditure on education out of the total budget was 37.1 percent in 1976, but reduced to

28.81 in the fiscal year of 1998-99, and it further fell to 24.76 in the fiscal year of 2001-02[32]. The various ruling parties that have come into power after the state formation, led by both LDF and UDF, had reduced the spending on education in the name of revenue and budget deficit. Despite the reduced spending on the education sector, the Indian Human Development Index report continues to indicate that Kerala occupies the first position in the Human Development Index (HDI) and is much ahead when compared to other states. Kerala, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, and Punjab occupied the top five ranks in HDI of 2007-2008.

It is worth noting, however, that this impressive HDI ranking does not imply that all districts in Kerala are prosperous and developed. Wayanad, Idukki, Malappuram, and Kasaragod severely lag behind the more prosperous districts such as Ernakulam, Pathanamthitta, Kollam, and Kottayam in various aspects. The Human Development Index in the latter districts is very high, and even comparable to the developed nations. How is there such stark inequality among these districts? While analysing the regional disparities in India, scholars have pointed out that, "the remarkable characteristic of regional disparities in India is the presence of backward areas even within states that have grown faster and are at relatively high-income levels on average" (Bakshi, Chawla and Shah 2015: 46). Also, as pointed out by many, backwardness is multidimensional, and there is no single variable that captures all its dimensions (Bakshi, Chawla and Shah 2015). This is truer in the Kerala context than any other state in India. In comparison to Wayanad, Idukki and Kasaragod districts, Malappuram district may not be seen as a backward district in the state. Nevertheless, many of the areas in the Ernad, Nilambur, Kondotty, and Perinthalmanna and Ponnani taluks of Malappuram district lack even basic facilities and infrastructure in education, health, and other human development indexes.

It should be noted that while analysing HDI within a particular region, certain communities face a double disadvantage based on differences in social class, religion and caste . Such is the case of Muslim caste groups who live in South Malabar. Some of the caste groups are better positioned in education than others, and they have been enjoying such a status mainly because of their social and cultural capitals, which will be explained

---

[32] Source: Selected Educational Statistics 1976-77, 1999-200, and 2001-2002, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

with field data in the fourth and fifth chapters. Similarly, as we have seen in the last section, compared to other socio-religious categories, Muslims are backward in the state, and their position in higher education is similar to the most exploited groups such as the scheduled castes. More interestingly, in the 'Kerala Model'of development, a great regional disparity is evident in educational development. Therefore a district-wise analysis is important to understand the position of Malappuram district in education. Therefore, the third and last section of this chapter will discuss the educational scenario of Malappuram district in detail.

2.5 Educational Profile of South Malabar

This section presents a comparative analysis of the educational profile of Malappuram district with the educational profile of other districts in the state focusing on three indicators- literacy, schooling and number of people who are graduates or have higher degrees.

2.5.1 Literacy of South Malabar

According to the 2011 Census, the literacy of Malappuram district is 93.6 percent, which is below the state average. Among the fourteen districts, Malappuram ranks 9th in literacy rate in Kerala. The district ranked fifth in the list of districts with the highest rate of Muslim literates. It occupies the seventh position in Muslim male literacy and fifth position in Muslim female literacy in the state. Throughout the census history, literacy figures for Malappuram have always lagged behind with respect to the state average. Even if we consider male and female literacy separately, in each category, the district lags behind the state average. The male literacy rate in Malappuram is 95.8 percent, but the female literacy rate is 91.6 percent. This difference is significant when compared to figures for other districts. Even though this difference of 4.23 percent seems minimal, no district in the state has such a wide gap between the male and female literacy rates.

Table 2.7. District wise Literacy rate of Muslims and All religious groups in Kerala (2001 and 2011)

District	2001						2011					
	All			Muslim			All			Muslim		
	Tota %	% Males	% Females	Tota %	% Males	% Females	Tota %	% Males	% Females	Tota %	% Males	% Females
Kottayam	95.8	97.3	94.4	93.8	97	90.8	97.2	98	96.5	95.6	97.1	94.3
Pathanamthitt	94.8	96.4	93.4	92.4	95.5	89.6	96.5	97.4	95.8	95	96.7	93.5
Kozhikode	92.2	96.1	88.6	91.3	95.5	87.5	95.1	97.4	93	94.5	96.9	92.4
Kannur	92.6	96.1	89.4	90.8	95.5	86.8	95.1	97.2	93.3	94	96.7	91.9
Malappuram	**89.6**	**93.2**	**86.3**	**89.6**	**93.4**	**86.3**	**93.6**	**95.8**	**91.6**	**93.7**	**95.9**	**91.8**
Ernakulum	93.2	95.8	90.7	89.9	94.4	85.6	95.9	97.4	94.5	93.6	96.2	91.1
Thrissur	92.3	95.1	89.7	90.1	94	86.8	95.1	96.8	93.6	93.5	95.8	91.7
Alappuzha	93.4	96.3	90.8	89.4	94.6	84.6	95.7	97.4	94.2	92.9	96	90
Idukki	88.7	92.3	85	88.9	93.4	84.5	92	94.6	89.5	92.5	95.6	89.4
Trivandrum	89.3	92.6	86.1	87.5	91.8	83.5	93	95.1	91.2	92.4	94.9	90.1
Kollam	91.2	94.4	88.2	88.1	92.8	83.8	94.1	96.1	92.3	92.3	95.2	89.9
Palakkad	84.3	89.5	79.6	87.9	92.1	84.1	89.3	93.1	85.8	92.3	95	89.8
Wayanad	85.2	89.8	80.7	87.6	93.7	81.6	89	92.5	85.7	90.6	95.1	86.5
Kasaragod	84.6	90.4	79.1	84.2	90.5	78.4	90.1	94	86.5	90.5	94.5	87.1
Kerala	90.9	94.2	87.7	89.4	93.7	85.5	94	96.1	92.1	93.3	95.9	91.1

Note: Table is arranged in the ascending order of most Muslim literate district as per 2011 Census. Population below the age of 7 is excluded from the total population

Source: Author's computation based on the Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

UNDP report says that gender inequality is not only pervasive in Malappuram, but throughout the state. While analysing the Human development index in the state, the UNDP acknowledges Kerala's high level of human development Index, but it points out that the gender inequality is one of the most persistent problems in the state. While analysing higher education of Malappuram district, it is not wrong to argue that the district has the worst case of inequality in education on the basis of gender. The data on the number of graduates in the district shows that male members have more opportunities than the females to access higher education in the district. Even though girls and boys receive equal opportunities in school education, higher education opportunities are often curtailed for girls in the district. The reasons for the educational backwardness of women in higher education and the community and caste factors influencing women's higher education in the district will be explained in detail in the last section of the fifth chapter. The next sub-section will examine the state of school education in the district.

2.5.2   School Education and Enrolment of Students

The school education system in Kerala is more advanced and well organized than several other states in India (NCERT 2007). The teacher-student ratio, physical amenities of schools like classrooms, toilets, and kitchen, electricity, and drinking water facilities are much better in comparison to many other states. The school system in Kerala is controlled by different educational bodies but functions under the larger control of the Ministry of Education. The Kerala Education Bill of 1957 legalized the role of private school management resulting in three school categories in the state: Government, Aided (Private school recognized by and receiving aid from Government, the latter also pays the salary of the staff members) and Unaided (Private school recognized by the Government but management meets the salary requirements of the staff members).

According to the Economic Review (2016), there were 12882 schools in Kerala during 2015-16. With 1548 schools, Malappuram district has the highest number of schools in the state (pp181-82). Even though, the district has the highest number of schools and educational sub-districts in Kerala, the district is lagging behind in education in terms of the number of seats for higher education, school facilities, the number of schools per

population, and percent of higher secondary graduates when compared to other districts in the state, especially districts of South Kerala. In order to understand the educational backwardness of Malappuram district in school education, the author here discusses two important features related to school education. The first one is the number of 'uneconomic schools' and the second is the percent of higher secondary graduates in Malappuram and other districts.

One of the features of Malappuram district in school education is its less number of 'uneconomic schools.' Schools with the insufficient strength of students are grouped as uneconomic schools (GKER 2016:184, Dhanuraj 1995). In another report, it is argued that "the use of the word 'uneconomic' in describing such schools is considered a misnomer because schools offer public service that cannot be evaluated against any meaningful economic yardstick." [33] Despite the disclaimer in the above description, the coinage of the term 'uneconomic schools' clearly suggests that running schools for a few students cause an economic burden and financial imbalance in the educational system of the state. Wayanad, Kasaragod, and Malappuram are three districts in Kerala with less number of uneconomic schools. In 2016, there were 5715 uneconomic schools in Kerala. There were 723 uneconomic schools in Kannur district, which is the highest in the state followed by Kozhikode (593) and Kottayam (560) districts (GKER 2016: 185). The numbers of such schools were only 218 in Malappuram district in 2014 but increased to 231 in 2016

Interestingly, the government argues that the emergence of uneconomic schools is the outcome of a 'healthy scenario' created due to the high competition among the government, aided and unaided schools to attract students which have in turn led to the closing down of the inefficient ones with the lesser number of students. The government has cited the negative population growth/low birth rate along with the stiff competition among schools in the three sectors as the main reasons for the existence of uneconomic schools. There are, however, other factors that also cause an increase in the number of uneconomic schools. The uneven and unequal distribution of schools without considering the population of the districts and regions is one of the reasons for the emergence of uneconomic schools. For instance, districts such as Malappuram, Kasaragod, and Wayanad have less number of uneconomic schools, and they are at the bottom in most of the

---

[33] Department of Education, Selected initiatives in education, P.9

educational indices analyzed here such as literacy, higher secondary pass outs and percent of graduates. Historically, these districts have been discriminated against in terms of educational opportunities.

Another reason, the author noted during the fieldwork, is that parents today prefer to send their children to well established and organized private schools instead of the government schools, especially middle and high-income groups. Previous research on the topic shares the same opinion (Banu 2007, Sancho 2016). David Sancho argues that emergence of private schools, especially 'emergence of new private English-medium schools was a phenomenon seen in Kerala especially after the 1990s. He gives three important reasons for this; one is the rising middle class, the second one is "decrease in government's capacity and willingness to subsidize education" and lastly, "India's wider endorsement of privatization of education" (Sancho 2016: 53-54). In addition to that, the number of students decreases in schools because the "accountability, dedication and commitment of the teachers and staff are under the watchful eyes of parents" (Sancho 2016). Moreover, unlike early days, now parents are demanding, and they want their children to produce competitive results in the exams as well as undergo all-round development. Even if children fail because of their own reasons, parents blame the quality of the schools for their children's poor performances. Such a trend negatively influences and questions the existence of the government and the aided schools.

There are two main reasons for the less number of uneconomic schools in Malappuram district: high number of births and fewer schools in the district. The number of uneconomic schools increases when there is a shortage of pupils in student enrollment. Student enrollment decreases mainly because of the low birth rate and the higher number of schools in a particular region. Malappuram, as mentioned above, shows the opposite trend- a high number of births and fewer schools. Secondly, the increasing number of uneconomic schools in a region likely means that there are a higher number of private schools in the area. The increase in the number of private schools directly affects the system of 'free education,' which is a constitutionally guaranteed right of any child below the age of 14. The RTE Act 2010 guaranteed 'free education.' Free education means, "no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges

or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education." In some cases, if the parents choose private schools and are ready to pay the fees, it is not a violation of the RTE Act. In such a scenario, those who are economically well off often select the infrastructurally-sound private schools.

However, there appears to be a positive correlation between the number of uneconomic schools and the educational development of a region: parents are not ready to send their children to schools without adequate facilities. Most of them prefer to send their children to private English medium schools which tend to be fully furnished and well-maintained schools that strongly attract parents' attention. More often than not, the existing government educational institutions pale in comparison to the private institutions with respect to infrastructure. There is a growing number of parents in the field who prefer to send their children to private English medium schools, despite the higher amount of tuition fees compared to government schools. Private schools not only provide infrastructural facilities, but they also provide transportation facilities, better toilets, and classrooms, and enrolling children in private schools has also become a symbol of parents' social status. Many parents consider government schools as 'low-quality educational centers, ' and such institutions are often accused of failing to incorporate the infrastructural and academic changes that characterize a modern all-around educational system. Interestingly, there are also cases that came to light during the fieldwork in which the parents could not afford to meet the high tuition fees of the private schools for a long period and were forced after that to resend their children to the government schools.

The below Table 2.8 further proves that even though the district has the highest number of schools, only 17.41 percent of the total population has a pre-university education. Out of the fourteen districts in the state, Malappuram holds the twelfth position in higher secondary education. The even more interesting statistic is that those who complete their school education from these 160 schools have only 17 arts and sciences colleges in the district to apply for higher studies, greatly reducing the chances of potential applicants to obtain admission in colleges within the district.

Table 2.8 Ranking of Districts by percent of Higher Secondary/Pre-University graduates (As per Census 2011)

District	Total	Male	Female
Kannur	24.72	25.43	24.14
Kottayam	23.70	23.76	23.63
Pathanamthitta	23.62	23.72	23.54
Kozhikode	22.53	22.99	22.12
Ernakulam	21.32	21.03	21.60
Kollam	21.15	21.60	20.77
Thiruvananthapuram	21.08	21.28	20.90
Alappuzha	20.03	20.13	19.93
Trissur	19.93	19.25	20.51
Kasaragod	18.78	19.89	17.80
Idukki	17.97	17.89	18.04
Malappuram	17.41	17.94	16.95
Wayanad	16.10	16.29	15.92
Palakkad	14.73	14.97	14.51
Kerala	**20.35**	**20.53**	**20.20**

Source: Author's Computation Based on the Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Note: Population is 18 and above. Total percentage is calculated excluding the population of seventeen and below

Even though a student qualifies with good marks, like Safwan who got 85 percent marks, obtaining admission in a government or aided college is extremely difficult. Discrimination that continues even today in the allocation of degree batches and new courses can be understood if we make a comparison to other districts in the state. Such a scenario has created the abysmally low number of graduates in Malappuram district. In order to understand the scenario better, the next subsection will analyse the higher educational profile of the field separately.

2.5.3 Higher Education of South Malabar: The most backward region in Kerala

Higher education is quintessential for creating a well-educated workforce, responsible citizens and for the social and political progress of any society. In order to impart higher education, Kerala has fourteen universities and 213 Arts and Science colleges (Economic Review 2016: 187). The 2011 Census shows that the total number of graduates in the State is 2.53 million, out of which, 1.13 million are males, and 1.39 are females. Kerala graduates constitute 3.7 percent of the total graduates in India. The interesting point

is that Kerala has 268,649 more female graduates compared to the total male graduates. In India, Kerala and Chandigarh are the only states which have a higher number of women graduates than male graduates. A total of 25.41 percent and 10.34 percent of women from Chandigarh and Kerala respectively are graduates whereas the percentages of men from Chandigarh and Kerala who are graduates are 24.02 percent and 9.4 percent respectively. Kerala produces 5.35 percent (1399985) of the total female graduates in the country[34]. Kerala also has a higher percentage of graduates (9.89 percent) than the national average (8.14 percent). In Kerala, like many other indicators of development, the district of Malappuram has the least number of graduates followed by Wayanad and Kasaragod.

Table 2.9 Ranking of Districts by Percentage of Graduates in Kerala (As per 2011 Census).

Districts	Population	Total Graduates		Total Males	Male Graduates		Total Females	Female Graduates	
		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Ernakulam	2.36	0.38	16.2	1.15	0.17	15.1	1.21	0.21	17.3
Thiruvananthapuram	2.34	0.36	15.4	1.09	0.16	14.8	1.25	0.2	16
Kottayam	1.42	0.19	13.6	0.69	0.09	13.3	0.74	0.1	13.9
Thrissur	2.19	0.27	12.3	1.01	0.11	10.6	1.19	0.16	13.8
Pathanamthitta	0.88	0.1	11.4	0.4	0.04	10.7	0.48	0.06	12
Kollam	1.86	0.2	11	0.85	0.09	10	1.01	0.12	11.9
Alappuzha	1.53	0.16	10.6	0.71	0.07	9.6	0.82	0.09	11.5
Kannur	1.77	0.18	10.1	0.8	0.08	9.5	0.97	0.1	10.5
Kozhikode	2.14	0.21	9.8	0.99	0.1	9.8	1.15	0.11	9.7
Idukki	0.78	0.07	8.7	0.39	0.03	8.5	0.4	0.03	8.8
Palakkad	1.95	0.15	7.6	0.92	0.07	7.4	1.03	0.08	7.8
Kasaragod	0.87	0.06	7	0.41	0.03	7.5	0.47	0.03	6.6
Wayanad	0.55	0.04	6.9	0.27	0.02	7	0.29	0.02	6.7
Malappuram	2.48	0.15	6.1	1.13	0.08	6.9	1.35	0.07	5.5
KERALA	23.47	2.53	10.8	10.97	1.13	10.3	12.51	1.4	11.2

Source: Author's calculation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Note: Total population and total graduates are in millions. Also, data shown here is after excluding the population below 20 years old. No.=Number

Like the backwardness in many social development indicators like health, railway networks, higher secondary education, male and female workforce participation and social infrastructure, Malappuram is way behind the other districts in the state and worse still

---

[34] According to 2011 Census, the total number of female graduates in India was 26168511 (a) and the number was 1399985 (b) in Kerala. Total percent is (b/a*100) is 5.35 percent.

when it comes to higher education. The district is not only behind the state average, but it lags behind even the national average of graduates. Malappuram, which holds the fifth position in literacy rate, is listed at the last position in the percentage of graduates in the district. The total number of graduates in the district is 0.15 million (152366) people, which is only 6.1 percentage of the total population above the age of twenty. This percent is even below the average of some of the most backward states in India. Also, this figure is even below the average of the BIMARU states combined. The total combined percentage of graduates in BIMARU states is 7.8 percent (M.P 7.9, Bihar 5.8, U.P 9.4, and Rajasthan 8.2). It shows that within the 'Kerala-model' of development, many regions in the state are left out, and they are even more backward than the most backward states in the country. In the rural areas of Malappuram, only 5.6 percent of the population are graduates (See Appendix 2), which shows the gross neglect these areas have faced at the hands of the authorities in terms of access to higher educational opportunities.

The 2011 Census data reveals that Malappuram has both the lowest percent of urban and rural graduates (for details see Appendix 2 and 3). Malappuram and Kasaragod are the only districts that have not yet touched the two digit percentage mark on the number of graduates in urban population. Another important problem in higher education of Malappuram is that of its low level of female education. The number of women graduates in the district shows the backwardness of females in higher education and the stark gender inequality that continues to exist in the district. The total number of women graduates are 74228 (0.75 million), which is only 5.5 percentage of the total number of the female 20 and above population. At the same time, the percentage is 16.0 in Thiruvananthapuram, 11.9 in Kollam, 12.0 in Pathanamthitta, 11.5 in Alappuzha, 13.9 in Kottayam, 8.8 in Idukki, 17.3 in Ernakulam, 13.8 in Thrissur, 7.8 in Palakkad, 9.7 in Kozhikode, 6.7 in Wayanad, 10.5 in Kannur, 6.6 in Kasaragode. It should be noted here that the national percentage of the female graduates is 7.4. It shows that with a percentage of 5.5, Malappuram holds the lowest rank among the other districts for the number of women graduates in the state and its ranking is also below the national average. Ernakulam, with the highest number of colleges in the state, stands first in the table with 17.3 percent of female graduates.

During the field work, most of the college-going respondents said that they study in colleges affiliated to the Calicut University. Calicut University is the only affiliating

university located in Malappuram district. The University has a total number of 36 government, 55 aided and 201 unaided colleges. In 2015, seven government, 18 aided, and 66 unaided colleges affiliated to the University of Calicut were functioning in Malappuram. The unaided colleges not only charge high tuition fees from the students but also fail to meet quality education standards including the appointment of qualified teachers. An increasing number of unaided colleges can be seen as a part of a larger agenda to privatize the education sector. The new unaided colleges, started by mainly religious associations and politically linked organizations pressurize the government to reduce the intakes in government and aided colleges. It reduces students' chances to get admission in a government college by reducing the number of courses and number of colleges in the government and aided sectors. Female students are the ones who suffer the most due to the privatization of education. During the field visit, eighty percent of families said that they spend equally on the schooling of boys and girls. They also said that they never show a preference for boys over girls in education. However, 90 percent of the household heads have the view that girls should marry early as possible, they say the 'preferable age' for marriage is 18-20. In such a situation, many of the household heads believe that it is futile to send their daughters to private educational institutions that charge exorbitant tuition fees. One of the respondents, Mansoor said that:

> My daughter passed plus two with only 78 marks, so I have to send her to a private college in Manjeri. I have to keep her in an educational institution till she gets married. Staying at home without studying is a threat to getting a suitable husband. Like me, many consider these private colleges as a 'stopover' for unmarried girls before their wedding. Manjeri Sabahal (Hidayat Arts College) is the best example of a 'stopover' in this region. In Sabahal, the first year degree classes have nearly 50-60 female students, but at the end of the third year, only a maximum of 20-30 female students finish their degree courses. All other female students drop out of the college because of their marriage.

The data coded from the field interview shows that early marriage, early pregnancy, and marriage related issues caused higher drop out of girls from schools and colleges. This has resulted in lowest percent of female graduates in the district compared to other districts in the state.

For instance, as shown in Table-2.9, there are 152366 (0.15 million) graduates in the district, out of which 78138 (0.08 million) are males, and 74228 (0.07 million) are

females. Malappuram and Kasaragod are the only districts in Kerala where the number of male graduates outnumbers the number of female graduates. The difference between the number of male and female graduates in Kasaragod district is just 95, but it is 3910 in Malappuram district. Above the age group of sixty, there are only 4189 graduates in Malappuram. However, it is 10682, 17315, 30466, and 32603 in Kozhikode, Thrissur, Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram districts respectively. These figures indicate that the higher education profile of Malappuram district with respect to the older generation is very limited. The older generation in the region likely had far fewer opportunities to acquire higher education, and/or possibly education was of minimal concern to them.

There are many reasons for the fewer number of female graduates in Malappuram district. The primary reason, based on the field research, is child marriage. The district has the highest number of child marriages cases reported in the state. Also, the census data shows that 36.1 percent of the female Muslims in Kerala married before the legal age and 67.6 percent of female Muslims got married before the age of twenty (the majority of these marriages are reported from Malappuram district). It shows that before the completion of a bachelor degree, 67.6 percent of Muslim women in Kerala are married off. In most of the cases, only girls are forced to marry before the age of 18; it also forces them to quit their education and career. A detailed study of child marriage and its relation to female higher education, the Muslim caste groups and the practice of child marriage among different communities are explained in the last section of the fifth chapter.

The fewer number of colleges, lack of other higher educational institutions, and patriarchal values that stop women from working have caused large-scale unemployment in the region. Malappuram has the lowest workforce participation of both males and females.

Table 2.10 District wise Worker population ratio of Muslims and All religious groups in Kerala

Districts	2001						2011					
	All			Muslims			All			Muslims		
	% Person	% Male	% Female	% Person	% Male	% Female	% Person	% Male	% Female	% Person	% Male	% Female
Kasaragod	34.7	49.1	20.9	22.3	37.0	8.7	35.4	51.7	20.3	22.7	39.9	7.4
Kannur	31.8	49.9	15.3	20.0	38.6	3.7	32.7	51.6	16.0	20.2	40.0	4.0
Wayanad	39.5	55.8	23.2	31.5	49.1	14.2	41.6	56.9	26.8	31.5	50.2	14.3
Kozhikode	27.9	27.9	8.2	21.7	41.5	3.3	30.7	51.1	12.2	22.6	42.9	5.0
Malappuram	**24.1**	**24.1**	**6.6**	**20.3**	**38.5**	**305**	**25.8**	**45.8**	**7.6**	**22.0**	**42.1**	**4.1**
Palakkad	36.1	52.0	21.2	25.7	44.7	8.1	37.1	54.9	20.4	26.4	47.3	7.3
Thrissur	32.1	50.6	15.2	22.8	40.2	7.8	35.1	53.3	18.7	24.0	43.3	7.9
Ernakulam	36.0	55.1	17.2	29.3	51.3	7.7	38.1	56.4	20.2	31.1	53.1	9.6
Idukki	43.2	58.1	28.1	34.4	54.0	15.1	46.6	60.0	33.2	35.5	54.8	16.5
Kottayam	32.9	52.2	14.0	28.1	50.3	6.3	37.3	54.8	20.4	31.1	52.9	9.8
Alappuzha	34.3	49.4	20.3	28.1	46.8	10.4	37.8	53.0	24.0	31.2	50.5	13.3
Pathanamthitta	29.7	47.5	13.4	26.6	45.9	8.7	32.8	50.2	17.5	30.3	49.5	13.0
Kollam	32.1	48.4	16.8	26.4	45.1	9.0	34.6	51.7	19.3	28.2	47.6	10.9
Trivandrum	32.4	51.4	14.5	26.5	45.7	8.5	37.3	54.6	21.4	29.0	48.1	12.0
Kerala	32.3	50.2	15.4	23.2	42.0	5.9	34.8	52.7	18.2	24.5	44.5	6.8

Source: Author's computation based on Census Report 2011, Govt. of India

Table 2.10 shows that the labor force of Malappuram is primarily masculine, and female representation in the workforce is ten times lesser compared to the male representation in the workforce. In Kerala, the work participation ratio is least in Kannur followed by Malappuram district. According to the 2011 Census, the female working population of Kerala was only 18.2 percent compared to the 52.7 percent of the males working population. Analyzing the Census data based on religion, the gender gap is higher among the Muslims. Among the Muslims of Kerala, 44.5 percent of the men are working, but only 6.8 percent of the females are in the workforce. In Malappuram district, the data shows that Muslim women are the least represented category in the labour force with only 4.1 percent of the women. At the same time, the percent of the male workforce in the district is 42.1 percent. During the field study, what the author has noticed that women from the so-called low castes have higher participation in economic activity, while women from so-called upper castes have regulations and high restrictions in participation in economic activities. Women taking up jobs are considered as an embarrassment (*kurachil*) to the family by the Thangals. Some even said to the author that it defames the reputation of the *tharavad* (*tharavadinte manam kalayum*).

The data regarding both female workforce participation and the number of graduates show that females have fewer opportunities for higher education and they have fewer roles in economic activities. This situation, in turn, results in the 'thin agency' of women in the decision-making process, and more depend on male members for social and economic activities. In such a patrilineal society, the higher education and the jobs of women are less valued, and parents invest less on the education of girls in families. This also causes the prevalence of patriarchal norms, child marriage of women in the region and higher college dropouts. During the field work, the author met many women who took admission in some of the finest colleges in the region but dropped out of college due to early marriage, pressure from husband's family and early pregnancy related issues. This will be further explained in the last chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter, primarily divided into three sections, discussed three major issues. The first section of the chapter compared the literacy, mean years of schooling and percent of graduates of Muslims in Kerala and other states. Results indicate that, in general, in the

lower strata of educational indices like literacy and MYS, Kerala Muslims are far ahead of other Muslims. However, when it comes to higher education, Kerala Muslims lag behind their counterparts in other states. In the second section, a comparison is made to understand the educational status of Kerala Muslims with respect to other socio-religious categories (SRC) in the state.   In this section, a discussion on literacy, schooling, and a number of graduates primarily from the data obtained from Census reports and also from field work show that Muslims in Kerala are the least educated religious community in Kerala, and their status in higher education is close to that of the Dalits, who have been discriminated against for centuries. The last section shows that Malappuram district lags behind other districts primarily in higher secondary, higher education, female education, and workforce participation.

However, as the first chapter pointed out, the educational backwardness among the Muslims in a district, state and country is not uniform in its character; many scholars rightly criticize this often made a generalisation. Even all the data mentioned above clearly shows that Muslims in South Kerala are well educated and have more participation in the workforce compared to Muslims in Malappuram district. The author would argue that in Kerala, Muslims are educationally backward, but not all Muslims are backward in education. There are privileged 'high caste' Muslims who are educationally well of compared to Muslims from 'low caste' groups. Before exploring the differential attainment of education and different educational status of Muslims by caste, it is important to point out the existence of caste among the Muslims and how different caste groups experience the vertical social stratification. It is of particular importance because there is a great denial about the existence of caste among the *ulamas*, a group of academicians, politicians and even among the common man perhaps due to the staunch belief that 'Islam is an egalitarian religion and therefore there is no caste among the Muslims'. However, the next chapter will challenge this 'status quo position' taken by the groups mentioned above by bringing the field responses on caste from South Malabar. The author has the view that across religions and regions, those who are not subject to caste discrimination can sometimes have blind spots or lack of appreciation to what it feels to be on the receiving end of caste discrimination and humiliation. With sufficient ethnographic data, the author argues that there exist caste and caste-based discrimination among the Muslims of South Malabar

when caste is defined based on an Ambedkarite perspective that characterises caste as birth based, religiously bound, endogamous and occupationally divided. Among the Muslims, social inequality and religious inequality are embedded in the religious interpretation of various religious texts, and these texts are taught, and widely accepted and venerated by the *ulamas*. Therefore the next chapter will discuss the social stratification among the Muslims of South Malabar in detail, focusing on the experience of caste from a subjective perspective of the respondents in this study.

Chapter III

Status, Occupation, and Endogamy: Social Stratification among Muslims in South Malabar

In the last chapter, the demographic composition and educational profile of the South Malabar, was discussed. In terms of the proportion of college graduates in the population, the number of colleges, and in women's educational status, it is clear that Malappuram district is one of the most backward districts in Kerala, a state known for its high socioeconomic index. Ironically, the demographic analysis of the region shows a transition of the population from a negative demographic trend to a positive one, the recent trend reflected in the low birth rate and low death rate recorded in the district. Despite the positive demographic trend displayed by the district, the higher education figures for the district are poor: only 5.30 percent of the people in the district are graduates. Only 4.80 percent of the women in the district are graduates. Also, the district has recorded the lowest (14th) rank in total male and female work participation rates.

Why is the region lagging behind in higher education and why is the proportion of the female graduates is lower in Malappuram than in other districts? The existing research in the area, albeit limited, points to a variety of reasons: while some researchers suggest historical reasons like the anti-colonial attitude of the people in the region, and rejection of anything related to British, including their education, as being the primary factor, some others argue that the religious positions taken by traditional *ulams* have resulted in the poor educational development of the district. In any case, the reasons are not monolithic but are multi-dimensional, not only historical but also sociological and political. The role of religion and how it defines education, the attitude of the people in the region towards education, regional imbalances in development, and cultural factors are some of the sociological reasons for the backwardness of the district in higher education. Similarly, the political factors such as the indifference of successive governments towards the district and allocation of minimum resources for education have all played their part in lowering the educational standard of the district. While some of these factors have been briefly commented upon throughout the thesis, the focus in this chapter is on the social

stratification of Muslims in South Malabar and how Muslims in the region have experienced and responded to the question of the caste.

This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section will explain the social structure that characterizes the Muslim society in South Malabar and deal with the question of caste based social stratification in South Malabar. It argues that there exists a hierarchy of social status that is not horizontal but vertical in nature and therefore the mobility of an individual from one caste group to another is almost impossible[35]. The second section will examine the different caste groups among the Muslims in the region, their social life and position in the social hierarchy by analysing the field responses. The task is not easy especially when the population is huge, and they are spread across South Malabar, and there is a denial among many Muslims that there is no caste among the Muslims. This belief comes from the unflinching belief among Muslims that 'Islam is an egalitarian religion.'

However, based on my field experience, I would argue that caste among the Muslims of India is a reality and I agree with what Ambedkar had argued decades before on Indian Muslims. After discussing the 'panchayat system' and endogamy of Muslims in the province of Bengal, Ambedkar argued that "there can thus be no manner of doubt that the Muslim Society in India is afflicted by the same social evils as afflict the Hindu Society" (Ambedkar 1990 [1946]: 229-30). He identified core features that characterize caste in society, namely birth-based hierarchical status, groups taking up traditional occupations and the practice of endogamy. In this chapter, I argue that the structure of Muslim society is embedded on the vertical division of its groups and that such divisions have had religious validation in the form of textual interpretations of Islam by Ulamas in a manner that maintains the dominant status quo of the Sayyids in the region. Based on my ethnographic data, and classifications made by early researchers like Victor D'Souza (1959), Roland Miller (1976), Thursten (1909), and Mathur (2011), the Muslims in the South Malabar region have been grouped into four caste groups; Thangals, Malabaris, Barbers, and Fishermen. The second section of this chapter discusses the differential

---

[35] Majority of the Barbers and Fishermen population in both present generation (G2) and parent generation (G1) are working in their traditional occupation (See Chapter 4 for more)

experiences of the four caste groups in the light of the main features of the caste system mentioned above. There are no government records and little previous work in the area, and therefore data on the number of the Muslim caste groups and population in specific caste groups is inadequate which further added to the challenges in conducting this study. All the data provided here have been collected through household surveys during my field work. The next section will discuss the question of Muslim caste stratification in detail.

3.1 The Question on Muslim social stratification

To get a general view of Muslim caste, participants were asked three important questions in this regard; I) 'is there any caste division among the Kerala Muslims?' II) 'Which caste do you belong to?' The last question was open-ended, III) 'what are your views on the social stratification that exists among the Kerala Muslims? The first two were closed questions, and the third one gave them enough scope to explain the situation and their experiences. Some respondents found these questions disturbing and not easy to explain and discuss, or tried to avoid it by diverting the topic. For instance, certain people took this question as blasphemous and argued that only Hindus have the caste system and Muslims do not believe in any such divisions. In another instance, a Thangal asked me to leave his house when I started to ask about caste. The person said I should stop asking rude questions. Further, he continued saying that "you came here to talk about Muslim education; I never gave you the permission to ask me about Muslim castes. I strongly believe that no caste or caste discrimination exists among the Muslims and only people who want to defame Islam in public want to discuss such issues". Each and every group had different opinions on the social stratification among the Muslims.

Out of the 160 households, I visited for interviews with members of different caste groups, above ninety percent of the respondents from Barbers and Fishermen agree that there exists a division or distinction or caste and caste-like stratification among the Kerala Muslims. They reported that such a stratification is humiliating, that the entire stratification system is built on and largely sustained by the practice of endogamy. Keeping in mind the complexities surrounding social stratification, the interview transcripts were coded in a way that sheds light on the participants' ways of thinking about the caste system and the way they experience this division, for instances like the criteria of spouse selection, and

the decision to participate in traditional occupation. The views of interviewees on 'Muslim caste' varies depending on their social background and their caste group. While participants who belonged to the same caste group and hailed from a similar social background expressed largely similar responses on social division, the economic background, education and locality of the participants also appear to differentiate their opinions on the Muslim caste question significantly. Therefore, the questions of 'social classes and economic background of families have not been overlooked while discussing the social stratification. In this regard, it is worth discussing the story of Kunjan in order to understand the interplay of caste and class and its relationship with the social status of Muslims in the region.

Kunjan was born in a barber family in a village near Pandaloor. He has three brothers and two sisters. His father migrated to Saudi Arabia in the late 1970s. Kunjan's father had opened a grocery shop in Sharafiya, Saudi Arabia in the first half of the 1990s. Later he expanded his business by opening many grocery shops in Saudi and later in many parts of Malabar. Compared to most if not all of his villagers', Kunjan had a better childhood and he had received a quality education. He completed high school and dropped out of school after that to help his father in his business. His father died in 1998, and at that time his age was forty. According to Islamic inheritance rule, which is what they follow in the region, after the death of the father, the property is divided in a manner where female members are bequeathed half the share of property that their male siblings get. Kunjan, the eldest son, bought the property share of his sisters by paying the market land price and added these to the land property he inherited from his father. He owns the largest share of the family land property, and he is one of the wealthiest persons in his village.

Kunjan owns cars, grocery shops, buildings in his village and nearby towns and a huge house in the centre of his village. People in the village respect him a lot, and they visit Kunjan especially when they are met with any financial trouble. One of the main reasons for the respect he commands is likely due to his wealth and his huge house. He sees his huge house as a symbol of prestige. He is the current president of the *mahallu* and the general secretary of the Madrasa in his village. He was also the president of the school PTA for five years from 2008-2013. Due to his bad health, he was forced to quit that position in

2013 but continues to maintain close relations with the school and its administration. He is the first person consulted by the villagers to solve any problem in the village.

Kunjan is the wealthiest and the noblest in his village, but even he could not escape the system of caste and caste discrimination. All his family members, including his son and daughter, married only from Barber families. No one in his family ever married from other Muslim caste groups, and he believes that such a choice is available, but largely restricted for barbers. Kunjan opines that "even if you earn a lot of money and prestige, it is not easy to remove the caste tag." He gave an interesting example. One of his relatives, Kabir, who lived in the neighbouring village never wanted to identify himself as Ossan. For that reason, he was never ready to take up the barber job. After qualifying his higher secondary exam with first-class (60 percent and above mark), he enrolled for B Pharm in Mysore. He returned to his hometown and opened a medical shop in Melatoor. Even though he named his medical shop as 'Fathima Medical store,' people started calling his medical shop as 'Barber's medical shop.'

Kunjan is of the view that, if you are born into a barber family, it is not easy to escape the caste tag irrespective of whether or not you are following the traditional caste occupation. A member of the Barber caste will be associated with the traditional caste occupation even when employed in a totally different and unrelated job. Kunjan and many others who were born into a Barber family have had similar experiences on the tagging of their caste occupations onto their actual professions, for example, barber's coffee shop, barber's medical shop and barber's canteen, etc.

Kunjan recollected another incident:

During the 2005 local body election; I was the candidate of Muslim league in ward no 13. Since the formation of this Anakkayam Panchayat, this ward has been electing only Muslim League candidates. In 2005 it elected me as their ward member. During the political campaign, the one thing that disturbed me a lot was being labeled as a 'lower caste' Muslim. I would have been affected less if this was only part of the opposite party's campaign, but I felt humiliated when people who belong to my political party said that 'Ossans' would not be able to handle the job of a politician.

He added that some of the members of his party were against filling his name for the ward elections. They were of the opinion that 'Ossans' were not meant to represent other Muslims. They should only perform their traditional duty- that is barbering. These incidents in Kunjan's life reveal the extent of humiliation faced by the 'low caste' Muslims

which in this case is despite managing to climb the social class ladder. During the political campaign of 2005 local body election, the one derogatory remark that he has not forgotten is "*cherumante kayyil adhikaram kittiya pole*" (looks like power in the hands of 'Cheruman'). This derogatory comment carries a lot of sociological meaning.

One of the meanings of this comment is that his caste is similar to the Hindu 'low caste' Cheruman. It also means that once 'Chreumans' get power and the authority, they are unable to handle it properly. It is one among the many derogatory phrases uttered to humiliate and belittle the social status of the 'Cherumans'. According to Thurston, "cherumans or cherumakkal have been defined as a Malayalam caste of agricultural serfs, and as members of an inferior caste in Malabar, who are, as a rule, toilers attached to the soil" (Thurston 1909a: 45). I have heard many times the utterly humiliating and derogatory comment from the people of the locality, both from the Hindus and the Muslims, that 'Cheruman cannot handle power; once they come to power they would act like fools, and they could ruin the entire system'[36]. Kunjan said that the same logic is applied to him and his caste by their fellow Muslims.

It is interesting to note that, even among the Muslims, very few barbers and fishermen are represented in local political bodies. They are rarely represented by their caste members in politics and are most often represented by the Malabaris and Sayyids. Amidst all these examples of caste discrimination, the elite Muslims and the ulamas continue to cite the religious texts as a means to not acknowledge the presence of caste or caste-like segregations within the Muslim community. Such a situation is articulated by Trivedi, Goli, and Fahimuddin in their work on *Does Untouchability exist among Muslims?* (2006).They (Trivedi, Goli and Fahimuddin 2016: 36) argue that:

> The precarious condition of Dalit Muslims due to the actions of the state is further complicated by the position taken by the conservative elite of their community. Every attempt of this marginalised group for recognition is countered by conservative Muslims citing certain Quranic verses. It is vehemently argued that since Islam does not lend support to vertical segregations, there is no possibility of caste practices among Muslims. The underlying assumption here is that all Muslims strictly adhere to Islamic texts in their everyday lives; a claim that would be first refuted by the same conservatives.

---

[36] To understand more on the relationship between Cherumans and Barbers see (Gough 1959: 121)

Similarly, while discussing caste, the ulamas in the field cite the Quran to argue that 'there is no place for caste in Islam,' but the same ulamas quote and interpret the same text to argue that 'Sayyids have more power, prestige, and status among the Muslims'. All traditional *ulamas*, who belong to either the A.P or E.K fraction, never refute the teaching that Sayyids are superior in Islam. They have been interpreting texts and giving public speeches in support of the Sayyids and the respect that they must be conferred with due to their direct association with the Prophet.

Some of the *ulamas* that I had interviewed, like the *ustadh's* view in the introduction, argue that a barber has less status in Islam compared to the 'common' Muslims. Based on my fieldwork experience as well as analyses of some of the textual interpretations and speeches given by *ulamas* on the question of caste, social differentiation and stratification (which is discussed in detail later in this chapter), it appears that a caste-endorsing religious ideology is imperative for the sustenance of caste divisions and the continuation of caste-based discrimination. In such a context, it is important to explain the basis on which caste has been defined in this study. I have considered three important parameters to explain the institution of caste and will examine the relationship between these three parameters of caste among the Muslims caste groups in South Malabar. The three important features of caste that form the bedrock of how it is analyzed in this study are traditional occupation, endogamy/marriage pattern and birth-based status.

In India, every caste is associated with a traditional occupation. As noted by Benjamin Lindt "this does not mean that every caste member was or is employed in this occupation, but that caste as an economic unit is, in the eyes of its members and those of observers, symbolically connected to a specific profession" (Lindt 2013:91). Therefore, the traditional occupation associated with each caste and the status attached to it is an important feature of the caste system. Endogamy, another defining characteristic of the caste system, is perhaps the single most important factor that ensures its sustenance and continuation in India. Intermarriages rarely happen in India and marriage is the most important life occasion where the prominence of the institution of caste is most evident. Lastly, the third factor considered in this study, birth-based status, places people in a vertical social hierarchical order. Those who are at the bottom are often not treated as equal to those who are in the higher position. Thangals have always claimed their superiority in Islam on the

basis of their birth to a specific lineage, that of the Prophet. Therefore birth-based social status is crucial in understanding Muslim social stratification.

Kunjan's example mentioned above shows that there is a connection between social class and caste among the Muslims in Kerala. But the fact remains that even if the Muslims belonging to the so-called low castes acquire a tremendous amount of wealth, it can give them prestige and status, but it never takes away the caste identity that they were born with. Such caste prejudice is humiliating and economic wealth cannot bypass such humiliations. In such a context, it is important to understand each community of Muslims in Malabar separately and the way they have experienced the caste based stratification. In the next section, therefore, how different Muslim caste groups in South Malabar have experienced caste will be explained in the form of narrative ethnography coded from people's stories, conversations and experiences with regard, but not limited, to endogamous marriage, occupation, social status and caste related everyday living experinces.

3.2 Social Stratification: The Way it is Experienced

The use of the term 'caste' to denote the system of social stratification that exists among the Muslims has been the subject of much controversy in Indian Sociology. The article *Does Untouchability exist among the Muslims?* Comments on the difficulty involved in fully understanding this issue of the experience of 'untouchability' among Muslims due to inadequate data and research in the area. The article argues that:

> One issue has cropped up time and again in social science literature and political discourse: is there a group of people among Muslims comparable to those included in the list of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in terms of their socio-economic conditions, social status, and experience of untouchability? In the absence of any reliable data and studies, this issue is rather difficult to explore. It is especially so because no castes, other than those that follow Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism, are included in the schedule, and government agencies follow official classification while collecting data (Trivedi, Goli and Fahimudin 2016: 32).

As argued by the above authors, there is no official data available on the caste groups among the Muslims in Kerala. There are no official government records that enumerate Muslim caste groups or the population within each caste group. Although there has been some previous research on Mappila Muslims, there has been little or no research that has examined social stratification among the Kerala Muslims, especially in recent times.

Miller in his recent work on Kerala Muslims (Miller 2015) has argued that there are caste-like groups amongst the Mappila Muslims but that they cannot be called caste groups. He further argues that:

> Mappilas tended to resist groupism-one of the main factors in the conversion to Islam in the interior Malabar was the reputation of Muslim social quality. Nevertheless, caste-like groups are also present among Mappilas. They are not castes in that they do not carry the same social implications that Hindus castes do, but they are caste-like in that they constitute distinct associations and some may even observe endogamous marriage practices (Miller 2015: 209).

Even though he rejected the term 'caste' for the socially stratified groupings among Mappilas, he accepts that they practice endogamy. Most of the previous work including that of Miller's categorically placed all the caste- groups, including Sayyids, Barbers, Fishermen, Keyis and Koyas, under the large umbrella term 'Mappilas'. Mappila Muslims are considered as Other Backward Classes in Kerala. P. R. G. Mathur (2011), made an attempt to define Mappilas 'so that differentiates the non-Mappilas from them,' and he had stated following as their features. Malayalam-speaking Mappilas hail from Malabar and follow both matrilineal and matrilocal traditions in North Malabar. They follow the Shafi sect of Islam and within them exist caste-like divisions such as Thangals; the descendants of the Prophet, the majority population as 'Malabar Mopla' also called as *Angadikkarn* in the rural areas, the third group as '*Kadappurathukar*' converts from local fishermen and the service community called Ossan who along with barbering also conduct circumcision ceremonies (Mathur 2011: 113-35). As argued by Mathur, Mappilas are not a homogeneous community; their social structures, marriage customs, social status and cultural life vary considerably within these sub-communities.

As noted by Imtiaz Ahmad in the introduction of the book, *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims,* "The hesitation on the part of our contributors to characterize the social stratification of the Muslims as a caste system arises from the fact that some of the characteristics of caste are missing in each situation" (Ahmed 1973: xx). All the contributers to this book, except Mines, had the view that the social stratification that they studied was comparable to the Hindu caste system. Likewise, I believe that although all characterstics of the Hindu caste system are not found in the social

stratification among the Muslims, only *some of the characteristics* are missing. While discussing intolerance and religious nationalism Historian, Romila Thapar had the opinion that:

> As far as intolerance goes, we must also remind ourselves that every religion in India discriminated against what we today call the Dalits. Even the religions that claimed that all men are equal in the eyes of God did not give them equality. Islam and Christianity did not have a category of Dalits outside India, but in India, Muslim, Christian and Sikh Dalits were segregated and lived separately (Thapar 2017).

Thapar's discussion shows that Muslims in India never treated their fellow Muslims who have converted or who perform manual jobs that Hindus considered as low caste occupation as equal as them and they were treated differently in different social and cultural contexts.

In the present author's experience in the field, analysing the social stratification among Muslims based on a rigid comparison with the caste system as realized among Hindu communities is not only meaningless but indecipherable. It is indecipherable because there is no visible hierarchal division, but there is a hidden hierarchy on the basis of birth and occupation; there is no pollution, but there is an unacknowledged notion of purity and pollution differently associated with different sub-groups; according to the Quran, there are no rigid birth-based occupations associated with Muslims, but in reality, there are specific occupational divisions and classifications that correspond to the different sub-groups; the Quran does not place any marriage barriers or restrictions based on particular sub-groups within the Muslim community but endogamy within each sub-group is publically promoted in the name of *kafa'ah* and, in addition, there is a clear status allocation on the basis of the birth of an individual.

Considering the three core features of the caste system, I would describe the social stratification that exists among the Muslims in my field as caste. Here I prefer to call these communities as caste groups instead of 'caste-like groups,' 'Muslim-sects,' 'Muslim communities' and, 'Muslims endogamous groups,' etc., because the core caste features like endogamy, birth-based social status and vertical hierarchical ordering and occupational division are embedded in these communities. Similar but not identical to the Hindu caste

system described by Ambedkar and others (Ambedkar 1979 [1916], Beteille 2012), among these four Muslim caste groups, no group considers themselves as a low-status group compared to the others.

For instance, Barbers are not ready to be vassals of Thangals in Malabar. Barbers claim that they were in the twelve member group of people who came to Kerala with Malik Ibn Dinar in the sixth century and were part of the early Muslim settlers in the Malabar Coast. The fishermen community claims that they were the early Muslim settlers in Kerala and they were the ones who first embraced the religion of Islam. Thangals claim that they were the one who spread religion in this land and they are the custodians of Islamic culture in Kerala. In such a context, to make a vertical stratification based on the status of each community is a difficult task. But based on previous studies and my interviews with a cross-section of the people of South Malabar, it would not be wrong to argue, or, Mappila's popular perception is that the caste groups such as the Barbers and Fishermen are 'low status' groups compared to the Thangals and the Malabaris.

Also, unsurprisingly, the two groups that are considered as 'low status' communities appeared to have a negative perception of the existing social structure of the Mappila Muslims. The other two communities, Thangals and Malabari, believed to be higher up in the caste hierarchy, have minimum concerns about the existing social stratification. In the latter category, the Thangals, who perhaps enjoy the maximum benefits of social stratification, believe that social ranking is inevitable and unavoidable in any Islamic society. They argue that caste stratification or social division is not something that they deliberately created for themselves but an inevitable consequence of their direct lineage to the Prophet which has resulted in the people of Kerala granting them a special status and superiority over the other Muslim sub-communities.

Even some of the Fishermen and Barbers that I had interviewed believe that Thangals should be treated separately and they should get higher status among the Muslims. Note, however, that there were a few in both groups that question the authority and the religious power of the Thangals, especially by those who belong to the Mujahid sect of Barbers and Fishermen. This opposition should be seen in the light of the fact that, in general, Mujahids severely criticize Thangals, their origin and their religious authority.

At the same time, they point out that they have been treated differentially by their fellow Mujahids and it is more evident during the discussion of marriage and related issues. Therefore it is important to analyse each group separately, and the way they describe, experience and understand the social stratification among the Kerala Muslims.

The discussion on the four caste groups will begin with the fishermen community first and then the barbers, followed by the Thangals and finally the Malabaris at the end of this chapter. Since the author does not believe in any social order that vertically grades an individual or a group, the order of discussion about each caste group is random and in fact contrary to the popular method used by many previous studies, where the 'upper castes' are placed in the first position followed by the 'lower castes'. The discussion here is mainly confined to the question of caste stratification and the way each community perceives it. The focus is on drawing a subjective narrative along with an objective analysis of the issue at hand. In doing so, importance has been given to the voices of particular community members while studying about them rather than asking about one community to the people from other communities.

3.3 Muslims in the Coastal Areas: Socio-Cultural Outlook

Most of the limited research, except Mathur (1977), done by the Muslims who live in the coastal areas of Malabar have used the term 'Pooslars' or 'Pooslans' or 'Puslars' to address the Muslim fisherman community (Logan 2009 [1887], Thurston 1909b, D'Souza 1959, Miller 1976, Osella & Osella 2008). Quoting the 1891 Census Report Thurston (1909b) had noted that "some Mappillas have returned "Putiya Islam," meaning new converts to Islam. These are mostly converts from the Mukkuvan or fishermen caste, and this process of conversion is still going on" (Thurston 1909b: 559). Further referring to the Census, he pointed out that "all Puislams follow the occupation of fishing" (Thurston 1909c: 111). Mathur has pointed out that "those Mukkuvans, who embraced Islam are today called Mappila fishermen" (Mathur 1977:378). Throughout his work, instead of the word 'Pooslan' or 'Pooslar,' he had used the terms like Mappila Fisherfolk/ Fishermen to denote the Muslim fishermen of Tanur. Today, the terms 'Pooslan' or 'Pooslars' are considered as derogatory within the Muslim fishing community, and according to them, the word is humiliating.

In my first field visit to the coastal village Parappanangadi, my local contact, who has been living in the area for the last twenty-five years, made it clear to me that "to call us Pooslars is humiliating, and we hate those who call us Pooslars." He further recalled how during his school days some of his friends had called him 'Pooslan' but that today in school classrooms, pupil rarely use such a word to describe a Muslim student who comes from the coastal area. He considers this as a positive development but admits that the change is partial. The change is partial, however, even today many people, outside the school, knowingly or unknowingly refer to the coastal Muslims as 'pooslars.'

The fishing community in Kerala and Tamil Nadu are referred to as Mukkuvar which encompasses Muslim, Hindu, and Christian fishermen. According to Kalpana Ram, the term must have come from the Tamil word 'mukku' means the tip or corner and at least from the folk etymological point of view, Mukkuvar means the people who live on the very tip or edge of the land mass (Ram 1992). Or else, the term could be a combination of the Malayalam words *mukku* meaning 'the corner' and *van* or *oruvan* meaning an individual which together may be taken to mean 'the individual who lives in the corner.' Even though there is a general term, *mukkavar*, to refer to the fishermen community irrespective of their religious affiliation, but as I mentioned, many Muslims refer to the Muslim fishermen community as 'Pooslan.'

The present author, a native of South Malabar, has often heard the origin of the term 'Pooslan' attributed to the Malayalam word *Puthu-Islami*. The word *puthu* means 'new' and *Islami* means 'one who follows Islam.' Therefore, puthu-Islami literally means the 'new Muslim,' perhaps a reflection of a deliberate attempt to distinguish this community as new(er) converts to Islam. On the other hand, it is also equally attested that when Islam came to Kerala, the people who lived in the coastal areas embraced it first following which Islam spread to people in the other regions. People in the coastal area say that "it is not only the coastal people who converted to Islam but most of the Muslims who live in Kerala are also converts. Then how does it make sense to call us Pooslans?" During the interview, 60-year-old Rahman said that "if someone calls me Pooslan, I will also address that person as Pooslan because he/she is also a convert at some point in history." In that sense, according to Rehman, "the ninety to ninety-five percent of Muslims who live in Kerala belong to the list of Pooslans; only a few from outside had come here with their religion as

Islam." He believes that fisherfolk of Kerala were the first Muslims in the state. Similarly, even Roalnd E Miller agrues that in the south and central Kerala many fisherfolks "adopted Christianity, in the norther region the buld of fisherfolk became Muslims. It is likely that they were among the first Mappilas" (Miller 2015: 186).

The Mukkuvar Muslim community's main occupation is marine fishing. According to the government of Kerala, marine fishing is the only source of livelihood for eight hundred thousand and more marine fishermen who reside in 222 marine villages. Out of this, more than two hundred thousand are active fisherfolk engaged in fishing along the coastline. As noted by Kalpana Ram (1992), fishing communities are involved in "two distinct areas of economic activity; the work of fishing itself and the traditional occupations which sustain contact with the caste society of the interior" (Ram 1992). She points out that, fishing is an important source of income for the coastal people and argues that they suffer from unemployment and poverty. Similarly, the official government record, says that "the socio-economic condition of the fisher folk in the State is pitiable when compared to the general section of the population. Backwardness is the hallmark of fishermen. They are in the grip of subsistence economy and indebtedness in the normal aspects of their life"[37]. My days in the field only convinced me further regarding the poor quality of life within this community, especially those who are directly related to fishing. Such participants in this study have told the researcher that famine and poverty are common in the coastal region.

. Parappanangadi, located close to the Arabian Sea and one of the small towns in Tirurangadi Taluk of Malappuram, has many marine villages[38]. In Parappanangadi, those who are directly involved in the activity of fishing are poorer compared to those who work in the fish trading occupation. Nevertheless, Gulf migration has made a partial difference to this region. While in the earlier days, the entire economy of the coastal region of Parappanangadi was based on fishing, Gulf migration has led to at least some of the Mukkuvar families enjoying a decent life. Interestingly, the researcher observed that the views of the community members on their economic status were often contradictory. On

---

[37] http://www.fisheries.kerala.gov.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=76&Itemid=44

[38] Malappuram district has a coastal length of 70km. The total fishermen population in the district is 77900, which means 1113 fishermen per square kilometre

the one hand, many were of the opinion that the region continues to be largely poverty-stricken and backward. On the contrary, some others claim that Gulf migration has given them a lot of opportunities, and it has helped some of the most backward families to come out from the age-old poverty struck life and helped them even to buy boats. This contradiction in views was evident to the researcher even in the living conditions within the community, for example, even within one small locality, one can easily see the co-existence of both spacious houses with modern amenities as well as small, crowded houses with minimal resources.

Mathur (1977) described two groups among the Mappila fishermen of Tanur, a small town only 10 kilometres away from Parappanangadi, the Beppukkar and Vellakkar, and these two fisher folk have divided into two endogamous groups. Mathur makes a short comparison of the Hindu fisher folk of Travancore, Arayans, and the Muslim fisher folk of Tanur, and he argues that:

> They do not believe that the notion of Karma sanctions their caste differentiation. To them, it is a matter of occupational specialization. However, even among the Mappilas, the different sects are hierarchically structured. The social system of the Arayans is very rigid. The relation between the master and the fishing labour among them has remained unaltered. By contrast, the Mappila, social system is flexible… To sum up, the Aryan political and social institutions are even today filled by hereditary succession. A Mappila in Tanur has to show outstanding personal qualification before he can acquire prestige and social status, as the society is egalitarian. (Mathur 1977: 364-65).

After four decades of his study, it is true that within the community the status of an individual is measured mainly in terms of economic capital, i.e. fishing units, land, house, and other movable and immovable properties. But even those who are economically well off face discrimination and derogatory remarks from people of the 'mainland.' Therefore, it is not wrong to argue that the social structure of the Muslim fishing communities of Parappanangadi and Tanur is socially egalitarian in nature, but within the whole Mappila population they are clearly discriminated against, they are endogamous, and they often face derogatory remarks., During my fieldwork, I noticed that the distinction between Vellakkar and Beppukar is hardly a mark of distinction and the divide is less visible among the people of the coastal region.

Since fishing continues to be the principal occupation of the area, buying a boat is considered one of the biggest achievements in these coastal regions. In Parappanangadi, in one of the marine villages, Saddambeach, the Fishermen have been using a boat bought with the contribution of 50 locals. Each of them pays their money on an everyday sharing basis. They have taken a loan from the bank, and each member pays hundred rupees a day towards paying back the loan. The caretaker of the boat deposits five thousand rupees every day in the bank. However, such sharing of money happens only on the days they get fish from the sea; the number of such days may be 15-20 in a month. They are of the opinion that rather than working for a big firm or a wealthy owner it is better to own the fishing boat themselves and share the money on an individual basis. They had bought the boat in 2005 but are yet to clear the bank dues. This shows the poor economic conditions of fishermen who struggle to pay back the loan in the region and the inability of the group members to find an appropriate job other than marine fishing. The members of the group say that although everybody pays hundred rupees without any delay and hesitation, the loan amount has not been fully paid yet because when a marriage of any of the group members takes place, especially for the marriage of daughters, they take a loan from the bank on the same security deposit.

Like the other caste groups in the district, the Muslim fishermen are patrilineal and patrilocal. Marriage is the single most important ritual that differentiates each of the Muslim caste groups. As noted earlier, all four caste groups are endogamous. Even though exogamous marriages have been reported, marriage in all four groups is largely confined to their respective communities. In Parappanangadi, based on my fieldwork, around 85 percent of Mukkuvar marriages reportedly happen within the community and, within a twenty to the thirty-kilometer radius. Most of them marry from Tanur, Thirur and nearby areas. The boys that I had interviewed said that they prefer to marry girls from nearby areas and prefer girls mainly from the same caste groups. Distance and caste are therefore the two important factors that are crucial in the selection of brides and grooms.

During most years, April and May are the periods of famine (*varudhi yude kalam*) in this region. The famine period is one of the most difficult times of the year for the entire coastal region in Kerala. Even if they go to the sea, they rarely catch any fish. On most days, even after hours of being in the sea, they return home empty handed. In this context,

the story of twenty-five-year-old Shaffeque from Saddambeach adds to our understanding of life within this community.

Shafeeque wakes up around 3 am to go to sea. His mother and wife cook breakfast and pack it for both Shafeeque and his father. In April and May, they leave for fishing around four o'clock in the morning. In other months, they leave after *fajr* prayer. Shafeeque had studied only till tenth grade, but he could not clear the SSLC exam. He first went for fishing when he was in the seventh grade. The primary duty that he performed during that time was jumping from the boat and blocking the fishnet opening. He has to do the jumping several times in one voyage along with twelve or fifteen other members. He said:

> Courage and the ability to swim well are the most needed qualities for the job and schools, and colleges can never give that to me. So I stopped going to school after my tenth standard. My elder brother and mother asked me to reappear for the exam, but I never did that.

Like what Shafeeque said, in his work, Miller (2015:210) also refers to the courage of the fishermen. Miller cites their slum-like living conditions, their little contact with other Mappilas and their reported superstitious beliefs as aspects of their sub-culture that other Mappilas distance themselves from despite widespread admiration for the courage their occupation demands. The nature of their profession involves going to deep sea, putting their lives in danger every day and therefore requires a lot of courage from them. Apart from that, they also require considerable physical strength and stamina in order to swim from and to the boat/ship, which could go up to 20-30 times during a trip.

Despite pointing out that academic pursuits would not have helped him in his daily job as a fisherman, Shafeeque regrets the fact that he did not clear the SSLC exams. The disappointment comes from the fact that it had blocked his entry to the Gulf. According to the new visa law, only those who have qualified the tenth standard can apply for a job visa in the Middle East, mainly to UAE. During the times of famine, he thinks about going abroad, but the visa problem pops up. He is aware that he could still go to the Middle East by paying extra money to the travel agent but reveals he has never had the money needed to buy a fake visa. People like him were the most preferred ones to perform the jump and

block duties in fishing. After meeting some of his friends who had returned from abroad, Shafeeque told me that:

> These are the times I feel like I missed out on two important things in my life. One is getting a good education and a white-collar job, and the other one was not utilizing the opportunity to go abroad. Most of my friends left for the Gulf with the hope that one day the entire family will escape from this bad situation. Most of the time, I borrow money from my friends during this period of famine. I have not learned anything in life other than fishing. Even in the season of famine, most of us go to sea expecting something but mostly return home empty handed. When we start our journey from the shore, many know that the day is going to be bad and we will have to come back in the afternoon with empty hands, but still, hope is something that forces us to go the sea again and again.

People in the coastal area believe that 'instead of things getting better day by day, the life and situation of the coastal region are moving from bad to worse.' The main reason behind such a pessimistic belief is the decreasing number of fishes in the sea.

Most of the older people admit that the number of fish in the region is depleting day by day. It is also supported by the government reports, which show that the number of fishes captured every year is also decreasing. Such a situation has forced many people in the region to leave their traditional jobs and take up other employment in the 'Eastside.' The 'Eastside' or "*Kizhakkinnu ullavar*," which means people who live on the east side of the coast, is a native form of expression to denote individuals who live on the mainland. The term is used mainly by the elder people during their conversations, especially when they talk about the difference in the lifestyle of individuals who live in the coastal areas and the mainland. Coastal people are increasingly being forced to discard their traditional occupation and to seek employment elsewhere because of decreasing fishes and poor social and economic resources.

Poverty, low level of education, unemployment, and economic instability are the main problems faced by the fishermen in the region. It is not only the case of coastal people who live in the Parappanangadi region, but the fisherfolk are facing similar problems in all the coastal areas across Kerala. According to Jayappa and Narayana, the domestic turnover in the fisheries sector is around rupees 6000 cores and provides a livelihood for about 1.7 million people of Kerala (Jayappa and Narayana 2009). They noted that depletion of marine fishery resources is the biggest challenge for coastal life in Kerala and other parts of India.

Another study has found that "overfishing, habitat and biodiversity loss due to bottom trawling, mechanization of trawlers, fishing by banned gears, the emergence of the new craft, gears, use of small size nets, juvenile fishery are the main reasons for depletion of marine fishery resources" (Kurup 2009: 37).

In addition to the above reasons, people in the coastal areas suggest many reasons for the depletion of marine fishery resources. The older generation points out that, during their time, fish was captured only for sale in the local market. When export businesses began, there was a huge demand for fish which made those already wealthy in the coastal region wealthier. They bought new boats and fishing equipment and even opened business centres near the coastal region for export purposes. This development, however, did not help the people who work for daily wages. They continued their work under different owners. Hamza, one of the oldest members of the region said that a high fishing demand for export, unethical trawling, and greed among the wealthiest in the region coupled with the entry of foreign fishing boats in the Kerala coast had caused the difficult present-day scenario in the coastal regions.' He, like many other older people in the region, believe that if someone shows cruelty towards the sea, it pays back in the same manner; but once you treat the sea very compassionately, it shows mercy upon the coastal people. They all agree that it is the Gulf migration, not the government funds, that helped the coastal people to survive in difficult times.

There are a lot of cultural and social differences between the fishing community and other caste groups in Kerala. In the coastal areas, as like in the other regions of South Malabar, religion plays an important role in deciding the life events such as marriage, the birth of children, and bereavement. The religious beliefs and cultural values restrict the movements of women, and they are also less represented in public and political discourses. The division of labour based on gender is a good indicator of the influence of religion and education on the workforce. The male members exclusively control fishing and trading in this region. However, the gender-based division of labour in Muslim communities is complex and differs according to class variations.

Amongst the Christian fishing community, it has been observed that "the women tend to sort and sell the fish that the men catch and are vital to the local caste economy"

(Hirst and Zavos 2011: 149). Kalpana Ram in her study on the Mukkuvars of Kanyakumari notes that "fishing itself is exclusively a male domain, although women are important in ancillary tasks such as weaving nets, salting and drying fish" (Ram 1992: 80). The women in the Muslim fishing community, however, rarely participate in such activities (more details in chapter 4). They are largely confined to housework and rarely come out for fishing jobs. This is not just true of the coastal areas; Muslim women in Kerala are less represented in the workforce both in the governmental and non-governmental sector.

The severe lack of female representation in the workforce is typical of all the Muslim-populated regions in the state. For instance, Malappuram district has recorded the lowest (14th) rank in total male and female work participation rates (25.8%, 45.8 %, and 7.6 %) (DCH 2011). According to the 2011 Census, Muslim female work participation in the district is only 4.1 percent, and that is the lowest rate among the districts of Kerala after Kannur (Muslim female work participation in Kannur is 4.0). At the same time, child marriage and early marriage rates are higher among the Muslims of the district, which also blocks the entry of Muslim women to higher studies and taking up jobs.

In the context of low female work participation, it would not be wrong to say that religion and cultural values are important factors in determining if and to what extent women enter the workforce. In the coastal area, many women (out of 99 women from present generation-G2) told the researcher that after marriage their husbands asked them to quit their studies. Many of them further said that they left their studies because of early pregnancy and childbirth (See Chapter 5). Doing a job outside their home is not on their priority list. All of them said that they had never planned to take any jobs outside their homes.

Najma, who had qualified secondary school examination in 2012 and had gotten married in 2013, recollected how she constantly heard about her marriage and marriage related planning right from her school days. In her parents' home and later at her husband's home, neither she nor anyone else had ever discussed anything related to her taking up a job outside the house. "I never wanted to take a job; I am so happy the way I am. My husband provides for me, and I work in my house, and that's the job I do," she said. She even believes that women should never go to work. Interestingly, the responses from other

113

female members are different: many opine in the discussion that women should also take up jobs because fishing is a very unpredictable occupation. On some days you get a lot and on other days nothing. So those women who work outside fishing can contribute a regular income to the family, which would then help the entire family to survive comfortably at the time of seasonal famine.

A Large majority of men do not encourage the women in their families to take up jobs outside the house. Women follow a fairly predictable routine in this community. On the days when men go fishing, it is the women who wake up first. They cook breakfast and brunch and pack it before 4 am in the morning. Women are also unsurprisingly the primary caretakers of their children. They also regularly go out to buy groceries, other household necessities and to take children to hospitals. As they follow the Sunni religious tradition, they never go to the Masjid for prayers (Except the women from four Mujahid households studied). But, they attend the public religious teachings and *wa'alu* programmes. However, compared to men, their contact with the outside world is minimal. This minimal interaction outside home results in minimal awareness about the educational career prospects for their children. Out of forty, 31 the women in the household are not aware of the subjects that their children study in the higher secondary or school level. They also have no idea about the selection of subjects for their children after the higher secondary studies.

The interaction between religion and caste, its effect on gender roles and the differential experience of caste across communities is worth mentioning. The situation of women in Muslim coastal areas, when compared to their counterparts in other areas and of other faiths, is different. For instance, in Kanyakumari, "it is women who bear the brunt of their polluted status in a caste society. Male work, oriented towards the sea rather than to the rest of the society, enables men to escape similar pressure more readily" (Ram 1992: 22). Ram argues that most of the marketing work is done by women and their contact with the outside world is more common than the men who go out to sea. This increased contact with the outside world enables women to communicate more often with people from other castes and classes. Such public interactions are the main sites of caste expression, and the Mukkuvar Christian women in Kanyakumari face a considerable amount of caste-based discrimination from the other Christian caste groups. In the Muslim coastal areas, as mentioned earlier, women have less contact with the outside world, and their little or no

participation in the labour force has resulted in them being only marginal victims of caste prejudice. Therefore, more often than not, in the Muslim context, more male members face caste prejudice than their female counterparts.

Most of the members of the Muslim fishing community in Malappuram are Sunnis. As noted in the first chapter, this must not be taken to imply that the remaining Muslim populations belong to the Shia sect of Islam. The rest of them belong to the Mujahid or the Jamaat-e-Islami sect of Islam. But I hardly met any fisherman who belongs to the Jamaat-e-Islami organization. Religious organizations like SKSSF and SSF play an important role in the region, mainly by organizing religious teachings and providing relief works for the locals. Like many other regions in Malappuram, these two organizations run separate madrasas in this locality, but they have four common mosques only one of which has a burial ground.

The *Qazi* or *Kathib* or *Usthad* of the mosque leads the prayer, and he gives regular speeches to people regarding religion. The current Qazi of Parappanangadi is from a village called Pullara, and he has been working there for the last twelve years. As elsewhere in Malappuram, he has assistance in the mosque, and the one who assists the Qazi is called '*mukri*.' The main duty of the '*mukri*' is to call for prayer and to take good care of the Masjid and its premises. Even though the mosque is not under the control of any one religious organization, there are attempts within the community by religious factions to take control of the Masjid. The religious organizations like SSF and SKSSF have a strong influence in the region. It has been reported that, in early 2000, there was a fight between these two groups during which one person was severely injured. In spite of this, according to the locals, these organizations contribute positively to community life by helping people during the time of famine and economic crisis. During the time of famine, they distribute 'relief kits,' and during the time of two Islamic festivals, they distribute grocery and vegetable kits.

Madrasa education, like in other regions of Malappuram, is very organized and most of the time it acts as the epicentre of religious discussions. In both madrasas, special religious classes are organized, and every month one special religious lecture is organized only for the women. Mujahids have no separate mosque in this area. They offer their

prayers and share the burial ground along with the Sunnis. There are strong religious debates that take place between the mujahids and Sunnis, especially Mujahid vs. the A.P Sunnis. People who belong to the Mujahid sect in this area give more importance to education, and they organize religious meetings in individual houses. Their weekly gathering is an important means through which they connect with their fellow members. Each week, a trained person gives lectures on different social and religious issues followed by a discussion amongst those gathered. The religious teachings provided in madrasas, the public lectures organized by different religious sects, religious teachings using modern technology like CDs and DVDs, and even social networks help Muslims in the locality to acquire religious education.

It appears that religious education could play a positively significant role in ending certain caste-based discriminatory activities. One of the Mujahid volunteers, Hamza, recounted how, earlier, the use of the term 'Pooslans' was more common and more frequent. He continued:

> They [(*Vadakkunnullavar)* 'people from the mainland'] often call us by that name, perhaps not deliberately, but during certain gatherings, they introduce someone from our group by saying "*Pooslan Abu vinte maken*" (son of that pooslan Abu); father's name is attached to the caste name. Once, one of our leaders came here to speak on 'Islam and manavikatha' (Islam and Humanism) topic. Before the talk, he came to my home for dinner, and I told him about the pooslar issue and suggested he needed to talk about it during the public lecture. He presented the issue very well in his speech, and he asked everyone who attended the meeting not to use the word again in their life. He explained that "the pooslan means 'new Muslim,' and that it makes no sense to call them Pooslan when the majority of the Muslims in Kerala are converts and new Muslims. If we go back to three or four generations of our ancestry, we will end up finding that our ancestors belong to Hindu low castes. Our ancestor must be a Hindu pulayan or cheruman, or in some cases, he/ she must be a Nair or a Namboodiri. So how can only those people who live in the coastal area be called as pooslar?

According to Hamza, such religious speeches have helped create a lot of awareness among the local people. Many people have apologized for calling them the derogatory name admitting that they had never thought about how the use of that term could hurt the community. Hamza was of the opinion that once they are informed, especially with reference to the religious texts, people are more easily convinced of the need to end such discriminatory activities. Hamza says that it took years to initiate discussion on this

sensitive topic of caste and to deal with it to some extent. Interestingly, at least some members of the community, like Hamza, appear to have internalized the supposed caste hierarchy which is reflected in their rather generous words for the very people who call them derogatory names. However, this is not representative of the opinions of the entire community as there are many others who do not give the benefit of the doubt like Hamza does with regard to the intentions of the other Muslim groups when they use the derogatory term 'Pooslan.'

But when it comes to marriage alliances, Muslim fishermen are the least preferred group for the other Muslim caste groups. The *ulamas* argue that all Muslims are equal in Islam; in reality, all Muslims do not enjoy equal status. Some groups enjoy a higher status and authority only because they were born into particular families. In this illegitimate hierarchy, the Muslim fishing community and the barbers are at the bottom, and the Thangals are at the top. Like the Hindu Mukkuvars, who are considered 'impure' and 'untouchable' according to 'strictly Brahminic interpretations of South Indian culture' (Ram 1991), Muslim Mukkuvars also face similar discrimination among other Muslims. This is true in the case of Muslim barbers also; they have also faced discrimination and marriage exclusion from the Malabaris. In the next sub-section, the social and cultural life of the Muslim barbers, and how they experience the social stratification in South Malabar will be described and discussed.

3.4 Endogamy and Caste Bound Occupation: the life of Barber Muslim

The religious values and religiously-influenced cultural traditions play a significant role in everyday life of Mappila Muslims. Any study of the social grouping, culture, economy and politics of Malabar is meaningless without a proper understanding of the prevalent religious structures. The Barber community is not an exception in this regard. Muslim Barbers are referred to as 'Ossans' by other Muslim sub-groups in Kerala. Thurston had used only a two line description to explain this caste group, and he used the term 'Osta' instead of 'Ossan', or 'Othan'. According to Thurston "Osta recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as the name of a caste of Barbers for Muhammadans" (Thurston 1909c: 446). Unlike the fishermen, they are not concentrated in a particular locality but spread across the region. The exact number of the Muslim barbers is not

available. No census report or previous studies have provided any estimate of the population of the community. During my visit to the Kollam district of Kerala as a part of the fieldwork, I found that there is a village called Mamood where nearly 200 barber families have a separate *mahalu*. The locals informed the author that the village was formed because of the discrimination and exclusion faced by barbers from the other Muslims.

In Malappuram, this community is spread across the district. While there are a few villages without any barber families, there are some others where the number of barber families is more than ten to fifteen. For example, in the Pullara, Kottapuram, Ponmala, and Pandaloor villages, there are more than ten to fifteen families who belong to this caste group. Therefore, unlike the coastal region, the field for this community is not restricted to a specific locality. Instead, the data is collected from different villages in Malappuram district. This is also the case for the other two sub-groups that form part of this study, Sayyids, and Malabaris.

The barber profession and the need for their occupational services everywhere is one of the main reasons for the spread of community to different geographical locations. Marriage within the community is the one main thread that connects its members who live in different geographical localities. In the district, the rural-urban divide is marginal, as there are not many big cities. In such a context, it is pointless to argue that most of the barber families live in the rural areas. The rural-urban divide is minimal in Malappuram district and therefore does not play an important role in the analysis of the caste communities and its influence on education, culture and any other social, and cultural apparatus.

Muslim barbers do not consider themselves as inferior to any other caste group. It is a fact in India that many of the lower caste people do not consider themselves as inferior to other castes. They have their historical versions of their ancestry. Dalits never want to be the vassals or subordinates of Brahmins. Each claims his or her position in the society by giving his or her historical versions but the extent to which the other caste groups accept these different versions varies. The case of barbers is no different. In most of the interviews, I came to know that they were part of the first Muslim settlers in Kerala. It is believed that when Malik Ibn Dinar came to Kerala for religious propagation, there were 12 members in

his group. But when he left for his native place with the other ten members, only one person stayed back as a representative, and he was a barber. The same is discussed in Siddique's *Marginalized Muslims in India*, in which he says that barbers were a part of the first Muslim settler groups in Kerala and they came from the Middle East: "the oral tradition of the Ossans recalls the migration of the Ossan from Musket. It tells us that Malik Diner came to India with 12 persons to spread Islam. One of the Individuals belonged to Ossan community" (Siddiqui 2004: 494). Only the Ossan stayed back in Calicut while all the others left for Musket.

The one who stayed back married the local women and that was the first generation of Ossans in Kerala (Siddiqui 2004). But it is the later interpretation of Islamic texts and the codification of *fiqh* and an unjust interpretation of the *kafa'ah* rules that has done injustice to the barbers. As I said in the introduction, texts like *Fath-ul-Mueen* has classified the barber vocation as an impure, despicable or undesirable job for a Muslim and advocated marriage restrictions with such groups to protect the family stability and values. Siddiqui points out that endogamy is the norm in this community. It is not only restrictive on a cultural basis, but such a restriction has been given religious validation too.

Most of the *ulamas* that I interviewed said that there is no caste-differential status or treatment in Islam; that even if there are such interpretations, it should not be considered as a valid reason for stating that caste or caste-like groups exist among the Muslims. On the one hand, the *ulamas* reject the prevalence of caste discrimination among the Muslims by preaching to the lower status groups such as barbers and fishermen and other low castes, that Islam is an egalitarian religion. On the other hand, they also interpret the religious texts to state that there are hierarchical differences among different Muslim communities, which in turn is one of the biggest reasons for the sustenance of the caste system among the Muslims. The stories from the field clearly counter the egalitarian position that *Ulamas* pretend to take on the caste issue. There is hardly anyone from the community who has not faced humiliation or differential treatment because he/she was born as a member of the barber community. The humiliations and its forms are different; either calling them their caste names, denying their marriage alliances, refusing food from their homes and considering their rank in Islam below to other Muslims. There were many people in my field who have had such experiences. The experiences of Shareef described below, not only

help to understand the humiliation he has had to face because of his caste but also offer a glimpse into how the community continuously face such situations even today.

Shareef works in Manjeri, nearly eight kilometres from his village. He has two daughters and a son. The eldest daughter is pursuing a B.A in English from a private college in Manjeri, and the youngest one is in 9th standard in an aided school in Cholakkal. His son, at the age of twenty-one, migrated to Saudi Arabia for a job. After three months of his arrival in Saudi, he found a barber job. Back home in Elambra, Shareef goes to the shop every day except on Tuesdays. In this region, most of the barber shops remain closed on Tuesdays, and some of them have started to shut shop on Sundays too. He earns nearly five hundred to seven hundred rupees in a day. After related expenses like shop rent, hair care products, electricity bill, etc., he earns nearly twelve thousand a month. This job provides him with a stable income and gives his family a decent life. I have visited his shop many times and one day he invited me to dinner at his house in Elambra. Dinner was one of the best ways to interact with Shareef, who otherwise has a very busy work schedule.

Over time, through various meetings, we developed a good rapport, and he started to talk about his personal life fairly freely with me. He recalled, "I had faced many moments in my life where I felt that I was not a Muslim like the 'other Muslims' and I felt this most when I was searching for my life partner." He narrated stories that he heard from his grandparents in his childhood:

> Historically, the ossans were the part of the early Muslim settlers in Kerala. They came here along with Malik Ibn Dinar and his fellow companions. There were twelve members of his group, and we were one among them. It is believed that Malik Ibn Dhinar had allotted him the duty of a barber and he had equal respect, religious knowledge, and consideration as the other group members. The fellow companions treated him with gentle reverence. Only in the later decades, our status went down. It happened because the scholars of religious texts have interpreted our occupation as something connected to dirt and pollution and gave it a disrespectful meaning. Such an unequal treatment further reflected in the social institutions such as marriage and kinship relations. People who converted to Islam even later than the barber community were reluctant to form marriage alliances with us. This attitude of the other Muslim communities forced us to marry someone from our own group, which also found validation in the scholars' interpretation of the Islamic texts. Many are of the opinion that marriage alliances with Barber families would degrade their family status and that it would be a further hindrance for the marriage alliances of other family members. But I am very proud of what I do, and I am not ready to accept the low status that is given to us by the other Muslims. Even if they call us 'Ossan' in a derogatory way, they also approach us first when

120

they need any immediate help, especially during the time of a newborn's hair shaving. Only if we are not available, they look for other options. They take what they want from us but are not ready to accept that we are equal to them in all matters, especially when it comes to marriage. If someone would say that there is no discrimination in Islam, either the person was born into one of a respected group of Muslim families, or he/she is ignorant and has never experienced any such discrimination and humiliation. Many times I have faced discrimination in my life, and I have heard a lot of derogatory comments.

Analyzing the field responses regarding marriage relations and regulations from a sociological point of view, it appears that a marriage with a Barber family is considered as hypogamous marriage by 'other Muslims' in South Malabar. Even those who are economically poor but belong to Sayyids/Malabaris consider marriage with barber men or women as an alliance that is of low-status.

Shareef described numerous examples where he felt he was differentially treated and humiliated. The most pertinent example that he gave to explain the form of humiliation that he has had to face was from his school days. When he was in school, most of his classmates would call him as 'ossane.' He said that:

> When the entire class addressed each other by calling their respective names, I was the only Muslim student in the class called by the caste name. I had often fought with some of my friends when they called me 'ossane.' Even after thirty years, I realized that the situation had not changed much when my daughter told me that someone in her school still calls her as 'ossathi,' the feminine caste name for someone belonging to the barber families.

He also spoke about the problems he faced in finding a life partner. He had never visited any 'other Muslims' house in his search for a bride.

The '*pennu kanal*' is a form of bride selection in this area where the boys visit the house of girl with the official permission of both sides of parents and elders. If the boy likes the girl, he will send his parents to the girl's house. If the boy's parents and sisters/brothers like the girl, then they would give her gifts such as sweets or gold. And finally, with the consent of both parties, they would fix the dates for engagement and subsequently marriage. Shareef had visited nearly fifteen houses as part of his search for a bride. But not one of the houses he visited was that of another Muslim caste. He also added that the concept of marrying outside his caste, of marrying 'other Muslims, never existed

121

in his family. All of his family members had married from the same caste group. His mother said she could never imagine a marriage alliance with 'other Muslims.' She points out that it is not encouraged in her generation and most of the community members marry within their community because of the existing cultural differences between the communities and the way they practice ritual ceremonies. She further explained:

> We were not afraid of the status or position of the new bride in our family, but if our daughter is married off to other Muslims, she will be treated differently in her husband's house on the basis of caste. I have heard one such story before, and therefore, I prefer and encourage my son and daughters to marry from the Barber families.

However, Shareef said that one of his friends from the same community was in love with a girl from another Muslim caste group. Both of their parents were working abroad, and both could be said to have a similar economic background. The girl's parents were initially very happy with the marriage proposal, but in the end, the proposal was rejected only because of the caste issues. It shows that even if some may be ready, it becomes difficult to overcome the pressure to conform to the majority view of the community that is against inter-caste marriage. These stories are similar to the stories one hears from the coastal areas, where the fishermen families with same economic status as some of the 'other Muslim' caste groups have rejected marriage alliances with the 'mainland Muslims' solely based on caste issues.

Apart from barbering, barber men also used to perform the male circumcision ritual in the earlier days. Today almost all circumcisions are done in the hospitals. The women in the barber families have traditionally performed the duty of midwives. They not only assist in childbirth but also provide fifteen days of pre and post-natal care. Post-natal care includes bathing the woman and child every day in the morning and performing the first head shave of the child. Even though the official state documents claim that Kerala is the only state in India where all births happen in hospitals, this is not entirely true. Many births still happen at home and midwives play an important role in childbirth. It is said that in some localities, midwives go to the house of a pregnant woman for a fortnight and they help bathe the newborn and the mother along with other related duties.

The role of midwives on the day of '*mudikalayal*' is significant. *Mudikalayal* can be related to the custom of '*aqiqa*' in Islamic societies. *Aqiqa* is an Arabic term "referring to an initiation ceremony usually performed seven days after a child is born" (Madhani 2006: 71). This *aqiqa* ritual includes "selecting a name for the newborn, shaving the child's head, reciting a short prayer and, traditionally, an animal is also sacrificed whose meat is distributed to the needy" (Madhani 2006: 71). A barber's role is unavoidable in the ceremony of *aqiqa*, and the first hair shave was mostly performed by the female members of the community. On this day, they are also paid highly, and most of the families give them extra meat of the sacrificed animal. Recent days, it is common that the first head shaving of the newborn to be performed by the male members. In many places, the custom of first head shaves off of the newborn is performed on the seventh or fourteenth or twenty-second or fortieth day of the newborn. Older Muslims are of the opinion that it should be performed on the odd days. Not all families sacrifice the animal, but only those who have economically well off and those who believe that such a custom is necessary for the well-being of the child participate in the *aqiqa* sacrifice. Traditionally, if a family had sacrificed an animal for the first child, most often, they also perform it for all the other children in the family.

Even today, in the villages and even in towns, several people take the help of midwives irrespective of whether they get hospital treatments. Despite this trend, the female occupation of a midwife is treated as the job with the lowest status in the region. Many Malabaris and even Thangals call them as '*ossathi*,' a derogatory term to denote the midwives from the Barber families. There are derogatory jokes and words regarding the job of barber midwives. One of the most derogatory remarks that are used to humiliate them involves statements like "why do you look at me like the midwives look into the vagina." Shareef added, "when people say this, they use the female barber caste name 'ossathi'; that is the most humiliating comment I have heard in my life, and I have heard it many times."

Midwives earn nearly 500-600 rupees for every pregnant woman and new-born they attend to. Even all those who consider the job of the midwife as a low-status one come to meet the barber midwives when they need any pregnancy related help. In short, as argued by Susan Bayly, barbers play a key role in the rituals sorroudding birth, death and other

'life crises' (Bayly 1989: 38). However, in his work on the 'the Harijan and other low castes,' Stephen Fuchs noted that Barber "womenfolk act as hired singers on social occasions like weddings" (Fuchs 1981:276). However, in his work on the 'the Harijan and other low castes,' Stephen Fuchs noted that Barber "womenfolk act as hired singers on social occasions like weddings" (Fuchs 1981:276). During my interviews, some of the oldest members of the Barber community, above the age of 60, recollected how both men and women sang at weddings. Hamsa Pullara, who is above 70 now, recounted incidents his grandfather had narrated to him. He said:

> My grandfather was a good singer. When there was a wedding in our place, he travelled with the groom's gang to the bride's place by foot. On their way and in the wedding venue, he sang songs with his friends. Apart from that, we barbers were engaged in *kombu vekkal* (Cupping or *hijama* treatment), we also actively participated in *kalapoottu* (ox racing). We were the ones who performed the circumcision rituals, and our women took the new born in their hands and recited the *azan* in their ears. It is our women's voice that any new-born heard first, and any of our ritual performing roles were unavoidable in any Muslim locality.

Hamsa said, "My grandfather was proud of the way he performed all the rituals". However, Hamsa added that for the 'other Muslims' (*muttullavarkk*) we are second class.

During my field research, I met women who had been midwives for nearly five to six hundred child births. One of them, from the village of Elankur, has been doing it since 1974, and she still continues to work as a midwife. She told the researcher that not a single case of death had been reported due to her negligence. She further said that:

> I am very proud of what I am doing. My mother and grandmother did the same job. I learned it from my mother, and in my childhood, I used to go with her to take care of pregnant women. I got married at the age of fourteen and when I came to my husband's home; my mother-in-law who was also doing the same job told me that I don't need to quit the job. Later I started accompanying her for a few months till I got used to the new settlement. Eventually, I started working on my own, and I had midwifed more than 500 child births. Even today people call me for assistance during childbirth, and I also go to the house of pregnant women to take care of them and to do the child's first head shave. I also do the second, third and fourth head shaves. My husband never asked me to stop what I do. We have four sons and two daughters. But my daughters are not following my path; they never want to do this job. Two of my sons are working abroad in Saudi Arabia, and two of them are working here. All of them are doing barber jobs. Nowadays they advise me not to go for midwifery, and they ask me to stay at home. Even my youngest son says that it is not suitable for our present status. But I remind him that that was the main source of income for this family for nearly 30 years. His father used to

work hard, but he has never had the habit of saving, and he never thinks about the future. He spends the money he gets for food and other everyday life expenses. I was the one who put away the money I earned as savings and spend it on buying a house and other valuables.

She says that the present generation of Barber women is very hesitant to take up the job. Only those who are from a poor economic background go for midwifery in the region.

As in the case of fishermen, here also, most of them follow the Sunni religious tradition. Very few of them follow the Mujahid school of thought and the researcher did not meet anyone from the Jamaat School within this community. Although the religious beliefs and customs all are similar to that of other Mappila Muslims, the Barber community, like the fishermen community, is not fully accepted by the other Muslims, especially when it comes to marriage alliances. Some exegetes of the texts like *Fath-ul-Mueen* claim that even if a Barber family serves the Ustad or feed the poor, they won't be rewarded equally like other Muslims. It also cautions other Muslims against having food from a Barber's house. Barbers are advised to render their services free of cost, which means that the job of a barber is considered as an obligatorily free service for other Muslims, in other words, an unpaid and thankless job, and worse still, one that is looked down upon.

The occupation, which is cited as the major reason for the marginalization of these communities, is considered as 'low status' job by the large majority of the people who belong to Thangals and Malabari folks. They also admit that 'intermarriage with barbers is a rarity in both villages and towns, and that mostly the girl's families have huge problems compared to the boys' families. Even though men are ready to take brides from other communities, it is difficult for women's families to consider such a proposal. Out of 40 households that I had visited, there were 148 marriages reported, which means 3.7 average marriages per household. Out of the 148 marriages reported, 142 marriages were endogamous, only six marriages were exogamous. These six marriages were alliances between the Barber community and Malabaris. Out of six, one was a woman married into a Barber family, and five women were married off to Malabari families. Therefore it would not be wrong to state that the barber community in Kerala strictly follows endogamy and endogamy are the preferred form of marriage for the community members. Even for those who are not performing the traditional jobs, it is very difficult to get a bride or a groom

from other Muslim communities. It shows that caste is an important criterion among the Kerala Muslims on marriage.

In Malappuram, 65 percent of the barbers in the field data for the present study have shops in their local villages. Some of them have moved their shops to nearby towns. The owners of shops in towns or cities appoint employees on a daily wage basis. The employees in such shops get half of the money that they earn the entire day. The shop owners get the other half and also take care of all the other expenses like electricity bill, barbering tools, and equipment. Most of them that I had interviewed prefer their own shops even if it is in any local village. However, poverty and lack of economic resources force many to join as daily wage employees. A daily employee gets nearly ten to twelve thousand rupees in a month. Like many families in Malappuram, it is the migration to the Gulf that has helped several barbers to escape poverty and to build houses in their villages. In my field, 80 percent of barber families have a direct or indirect connection with the Gulf and Gulf remittance is their main source of income. Gulf remittance, however, is not used as savings but it is mainly used for house construction and other daily expenses. Building a new house is the first thing that those who have migrated to the Gulf spend their earnings on. Like other Mappilas, it is often the most valuable material asset owned by many barbers. The father's property and house tend to be bequeathed to the youngest son of the family, irrespective of his economic standing. The first thing he does is to renovate the house. Mappila Muslims are a house-pride community, and the beauty of their houses and the material comforts it offers is a top priority.

Unlike Thangals and fishermen, barbers are not at all organized as a community, and they do not have any specific organization of their own. Fishermen are connected to each other mainly because of their geographical unity. They also have Fishermen associations which connect the members of the region. Among the barbers, however, such unity is not visible because of their scattered population, and Muslim barbers from South Malabar hardly have membership in Kerala State Barbers and Beauticians Association (KSBBA). Those who are the members of this association told the author that they barely go for the meetings, but follow the rules and regulations implemented by the association. Although this is the case, recently some of the biggest families within the community have been known to organize yearly family meetings. Doing my field visit, I had visited such a

family meeting at Pandaloor. It was organized by Kunjan, whose experiences have already been described in this chapter. The family meeting was particularly organized to celebrate his mother's centenary. He and his brothers had invited all the immediate and distant relatives. According to Kunjan, "nearly 500 people participated in the centenary celebrations". The one who offered the prayer at the meeting is also from the Barber community. There are very few people from the Barber community who work as *Qazi, Qatib,* and *Ustads*. There are very few who possess great religious positions within this community.

Around 87 percent of barbers in this study's data follow their traditional occupation (See Chapter 4). Nevertheless, this community lacks any formal organization to represent them on a larger platform. Also, it is their occupation that largely limits their marriage prospects to members from within their community. Nearly 97 of the marriages in the community are endogamous. Traditionally, boys would start learning the job from their fathers or male relatives when they are in 9th or 10th standard. In many cases, if they fail the secondary or higher secondary exams, they directly take up the barber job. Many of them migrate to the Middle East after five to ten years of working in their native village/town. Usually, those who pass the SSLC exam continue their education and attend the higher secondary courses, but those who fail in the SSLC exams directly start working instead of appearing for the SSLC exams a second time.

Child marriage is common among the Muslims of Malappuram district and barbers are no exception in that regard. Nearly 50 percent of the female marriages, based on my field data, were below the legal age of marriage, and 83 percent of the women in the community married off before they reach the age of twenty (See Chapter 5). Most of the marriages take place when the girl is between the ages of 14-19 years. There are several reasons for the prevalence of child marriages in this region which is also unsurprisingly responsible for the poor rates of female higher education. The reasons and how it affects female education will be explained in detail in the fifth chapter.

The social capital of barbers is minimal, and the strong ties of kinship network among them negatively influence the education of the community, especially women's education. For instance, it is the close kinship ties that help families to find the bride/groom,

the families of those who are interested in either bride or groom put pressure on the family. Such a strong connection of kinship ties within Barber families is one of the main sources of marriage alliances in the community. This section described the experiences of caste in the Barber community. The next section will discuss the social and cultural life of the Thangals in Malabar and how and why they enjoy the higher status in the social stratification among the Mappila Muslims.

3.5 Thangal Muslims: The Sayyid endogamous community of Kerala

Thangals are a caste group, similar in status to the Sayyids of North India, who claim to be the descendants of the Prophet and as a result, are considered as the so-called upper caste Muslims in Kerala. Apart from their supposedly superior lineage, their Arab descent is also perceived as an important factor in the high status and power that they enjoy among the Kerala Muslims. Miller had argued that "the large majority of Malayali Muslims who do not claim to be Arab-blooded treat the factor of Arab descent with respect, particularly in the case of the *Thangal/Sayyid* families but do not give it undue weight" (Miller 2015: 209). In the field work for this study, however, it has been observed that most of the Muslims respect the Sayyids. Fisal confirms that among the Muslims of Kerala, the only group that enjoy special social status on the basis of birth is Thangals (Fiasal 2010: 29). Sayyids, among the Mappila community, the most respected group are Musliyar, who constitute the Ulama class, and any Muslim can become a Musliyar (Faisal 2010: 29).

In the introduction to *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies* Kazuo Morimoto noted that "the base line that the Umma considered the Prophets kinsfolk to constitute a special category within the community and that a particular respect or regard should be offered to them has evidently been shared rather widely by various interpretations of Islam through the centuries" (Morimoto 2012: 3). These religious interpretations have practical consequences, and in most of the societies the Prophet's kinsfolk have a 'superior status,' and as elsewhere (Sila 2015 [1970]: 64, Mobini-Kesheh 2004: 25), in South Malabar too they strictly follow the interpretation of *kafa'ah* legal principles. However, their status has been questioned by various sects among the Muslims.

The Mujahids are perhaps one of the very few sects to openly question the high status enjoyed by the Thangals. However, some Muslims, like the Mujahids, are of the

opinion that it is 'unnecessary' to give Thangals special status and power because of their supposed direct link to Prophet Muhammed. This was pointed out by Osella and Osella where they argued that the Mujahid critique of Sayyids are "similar to low caste and reformist Hindu critique of Brahmans" (Osella and Osella 2013: 161). The Thangals' high status is in some respects comparable to that of the Hindu Brahmins in that it is both birth-based. While analysing social divisions among the Mappila Muslims, Victor D'Souza has pointed out that in "the five distinct sections of Thangals, Arabis, Malbaris, Pusalars and Ossans form a social hierarchy in which the Thangals are the highest and the Ossans the lowest" (D'Souza 1973:50). The lowest rank is decided mainly based on occupation. Among these groups, inter-caste marriages are not only discouraged but also considered as unacceptable. The reasons for endogamous marriages are many, and each caste has its reasons.

For instance, among the Thangals, the endogamous marriages are encouraged to maintain the purity of blood. They consider themselves as the descendants of the Prophet, and therefore that their blood is purer than that of other Muslims. While discussing Sayyid community of Cikoang in South Sulawesi, Adlin Sila (2015: 64) said:

> Bloodline, then, is the chief principle of Sayyid family identity. In order to preserve their pure line with its ties with the Prophet, the Sayyid strive to exercise kafa'ah strictly in their policy of marriage. Kafa'ah has a root meaning in Arabic of 'equal' or 'proper' (and hence 'equality of marriage partner') and thus refers to marriage between the Sayyid and the Syarifah. Prospective husbands and wives who can both show blood ties with the household of Muhammad are always considered to be the best arranged partners.

As he said in the above passage, in South Malabar also, according to my Sayyid respondents, to keep the Prophet's lineage 'unpolluted' by marrying the locals, they strictly observe the tradition of endogamous marriage. The data colled from 40 households show that 131 marriages out of 137 are endogamous.

At the same time, endogamy is practiced among the Barbers and Fishermen to ensure that the cultural values and economic background of the bride and groom match. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that if they marry from other castes the bride or groom will not be completely accepted, or they will not fit into the group (*Avaru kootathil koodilla*). To maintain the cultural values, to avoid humiliation in their partners' families

and for a better-married life, most of the 'low caste' people marry only someone from their respective caste backgrounds.

During my interviews, most of the Thangals have reported that a male member of a Thangal family marrying from other castes is still more permissible compared to a female member of a Thangal family marrying outside her caste. If the latter happens, she is not considered a Thangal from then on. Intermarriages are seen as hypogyny. The Thangals do not encourage exogamous marriages. Only if the person is not able to find a suitable partner within their community is he/she allowed to go for such marriages. Despite their lineage having begun from Fathima-the Prophet's daughter, the Thangals' family structure in South Malabar encompasses agnatic lineages as successive generations after Fathima took the descent status of their father and not of their mother.

While describing Muslim social structure and experience of growing up in Lucknow, Saeed Naqvi pointed out that 'Sayyids extracted a premium in the marriage market' (Naqvi 2016). Similarly, Malabar is no exception, here Thangals have a superior position in the marriage market among the Sunni Muslims. They take women only from families that are socially and culturally of their own standing. I have not met a single Thangal in my field who had married from 'low caste' groups like Barbers or Fishermen. Most of the time, economic status, the '*deen*' (religiosity), and the '*tharavadu*' are the main criteria for the selection of the marriage partner. Even if the women are from economically well-off families, are relatively higher educated and have religious knowledge but belong to the lower castes like barbers or fishermen, marriage alliances with them are heavily discouraged.

In some cases, Thangal men marry from castes like Malabari who are considered a step below the Thangals in the supposed hierarchy but not from the lowest castes. Bhattacharya had cited the same case in his study on the caste among the Muslims of West Bengal: The marriage of Sayyed men (similar to Thangal men in my field with respect to status) with the women of the lower castes is allowed, but the marriage of Sayyed women with men belonging to castes considered lower than their group is strictly not allowed (Bhattacharya 1973). But this must not be taken to mean that there exists a strong notion of ritual purity and pollution in all aspects of life among the Muslims. With regard to Kerala

Muslims, unlike their Hindu counterparts, strict rules of 'purity' and 'pollution' are applicable only to marriage alliances for the Thangals and not to other aspects of life like sharing common spaces, burial grounds, and eating meals cooked by different caste groups, etc. The Thangals eat, sit and share their prayer spaces with other communities. They also eat food cooked by other communities. When it comes to marriage, they claim to follow the rules as described in the '*kitab*' and as interpreted by their forefathers.

It is argued by many that the "dominant ruling groups are known to have elevated themselves in the caste hierarchy" (Aggarwal: 1973:24). This is true in the case of the Thangals too. They have been controlling the largest single Muslim political party in Kerala, and people respect their leadership mainly because they 'belong to the family of the Prophet.' To maintain such a status, they have been using religious teachings as a tool. It is not only the Thangals who maintain their status by interpreting religious teachings in a manner favourable to sustaining their supposed superiority, but the traditional *ulamas* also support the Thangals in this endeavor. In this context, education, especially religious education, is used as a method to maintain the status quo of the upper caste Muslims. In sociological theory, such a situation is clearly articulated by Bourdieu by claiming that social inequalities in societies are legitimated by the educational credentials held by those in dominant positions. He further says that "it[education] is, in fact, one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and give recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one" (Bourdieu 1974: 32). The Thangals in South Malabar, the dominant caste group in the region, use religious education to perpetuate the existing social pattern in which they enjoy higher rank and power compared to other Muslims. Further to say, they defend their power and higher status by saying that it is a natural gift of Allah, that is, Allah had gifted them the chance to be born in a specific family, and that should not be questioned.

Victor D'Souza has clearly stated that "although the cementing bond of Islam has created a new sense of fellow feeling among all Moplas, it has not eliminated the old difference" (D'Souza 1973:46). The "old difference" here is likely a reference to differences that existed between various communities before they converted to Islam, like the certain features of the caste system which could have been adopted from the Hindu

131

cultural tradition. But as Moin Shakir (1974) points out, the crucial question here is whether the social stratification among the Muslims is due to the influence of Hinduism or if there is something in Islam itself which tacitly encourages the idea of casrete (Shakir 1974).

The field responses show that the caste system among Muslims is not merely a modified carry-over from the Hindu past of many Muslims but equally the result of interpretations of the Quran and the *Hadith*s that are favourable for the upper castes like the Thangals. In my interview, all the Thangals claimed that they have a special position in Islam by birth, that their special position and birth-based religious authority cannot be taken away from them and that they are the ones who *should* lead the Muslims. Sayyid Said thangal from Velluvangad told me that when a baby is born in the Thangal family, he should be called as 'Thangal,' not by any other name. The very name 'Thangal' itself invites prestige and privilege. He further pointed out that 'Thangal is not a name but it is a property of a community, and no one else who is born outside of a Thangal family can be called as Thangal.' He believes that the surname is the only way to keep the Thangal family differentiated from other family and community members. Therefore, it is a must to use the name to recognize the person as a Thangal.

When I asked if it is necessary to differentiate a Thangal from another person, he said that "to keep the Prophets family respected and to ensure Islam thrives in its true spirit, every Muslim should respect the Thangals. If people are not able to identify a person by surname, how could he/she respect them?" Apart from the Thangal surname, some of the Thangals of North Malabar use the surname *Koya* that is mainly used by the elite Muslims of Calicut (Muthukoya 2009). In addition to their surname, they also follow the *Qabila* names such as '*Shihab*,' '*Bukhari*,' '*Jifri'* and '*Hydroos'* etc. In the Kerala context, a *Qabila,* which can roughly be translated to mean 'tribe,' can be defined as a group of people who identify themselves as the descendants of a particular ancestor and in this case, the ancestral lineage connects directly to Prophet Muhammed's daughter Fatima. It also argues that a person's ancestry or family origin can be traced through a detailed study of *Qabila*.

The *Qabila* is also stratified vertically. Today, the Shihab *Qabila,* due to their political power and leadership, occupies the higher position in the Thangal hierarchy compared to the Bukhari or Thurmudi *Qabilas*. All the *Qabilas* are mixed through

marriage, and the male's *Qabila* is transferred to the next generation. Property rights operate according to the Islamic rule. But the females, in most cases, sell their hereditary property to the male brothers because they move to their husbands' place. This trend results in the male members having a lot more land compared to the female Thangals, who are known as *bheevis* (Etymologically similar to the Sayyid women in North India who are called *Beegum*). In this group, name and property are transferred through the male line. But in some cases, I have noticed that some of the Thangals add their mother's name along with the father's name and use it as a surname. In some of the villages, if there is only one Thangal family, people in the locality tend to not call male members of that family by their first names and instead simply call them by the surname 'Thangal.' To address a person from a Sayyid family without adding the surname 'Thangal' is considered as humiliating by the family members. Even the elder members and the learned scholars address the Thangal family members as Thangal and not their first names.

It is taught in a Sunni madrasa and other popular teachings like *wa'alu* and Friday post- *jummah* prayer teachings that '*Ahlul-Bayt* (People of the House) are the representatives whom Allah has selected to guide the Muslim community.' Here in Kerala, the Ahlul-Bayt are Thangals. Sunnis have been taught that Ahlul-Bayt is the descendants of the Prophet's daughter Fatima. They also believe that those who criticize the Thangals will face the same tragedy that Abulahab, the uncle of Prophet Muhammed, faced in Islamic history. They will be destroyed in the end. The Quran has revealed the following verse about Abu Lahab, "Perish the hands of Abu Lahab (the father of flames). Perish He! His wealth and his children will not benefit him! He will be burnt in a Fire of blazing flames! His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood as fuel. A twisted rope of Palm-leaf round her (own) neck!" Sunni school of thought and its scholars in Kerala believe that, according to many of my ulama respondents, those who critique the Ahlul-Bayt will face the same fate as Abu Lahab. According to local history narrated by the Thangal of Peleppuram who belongs to *Shihab Qabila* of Thangals, Ahmad Shihabudeen who died in 1946 is the father of Shihabi *Qabila*. He said that:

> Those people who go to meet the Thangals believe that they have a special power to solve any disputes. 'God has given them a certain power to maintain law and order in society' (*Allahu kodutha fazlu annu*), he told me when I asked him about the Thangals During the interview, one of the teachers who hails from the Malabari

133

family said "Prophet once said that, *Qul Lā As'alukum Alayhi Ajrāan Illā Al-Mawaddata Fī Al-Qurbá* (Say: I demand not from you any reward for it (preaching prophet-hood) except your *Mawaddat* (love) of my *Qurba* (nearest relatives). This *hadith* of the Prophet makes it clear that the Prophet has asked the people to respect the Alhlu-Bayt". He further added that "a Muslim can take two paths to follow his/her religion, one is the path of *ulama* and the other one is the path of Ahlul-Bayt. Ahlu-Bayt was divided into two- one is Hasaniyy, and another one is Husainiyy, but it is necessary for the *ulama* and Ahlu-Bayt to work together for a better Islamic society". He believes that Tajul *Ulama* Ullal Thangal, the 38th grandson of Prophet Muhammad, and Shihab Thangal Panakkad, the 40th grandson of the Prophet, were the most respectful Thangals in Kerala.

In most of the religious functions, Thangals are the chief guests who come mainly to inaugurate the function. The locals' veneration towards Thangals can be seen in all parts of Kerala.

For instance, in a public function, when a Thangal comes to the venue, people stand up, try to kiss his hand and get his blessings. The public who gather there would only refer to the Thangal by his surname. People are afraid to address the Thangal as 'nee' (singular you), instead, with the higher reverence they address him as '*ningal*' (plural you). However, even the term '*ningal*' is also considered as disrespectful and I have observed the elder members correcting, the younger ones to call them as 'Thangal' instead of '*ningal*.' Apart from showing respect to Prophets' descendants, this could be an influence of the Hindu caste system of Kerala, where, according to Chandramohan, the 'lower castes' were not allowed to use the language of the 'upper castes', and had to address an 'upper caste' man as *thamburan* (lord) and woman as *thamburatti* (lady). Further as noted by Chandramohan, the 'low castes' were not allowed to refer to themselves as 'I' or 'we' (neither first person singular nor first person plural) but only in the third person, *adiyan* (Chandramohan 2016: 12). In a similar vein, among the Muslims, even today, the Sayyid men are addressed as *Thangals* and Sayyidah (lady of a Sayyid house) are addressed as *bheevis*, and the author never heard any visitor address the Sayyids as *nee/nigal*, but always address as *Thangal*. Rasheed Thangal, Muslim League political leader in Manjeri town and one of the members the Thangals organization in the Manjeri area, said that:

> To those who come from outside, it might feel like a trivial issue, but those who are in the system and those who believe that Thangals are the descendants of the Prophet and that they should be respected would consider any such remarks [addressing them as 'ningal'] as offensive.

All these are constructed within the powerful notion of '*kuruthaked*' or '*guruthaked*.' It has been taught in the madrasas that God will curse those who disrespect the teachers, the elders, and Thangals. Disrespecting a Thangal in any manner would cause the person 'kuruthaked'. '*Kuruthaked thattal*' is one of the main forms of maintaining respect for the Thangals in the hierarchical society. Children are taught from their childhood that disrespecting a Thangal will invite 'bad luck' to his life. Such a belief is rampant and widespread among the Muslims of South Malabar which in turn ensures that no one criticizes, disrespects, and disobeys anyone belonging to the Ahlu-Bayt. That you cannot question the decisions taken by the Thangals is another popular teaching among the Sunnis.

All the Thangal family members proudly bear the name Thangals, and they transfer the surname to the coming generation. But women in Thangal families do not bear the name Thangal in addition to their first names. In the earlier generations, many of them were called as 'bheevis, ' but today such a naming is rare and hardly used as a female surname but Sayyidah is popular. In South Malabar, especially among the Muslims of the so-called lower castes, attaching father's or mother's name to the first name of a child is not popular and a rare occurrence. This is unlike the practice in Thangal families, where in most of the cases, the father's name is most important. Today the religious fractions like A.P and E.K and their affiliated organizations question the origin and *Qabila* status of Thangals. They argue that 'this Thangal (referring to a member of the rival fraction) is not an original Thangal.' Defaming rival religious organizations and their members is the main strategy used in order to maintain superiority among the Muslim masses. In such situations, most of the Thangal families have a chart hung on the walls in their homes which describe in detail their lineage and how they are directly connected to Prophet Muhammed. They also consider it essential to keep their fathers' and ancestors' names in order to protect the future generations from any problems related to the religious authority, power and status their community has enjoyed for so long.

One of the Thangals I interviewed holds five surnames along with his real name Basheer. He introduced himself as 'Sayyid Muthu Koya Basheer Jifry Thangal.' I have not met any Thangal who does not hold at least three names. Naming a child has a social and political implication among the Thangals. But this rigid naming practice does not apply to

the other caste groups. When asked about it, Said Thangal had said that the leadership of most of the political parties and religious organization are under the control of the Thangals. Those who cannot include Thangals in their main leadership will not be accepted as a *true* Muslim organization or political party. When I further asked about how those who critique the Thangals, like the Mujahids, see the Thangal leadership, he was of the opinion that even those who do not support Thangals want their presence in the organization to pull in the masses to their organization.

Even though Mujahids openly critique the very existence of the Thangal caste and their claim for a ritually superior position among the Muslims, they continue to support the political leadership of the Thangals. The Mujahid leadership vehemently criticizes the '*swalath*' and other public functions organized by the Thangals and the traditional Sunni leaders. For instance, Mujahids severely critique the *Muttipadi swalath*, which happens in '*swalath* nagar' in Malappuram at Muttipadi on the 26th evening of the holy month of Ramzan. Nearly hundred thousand people attend the *swalath* and the food distributed after that. It was started recently by the famous Muslim leader Sayyid Khaleelul Bukhari Thangal. He is also a member of the Samastha Kerala A.P. Sunni fraction. Over the years, the number of people who attend the *swalath* has increased from 10 thousand to above one hundred thousand. It had invited huge criticism from the Mujahids by saying that any such practices are not a part of Islamic tradition and it has not got any validation from the Quran and the *Hadith*s. They even argue that this '*swalath*' is the major source of money making for the A.P Sunnis.

Khaleel Thangal's status in society and his acceptance among the Sunnis even threatened the Panakkad Sayyids. Samastha E.K group has organized many seminars where they criticized Khaleel Thangal by disputing the origin of his *Qabila* and claimed that he and his ancestors do not belong to any Thangal families. Even many members of E.K Sunnis do not buy such an argument completely, but such criticisms and counter-arguments are common between these two groups. When I interviewed people from Muttipadi, they were of the opinion that 'Khaleel Thangal's charismatic leadership and the way he conducts the annual *swalath* has invited huge appreciation from the common people of South Malabar. They not only contribute money to the Thangal trust but have also started to send their children to the Thangal's school. The school has both CBSC and state syllabus. To

understand the power politics behind the Thangal leadership in Kerala, a thorough research on the 'respectful rivalry' between the two groups of Thangals in Kerala is inevitable, namely the Shihab Thangal family of Panakkad and Khaleelul Bukhari Thangal family of Malappuram.

Both the families belong to the Sunni tradition, and they are the unavoidable part of the Muslim religious leadership in Kerala. The Pannakad Thangal group supports and occupies the top leadership positions among the E.K Sunnis while the Khaleel Thangal group enjoys the leadership positions among the A.P Sunnis. Members of the Panakkad family have been occupying the top position of the Muslim League party since its inception in 1947[39]. Even the lower party positions and its affiliated organizations are under the leadership of different Thangals. However, many of the Thangals that I had interviewed reported that they often oppose the decisions taken by the Panakkad family and in many cases, most of them support Khaleelul Bukhari Thangal.

Khaleel-ul Bukhari Thangal is one of the main leaders of the Muslim religious group popularly known as A.P Sunnis. Unlike the Panakkad Thangal family, his family traditionally does not play an important role in politics. They are actively involved in spiritual activities and tend to steer clear of political debates[40]. Some of the Thangals that I interviewed had made clear their position by saying that they prefer to stay away from politics because it divides the Muslim community (See Chapter 4). Few have the opinion that if the Bukhari Thangals start supporting the LDF, it will make Muslim League vulnerable, which many think is bad for Muslims in Kerala. The Thangal families who support the A.P Sunnis are not ready to accept the political and religious authority of the Panakkad Thangals completely. Many of them even argue that the ancestry of the Shihab

---

[39] The presidential post of the party, although unwritten, is reserved for the senior most member of the Panakkad family. For 26 years, Panakkad Sayyid Shihab Thangal was the leader of the Muslim League in Kerala. After his death in 2012, his brother Panakkad Haidar Ali Shihab Thangal was elected unopposed as the president of the Muslim League.

[40] Even if they took political positions, generally they would not overtly support any political party. But the after 2006 assembly election, a major shift happened in the political landscape of South Malabar. Unlike previous elections where the A.P Sunnis did not support any political parties openly, in the 2006 elections, they declared that they would support the Communist Party of India. After the defeat of the Muslim League candidate M.A Majeed, A.P Sunnis celebrated the victory of T.K Hamsa, the LDF candidate, in Manjeri town with a huge victory march from Manjeri North to Manjeri South. Since then, A.P Sunnis do not have friendly relations with the Muslim League and the Panakkad Family.

Qabila cannot be traced back directly to Prophet Muhammed, and therefore that they are not the 'original' Thangals.

Even though there are disputes over the lineage and ancestry, due to the charismatic power and leadership quality of the Thangals in South Malabar, most of them still enjoy a high position in the social hierarchy compared to the other castes. It remains the fact that people approach the nearby Thangals to solve the problems related to property, marriage, family and many other social and political problems. In many cases, only if the Thangals cannot solve the problem are the issues taken to the court or police station. The other caste groups large believe that those who question the integrity of the Thangals invite wrath and other problems. Such wrath is what I had earlier referred to as the 'kuruthaked thattal.' It is influenced by the cultural tradition of 'guruthwam' and 'poruthwam.' But it has been argued by some of the *ulamas* that in Islam no person can curse another believer. It is considered as *haram,* and so according to the Islamic belief, it should be possible to criticize the Thangals or anyone without fearing any spiritual wrath. But the idea of 'kuruthaked thattal' is widely accepted among the people in the region, especially because of instruction in the Madrasas and public teachings.

Ambedkar argued that "It is not possible to break caste without annihilating the religious notion on which, the caste System, is founded" (Ambedkar 1979:27). He has clearly pointed out that the Hindu religious system is the one that maintains the caste structure. Similarly, even among the Muslims in Kerala, the interpretation of religious texts by various *ulama* classes, especially the Sunni ulama, help to maintain the caste status of Thangals. They have been arguing that among the Muslims, Thangals have a special status and position compared to other Muslim groups and that this higher status is religiously sanctioned and each one has to follow it. To further sustain this special status, believers are cautioned by the *ulamas* that those who do not follow this teaching would face the consequences from Allah.

To address Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal conference in Lohar, Ambedkar had written that "The *Shastras* do not permit a Hindu to accept anyone as his Guru merely because he is well versed." Similarly, even among the Mappila Muslims, many consider that Thangals, born as the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, have more religious power and

authority than the learned *ulamas*. During the present researcher's interviews, one Thangal member explained the situation thus: When asked about the approach other Muslim caste groups have towards the Thangal community, and whether there have been any noticeable changes in their approach in recent times as compared to his childhood, Said Thangal explained the issue very sarcastically. He answered my question with another question, "How could people place *sabeena* over the Quran?" This comment can be seen as a metaphor that explains the caste hierarchy among the Mappila Muslims of South Malabar. When I asked him to elaborate further, he explained that:

> Just like the Quran is the most valued holy text for Muslims, and every other text that came later (like the *maulid kitab*, *Sabeena*, etc.) are secondary, similarly we have a special position in Islam, one that is over and above that of the ulamas, which neither the ulamas nor the Mujahids can question. If there is a dispute over incidents or issues, or there is any obfuscated matter that people need clarification on, then they are expected to should first refer to the Quran and only later to the next source, the *Hadith*s, and any of the other *kitabs* written and coordinated by the imams. Therefore, Muslims respect the Quran so much that they are even prohibited from reading and touching the holy book when they are in *najas* (ritually unclean).

According to Said Thangal, the respect Muslim people have for the Thangals is similar to the respect they have for the holy Quran. Moreover, he strongly believes that they have a special privilege in Islam that Allah and His Prophet granted them by birth into this community.

He further explained that today most of the Muslim organizations are trying to form a separate Sayyid association. He pointed out that A.P Sunnis are the ones who first started such organizations and later the E.K Sunnis also formed similar organizations. As mentioned earlier, today, even the Mujahids and mainstream political parties including the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) are also trying to get the Thangal members into their organizations. Every religious organization considers the inclusion of a higher number of Thangal members as prestigious. It not only pulls other Muslim caste groups towards their organization but the organization can use the involvement of Thangals as a power source to mobilize the social, economic and cultural capitals.

In reality, each caste group values itself highly and is not ready to consider themselves as inferior to other castes, except to the Thangals. The lower caste people may be less literate; they may be economically backward, less politically united but they are

never ready to accept that they are inferior to other Muslims. The higher status of the Thangals is not just maintained through their political power, but they also get huge support from the traditional *ulama* class and the latter's interpretation of religious texts. Therefore, before moving to the next chapter to analyse the education, occupation and organizational affiliation of the households in these four caste groups, it is important to understand how the *ulama* class has interpreted the status of Sayyids. In the next section, I will analyse two speeches of Sunni religious leaders on the Sayyid families of Malabar to highlight how religious teachings support and sustain the higher status of the Thangals.

3.5.1 Analysing the Speeches of Kerala Ulama on Ahlu-Baith

During my field work and while listening to the public lectures on Ahlu-Baith in Kerala, the present researcher has come across one *hadith* very often: "I leave behind me two weighty things; the Book of Allah, the Quran and my progeny, my Ahlu-Baith. Never, never will these two get separated from each other until they meet me at the *Ḥawḍ al-Kawthar"*. This *hadith* is related to the last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad and one of the most debated *hadith*s among the Muslims. But the most common, accepted version of this *hadith* is that "I leave behind me two things, The Quran and my Examples (the Sunnah) if you follow them you will not go astray." In my field interview, Muhammed Kutti, the religious scholar from Manjeri responded to this by saying that only very few Islamic scholars interpreted this as 'Ahlu-Baith' instead of Sunnah and such interpretations are mainly from the Shia scholars. But in the field, I had received numerous versions of it, and that argues that the Prophet's kinfolk should be treated well, and everyone should respect them without any question.

In Malabar, the common people's knowledge about the Thangals and their importance in Islam is mainly moulded by the teaching of the traditional *ulamas* of Kerala primarily through the system of madrasa education along with the religious public speeches, which are popularly known as wa'alu programmes. If one argues that 'there is no such group as Ahlu-Baith in Islam', it is considered as sacrilegious by the ulamas and majority of the people in the region. According to Muhiyudheen Kamil, "It is the Qureshi gotra, and the Sayyids have the right to lead the Muslim community and who ever

disrespects them will face bad luck from Allah. They have a special '*quwat*' (power) in Islam, and that is the reason we give the leadership to Ahlu Baith".[41]

The *ulamas* say that it is not only the descendants of the Prophet's daughter Fathima who are considered as Ahlu Baith but also all those who accepted Islam as their religion in the family of Abdul-Muṭṭalib (the grandfather of the Prophet) and Hāshim ibn `Abd Manāf (the great grandfather of the Prophet). However, in the field, contrary to such an argument, all the Thangal families insist that their lineage can be traced back specifically to the Prophet's daughter Fathima. In his talk to defend the Thangal lineage of Fazal Koyamma Thangal Koora, Kamil Saqafi, one of the famous religious preachers from Kasaragod, who affiliates himself to the A.P Sunni fraction, cites numerous *hadith*s. He argued, based on the interpretations of the Quran and the *hadith*s, that those who disrespect the Thangals and those who disrespect their decisions and authority should consider the following matters very seriously. Firstly, they either belong to any of the following three categories: those who do not have *imaan* (religiosity) and therefore belong to the category of pseudo-believers, those who are illegitimate children and those who were conceived when his/her father copulated when the wife was menstruating.

Secondly, he argues that the Prophet had cursed six categories of people, out of which the last category of people are the ones who trivialize and disrespect the Ahlu-Baith. It is not only the Prophet, who cursed such people, but it is also Allah, and the whole angels had cursed the ones who do not respect the Ahlu-Baith. Thirdly, he says that it is the Prophet who goes first to the Pond of Abundance, *Ḥawḍ al-Kawthar,* where people should be questioned on two things one is the Quran and the other one is Ahlu-Baith. Those who disrespect any of these will be punished. A fourth point put forward by Kamil Saqafi in this regard is that those who disrespect the Prophet's kinfolk will be punished severely after his death in the after world. Furthermore, those who take revenge on Ahlu-Baith are the ones who belong to the path of bogus believers. Additionally, only those who enter hell could criticize the Ahlu-Baith. Lastly, those who question the Ahlu-Baith will not get the *Hawd al-Kawthar,* and when they attempt to drink it, they will be lashed with fire sticks.

---

[41] Aadaravinte Aavashyakatha (The importance of Reverence), Speech by Muhiyudheen Kamil Saqafi in Ullal on 12.02.2011

According to Kamil Saqafi, only people who are in either of the above-mentioned categories would dare to commit the mistake of criticizing or questioning the origin and authority of the Thangals. In short, he has the opinion that no one can criticize and question the origin, decisions, power and authority of Ahlu-Baith. He believes that as a 'true Muslim' it is his duty to defend the Ahlu-Baith because in *mahshara,* the gathering place, where there is no one to rescue you except the Prophet, the Prophet, at that moment, will intercede for four of the following categories of people: those who cherished his Ahlu-baith would be rescued by the Prophet, those who help the Ahlu-Baith when they are in need of any help, those who take any initiative to save their honour and pride when the Ahlu-Baith is punished and defamed by any individual or a group and lastly those who use his/her tongue to protect the Ahlu-Baith and praise their *karama*, 'miracles', would be honored with the intercession of the Prophet.

Kamil Saqafi concludes his speech by saying that he supports the Thangals for the reasons mentioned above and that he would continue doing so until his death.   This opinion and teaching is the opinion and teaching of many *ulamas* in Kerala. For instance, the teaching of Rahmathulla Qasimi Muthedam, whobelongs to the E.K fraction, had pointed out that it is the duty of every Muslim to protect the Ahlu-Baith from any criticism. Most of the *ulamas* I interviewed asked me how someone who loves the Prophet could hate or criticise the Ahlu-Baith. It clearly shows that any criticism of the Thangals are taken as a criticism of Prophet Muhammed, and it is used as a source of political power to maintain the status quo of Thangals in Kerala. If anyone dares to criticize the Thangals, he or she will face huge consequences in his or her lives on earth and in the after-world.

This sub-section addressed the reasons behind the superiority of the Thangals as a Muslim caste group, examined the beliefs of the other Muslim groups in this regard and also shed light on the teachings and interpretations provided by *ulamas* and other religious leaders in favour of the powerful position enjoyed by the Thangals. In the Bourdiosian sociology of education theory, these speeches serve as an instrument for the transformation of religious knowledge from one generation to another, but at the latent level, it is the process of the reproduction of caste relations among the Muslims and the need to respect a certain group without questioning the existing status quo in societies. In another perspective, the *wa-alu* programme and the speeches that celebrate the lineage, authority

and status of Sayyids is "conservation of a culture inherited from the past" (Bourdieu 1977). No doubt, the Thangals of Kerala have become a powerful political class and caste because of their cultural capital. The present religious education system among the Muslims, no doubt, reproduces the structure of the distribution of the cultural capital among the various Muslim caste groups. Does this cultural capital help them to achieve higher educational credentials? Subsequent chapters will discuss this question in detail. The next sub-section will examine a fourth Muslim group called the Malabaris who are defined mostly by the extent of their differences from the other caste groups rather than by an inherent birth-based occupation and/or status.

3.6 Malabari Muslims: the largest Muslim Population in South Malabar

In this work, I have used Malabari to denote the Mappila Muslims who do not belong to any of the three caste groups described in this chapter - the Thangals, the Barbers, and the Fishermen. Mappila is a generic term used to denote Muslims of Malabar and scholarly works have variously spelled it as Mappila, Mappilla, Mopla, Maplah and Moplaymar. It is important to note that not all Mappilas are Malabaris but all Malabaris are Mappilas. In other words, Mappila Muslims also include Thangals, Barbers, and Fishermen and these categories are not included in the Malabari group.

Within their caste groups, the Barbers, Fishermen, and Thangals, are connected through the extended kinship networks such that each person is indirectly or directly related to other members of their caste through affinal ties. However, such a kinship network and affinal ties can hardly be found among the Malabaris. That is one major difference between the Malabari groups from other caste groups. In his work on Mappila Muslims, Victor D'Souza says that "In Malabar, among the Moplahs themselves, the main body of the Moplahs is termed Malbaris or Malabaris and the other sections are called the Thangals, the Arabis, the Pusalars and the Ossans" (D'Souza 1959: 490). He further says that, among the Malabaris, there are a large number of people of Arab origin and lineage but "these people have lost the identity of their Arab origin by the adoption of mother-right cultural traits" (D'Souza 1959: 490). They are the largest Muslim population in South Malabar (Jeffrey 1992: 112), and they lack a specific traditional occupation which could be one

major reason contributing to the denial of caste by most of the Malabaris. They follow the Sunni, Mujahid or Jamaat religious school of thought.

They also practice endogamy. They rarely enter into a marriage alliance with other groups especially with Barbers and Fishermen, whom they consider as lower status groups. Exogamous marriage with Thangals is also a rarity. During the field work, the researcher has noticed that Thangal men have had marriage alliances with Malabaris but rarely do they enter into marriage alliances with Barbers and Fishermen. Out of forty Malabari families that I had visited, there were very few exogamous marriages reported. All other marriages are within the communities. Inter-religious marriages are rare and such couples have been outcasted from the families. Malabaris take up all kinds of jobs except barbering and fishing (recently some of them are engaged with these jobs), but they have not been traditionally limited to any specific profession. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that Malabaris is defined as a caste group in relation to their differences from Thangals, Barbers, and Fishermen.

They see their social status as being above that of the Barbers and Fishermen and agree to the extent that their status is below that of the Thanagls. Most of them are converts but enjoy equal status irrespective of their origin and occupation, and class divisions are more common among the members of this group. It is the economic capital that decides the social status of the members of this group. Nearly fifty thousand people from the 'lower caste' group converted to Islam during 1871-1881. During this period and after that, many people from 'lower strata' converted to Islam (Logan 2009 [1887]: 231). Conversion is the major reason for the large Malabari population in South Malabar.

Historically, the North Malabar Muslims enjoyed the comparatively higher economic status while the bulk of the Muslim population from South Malabar suffered tremendously, the majority of who were Muslims converts. They converted from the 'lower caste' Thiyya, Cheruman, and Mukkuvan groups, for whom the honour of Islam "brought freedom from the disabilities of ritual pollution" (Hardgrave 1977: 59). However, in the case of the Barber and Fishermen Muslims communities, such freedom is still limited, and they face discrimination in many social and cultural spheres as has been discussed in this chapter.

Within the 12 Mujahid households selected from the Malabari group, most of the total present generation (G2) marriages are sectarian bound, which means that Mujahids prefer to marry only from Mujahids and vice versa. This is somehow even limited to sub-sects within the sects. For instance, those ulamas who follow the A.P sub-sect of Sunnis prefer to find a spouse from the same group, and they completely avoid a marriage alliance with Mujahids and prefer to not marry from the E.K Sunni sub-sect. Sainudeen Saqafi Velluvambram, who teaches in an Elambra A.P madrasa, explained to me that:

> The life of a Muslim revolves around his religion. From birth to death, we follow religious rules and regulations. But Mujahids, whom I never consider as true Muslims, have a different tradition and opinion in most of the religious matters. For instance, we even have a difference of opinion in how to perform our five time namaz. So how a Mujahid woman can live with a Sunni man? I believe it would be better if we reduce our marriage alliances with Sunnis. Even within the Sunnis, I prefer A.P Sunni families. If we marry from other sects and groups, there are higher chances for disputes regarding several religious issues.

Sainudeen Saqafi Velluvambram, who is nearly sixty now, has four daughters and three sons, and all of them married Sunnis, that too within the A.P fractions. Such an emerging 'sectarian endogamy' is beyond the scope of this thesis, but this would be an interesting topic for further research.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the overall status of four caste groups in South Malabar. It argues that those who are in the 'lower strata' have had a number of humiliating experiences and been meted out unequal treatment within the Mappila Muslims, especially when it comes to marriage. According to my ethnographic data, more than 90 percent of the population of the people in my ethnographic data follow endogamous marriage. Historically, Thangals of South Malabar have been strictly following the *kafa'ah* rules to keep bloodlines pure, which further fortifies their endogamous unit. Marriage patterns in the field reveal that it is difficult for a Barber and Fishermen to have marriage alliances with Malabaris, and the majority of them still practice endogamous marriage. Traditional *ulamas* from both Sunni fractions, A.P and E.K Sunnis, unequivocally support the higher status of Thangals and argue that no 'ordinary Muslim' can criticize and question the origin, decisions, power and authority of Thangals.

Keeping in mind the social and cultural divisions among these four communities in Malabar, in the next chapter, the possession of social capital by each caste group, how they mobilize their social capital, the sources of their social capital and lastly how it differentially contributes to their higher education will be discussed.

Chapter IV

A Discussion on Education, Occupation, and Networks of the Head of the Households

In his upcoming book titled as *Christian Denominations, Hindu Castes, Muslim Sects: A Study of Their Demography and Socioeconomic Profile*, K.C Zachariah, the pioneer of demographic and migration studies, discusses the history and population growth of Hindu castes, Muslim sects and Christian denominations in Kerala (Zachariah 2016: 6). The book is likely the only work of its kind so far that looks into the population of different religious groups and the divisions within the religions in Kerala. The study classifies Muslims into two sections or sects, that of the Sunnis and the Shia Muslims. However, one limitation is that it overlooked the other sectarian groups among the Muslims such as the Mujahids, Sunnis, and Jamaats. When it comes to Kerala Muslims, as has been pointed out in the first chapter, the division and distinction of Muslims are more complex and cannot be understood only by looking into the two sects, Shias, and Sunnis. In Malappuram district, Shias are only 0.7 percent of the total Muslim population and rest of the 99.3 percentage are Sunnis (Zachariah 2016), but the division on the basis of Islamic religious ideologies among the Muslims are very stark, deep rooted and more evident than the divide between Sunnis and Shias.

Previous works argue that affiliation towards particular religious sectarian groups have educational benefits for Muslims where those who are affiliated to Mujahids and Jamaat have a clear-cut edge in educational development when compared to those who belong to the Sunni sect of the Muslims (Osella and Osella 2008, Muhammed 2007). However, there are many other factors from students' social and economic background to parental education, parental jobs and their networks and membership in political and social groups, kinship networks, the influence of peer groups, and even geographical localities that play vital roles in the educational performance of students. Further, the importance of students' social background on educational attainment was pointed out by Coleman who suggested that those students whose home background is favourable to educational

achievement are less prone to other social influences (Coleman et. al 1966). Nevertheless, educational attainment also depends on the possession of social capital within families, which is unequally distributed in various communities, castes and regions.

The question of the accessibility of education for Muslim caste groups in South Malabar is analyzed in the light of the Colemanian of social capital, and how it is distributed among the different households in the four caste groups. Analyzing 'Caste in Kerala,' Hardgrave had the opinion that:

> The most highly organized community of Kerala in these early years, as today, was the Christian. Each of the Christian sects, through its system of schools and churches, had formed associations, the most important being the Roman Catholic community. The Muslims, too, formed communal organizations for the advancement of their community interests (Hardgrave 1964: 1847).

The 'communal organization' that Hardgrave refers is formed with the help of social capital mobilised by religious groups through various mechanisms to educate the specific religious community, but often excludes the other communities and exploits those who are within the communities (Mathew 1989). This 'exclusionary and exploitative' character of social capital will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Muslims, like the Christians and Hindus in Kerala, are organised under various organisations and sectarian groups which have established educational institutions. However, how effective these institutions have been, in helping Muslims belonging to various caste groups in Kerala to achieve an education has not been the focus of study yet. As Coleman said in his seminal work on *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Coleman et.al.1966), educational discrimination not just starts in the schools but it begins within the families. Educational exclusion and discrimination are not just visible in the classrooms and syllabus, but its roots are deeply embedded in the social structure and the way education functions in Indian society. Based on the data collected for this study, the relationship between the strength of the networks within each caste group and their educational development and progress will be analysed and compared. Does the social network credit that each Muslim caste group possesses help them to redeem it for educational purposes?

In this chapter, the author will analyze the possession of social capital by the families of the four communities and how the possession of social capital is related to the higher education in the families. The burgeoning literature on social capital and education argue that parental or household heads with an advantageous position in education are able to successfully intervene and mould the education of their children (Coleman 1972, Bianchi and Robinson 1997, Ball 2003). Oxford dictionary defines 'family head' as he 'head of a family or household, especially one who earns money or makes decisions for the rest of the family.' West's Encyclopaedia of American Law defines head of household as "An individual in one family setting who provides actual support and maintenance to one or more individuals who are related to him or her through adoption, blood, or marriage" (Lehman and Phelps 2005: 218). From the above definitions, it is clear that a household head is one who makes decisions, earns, provides and supports the family system.

In South Malabar, most of the wage earnings and financial assistance are provided by the male members, but female household heads have the role in decision making and supporting the family system. Many studies have argued that the influence of the mother over the child's education is crucial. Therefore, no study can exclude the data on the female heads of the households while discussing parental influence on children's education. Therefore, rather than calling it as data on household heads, these are the data on the parents of the families and when the author refers to household heads, it includes both the male and female head of the families[42].

The first section of this chapter, *Parental education, Home Environment and Social Capital,* discusses the education of the head of the households in detail. This section is divided into three sub-sections that each dicuss three indicators to study the parental education, the same indicators used earlier in the second chapter to study the overall

---

[42] The data is collected from both the male and female head of the families, a total of 320 members. Out of 160 families, there were 14 families where the father is not alive, and 3 cases where the mother is dead. The educational details and occupational data on the dead persons are collected from their spouse or son/daughter in some cases or from their parents, brothers, and sisters, and in two cases the data is collected from the brother-in-law (*aliyan*) of the deceased member. By doing so, no head of the households have been omitted, and data is collected from all of the 40 families from each of the four caste groups. The youngest female household head's age was 33 years, and the youngest male respondent was 38 years old. The age of the respondents varies from 33 years to 74 years. The age of the household heads varies from 38 years to 73 years.

education of Muslims in Kerala and outside. The first part assesses *literacy* of the head of the households. The second part discusses the *school education* of the head of households. Parents who hold a degree are grouped in the third part called *higher education*, which includes data on those who have a higher education above graduate level.

The second major section of this chapter examines the *occupation* of the head of the households. This section analyses the parental occupation in five broad categories. The first part of the sub-section looks into the *traditional occupation* and analyses the household members who follow a particular occupation that has been traditionally followed by the members of their family since the last three consecutive generations. The second and third parts discuss *Agriculture and allied occupation,* and *self-employment and business* respectively. *Government and salaried jobs* are analysed separately in the fourth part. Gulf remittance serves as the major source of income for nearly 140 households in the field. Therefore the last part of this section focuses on *Gulf migration and immigrant jobs.*

On analysing education and social capital, one important characteristic that was noticed is the membership of family members in various organizations and associations. Such a membership and connection help families to connect people outside their kinship networks. Therefore, the third major section of this chapter titled as *membership in organizations and associations,* in which, participation in PTA is discussed along with the membership of family members in various religious organizations such as *Mahalu* and madrasa committees in the first sub-section. The second sub-section discusses the membership in *voluntary organizations* and *community groups,* and the last sub-section will analyze the membership of households in *political parties* and in *the local sports clubs.* Overall, this chapter will attempt to provide a detailed understanding of the possession of the social capital by each family in each caste group. Based on the comprehensive description of the possession of social capital by households in the field in this chapter, the next chapter will use the data to understand the present educational scenario of each of the four caste communities.

4.1 Parental Education and Social Capital

As mentioned in the first chapter, parent's education is closely connected to the educational outcome of the children, and it is one of the important sources of social capital. Formation of social capital, particularly in the family context, happens in two ways. One is via within-the-family connections, and the other is outside-family connections. Firstly, a positive relationship and mutual understanding between parents and their children are vital to the educational success of all children. For instance, according to Coleman, parents' financial capital and cultural capital will be useful for the child only when they have a positive parent-child interaction and only when the child gets a proper care and affection within the family network. Only in such a circumstance can the child positively use the parent's cultural and economic capitals. Secondly, parents' immediate relationships and networks outside their house are important for their children's educational achievements.

In Sociology literature, most scholars argue that 'highly educated and richer parents can provide a better environment for their children,' and they outperform in education compared to children of lesser educated and poor parents (McLachlan, Gilfillan, and Gordon: 2013, Chevalier, Harmon, and Sullivan: 2013). Positive networks are important for the child to grow in a healthy environment, as noted by Teachmen and Carver, "children are not afforded a weak link in their daily pattern of interaction that would allow them to engage in behaviors that would threaten the development of subsequent human and financial capital, e.g., premature sexual activity, use of illicit drugs, participation in a gang" (Teachman and Carver 1996). Further, the work of Bianchi and Robinson underline the thesis that parental education is the predominant predictor of the human and social capital investments that children receive (Bianchi and Robinson 1997).

It is widely accepted that educated families give a higher priority to the education of their children and educated families with their increased social networks, income and exposure provide a huge motivation for children to study (Cohen 1965: 405, Alam 2012:156). It is also noted that parents who provide resources to their children do not expect the same level of reciprocity from their children (Ben-Porat 1980). Coleman's social capital theory places greater importance to ties within the family and how such an interconnection within the family helps the children to become responsible adults. However, Coleman, as noted by Teachman and Carver, mainly relied on a single indicator of family structure i.e.

the number of parents present in the family. Based on this single indicator, he argued that compared to single parent families, two-parent families have more time available for parent-child interaction and it will have a positive result in a child's future (Teachman and Carver 1996).

However, in this study, the author has not only taken the educational credentials of parents, but also looked at their occupation, and other social networks. In some of the families in South Malabar, the father works outside the home town, most often in the Gulf countries and children live in a single parental condition. Also, they get good care and support from their grand-parents. In such cases, grandparents take on the role of parents, and they are the ones caring for the child in most of his/her daily activities. However, it is impossible to include a detailed discussion on the education of such grandparents. Therefore, the focus is given mainly to understand the education of the parents- head of the households. The next sub-section will discuss the literacy of households in the field in detail.

4.1.1 Literacy in the Households

Literacy is one of the most important components that help to understand the basic educational status of any community, region, and state. However, as mentioned in the second chapter, the problem with the way literacy is defined is that it considers a particular type of people as literate based on the official definition given by the state, which excludes a lot of individuals who are literate in certain local languages and dialects. Such a situation not just rules out a large number of individuals who are well versed in 'unrecognized' languages, but they also negate the existence of diverse languages and dialects spoken in different parts of the country. For instance, in South Malabar, most of the Muslims are literate in Arabi-Malayalam, but those people are not considered literate by the official census.

In this study, the author has included the question that asks the details of a person's literacy skills in Arabi-Malayalam language. Out of 320 household heads (G1), 319 people are literate in Arabi-Malayalam. They can read the Arabic scripts and understand the meaning of Malayalam words written in Arabi-Malayalam. However, out of 320 household heads, only 299 people (93.4 percent) are counted as literate according to the official definition of literacy. It shows that compared to the formal definition of literacy, there are

twenty more people who are literate in Arabi-Malayalam. There is no wide gender disparity in the profile of literacy in Arabi-Malayalam. One of the major reasons for this is the widespread Madrasa education in the region and the knowledge that is acquired to recite the Quran which also helps them to read Arabi-Malayalam literature. Another reason must be the higher number of Sunni sect in the present research sample. Mujahids, traditionally, do not educate their children in Arabi-Malayalam but they teach the students in madrasa either in Malayalam or Arabic. During the interview, out of sixteen Mujahid households, (10 percent of the total participants from the Mujahid sect), most of the household heads said they could read and understand Arabi-Malayalam even though they have not received their formal religious education in Arabi-Malayalam. However, unfortunately, this type of literacy is not acceptable or does not count in the official census department's survey on literacy.

In the field, as mentioned in the first chapter, most of the families give preference to both religious education along with formal schooling. Taking into account all the communities in the present study, 98 percent of the head of the households had either completed madrasa education or gone till fourth or seventh standard. Almost all students from these households attend madrasas for their religious education. However, parents with a high level of income and education have slowly started to send their children to the English medium schools. Most of these schools start their classes at eight in the moring. Therefore those who go to such schools cannot attend the madrasa education. Apart from the few such exceptions, most of the children in the locality acquire the madrasa education. They go to madrasa till the seventh standard, and the dropout rate after the seventh standard is huge in most of the localities of Malappuram district.

Most of the dropouts say that to perform better in schools, they discontinue madrasa education. Some were also of the opinion that doing both Madras education and school education is difficult to manage together. As the everyday life rituals, practices and dispositions, which are multifaceted, diverse and vary greatly, and important 'life-cycle' events such as birth, marriage and death of the field are organized and deeply linked to religious beliefs, Muslims generally place higher importance on religious education. Therefore, all the parents are of the opinion that their child should get a basic religious education like the knowledge about five times *niskaram*, reciting the Quran and basic

knowledge about Islam and its tenets. Basic religious knowledge is important for everyday religious practices. In educating adolescents about religious values and norms, the madrasa plays an important role. Therefore, across the caste and class background, Muslims in the locality place a higher value on basic religious education. However, as mentioned earlier, dropout rates are higher in the higher classes in madrasas, especially after the seventh standard.

Table 4.3 Literacy of the Household Heads (Including literacy in Arabi-Malayalam)

Caste Group	No. People	Illiterates	Literacy %		M+F %	Literacy in Arabi-Malayalam		M+F %
			Male(M)	Female(F)		Male(M)	Female(F)	
Barbers	80	8	92.5	87.5	90	100	100	100
Fishermen	80	9	90.0	87.5	88.8	100	97.5	98.8
Sayyids	80	1	100	97.5	98.8	100	100	100
Malabaris	80	3	95.0	97.5	96.3	100	100	100
Total	**320**	**21**	**94.4**	**92.5**	**93.5**	**100**	**99.4**	**99.7**

Note: M+F =Male plus Female Percent
Source: Based on author's field work

Analysing literacy according to caste, as shown in Table 4.1, the most important point is that there are no illiterate men in the group of Sayyids. All of them are literate in both Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam. However, one Sayyida is reported as illiterate. In the field data, there are eight illiterate people from the Barber community (five women and three men) and their total literacy rate is 90 percent. The fishing community has the highest number of illiterate people with a total of nine (four men and five women), and their overall literacy rate is 88.8 percent. Followed by Sayyids, Malabaris are the most literate group in the field. There are only three illiterate people in that group (two men and one woman), and their literacy rate is 96.3 percent. However, these 21 illiterate people are from the age group of above forty-five, and more than half, exactly 14, (20 people said they never attended the school of them had never had formal schooling. Discussing schooling opportunities, Bappu, the illiterate Barber from Manjeri, told the author that he is not able to write any language but that he can read Malayalam although not fluently. He further explained that:

I can recite chapters from the Quran, but I am not able to read any other languages. When I was eight years of old, I started to go with my father for barbering. Unlike today, during those days, there was no permanent place or a shop to perform our job. My father used to go to different houses, and most of the time the job was done in makeshift shops. I started to work as a barber at the age of eleven, and I continued that job till my sixties.

His generation had rarely attended schools and colleges but received a basic religious education. The main demand during their time was to be able to read the Quran, recite the *dhikr* and *duas* and also to learn basics of religious ritual performances. He knows some of the relevant chapters of the Quran by-heart, and he could also remember the *dhikrs* and prayers. During those days, the *dhikr* and *duas* were orally transmitted from one generation to another mainly in *dars* and *othupallis*, and such an oral tradition was the main source of religious knowledge.

The higher literacy of the Sayyids may be connected to their higher status and their job as traditional ritual healers. It is necessary to know the language to communicate with the patients and to prescribe medicines. The Thangal of Payyanad was above sixty-five years old when I met him. He has been working as a ritual healer since the last four decades. Being a healer, around twenty to twenty-five people come to meet him in a day for various purposes. The women who come to meet him stand behind a purdah and talk to him about all their grievances, family problems, and property issues. Sometimes he gives verbal advice, and along with that, he may also provide a small note, known as *kuripp (prescription note),* to the patients. The prescription note contains some techniques, magic spells and incantations that the patients should recite or perform in their home, and it also contains the dhikrs, *duas,* and the Quran *ayats* that one should recite at a particular time of the day and for a particular duration, and sometimes it should be done in isolation and secrecy.

To prescribe such a note, apart from having knowledge of the dhikrs and *duas* and the Quran, Thangals should have the basic knowledge of how to write and read a language. To be literate in Arabi-Malayalam is not sufficient for their occupation because many times, non-Muslims also visit the Thangals seeking their blessing and asking for solutions to many problems. The non-Muslims, mainly lower caste Hindus who come to meet the Thangal, cannot read and understand Arabi-Malayalam. They would need to be given prescription notes in Malayalam. Therefore it is a must for a Thangal to learn to read and

write the local language. Such a tradition of prescription writing and their job as traditional healers would have likely demanded Thangal men to be literate even in the earlier days.

It is also noted that in their perceived roles as religious and political leaders of the rest of the Muslim community in Kerala, educating themselves appears to be important for the Sayyids in order to lead the community towards the 'right path.' In other words, it is the cultural milieu in which they grow up that makes them more prone to the culture of reading and writing. For instance, the young Thangal from Thambanagadi said:

> I have grown up seeing my *uppa* (father) read and prescribe medicines for illnesses. In my childhood, my father used to ask me to write the *dhikr* and other medical prescriptions. Moreover, he used to remind me that I have to write everything in clear letters and words so that people can read it without difficulty.

This culture of healing practice and prescription writing is common in most of the Thangal families, though many of them are not formally acknowledged as ritual healers. This traditional occupation, since it requires the ability to read and write apart from a knowledge of medicines, appears to encourage them to educate themselves and their children in both Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam along with the strong belief that they are the ones who should lead the Muslim community in future.

However, it is not right to call the Sayyid community the most educated group among the Muslims only by analysing the higher literacy of this group. An understanding of educational indicators like school enrolment and higher educational status is important in understanding the detailed educational status of the four communities. In order to arrive at a better understanding of the education of the head of the household, the school education of these four caste communities will be analysed in the next section.

4.1.2 School Education of the Head of the Households

School education is a deciding factor in a child's future educational prospects. The better the school education, the easier it is to climb the ladder of higher education. In addition, formal education is an important mechanism of socialisation that produces new networks. In the socialisation process, educational institutions, especially schools, play an important role. It not only enables an individual to learn the relevant language(s) and skills but it provides knowledge about culture, social values, and social responsibilities. However, as noted by Morrison and McIntyre, "it makes little sense to discuss schools in isolation from the other agencies of socialization. They are neither the first nor necessarily

among the more important agencies" (Morrison and McIntyre1971: 11). Therefore, along with schools, many other agents including higher educational institutions, families and other social institutions play an important role in socializing an individual.

In the sphere of education, it makes little sense to discuss schools by ignoring other institutions of education. While analysing the education of a community, it is essential also to understand their status in higher education. In the context of Kerala, even though there are differences in educational attainment of children in various families, most of the students have opportunities to enrol in school education whereas the higher education scenario is not as accessible.

In India, primary education or elementary education is the education of a child aged from 6 to 16 years. Education of a child till 14 years is made free under the right to education act of 2009. In South Malabar, except 20 people from the sampled population, all the other participants had at least some sort of school education. Out of the 20, as mentioned earlier, 14 people are illiterate. Even though the remaining six people do not have any formal education, they are literate and learned to read and write through informal education.

Table 4.4 Community-wise School Data of the Household Heads

Class	All castes			Barbers			Fishermen			Sayyids			Malabaris		
	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W	T
N.L	9	12	21	3	5	8	4	5	9	0	1	1	2	1	3
<4th	32	22	54	9	6	15	17	12	29	1	2	3	5	2	7
>4th	119	126	245	28	29	57	19	23	42	39	37	76	33	37	70
Till 10th	52	64	116	8	12	20	5	9	14	18	16	34	21	27	48
10th Pass	23	33	56	2	4	6	2	3	5	10	12	22	9	14	23

Note: N.L: Not Literate, M: Men, W: Women T: Total
Source: Based on author's fieldwork

Table 4.2 shows that, out of 320, a total of 54 household heads could not complete education beyond the fourth standard. The data here shows that 76.6 percent of the sampled household heads (245 people) have an education above primary school level, education above the 4th standard. Only 116 household heads, 36.3 percent, have education till secondary school. However, only 56 household heads have passed the SSLC exam. This

figure shows that only 17.5 percent of the household heads from the entire population have cleared the 10th standard exam.

Even though 116 people have attended school till secondary school, the majority of them (60) failed in the SSLC exam. Only 56 people have cleared the SSLC exam. Examining the numbers caste-wise, there are only 6 Barber household heads who cleared the SSLC exam that includes four women and two men. Only five household heads from the fishermen community passed the SSLC exam, and this includes three women and two men. The largest number of 10th passed household heads belongs to the Malabari community. Out of 80 Malabari households, 23 household heads passed SSLC exams, and out of the 80 Sayyid households, only 22 household heads cleared the SSLC exam.

One reason for the higher number of the 10th pass households in the Malabari community must be the inclusion of 10 Mujahid families in the list. The author had included two Barbers and four Fishermen families from Mujahid sect (Total 16 mujahid families in the sample). Out of these four barber mujahid household heads, three of them cleared the 10th standard exams. The remaining one person, the male head of the family, Moideen Kutty is educated till 10th standard, but he could not clear the exam. Out of the 56 who passed the SSLC exam, 14 of them (4.4 percent of the total population, and 25 percent of total SSLC passers) are from the Mujahid sect. However, within the mujahid sect, 43.75 percentage of the household heads have cleared the SSLC exam, but at the same time, the rate is only 14.58 among the Sunni household heads. Also, out of 56 pass outs, 33 are women (18.3 percent of the total sampled population, and 58.93 percent of total SSLC pass outs).

Table 4.2 also shows that the most number of people who had below primary level education belong to the Fishermen community. Also, there are a significant number of school dropouts reported from the Fishermen community. The general response from the Fishermen parents on their educational backwardness is that 'we never had the opportunities and facilities for education that this generation has. We were poor, and our main concerns were providing for our families with food and shelter'. Forty seven year old Hamza, a Mujahid activist from the Fishermen community, remembered that during his school years those who were in 6th to 10th standard went for fishing and related works as a

part time employment. Those who were under the age of 13 and 14 were also engaged in fishing activities with their family members. He continued:

> Those who were 13 and 14 preferred to go for the job than to school. They were paid nearly equal to the eldest members of the fishermen group. Moreover, most of them go for fishing either with his brother or/and father and instead of discouraging them, they would happily take them for the job. Such a situation forced them to leave their education behind and work as full-time marine labourers.

Similar situations, where the caste occupation is one reason for the educational backwardness of Muslim communities, have been reported by other researchers. For instance, Uzma Azhar's (2012) study of the *"Education among the Muslims of Delhi"* says that the caste and class divisions do not just influence the income of Muslim families, but it influences the education of Muslims. Azhar's work points out that the low educational status of the Arzal caste is "due to their family occupations which are skill based (embroidery, tailoring, etc.), so, they mostly educate their children till middle school, after that, they join their family businesses" (Azhar: 2012). From this example and data provided from the field, it is clear that the skilled caste groups like the Barbers and Fishermen prefer to take up their traditional jobs at an early age than pursue formal education.

While discussing the medium of education, those who had attended school said that they were educated in Malayalam medium. The first generation of the Muslims in South Malabar was never educated in English medium schools, and that blocked their entry to the 'sponsored mobility' as mentioned by Kumar (1997). By Sponsored mobility, he refers to the phenomenon in which those who attend the elite schools get admission to elite higher education institutions and then move into the best jobs in the country (Kumar 1997).

Similarly, Morrison and McIntyre, in their 1971 study, show that educational success is related to social class, and they further argue that "the children of people in professional and managerial occupations, for example, are much more likely to be successful than the children of unskilled manual workers" (Morrison and McIntyre 1971: 15). Their argument is further corroborated on analysing the job profile of the head of the households in this study and education of their children in South Malabar. Below 5 percent of the parents are doing white-collar jobs and rest of the 95 percent are agricultural labourers or coolie workers, migrated workers or small business owners or follow their traditional occupation. The fact remains that the first generation of Muslims who lived after

the independence in South Malabar was largely excluded from higher education and government jobs. The representation of Barber and Fishermen Muslim communities in government jobs was zero, and only very few from the Sayyids and Malabaris had the opportunity to be employed in such jobs.

A gender-based analysis shows that there is no significant divide at the level of primary education. Among the Barber and Fishermen communities, the female head of the household outperforms in primary education than the men. As mentioned earlier, men from this group have shown little interest in education due to their early entry into employment and female members had relatively fewer restrictions for pursuing primary education. However, the gender differences are less in favour of women as the level of education increases. Apart from not getting admission in higher educational insistituions, women face major hurdles for their higher educational pursuits due to early marriage, early pregnancy, and existing patriarchal values. Of these factors, ethnographic dat suggests that early marriage appears to be one of the most significant reasons that prevent women from pursuing higher education. Considering the importance of the subject, the relationship between early marriage and how it influences the education of girls and reasons for child marriage in South Malabar needs a separate discussion. Therefore, the last section of the fifth chapter will discuss the issue in detail.

The ethnographic data collected from South Malabar shows that the educational attainment, especially higher education, appears to be closely linked to the caste system. The number of students who can access educational opportunities and successfully complete their education decreases for 'low caste' students as the educational level increases. In short, the educational structure in the locality, as elsewhere in India, to borrow Lin's theory (2001), has a pyramidal shape, in terms of accessibility and control of resources: the higher the educational position, the fewer the occupants; and the higher the educational position, the better the view it has of the structure (Lin 2001: 81). For instance, in the present study, the number of so called lower castes decreases as the educational level increases, which shows that the position of 'low castes' in the social structure negatively influences their educational attainment. While this subsection looked at the school level education of household heads across caste groups, and it shows that the so called higher

castes have a relatively better educational status, the next subsection will discuss the higher educational profile of the head of the households in detail.

4.1.3 Higher Education of the Head of the Household

Higher educational background of the parent is one of the most important factors that directly influence the educational career of the children. In this section on higher education, the researcher has included graduation and higher degrees, including post-graduation, and doctorate degrees. Researcher's observations from the field show that parents with a degree and higher are likely sent their children to better schools and colleges, and such parents are least likely to encourage their children to take up a job at an early age.

Among all the caste groups, it has also been noted that the Sayyids to get seats in colleges easily compared to any other group because their religious clout enables them to exert political pressure on college managements in order to obtain a seat when necessary. The bargain capacity of the Sayyids is far stronger than that of any other caste groups. The very name, Thangal, as discussed in section 2 of the third chapter, carries an embodiment of the social capital that the caste group possesses as a derivative of the cultural capital that they possess by birth i.e. as the descendants of the prophet. During the interview, the Thangal from Pandikkad reminded the author that he does not even need to go to college for the admission of his child. When he calls the college management, they would say 'Thangal need not come to the college for the admission; even if your son does not get the merit seat, we will give him admission in the management quota.' However, it does not mean that all Thangals have same social status, power and the authority to pressurize the management but most of them have a voice and possess strong networks that help them connect with the college management to ask for a seat in any educational institutions. However, it should be noted that Kerala, with 52.38 percent, has the highest percent of private aided management schools in the country (See Appendix Table 4 and Table 5). In private aided management schools, teachers are appointed by the management without any government intervention, and they have a fixed number of seats under the 'management quota'. In such a scenario, Thangals domination in religious and political spheres gives them easier access to the educational institutions and their authorities, and it makes them tough bargainers of college management seats or seats in any other private educational institutions in the state.

When it comes to parental education, those who are less educated want to educate their children in a better way, but they rarely have enough knowledge, awareness and the right kind of information about the options available. For instance, less educated parents were found to know little about how to select the course, whom to contact and how to get admission in management quota if their child scores less in exams. This lack of educational capital is widely seen among the barbers and fishermen; they shared how even from school days they teach their children the traditional job and encourage them to pick up the skills required for those by allowing them to earns little perks on the job even from the schooling days. The small economic benefits and the life of leisure that comes with it encourage them to follow the traditional occupation immediately after their schooling. After school, many of them migrate to the Gulf countries. Although the children of both educated and less-educated parents migrate to Gulf countries, early age migration is higher in less educated families compared to educated families.

In South Malabar, very few respondents cited distance between school/college and home as a reason for school dropout. This finding is contradictory to Sanjeer Alam's study on the education of Muslims in Bihar, in which he says that "distance of schools or educational institutions is one of the most important factors responsible for discontinuation" (Alam 2012: 153). In Malappuram, however, only when it comes to girls' education, especially plus two and higher education, distance is an important factor. Otherwise, distance is not an important reason for the discontinuation of education. Many families told the author that they never send their daughters for higher education to a distant place, that they think sending girls for higher education to a distant place is inappropriate. The son preference and 'the social process and institutions that surround the desire for son' (Purewel 2010), is not just prevalent in the educational sphere, but it also reflects in how the child is nurtured, the time spend with girl child, and the healthcare that she gets in the households (Dreze and Sen 2004, Purewal 2010, Barcellos Carvalho and Lleras-Muney 2014, Gupta 1987).

Even in South Malabar, parents send their male child to distant towns like Calicut and Kochi to various educational institutions. However, most of them are reluctant to send the girls even to the nearest towns citing security issues, future marriage problems, and the problems related to travel and accommodation. One of the students, Ruhsana, from the

Malabari group, had finished her plus two with A plus in all subjects in 2011. She took admission in Mampad College for B.A Economics in July 2011. Ruhsana's father works in Saudi Arabia, and he wants his daughter to study well and get a good job. However, he gets only four months leave from his job in two years. When he came in 2011 on leave, his daughter had completed plus two and just joined at Mamabad College. On the topic of her education, and marriage he said that:

> I was afraid that by the time I come back after two years on my next leave, my daughter would be in the third year of the degree. In this part of Malappuram, that is somehow considered as too old for a girl to get a good marriage alliance. I have rarely seen the marriage of a girl after her graduation without the higher demand of dowry and related problems. The guy who came to meet Ruhsana demanded less dowry than the others. Moreover, he also comes from a nice *tharavadu*. So I did not have a second thought.

After two years of her college admission, in 2013, she got married, but unlike many of her classmates, she continued her studies. However, when she reached the 3rd year, she got pregnant and stopped going to college. Her delivery was due in March 2014, and so she was unable to attend the final semester exams, and she failed to complete her graduation. During the interview, Ruhsana said she wanted to become a college teacher, but now she is not thinking about her graduation. She thinks that she will not be able to write the exams anytime soon.

Ruhsana's father and mother were educated only to the high school level. They hardly know the educational opportunities available and the subjects to be taken for higher studies in order to obtain a job. They fixed her marriage in 2013 March due to the leave and vacation problem of Ruhasana's father as well as due to fear of societal pressure. Finally, marriage and pregnancy were the reasons for Rushana's dropping out from college. Ruhsana's story is not an exceptional case; many related stories were reported from the field. Therefore, undoubtedly, the decisions taken by the parents appear to be an important factor as far as the higher education of a child is concerned, in particular, that of girls.

Figure 4.1 Caste-wise Number of Graduates among the Household Heads (G1)
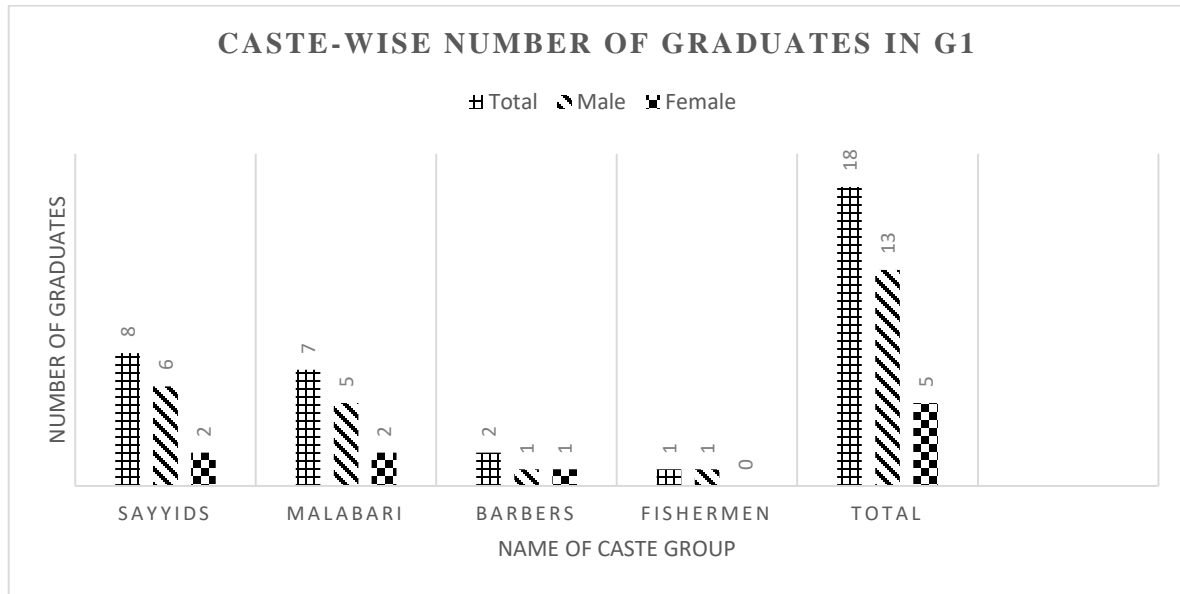
Note: Total Population 320, Male: 160, Female: 160
Source: Based on author's field work

Out of 320 parents, only 18 of them had a graduate degree (5.6 percent). As shown in Figure 4.1, there were eight, seven, and two from the Sayyid, Malabari, and Barber communities respectively. Contrary to the better education performance of women at the level of school education, the number of male and female graduates is 13 and five respectively.

There was only one person from the Fishermen community who had an education at the graduate level. The graduate parent from the fishermen group, Anwar Kareem, went abroad after graduation and worked there for 24 years. He has three brothers and one sister. His father, like many from the community, was a fisherman, and so are his three brothers. They encouraged him in his studies and stopped him from doing the traditional job. However, after the graduation, he failed to get admission for further studies and a proper job. During that time he was also facing financial difficulties. Two of his brothers had migrated to Saudi, and they had moved to a new house with their families. When his father turned sixty, and he was unable to go for the job, Kareem's elder brother shouldered the economic responsibilities of the family. When the financial situation in the family began getting worse, he was forced to leave his higher education plans behind, and he finally migrated to Saudi Arabia. During the interview, he said:

164

Higher education without money is considered as nothing but a failure. A person of my age could not rely entirely on my family for my studies. It is especially humiliating when your friends of the same age group earn sufficiently well in life. That made me think about my education. After my degree, one of my friends who is working in Saudi Arabia sent me a visa, and I joined as a managing officer in a travel agency. Even now when I think about my decision, I have no regrets. Only one thing makes me sad, and that is that I had to live many years abroad without my family. Otherwise, everything was all right; I earned a lot of money, and I built a new house, bought a plot near to my home and my children are living here with all the good facilities. Now I dream of better education and career for my children. The first generation struggled a lot and fought a life of poverty, famine, and misery to make the life of the second generation better.

During our conversation, he started to discuss the recent hit Malayalam movie Pathemari and said that Pathemari was one the most touching movies he has ever seen. He watched movies not in a theatre but only on television. He said that "I heard a lot about that film, so when it came on television I decided to watch it." He further said:

I could relate Pathemari to my life, and that must be the main reason for liking the movie so much. The life of most of those who migrated to Saudi is similar to the story of Pallikkal Narayanan [the protagonist in the movie]. Only because our generation migrated and lived a life of hell in Saudi and other Arab countries, the present generation enjoys a decent life here.

Like, Kareem, many from the field said that 'it is the Gulf migration and remittance that saved the life of their families from acute poverty, famine, and unemployment.' For instance, in Kerala, the largest number of emigrants are from Malappuram district, and the district receives the largest amount of remittance, 33.4 percent of total remittance, in the state (Zachariah and Rajan 2015). Therefore, Gulf migration is part and parcel of the district's economy, and it is the last resort of the people of the most unemployed district to find employment. Even the educated people in the district find it difficult to get a suitable job in the district, and for them going abroad is the most promising answer to the question 'what next after studies'? In the ethnographic data, out of 18 graduates, only seven people stayed back in Kerala, the rest of the 11 graduates migrated to Gulf countries. Looking at the present financial status of those who migrated, their house and other amenities, it is easy to see that they have achieved much wealth compared to those who did not migrate to Gulf countries. From those who stayed back, 5 of them are teachers and others have their own business in Malappuram. A community-wise breakdown reveals that two teachers are from Malabari and Sayyid communities respectively and one from the Barber community.

In South Malabar, the least educated groups were the Barbers and Fishermen. In the Barber group, there is one male and one female graduate. The female graduate, Fatima, lives at Mankada village. She has been teaching in a school at Perinthalmanna for the last fifteen years. Fatima had graduated from Malappuram Government College in 1994 and took a B.Ed. Degree before joining as a high school teacher. She is the only female graduate and the only government salaried employee (working in an aided school) from the Barber community in the sampled population. During the interview, Fathima explained that her husband, Usman, does not follow the traditional occupation of barbering. He was the owner of a shop in Saudi Arabia. She stated that she was born and brought up in a family that prioritised education. She further explained:

> Even though my father was a barber, he decided to send two of his children to a good school. After my pre-degree, I was the only girl from my locality who went to college. I got married when I was in the second year of my degree. Mine was an arranged marriage, and my husband also belongs to a barber family. After the wedding, my husband was very supportive of me pursuing my studies. His father was a Barber, but he did not follow the traditional occupation. After his five years of life as a supermarket employee in Saudi Arabia, he managed to open a small supermarket on his own, and that is the one reason for the financial stability of our family today.

Fathima has two daughters and a son. One is doing MBBS from a private college in Kerala and another one studying in Mambad College. Her youngest son is studying in ninth standard. As mentioned earlier, it is the education and exposure that she received in her life that equips her with the necessary social and economic capital necessary for her children to perform well in education.

As mentioned in the second chapter, even today, the rate of female higher education is way behind the rate of male higher education in South Malabar. The 'gender gap' in education, which refers predominantly to the absence of girls and women from the educational system, increases as the level of education level increases. One reason for the increasing gender gap in higher education is early marriage. Traditionally, girls get married at a very young age, and it adversely affects their higher education. Marriage is the most significant hurdle for girls, who outperform boys till high school, to achieve a better higher education in South Malabar.

The section on educational level of parents shows that there is no great difference among the four caste communities in rates of literacy and primary education. The Barbers

and Fishermen start to lag in education when the educational level goes up. When higher education is analysed, they clearly lag in numbers, and the performance of Sayyids and Malabaris are much better. As noted in NSSO 71st round, in India, 'for the males of age 5-29 years, engagement in economic activities was the most common reason for dropping out (30 percent in rural areas and 34 percent in urban areas) or discontinuing studies' (NSSO 2014). If economic activity is available at early ages, it causes the discontinuation of men from studies, especially if he is economically poor and educationally unambitious. The lack of ambition stems from many external factors such as poor family conditions, demand for earning, lack of exposure to higher education, the absence of the educated family members, and inability to meet the educational expenditures.

In the field, the author noted that early availability of economic activity in the form of traditional occupations like barbering and fishing takes out the Barber and Fishermen men from discontinuing their higher studies. Their early entry to their traditional job coupled with poverty, lack of social capital and networks are the major reasons for their backwardness in high school and higher education. Out of the total population of 320 from G1, only 18 are graduates (5.63 percent), in which eight of them are from the Sayyids and seven of them from the Malabaris, which means that 10 percent of Thangals and 8.75 percent of Malabaris in G1 category are graduates. However, at the same time, only 2.5 % and 1.3 % of Barbers and Fishermen are graduates respectively. On analysing the educational profile of Muslims in South Malabar, it is evident that the Malabaris and Sayyids perform better in education than the two other caste groups. Taking this trend into account, the study will attempt to explain the occupation of the parents of these four communities and how it varies from one community to another.

4.2 Occupation of the Parents

Work places form an important site where the members of family communicate with people outside their kinship network. Occupation not only provides economic capital but it also enables families to acquire social and cultural capital. Previous studies have pointed out that the relationship in which children are embedded in families, the relations that they maintain with parents and time spend with children are important for their educational development (Becker 1965, Davis-Kean 2005,). Parental relation to the

outside world is largely connected to their employment networks. As noted by Bianchi and Robinson "parental resources also place children in certain types of communities and educational environments where social interactions can provide further social capital to facilitate "good" child outcomes" (Bianchi and Robinson 1997: 333).

Sociological theories are largely in agreement regarding the relationship between the occupation of an individual and the social status he/she possesses. The former is seen as a significant indicator of the latter (Morrison and McIntyre1971, O'Brien and Jones 1999). Most of such works have looked at the employment type of the parents and the 'quality time' that they spend with the children and its impact on their education. For instance, O'Brien and Jones' study shows that "maternal working per se did not appear to contribute to the educational disadvantage: indeed, children performed best in households where mothers were in employment, but the gains were less strong when both parents worked in full-time jobs" (O'Brien and Jones 1999). While O'Brien and Jones focused on the time parents spend with the child and its influence on education, the present study focuses more on the type of jobs that household heads perform in the four communities and how it reflects on the higher education of present generation G2.

Joint family system is another characteristic feature that can be related to the job profile of the family members. All the caste groups except the Malabaris have a caste-bound occupation that is followed by most of the family members. Previous research suggests that a higher proportion of the so-called low caste families live in a joint family (Kolenda 2003). In South Malabar, where the joint family is connected to the class status of the individuals, the stories are not different. Eldest members in the family move out from the joint family first, followed by other elder members. But poor economic status forces the family members to stay in a joint household for a long period of time. In the field, nearly 90 percent of the people from all communities moved to a new house in their late thirties and early forties, and until that age, they had stayed in their joint families.

There are a number of ways in which different occupations are categorised. International Standard Classification of Occupations- ISCO–08, arranges occupations into one of the 436 unit groups at the most detailed level of classification hieracrchy, and these are the part of the ten major sections such as managers, professionals, services and sales, and skilled agriculture, etc. (ISCO-08 2012: 14-16). Analysing the existing literature, one

can further reduce the classification of the occupations into four broad categories like the salaried, those engaged in business, manual workers (skilled and unskilled) and the agriculturists (Crompton 1993, Deshpande and Shikar 2008).

However, it is not possible to apply the same categories in the present study because of the field's varied structure, culture, and history. Based on the field experience and according to the primary livelyhood of the people in the area, this work has classified the employment profile of the head of the household as follows, the (I) traditional occupation (II) agricultural labors, (III) self-employment and business (IV) salaried or government jobs. In a district, where the major source of its economy is Gulf remittance, it is most important to understand the Gulf migration, remittance and the jobs performed by the head of the households abroad. As many members of the households surveyed in this region work abroad, a fifth section is included, migratory jobs/ jobs abroad. The employment of the grandparents, parents and the present generation of household heads were also asked in order to understand the occupation that is followed by families since generations, which would help to analyse the caste and its relation to occupation, social capital in families and an overall social and economic status of the families across the four caste communities.

4.2.1 Traditional Occupation

In India, traditional occupations are connected to caste, which is hereditary in nature and the skill and knowledge required for the practice of the vocation are handed down to the subsequent generation on the line of descent (Rao 2005: 130), and these can also be referred to as caste-bound occupations. According to Sarkar "an occupation in which a group of people is engaged considering it as occupation sanctioned by the Hindu scriptures" (Sarkar 1984: 6), is called as a caste-bound occupation. In India, traditional occupation or hereditary occupation is vertically graded, and a lot of taboo and status is attached to it, and such occupations are sanctioned by Hindu religious scriptures (Sarkar 1984). But what if there is no religious sanction?

For instance, among the Muslims of India, many of the occupations are not religiously sanctioned, but they are caste-bound and have been performed only by certain caste groups for generations. Ambedkar points out that "caste system is not merely a division of labour. It is also a division of labourers… it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other" (Ambedkar 1979: 47). Amongst the Muslims,

169

many occupations, as mentioned in the introduction, are considered as 'inferior' and 'undignified', and most of them can be listed under the category of traditional occupation. In addition, these traditional occupations cut across all religions, and many converted Muslims who follow their former occupation also could not dispense with the caste taboos.

In the present study, traditional occupation is defined as a caste bound occupation that is practiced by successive generations, at least two to three generations. On analysing the literature related to caste and occupation, there are many studies that show that increased urbanisation, industrialisation, migration from rural to urban centres, new economic forces and educational progress are all responsible for the decline of caste-bound occupations in India (Srinivas 1962, Ghurey 1961, Bose 1975). Singh (1976) claims that many of those who once practiced the traditional occupations in Indian villages had since abandoned it. Even though there are changes in the nature of the relationship between caste and occupation and as argued by Beteille, the correlation of caste and occupation is weaker now than in the past, this does not mean that occupations are no longer ranked (Beteille 2006:93). The field data for the present study, also shows that even today, some of the Muslim castes groups, mainly the Barbers and Fishermen, in South Malabar continue to follow their traditional caste occupations, and they are ranked in the social hierarchy primarily based on their occupation

Like the Hindus in India, do Muslims have a set of occupations sanctioned by their religion? The Hindu caste system and its so-called division of labor concept (varna system) based on which the Brahmins perform the priestly duties, the Kshatriyas are warriors, Vaisyas caste is occupied in trade and agriculture, and Shudras work as manual labour and provide service to all the other three groups, are sanctioned by the Hindu scriptures. While such a division of labor among the Muslims is not explicitly sanctioned by the Quran, the textual interpretations by many religious clerics/scholars have prioritized some Muslim communities over others.

For instance, as described in the second section of the previous chapter, the textual interpretations by ulamas support the notion that even if there are learned scholars, the Thangals should be given priority in religious ceremonies and ritual performances. If they are not given priority, it will be called by some Thangals as "*placing sabeena above and over the Quran.*" In the *Fat'h Ul Mueen,* as mentioned in the introduction, treat certain

occupations such as Barbering are catogarised as 'low level' occupations and people need not pay for 'their services'. In addition to that, in South Malabar, all the caste groups, except Malabaris have a specific job that is attached to their caste groups. This traditional occupation, as mentioned in the last chapter, is barbering and related jobs for the Barber men, midwifery for Barber women, fishing and related jobs for the Fishermen and Fisherwomen, ritual healing and religious duties for the Thangals.

Moreover, these traditional occupations constitute the prima facie reason for the prevalence of endogamy in these communities. Among the Malabaris too, there are certain groups who follow a certain occupation since generations such as *kuziyan* (the one who digs the grave), tailor, and handcrafter. However, most people from these occupational groups have moved away from their traditional occupation, and they no longer strictly practice endogamy like the Barbers and the Fishermen. Even if they take up another job, they hardly address the Malabaris as a *Kuziyan* or a tailor and compared to the Barber and Fishermen jobs, these are considered as less stigmatized occupations. Unlike the other caste groups, hardly any family member from these groups follows the same occupation as their parents. For instance, during my ethnographic research, I could find only a few *Kuziyans* who follow the occupation since generations.

Kuziyan can be closely related to the *Sai* Muslim caste group of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh whom Hasana and Das had studied and classified their job as grave diggers (Hasan and Das 2005). Like in North India, it is one of the stigmatized jobs in South Malabar and because of the low status attached to the job; people from other Malabari sub-communities were reluctant to go for marriage alliances with such families. There is less taboo attached with tailors. Even though this study collected data on a few persons from this group, the author was not told of any marriage restriction within the tailoring community. They have marriage alliances with other malabaris, even though the status of some of the others is lower. It is a person's occupation that directly affects his/her financial capital and that of his family and decides their social status. In the case of the Barber or Fishermen communities, if one of them takes a job outside their traditional occupation, they will still carry the caste tag of the respective caste groups in their new professions. Therefore, the caste stigma attached to the Fishermen and Barber castes cannot be removed by simply taking a job outside the traditional occupations associated with their communities.

Looking at the traditional occupation in the field, nearly 87 percent (total number 35) of the male members of the Barber community perform their traditional job, barbering. This job is categorized as a service provider job in the existing hierarchy and also perceived as 'inferior' and 'undignified'. Out of 40 female household heads in the sample, 18 female households in this group said their occupation is midwifery. This occupation, though not a full time occupation, gave many barber women financial independence and stability compared to female members of other caste groups.

Those men who follow hereditary occupation among the Fishermen were slightly lesser than those following the hereditary occupation in the barber community. 77.5 percent Fishermen, that is, 31 male household heads, follow their traditional occupation, fishing. At the same time, agriculture and other coolie work and small business also supported the traditional occupation, and many of them had highly benefited from the Gulf migration. Out of forty, only 7 fisherwomen said that they are part of the traditional occupation, mainly collecting fish from the boats and selling it in the local areas.

However, as pointed out by M.N Srinivas, "Even though a caste is not only associated with an occupation but has limited kind of monopoly over it, it is not true to say that every member of the caste practices that occupation exclusively...But, generally speaking, most castes also practice agriculture in addition to their traditional occupation" (Srinivas 1965:506). As he mentioned, even in South Malabar, the Fishermen community have dominance in fishing and related trade, the Barbers have a monopoly over barber and beautician jobs. The Sayyids have the lion's share of the jobs related to the religious ritual healing practices. *Ulamas*, mainly belonging to the Malabari group, also perform the ritual healing practices, but they have not been performing these rituals since generations, and this makes them different from the Sayyids. In South Malabar, the three caste groups, Barbers, Fishermen and Sayyids enjoy an occupational monopoly, and as argued by Srinivas, resentment of other castes taking over their occupation and members guarding the secerets of their occupations unite these traditional caste groups (Srinivas 1955:7).

In the Fishermen group, out of 40 household heads, 13 of them work abroad. The interesting fact is that those who work abroad from the Fishermen community take up other jobs when they migrate to Gulf countries. While asked about the deviation from their traditional job once they migrate, most of them reported that it happens due to economic

reasons, like better jobs, better payment and numerous opportunities in Gulf countries. 95 percent of the Barbers who migrated to Gulf countries from South Malabar, however, take up barbering as their profession, even in the Gulf. They explain that they stick to their traditional occupation mainly because that is the one job they know thoroughly and following the traditional occupation is profitable even in Gulf countries. They also point out that compared to other professions that the migrants do in Gulf countries, barbering has a certain status and it is also a well-paid job. Jaleel, the Barber, said:

> I was working in my cousin's shop in Saudi Arabia. When I meet my Malayali friends on Fridays, they say that I am one of the luckiest peoples in Saudi because of my job pattern. I can work according to my interest and timing. I work inside an a/c room, and I get paid well for my job. But my friends work outside in the heat for minimum wage labor. Due to these reasons, they envy my occupation.

He added that most of the barbers in Gulf countries work in better conditions and earn more money compared to barbers working in Kerala, and therefore they do not feel the need to deviate from their traditional occupation.

The Sayyids have greater mobility and fewer restrictions with regard to their traditional occupation. They still do not completely leave their job as healers and religious ritual performers even if they take up another job. Most of them do it as a part-time job or 'service on demand.' The service on demand' means they never take up healing as a full-time profession but when the local people contact them for various healings and religious functions, they take up the duty. The ethnographic data shows that nearly 55 percent (22 Thangals) work as full-time healers or religious service givers. Only below 5 percent, that is, only two people are directly engaged in agricultural labour.

It is important also to note that many Thangal families have an earning from agriculture productions, but they are not the ones working in the field; Malabaris are the ones who work as coolie workers in the agricultural land of the Thangals. Those who work as full-time religious service givers have an office adjacent to their home where people come and meet the Thangals. Local people come to their place to get various services. Females from Thangal family, Sayyida also called as *Beevis* and *sha-rifa*, constitute the group that has the least workforce participation in South Malabar. Out of forty families, only one Sayyida was working, that too in the salaried government sector. During the

interview, many of the Sayyida said that they do the healing practices, not as an occupation but as a service. One Sayyida of Thamarasseri told the author that:

> When people come to meet my husband, the female members' definitely come to meet me. I hardly go out in front of male members who come home as that is forbidden in Islam. I suggest the women who come to meet me to practice religious rituals; I suggest them the *dikrs* and *duas*. Some people give money. But I hardly accept it. People visit here to get blessings, so I should not charge for the service that Allah gifted me.

I heard the women jokingly say that '*ollu valya Beeviya*' (she is like a *beevi*) to address a woman who hardly goes out for occasions like marriage, or activities like shopping or hardly appear in front of people other than her *mahrams*[43]. The joke may be seen as a metaphor that reflects the lives of *beevis,* who never go out alone or go out in public in the presence of someone from outside of her kinship relations. Such religious restriction coupled with affluence has resulted in the 'thin agency' of Sayyida in South Malabar. As stressed by Saba Mahmood, 'the meaning of agency must be explored within the grammar of concepts within which it resides' (Mahmood 2005: 34). Within the religious circle, even though Sayyida is respected, their movements are highly restricted compared to women from other Muslim castes and women *within* the same geographical locality. Such a 'thin agency' has resulted in the lesser workforce participation of Sayyida in South Malabar.

The relationship between practice of religious norms and economic outcomes has been famously noted in Weber's theses and observation of protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism, where he examined, 'the consequences for human character of certain types of religious orientation' or 'how different social and cultural environments facilitated the rise of personality types and their relationship to economics and politics (Turner 2013:16). Where the protestant religious spirit was 'an independent variable that could positively influence the economic outcomes by fostering traits such as work ethic, honesty (and hence trust), thrift, charity, hospitality to strangers and so on' (McCleary and Barro 2006: 50-51),

---

[43] According to The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, *Mahram* is a state of consanguinity precluding marriage, which means all those males whom a Muslim woman cannot marry at any time in her life, which includes her son, grandson, great-grandson, etc., her father, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc., and her paternal and maternal uncles, her brother, brother's son and sister's son. The opposite is called as Ghayr Mahrams. Majority of the Sayyida informed that they never interacts and intermingles with people other than *Mahrams*. The author had never seen the face of many of them during the interview as they were sitting behind the curtain.

here, the religious interaction affects the economy negatively by imposing and reaffirming patriarchal values, distrusting strangers (*ghayr mahrams)* and nurturing a negative attitude towards the female work ethics. In south Malabar, especially among the Sayyids, the Islamic spirit and religious environment and culture internalised by the Muslims and the patriarchal interpretation of texts that prohibits women meeting *ghayr mahrams* is a potential cause or one of the major contributing factors that block women from work participation.

In summary, in the G1 category, nearly 87 percent of the male Barbers in South Malabar follow their traditional occupation and 77.5 percent of the Fishermen work in fishing related jobs in the coastal region. More than half of the Sayyids in the field, 55 percent, follow the traditional job, as healers and religious service performers, though not full time. Malabaris are the ones who do not have any specific traditional occupation. Very few of them are involved in professions like tailoring, handicrafts and digging the grave from generations. These are not traditional occupations for Malabaris because these occupations are not explicitly associated with them. Also, within these households, there are people who perform various jobs and no member in such families thinks that they have a traditional occupation to follow. Further, here I do not ignore people engaged in, what Béteille (2012) has called, the 'new caste-free occupation' from the four caste groups in South Malabar, but the Barbers and Fishermen still depend largely on their traditional occupation for a livelihood.

Those who follow caste occupations are also the ones who strictly follow the endogamous marriage patterns. Even those who deviate from the traditional occupation from caste groups like the Barbers, the Fishermen, and the Sayyids, follow an endogamous marriage pattern. Theoretically, as noted by Ghurye, "caste no longer rigidly determines an individual occupation but continues to prescribe almost in its old rigor the circle into which one has to marry" (Ghurye 1961: 209). In South Malabar, 87 percent of the Barbers and 77 percent of Fishermen and 55 percent of Sayyids follow their traditional occupation, but an even higher number of people from these caste groups practice endogamy. More than occupational homogeneity, it is endogamy that appears to bind these groups together, and that constitutes the most important characteristic of caste division among the Muslims.

Those who are in the traditional occupation work majorly with the help of their kinship members, mainly because the nature of their occupation demands skilled people, who mainly come from their own community. While examining traditional occupations in Kerala, sociologist Rao noted that 'all the members of the family in some way or the other assisted the senior male members at work' (Rao 2005: 130). For instance, within the fishermen community, father, brother and cousins all go for fishing in the same boat. In the boat, most of the members are from the same locality, group and sometimes half of them are connected through kinship networks. Similarly, the barbers who work in the same shop are either relatives or belong to the same families.

The author hardly met any members of the Malabari community working as barbers in South Malabar. Even though the Barbers come into contact with people from all castes, religions, and communities, their work related activities are most often confined to their particular kinship networks. Those who are from the Sayyid group also share their workspace with kids and family members. When the present author visited Thambanagadi Thangal Kunjikoya, one of the most famous ritual healers in Pandikkad town, the father, and his two sons were sitting in the same house, and they were treating patients. Kunjikoya said that when there were more patients (whom he refers to as clients), he shares the younger clients with his sons. He believes that through working together with his sons, he would teach them lessons that they need to learn to become better healers.

Apart from the healing work, one of the sons of Thambangadi Thangal is also working as a teacher, and the other one owns a small business in Pandikkad, the nearby town. Those who do the traditional job mostly depend on family members when they want to grow and become successful. The kinship network plays an important role in the traditional occupation. Borrowing the Granavatorian (1973) terms, it is the 'strong ties' that matter more in traditional occupation than the 'weak ties.' This shows that the groups and individuals who follow traditional occupation have a minimal amount of social capital when it comes to connecting with people outside the group. This is because of the nature of their occupation in which their networks are confined mainly to immediate family members. Further, this forms the 'homophily networks' among the caste groups, and their everyday interaction is not constrained but largely limited to people within the group. How this influences the education of the current generation of the four communities will be

176

discussed in detail in the next chapter. The next sub-section discusses the agricultural occupation of the head of the households.

4.2.2 Agriculture and allied occupation

In South Malabar, most of the people who work in the agricultural sector are casual or daily wage labourers. They do not occupy a permanent work site, they go to work in different places but mostly within the village or adjacent villages, and receive daily wages for their labour. There are also people who work for families and firms since generations. However, it is not akin to bonded labour. Most of the agricultural labourers work from eight in the morning to five in the evening, except during summer, when most of them shift their work times from six in the morning till two in the afternoon because of the extreme heat. All of them who work in the sector told the researcher that they are paid on a daily or weekly basis, earning between 500-1100 rupees per day. During the off-season, they take up other jobs.

The higher number of household heads working as coolies and agricultural labourers are from the Malabari group. 12 male and three female parents from this group work as agricultural labourers, but there are only one and two males from the Barber and the Fishermen communities respectively. Surprisingly, there are no Sayyids working as agricultural labourers. It does not mean that Sayyids never do any works related to agriculture, they do agricultural work in their land as subsistence farming, but the main occupation is never reported as agriculture labour. Thangals of Thambanagadi and Nellikuth and Thangals from Panakkad and many land owning Sayyids told the author that with the assistance of Malabaris they do subsistence farming, but they do not consider their major occupation as agricultural labourers.

Out of 15 Malabaris who work as farmers, eight household heads work on their own land, mainly relying on family labour, but sometimes, they bring labourers from other families to work in their field for a dialy wage. The remaining seven work as daily wage labourers in the agricultural sector. Both types of farmers have been included in the data set. The labourers shared with the author that their major source of income is agriculture and that they hardly go for any other work. Inni Kurikkal, the farmer, said:

> I am 48 years old now. Since the last two decades, I have been working as a farmer.
> *(thottam kalakkal)*, sewing the paddy field, cultivating banana and tapioca, and

177

doing all sorts of agricultural jobs. I also hire land for rent for one or two years. Once I had a plan to go abroad, but due to a bad medical report, I was unable to go. So here I am, working as a farmer, and I earn nearly 600-700 rupees in a day.

He said that once he hired the land, he calls other people to work with him in the land. He has three brothers and two sisters. Two of them are working as agricultural labourers, and the other two migrated to Gulf countries. Inni Kurikkal, like any other Malabari, married from the Malabari caste group. He has two sons and two daughters. One had finished SSLC and went to a Muslim religious college in Calicut. He says that his family is very religious and his grandfather always insisted that at least one child should be *'musliar.'* Therefore, taking his father's suggestion, Unni Kurikkal had sent his eldest son to a *deeni* college in Calicut, where he received both secular and religious education. But those who work in the agricultural field that is not their own property but as hired help have a different educational status.

4.2.3 Self-Employment and Business

After the traditional occupation, the second most common occupation category among the household heads in the sample for the present study is that of self-employment and business, which includes unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled employees and small scale businesses to large scale business firms. This should not be catagorised as traditional occupation as many of them said that their parents and grandparents had been doing different occupations and they had never followed their occupation.

In the present data set, there are people belonging to all the caste groups who listed in the category of self-employment and business. Firstly, from the Sayyids, eleven of them are listed in this category. These people include three shop owners, two shop keepers, a driver, a medical shop helper and an assistant electrician, and three people work in religious institutions. All of them had endogamous marriages, and no family members had marriage alliances with the Barber and Fishermen communities. From the Malabari community, 18 (15 males and 3 females) of them are listed here. These include both skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labourers like shopkeepers, masons, hotel staff, cooks, drivers, tailors, woodcutters and construction workers. Three of them are also engaged in textile

businesses. Two male Barbers are not engaged in their traditional occupation and work as a woodcutter and as a hotel cashier, and two females work in pickle companies[44].

From the Fishermen group in this study, five men work at different shops in Parappanagandi and one person is an auto driver, and three women work in different non-traditional occupations. This unskilled and semi-skilled workforce must be one of the largest work forces in Kerala if we take up the entire population. Some of them set-up their own shops and businesses, some get daily wages based on their occupation, and they work under an owner. The least wages earned by members of these groups is approximately 400-500 rupees in a day and the maximum wage earned is around 1300-1500 rupees in a day. The business persons reported a minimum earning of twenty thousand and the maximum is reported as 1.5 lakh in a month. This is a mixed group who come from all castes and social class backgrounds. Their workspace interaction and networks are not confined to people from a particular caste, class or religion, but it cuts across all such distinctions.

4.2.4 Government and Salaried Jobs

As mentioned in the second chapter, the total share of the Muslims in government job is 10.4 percent in Kerala. But there is no data available to classify these Muslims according to their caste, class, sect, and regional status. Therefore, the author has to rely completely on the ethnographic data to analyse the government job profile of the four communities in South Malabar. In this study, the government employment category includes people who work in the government and government aided sectors like school and college teachers, bank employees and those who work in the co-operative sector. Out of 320 household heads, as shown below in figure 4.1, only 23 people are working as government employees or salaried people, which show that only 7.19 percent of the total G1 population is working in the government sector, of which the largest number are from the Malabari group, followed by the Sayyids. There is no male member of the Barber community in this field who works in the government sector.

However, as reported in the section on higher education earlier in this chapter, there is one Barber woman who works in an aided school as a teacher. In the present study, she is the only person from the Barber family included in this employment category. Similarly,

---

[44] Though barbering can be clubbed in this section, it is omitted in this section as it is categorized as a traditional occupation.

there is only one government employee from the Fishermen community, who works in the marine department. From the Sayyids, there are 8 people, and from the Malabari group, there are 13 people who work in this sector. Five Sayyids, as I mentioned above including one female, are teaching in government schools and two work as college lecturers. There are two doctors in the sample, one a Sayyid and the other a Malabari. From the Malabari community, there are 5 teachers, all from Mujahid sect, and three men who are also working in government schools. In addition, one person works a clerk in a taluk office, another person works in a co-operative bank, and two teach in a college. No doubt, the one reason for the higher number of salaried people among the Malabaris is the selection of ten Mujahid households in this category. They are highly educated compared to other households.

Figure 4.2 Occupational Details of the Caste Groups
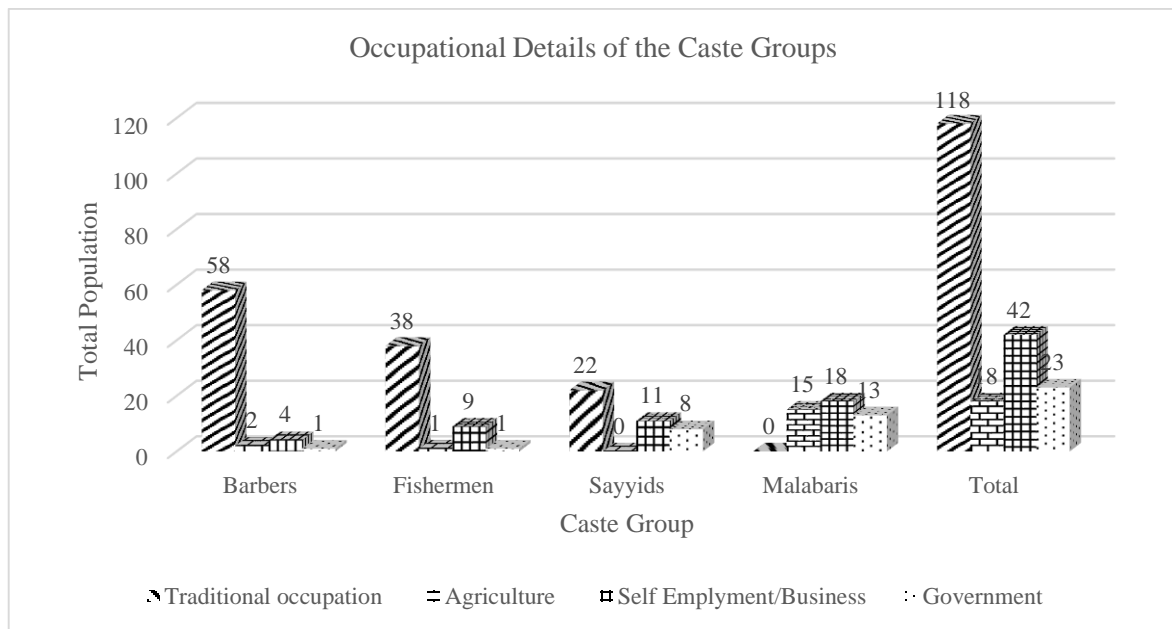
Source: Based on author's field research

Figure 4.2 shows that there is more work participation among the Barber community, mainly because of the female workforce participation (as midwives) and less work participation among the Sayyids due to less female workforce participation. Out of the total working population, 89.23 percent and 77.55 percent of the Barbers and Fishermen respectively follow their traditional occupation. However, government jobs and the related salaried jobs can be taken as one of the best indicators of the educational progress of communities.

The educational backwardness of the Barbers and Fishermen and the comparatively better education of the Sayyids and Malabaris are reflected in their varied representation in government employment. For instance, household heads from the Malabaris and Sayyids can boast of better higher education, and better higher secondary education and these two groups also have more number of people working as government/ salaried employees. Many people listed in the above mentioned four employment categories have worked/ are working in Gulf countries. Therefore, it is important to discuss the Gulf migration in this area and how various communities benefitted from Gulf remittances.

4.2.5 Gulf Migration and Occupation

Gulf remittance is one of the major sources of income for families in South Malabar. Migration surveys since 1998-2014 show that, according to geographical location, the largest number of emigrants originated from Malappuram district. Out of the total emigrants in 2014, 19.0 percent of them are from Malappuram district (Zachariah and Rajan 2015). Zachariah and Rajan's work also shows that "among the 14 districts in the state, Malappuram received the largest amount of remittances, i.e., Rs.10245 crores which works out to Rs.121, 000 per household" (Zachariah and Rajan 2015).

As mentioned in the second chapter, Muslims in Kerala must be one of the communities who benefited the most from the Gulf migration. In the ethnographic data, 104 families had at least one member who either has worked or is working in the Gulf. Gulf remittance is one of the major sources of income across the four caste communities. In the district, Gulf remittance is higher compared to the state average of remittances received by households. According to a 2014 study, in Kerala, less than 17 percent of the total households had received remittances in 2014, and a huge majority of the households

in the state are not direct beneficiaries of remittance (Zakaria and Rajan 2015). Contrary to this, in the case of South Malabar, what the data in the present study shows is that 65 percent of families received remittances from Gulf countries. Either the household head, or their son/daughter, or brothers/sisters work in Gulf countries. These remittances are the back bone of all the four communities in South Malabar, especially for the Barbers and the Fishermen, many of whose families told the author that their major source of income comes from Gulf remittances. The number of people going abroad from these communities is higher when compared to the other two communities.

Interestingly, most of the migrants from the Barber and Fishermen communities, who follow their traditional occupation in the migrant countries, are less educated when compared to those belonging to the same caste groups who do not follow the traditional occupation; the latter are also less likely to migrate. This is contrary to the point made by Zachariya and Rajan on the overall analysis of education and migration in Kerala. They say that:

> Overall, migrants are better educated than the non-migrants. For example, while only 45.2 percent of the total population (15+ years) have passed the 10th standard or have higher levels of education, as much as 75.1 percent of the emigrants and 78.2 percent of the out-migrants have passed 10th class or higher levels of education. Similarly, while only12.2 percent of the total population have received a diploma or a degree or higher levels of education, 35.4 percent of the emigrants and as much 41.6 percent of the out-migrants hold a degree or higher levels of education. The average years of schooling were just 7.9 years for the general population, but as high as 11.0 years for the emigrants and 11.6 years for the out-migrants. Migrants are indeed better educated than the general population as evidenced by this snapshot of educational attainment (Rajan and Zachariya 2015).

The majority of the household heads had not even finished 10th standard before they migrated to Gulf countries. The type of job that they do in the migrant country must be one of the reasons for their low level of education. To follow the traditional occupation, they do not have to be highly educated. In fact, until recently, most of those who failed the SSLC exams went to Gulf countries while those who qualified the exams with higher marks went for higher studies. However, when the Gulf countries changed the rules that permit only the SSLC certificate holders to migrate, may people lost their fortune, including people like Shafeeque, whose story was discussed in the previous chapter in the subsection titled *Muslims in the Coastal Areas; Socio-Cultural Outlook*.

Jaleel, the barber, said that those who failed in the SSLC exams always looked for a gulf job during the 1990 to 2005 period. He further said that:

> The situation has changed, and because of *Nitaqat*[45] and many other problems in Gulf countries, people even after reaching their legal age, do not want to migrate to Gulf countries. But some years before, it was common for most of the people who had not even reached eighteen years to try to get fake passports and go abroad for jobs. When I was in Saudi, some of my roommates came there even before they reached the age of eighteen, but when we asked the present generation, most of them prefer to stay at home than migrating to Gulf countries.

Jaleel's observation is further corroborated by data from this field. In the period between 1990 and 2005, most of the people who migrated to Gulf countries, according to field data, failed to clear their high school exams (SSLC Exam). Most of them migrated to the Gulf with the ambition that one day they will become rich, their family would be prosperous, and they would have better facilities at home. Those who migrated after 2010 were better educated compared to the previous generation.

Zakaria and Rajan also point out that "the brain drain argument holds water" when analyzing the profile of migrant workers in Kerala. However, 'labour drain' to Gulf countries is important while discussing the profile of the migrants from South Malabar. Most of the migrants from South Malabar to Gulf countries are unskilled labours, but they form the backbone of the financial capital generated in South Malabar. In many professions, including barbering, the loss of labour through migration to Gulf countries was not replaced by the locals, but mainly migrants from other states. Some of the respondents said that "it is hard to get a local worker", and "for manual labour we have to rely on Bengalis". However, it is a fact that migration and remittance flows have improved the standard of life of the erstwhile "wretchedly poor" (Panikkar 1989: xi) South Malabar Muslims across all castes groups.

Even though the *gulfukaran* (Gulf migrant) generates economic capital, their migration produces many negative unintended consequences, such as increasing number of single parent families. The *gulfukaran* fail to acquire and mobilize the social capital for their children and families. One possible reason for this is their inability to forge

---

[45] The nationalisation/localisation programme introduced by Saudi government with the intention to employ a minimum number of Saudi nationals in the private sector. Now the word is a common usage in Malabar, see (Naha 2014).

connections and contact with the child, guardians and also their lack of awareness about educational opportunities back home. In addition, most of such families are single-parent households which result in 'structural deficiency in the family social capital' as discussed earlier. While discussing social capital available to the child from the parent, Coleman argued the following:

> Social capital within the family that gives the child access to the adult's human capital depends both on the physical presence of adults in the family and on the attention given by the adults to the child. The physical absence of adults may be described as a structural deficiency in family social capital. The most prominent element of structural deficiency in modern families is the single-parent family. However, the nuclear family itself, in which one or both parents work outside the home, can be seen as structurally deficient, lacking the social capital that comes with the presence of parents during the day, or with grandparents or aunts and uncles in or near the household (Coleman 1988: S111).

Further, he argued that 'The effects of a lack of social capital within the family differ for different educational outcomes.' In such a scenario, the higher migration of the Barbers and Fishermen have caused the low level of social capital within their families, and it further reflects on their educational outcomes. Migration and the 'forced inability' of male members to spend time with their children has negatively affected the educational condition of Barbers and Fishermen, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.3 Membership in Organizations and Associations

While discussing the theories of social capital, this study has mentioned that in forming social networks and connections, memberships and participation in groups, organizations and associations are most important. Such networks might be a person's religious affiliation, and membership in sectarian religious groups, political parties, participation in sports clubs, membership in political organizations, libraries, *mahalu* committees and PTA, all of which help in forming social networks. Without wider contacts with people outside the family and kinship network, it is very difficult to build a bridging social capital. The next sub-section will discuss caste groups' networks and connections through membership in different organisations and associations.

4.3.1 Membership and Affiliation to the Religious Sects

There is no doubt that the religion of Islam plays an important role in everyday life of the Muslims of South Malabar. During the 'life-cycle' events, birth and death ceremonies, other important life events such as marriage and in everyday life, religious

beliefs and rituals play a pivotal role. Sunnis constitute the largest section of Muslims in Kerala with a percentage of 93.8 (8323749) while Shias constitute 6.2 (549723.4) percentage of the total Muslim population. Both together constitute 26.6 percent of Kerala's total population (24.9 Sunnis and 1.6 Shia Muslims) (Zachariah 2016).

Before discussing the social capital of these communities, the researcher wants to make it clear that not a single Shia Muslim was interviewed for the present study. It is mainly because of the absence of Shia Muslims in my field, South Malabar. According to 2011 Census, the total Shia Muslim population in Malappuram district is 0.7 percent, and Sunnis constitute 99.3 percent of the Muslims in Malappuram district (Zachariah 2016). Within the Sunni Muslims, there are numerous sects or fractions. The majority of them are called Sunnis, and the other section is called as the Mujahids. The Sunnis are further divided into the AP Sunnis, and EK Sunnis and the Mujahids are further divided into the Madvoor sect and KNM. Apart from these, there are followers of the Jamaat-Islami-Hind.

As pointed out earlier, there are only two people from the Jamaat sect who were interviewed for the present research, and they both belong to the Malabari communities. Despite the researcher's best efforts, followers of the Jamaat sect could not be found in the other three caste groups. In addition, 16 Mujahids were interviewed. While most of the Muslims agree that they follow one of the religious sects, it does not necessarily mean that all of them are active members and supporters of the sects and their programmes. They follow their religious beliefs, major life events like marriage, birth, and death related ceremonies according to the rules and norms prescribed by the sectarian religious ideologies. Between the Mujahid and Sunnis sects, there are a lot of differences in religious teachings and practices as well as matters related to everyday life and the other major life events mentioned above.

Apart from religion, political organizations, sports clubs, educational trusts and groups, cultural organizations and community groups are all important in forging social networks. Therefore, this section is not just confined to religious groups alone, but the author has included many of the above-mentioned organizations. The author will discuss the membership of household heads or anyone from the family who holds any membership, participates and are actively involved in these organizations. In the next chapter, the educational profile of communities according to their organizational affiliation and

185

membership will be discussed. For instance, the majority of the Barber community, that is, 38 households is Sunnis, and only two are from Mujahid sect. Out of the two Mujahids, one woman, as mentioned earlier, was working as a teacher in an aided school. She is of the opinion that her religious ideology and the organization she is affiliated to had a clear impact on her educational career especially at a time when the religious authorities have had greater control over women's education and public presence. Based on the existing literature and researcher's field experience, it can be argued that the Mujahid and Jamaat sects are better off in education when compared to the Sunnis.

The majority of the household heads (308 out of 320) said that they support or affiliate themselves to or believe in one of the religious sects mentioned above. No one is reluctant to talk about their religious ideology, and most of them affiliate themselves to one of the sects and sub-sects of Muslims mentioned above. The dislike towards the other group is evident, and some members of the Mujahid sect are not ready to accept that the Sunnis as Muslims, and vice versa.

Analysing community-wise membership, all the Sayyids belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. Within that, there are 28 households affiliated to- and supporting the E.K sub-sect of Sunnis, and rest of the households are the adherents of the A.P Sunnis ideology. Even though marriage between these two groups and sub-groups is not restricted, first preference for mate selection is nevertheless from the same sect and sub-sect. Therefore, within families, it would not be entirely uncommon to find members of both sub-sects. There were two Barber households who affiliate themselves to the Mujahid sects and rest of the 38 families reported that they are Sunni Muslims. Out of the 38 Sunni Barber families, most of them, nearly 32 families said they support the E.K Sunnis. There were only six families who were educated in A.P madrasa and supported the A.P Sunnis.

Within the Fishermen community, there are four Mujahid families and 36 Sunnis. Within the Sunnis, there are 25 families who send their children to E.K madrasas and affiliate themselves to the E.K Sunnis whereas 11 families said they send their children to A.P madrasas and support the A.P Sunnis. Malabaris encompass diverse religious sects, but like any other group here also predominantly of them support E.K Sunnis. In the present data, the Malabari sample constitutes 10 Mujahids, 2 Jamaats, 9 A.P Sunnis and 19 E.K Sunnis.

Why is the understanding of religious sect important? It is crucial to understand the affiliation and support of households towards a religious sect because the sectarian and sub-sectarian differences play a crucial role in what Gennep (1960) called the 'rite of passage,' understanding of gender, and even the educational status of Muslims. Additionally, even though all Sunnis are considered as Muslims, there are clear endogamous groups formed within the Sunnis not just based on their caste, which the author has explained in detail in the previous chapter, but also on the basis of religious sects such as Sunnis, Mujahids, and Jamaats.

In the field data for the present study, except three Mujahid families, all of the Mujahids (total thirteen families), married from the same sect. Some of the Sayyids said they even have restrictions on sub-sectarian lines. In another case, the Mujahid sect hardly sends their child to Sunni madrasas for religious learning and vice versa, unless they have no other options. The sectarian difference is not just reflected in religious teachings but is reflected in most of the religious and ritual ceremonies. Historically, Mujahids are one of the few sects who actively supported both the English and Malayalam medium of education at a time when most other Muslim groups did not, which later gave them a clear edge in education when compared to the Sunnis. In most of the schools and colleges in South Malabar, their representation as teachers is noticeable and this can be clearly connected to the positive outlook of their religious ideology towards modern education.

4.3.2 Membership in *Mahalu*, Madrasa and PTA Committees.

There is no doubt that, in South Malabar, the Sayyids dominate in the religious decision-making bodies[46]. In each locality of South Malabar, if there is a Thangal family, any male members of the family will definitely be a prominent voice in the religious decision-making bodies such as the Madrasa committee, *mahalu* committee, and *palli* committee. In some villages, they have been the members of *upadeshaka samithi* (advisory committee) from generations. Out of 40 families, 38 of them said they are in at least one of these three committees. When asked why the Thangals outnumber other groups in the religious decision-making bodies, Ismayil Thangal, from Peleppuram, answered:

---

[46] However, it should be noted that that the madrassa and *palli* committees are 'exclusively a male domain'. In such committees the participation of females are zero, even among the *Mujahid* or *Jamat* families, who argue for and take the lead in allowing women to offer prayers in mosques.

To be frank, by Allah's grace, we are the most privileged and respected group among the Muslims. Therefore, we have the responsibility to lead Muslims on the right path. In our area, in any general body meetings for the selection of a new committee of Madrasa or Mosque, the first name that pops up in the meeting must be the name of the Thangals. Even when a Thangal rejects the members' suggestions citing his ill-health or inconvenience, his name automatically lands up on the advisory board list.

Ismail Thangal's father was the secretary of Madrasa committee for four years following which his father continued in the post of President for six years. Until his death, he was the member of the madrasa and *mahalu* committee advisory board. He said his father never asked for any posts, but people had given him all the powers. Apart from the Thangals, all other groups participate in such committees. Out of 40 Barber families, 13 families said that they had been part of madrasa and *palli* committees, this number was 15 for Fishermen and 21 for Malabaris. Selection of members to any such committees is made by looking into various factors such as the religiosity of the person, his wealth, and social status.

4.3.4 Voluntary Organizations and Community Membership

Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) is mostly a secular space where parents along with teachers discuss the issue of students enrolled in schools[47]. The constitution of PTAs can provide an interesting insight into the power and status dynamics prevalent in the locality of the schools. Out of the total sample in this study, only one Barber household head, Kunjan of Pandaloor, who was mentioned in the last chapter, has been a president of PTA, but there have been 12 Thangals, and 8 Malabaris who have occupied the position of the president of PTA in the past. Further, it is noted that fishermen have more participation in PTAs compared to the Barbers. The major reason was the locality of the school in the coastal region, where most the students come from the Fishermen communities, and PTA comprises mainly fisherfolk members. This is unlike the case with the Barbers who are scattered across South Malabar. Across the caste group, the participation of female household heads outnumber the male members in PTA general body or other meetings. This happens mainly because of time at which the PTA meetings are held which is more

---

[47] The main agenda of PTA is usually on how to generate funds for improving infrastructure, discussions on the quality of education and programmes and policies needed to improve the overall facilities of the school. But many PTAs hardly discuss academic matters due to many reasons, for more see (Kumar 2010). According to new circular issued by Kerala State Government (190/2016 dated 12/11/2016) a PTA president can hold his position only for three years.

suitable for the home-bound women rather than the working male members of the families. Also note, as mentioned before, that the female workforce participation is far less compared to that of the male workforce participation. In addition to this, the absence of the male members of families due to Gulf migration in many cases also leaves only the women available to attend the PTA meetings.

On analysing the four caste groups, the Thangals are perhaps the most organised as a community, and they have organisations in both the A.P and E.K Sunni fractions. Both the fractions have regular meetings, office spaces, committees and annual meetings. The organizations work for the welfare of the Thangals, and they help members financially and socially. Both of the organizations were established after 2010.

One of the least organized groups in the four communities appears to be the Barbers. Even though they have a state level organization called the All-Kerala Barber and Beauticians Association, they rarely participate in their programmes. It is a secular organization that includes all religions and caste groups of Barbers. They call for meetings and set agendas like increasing the beautician fees, working hours, holidays, and the welfare of the members. Unlike Barbers, the Fishermen community in Malabar is more organized. One of the reasons must be their geographical unity, unlike the barbers who are spread across South Malabar. Most of the fishermen in the field are members of particular religious fractions such as A.P Sunnis and E.K Sunnis, and in addition to that, they also participate in religious decision-making bodies. Their organization is more consistent in following up with community matters and has strong intra-network ties than the Barbers. Riyas, one of the members of the Fishermen organisation, said that "there are fishermen organizations in most of the villages and they are the ones who take decisions about the number of boats allowed in a locality, and other decisions related to fishing and harbouring." Their organizations are mainly concerned about fishing and related activities.

4.3.5 Membership in Political Organizations and Sports Clubs

Apart from religious organizations, political organizations also play a key role in generating an individual's or groups' social networks. Strong political relations can be bargained with or credited to get benefits from the educational sector because of the close nexus between the political parties and educational institutions. The data in the present

study suggests that unlike religious organizations and sectarian religious groups, political organizations have limited control over an individual's life in South Malabar. This does not mean that political organizations are unimportant, but that religion and sectarian religious identities play a more pivotal role in everyday life of an individual than political organisations.

In the field, like the invisibility of women in many spheres, female memebrs across castes have minimal active particiaption in politics. The 'Thin agency,' of women in politics which will be further elaborated in the next chapter, is the result of the patriarchal values that are deeply imbibed in the minds of politicians, *ulamas* and religious organisations, which consider women are entering politics as *anti-Shariat*[48]. Largely, their political participation is limited to casting votes. The majority of them, except five women out of 160, hold different political views, that is, they support a different politial party from that supported by their partners. On asking the male participants whether they have any political party affiliation or not, out of 160 households, 148 of them said they hold a political view, and they support particular political parties.

There are a considerable number of households where people (father, son, brothers, sisters, mother, daughter, brother-in-law, etc.) possess different political views and support different political parties. Except for ten households, both the household heads, male and female, have the same political affiliations. During the interview, twelve families said that they do not support or favour *any* political party, but they cast their votes during the election.

Community-wise data shows (See Appendix Figure 1) that majority of the Thangals (28 families) support the Muslim League. Five Sayyid households said they favour the

---

[48] Though reservation for women in local bodies gives chances for many Muslim women to contest in elections, the ulama class continue their antagonistic attitude towards women's political participation. Many *ulamas* that the author interviewed believe that women's participation in politics and them sharing public spaces with men from *gair-mahram* is against *sharia*. Though Muslim League, which has the highest support from the households in the field, has a women's wing of the party called Vanitha League, majority of the women who are members of this league in my field reported that they never participated in any of its programmes. The field experience confirms the views expressed Basheer (2011) that "the Vanitha League is a paper organisation that comes to life only during elections. Its affairs are decided by the male leaders of the parent party. It hardly has a political role; its activists do not take part in dharnas and processions organised by the party. Had there been no reservation for women in the panchayats, there would have been no Vanitha League." Within the ulama class, there is debate on the issue, and some of them are of the opinion that it is an 'unavoidable' situation in a democratic society, and that for the betterment of the community, women should take part in political activities.

Congress and four household heads support the left parties. Three of them marked their response as 'not supporting any political parties.' Those who support Congress and the left parties are all from the A.P fraction of Sunnis.

Most of the households of the Barbers, Fishermen, and Malabaris also support Muslim League. From these three groups, nine households said they do not support any political parties. One of the reasons for the majority of the families reporting themselves as the supporters of Muslim League is because of the nature of the field, where since the last four decades, Muslim League dominates the political sphere. There are also a considerable number of people who support both the CPIM and Congress parties. Community-wise data shows that nearly 32 households of barbers, 25 Malabaris, and 28 fishermen said they support the Muslim League (total 113 households). Four Thangals, four Barbers, six Malabaris and seven Fishermen families said they vote and support CPIM (Total 21 households). Twelve household heads said (3 Malabari, 5 Sayyids, 3 Fishermen and 1 Barber) they are affiliated with the Congress party. Two families from the Malabaris, as mentioned in the last section, support the political views of Welfare Party, the political wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The A.P fraction of the Thangals has the opinion that the Muslims league and its political ideologies are hijacked by the Panakkad family, one of the most prominent Thangal families in Kerala, and because of that all other Thangals in Kerala are 'politically marginalized.' One of the A.P Thangals from Thamarasheri near Manjeri town said that he voted in favour of the left parties but pointed out that he is not a political activist. However, some of the locals in his village branded him as a 'communist Thangal.' He made it clear that he detests that label and he believes that such labelling is a consequence of his severe criticism of the political stand of the Muslim League. Panakkad Thangals, according to him, appropriated the Muslim League and in order to establish their supremacy, they, along with many of the League supporters and leaders, slandered and appraised the origin and validity of other Thangal *qabilas*. He cited the example of Sayyid Ibraheem Khaleel Al-Bukhari of Malappuram and said that:

> To establish League's political domination, their political leaders and supporters treated him condescendingly. They unleashed smear campaigns against him and his institutions. But I believe that their campaigns could never defame the status of Khaleel Thangal. Their criticism gave more power to him, and he became one of

the most respected Sayyids in India. In my opinion, Sayyids should lead Muslims
to the right religious path and should stay away from politics.

In his view, Thangals should not actively participate in politics because politics mainly teaches to hate one's opponent even if the opponent does any good work. To protect the dignity of the Sayyids, he revealed that he had requested that other members of his family 'refrain from politics, especially party politics.'

Sometimes, active membership in politics helps families to gain some benefits like jobs and admission in schools and colleges. For instance, some of the party workers and their families have managed to obtain seats in schools and colleges, at the plus two level, jobs in co-operative banks and jobs in schools and colleges as a benefit of their political connections and networks Political recommendations, according to the A.P Thangal of Thamarasheri, is a kind of bribe, a backdoor entry system used by many people in the area to get admission in schools, colleges, and other institutions.

While affiliations to religious and to a lesser extent political organizations are an integral aspect of the everyday life of the Muslim life in South Malabar, membership in sports organizations are not only an integral aspect of the culture of the region, but also become an interesting platform for the secular coexistence of different caste groups and religious sects in the region.

Sports organizations are one of the most secular voluntary networks that work in almost all rural and urban villages in Malappuram. They organise voluntary activities like sports events, cultural festivals; relief works such as the distribution of notebooks, blood donation camps, water distribution, health classes, educational coaching, etc. Most of the committee members in these clubs are youngsters.

One of the interesting points to note with regard to membership of such sports organisations is that there are less number of Thangals. Taking community-wise data, only a few have membership in such clubs. Many said that their children attend the programmes organized by the clubs, but many of the clubs never keep a strict membership pattern. The elder members of the family are not that fond of the sports clubs and their activities. They complain that this spoils the future of the children because they spend a lot of time on unnecessary activities like playing caroms and discussing and watching football. Nevertheless, the activities and programmes make local members more social, and it gives

them a space to connect with their neighbors. Clubs also work as a bridge between many communities where all religious, caste and political groups come together and unite for sports and other leisure activities. Such a connection among the local people is important in maintaining peace and order in society. Therefore, the value of clubs cannot be underestimated in maintaining social cohesion locally amongst the members, and some of their activities also motivate and help locals to study and engage in reading and writing activities. A more detailed examination of the influence of such clubs on inter-religious and inter-caste ties is beyond the scope of this thesis but would make an excellent topic for future research.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is clear that certain caste groups have more social connections and networks in South Malabar compared to other communities. Their varying possession of social capital (or lack of it) is directly related to their status in Muslim societies. In short, in South Malabar, Sayyids with their 'dominant lineage', political authority, networks and connections, and highest position in the local hierarchy are, what Srinivas (1959) called, the 'dominant' castes among the Muslims. The crucial question that emerges from this chapter is how these networks are credited for educational purposes in the present generation? Do the control and dominance in possession of social and cultural capital enable the Sayyids and Malabaris to acquire better education among the Muslims? The next chapter will explain in detail the present condition of these communities with respect to educational development, and it will also analyse the gender dimension in this regard and the relationship between child marriage and education.

Chapter V

Caste, Gender, and Networks: Impact on Higher Education

Panakkad, a village five kilometres away from the district headquarters Malappuram, is home to one of the most powerful Sayyid families in Kerala. Whoever spends a Tuesday at Panakkad will be astonished by the number of people visiting this small village in Malappuram district. The Panakkad Thangals are not just the leaders of the political party Muslim League, but they also enjoy positions like that of being *Qazis* of hundreds of *Mahallus* of Malabar along with possessing enormous political power and social prestige.

During my conversation with one of the locals in the village, he pointed out that if there would have been a Guinness record for the person 'who made the most inaugurations', or to the person who 'laid most number of foundation stones for masjids and houses', it would surely go to Panakkad Shihab Thangal, the most respected and celebrated figure in Kodappanakkal Tharavadu. He further asked me "who in Malabar would not like Thangal to lay the foundation stone of his house or who would not want Thangal's presence while opening a new shop." Whoever spends a Tuesday at Panakkad would ask why a large number of people, irrespective of their caste, religion, and gender, visit Panakkad? How do they have this much power to attract the people?

The first Tuesday that I spent during my field work at Panakkad made it clear that Sayyids, especially Panakkad Shihab Sayyids, are one of the most politically, socially and religiously powerful communities among the Muslims and their 'charismatic power'- that is bound to blood relationships and transferable through blood ties (Weber 1948: 1135-36), and 'alluring nature' not just attracts the Muslims but people of other faiths. Panakkad Shihab Thangal and his political party Muslim League, according to Osella and Osella, played a crucial role in bridging connections and political unity between urban modernism/reformisms (Mujahids) and rural traditionalism/ conservatism (Sunnis) (Osella and Osella 2013:157). Later when I traveled to different corners of South Malabar in search of Sayyid families, what I had experienced is something remarkable, and that is as equal to what Louis Massignon has referred to as the 'sacred hospitality' of people. This further

strengthened my thought that it is not just the Sayyids of Panakkad who hold such enormous power and prestige among the Muslims but Sayyids, in general, have the power to allure the people of all faiths, castes, and genders. To rephrase Weber, in the heads of South Malabar Muslims, these 'magicians' and 'heroes/healers' "proved their charisma in the eyes of their adherents" (Weber 1978: 1112).

Sayyid Ali Shihabuddin, who died at Valappattanam, considered as the founder of Shihab *qablia,* was the member of the 34th generation of Prophet Muhammad and reached Kerala in the hijra year 1181 (Muthukoyathangal 2009). It is believed that Shihab Thangal's father, PMSA Pookoya Thangal, was an expert in traditional healing since his childhood and he had always shown enormous zeal to solve the problems of the masses (Muthukoyathangal 2009). All the traditional ulamas the author interacted with believe that the 'Thangals power to resolve problems of people' and 'their sense of justice dates back to several generations' and 'their quality, skills, and knowledge in the field of medicine is not learned but acquired and transmitted from one generation to another'.

In the early morning on every Tuesday, Panakkad, a village situated on the banks of Kadalundi River, is filled with people from different castes, religions, and regions. All come here with one intention- to meet the Thangals. Even though their intention is the same, they all come here with different problems and complaints. The various Thangal houses in the locality discuss and solve the issues of people such as property settlement, marriage related problems, *mahalu* committee related matters, and many other social, economic and political issues. On every Tuesday of the year, the houses of the Sayyids in Panakkad turns into a temporary court, a Sufi-abode offering salvation for distressed people and those who come for blessings, a place where many try to find solace for their countless problems and a place where people get recommendation letters for jobs and educational opportunities. The reverence people have towards the Sayyids cannot be seen anywhere else in Kerala.

The recommendations people get from here to help obtain admission in school/college seats and jobs both in private and government sector is particularly interesting. Even though the people who come here say that the recommendations do not always work in their favour, they feel that they should at least come here to get the

blessings. When they leave, they kiss the hands of the Sayyids. People hug them and ask to be remembered in their prayers. When someone pleads to a Thangal for prayers, amidst his busy schedule, Thangal would say "*Al-Fathiha*." All those who are waiting around recite the *surah Al-Fatihah* from the Quran. After the recitation of the *surah,* Thangal makes a short *dua*. These 'momentary prayers' might happen several times in a day because of the demand for prayers from the visitors.

The author met many people who were there to get recommendation letters for college admission, for jobs and even for their *dua* to pass the examinations. An interesting question that arises here is regarding the educational status of a group who provides recommendation letters and calls for people to get admission or job in educational institutions, banks, and various posts. There have been no systematic studies conducted yet that explains the educational status of the most privileged and respected Muslims in Kerala. The data from the present field shows that amongst the Sunnis, the Sayyids fare much better in education compared to other caste groups in South Malabar, such as the Barber and the Fishermen communities and equal or perhaps only slightly lower when compared to Malabaris.

Even though each Sayyid household was far from homogeneous in terms of their social and economic status, and there are many Sayyids who suffer from economic hardship and unemployment, their overall educational status is much better when making a comparison with other caste groups. As said by Kunjan, the barber:

> If in the 1950s or even before that a community could go outside of Kerala for higher studies, they are the high caste Hindus, Christians and Muslims, and only they could afford education. Only Koyas, Keyis and Sayyids went outside for study during that time. If Panakkad Thangal can go to Egypt in the 1960s and spend nearly eight years there for higher studies, that shows their power and networks.

As mentioned by Kunjan, Sayyids, and Koyas of Calicut had access to higher education much earlier than the Barbers and the Fishermen. In later years, their early access to higher education turned into an advantage for their future generations to perform better in education while other communities continue to lag in educational development.

The first part of this chapter will discuss how caste, sects and family networks intersect in the context of the higher educational status of South Malabar Muslims. In the

previous chapter, social capital in the form of the parental education, occupation and social network was discussed, and it was clearly shown that the possession of the social and cultural capital of the Thangals are remarkable compared to that possessed by other caste groups. They not only exercise political power but also act as the 'rightful custodians' of the religion, and consequently, are seen as the 'final authority' on societal issues. This chapter argues that their 'dominant status' in society is reflected in their educational status and the present generation has greatly benefited from their family's cultural and social capitals.

It is easy for a Sayyid to credit his social capital for education than a barber or fisherman. The latter groups not just lack the networks and 'weak social ties' due to their occupational character, but they are also largely absent from the higher education scenario of Malabar. The reciprocal relationship of these communities are mainly confined to their own caste groups, that is, they fail to create bridging social capital for educational benefits. As recorded in the fourth chapter, except a teacher working in an aided school and one person working in the marine department, there is no one from the Barber and the Fishermen community in the sample for this study, who work in the government sector. However, among the Muslims in the field, several Sayyids and Malabaris work in the government sector.

In addition to this, this chapter also explores the *relationship between gender and education* in the field. The field responses show that the continuation of child marriage among the Muslims is one of the main reasons for the educational backwardness of Muslim women. The national average for child marriage rates among the Muslims of India is only 17.05, but at the same time, it is 36.14 percent among the Kerala Muslims. In other words, the percentage of child marriage among the Muslims of Kerala is double that of the national average. The marital age of Muslim girls and the dropout rate of girls from colleges because of child marriage are particularly relevant in this context.

According to the 2011 Census, the percentage of women who married before the age of twenty is 67.63 among the Muslims of Kerala while it is only 34.34 percent and 22.38 percent among the Hindus and Christians respectively. The number of child marriages in Malappuram is higher compared to any other district in Kerala. Interestingly,

197

girls from all caste groups are the 'victims' of child marriage, and the marital age of girls is low in all the four caste groups. As noted by Hasan and Menon, "gender and customary practice, rather than class, are the determining factors as far as women's marital status is concerned" (Hasan and Menon 2005:61). Even among the Muslims in South Malabar, when it comes to marriage, across caste groups, girls are married off early, and rather than caste background, there are various other factors, that decide the prevalence of child marriage, which will be explained in the last section of this chapter.

While analysing caste, Ambedkar noted that the practice of child marriage enables to maintain the endogamous marriage relations and it contributes to the persistence of caste structure in stratified societies (Ambedkar 1979: 12-15). Endogamy can be maintained only by marrying off women in a caste group 'on time,' otherwise, according to field respondents, the girls will not be able to find suitable grooms within the group. Many of my field respondents said that to marry girls on time is fundamental to preserve the statuses of families. Endogamy has been described as a fundamental form of group cohesion and social isolation from other groups (Rosenfeld 2008), which blocks the 'inappropriate alliances' with members of other caste groups. Among many other reasons, the higher number of child marriages in South Malabar happen mainly to maintain the caste structure and also to maintain the religious endogamy of Muslims. In other words, in South Malabar, both caste and religion are important criteria for marriage and endogamous marriages work as the single most important feature in preserving the Muslim caste divisions.

As the third chapter discussed, more than 85 percent of all marriages in South Malabar continue to be caste endogamous. Therefore, the second part of this chapter discusses the practice of child marriage in the four communities and discusses the major reasons for child marriage from the perspectives of the field respondents, which includes the girl- the victims of child marriage, her parents and school and college teachers. Also, this section examines how child marriage affects the higher education of Muslim women in South Malabar. The next section will analyse the complex relationship between castes, sects and gender differences in the attainment of higher education.

5.1 Higher Education of the Field: Interplay of Caste, Sect, Gender, and Networks

As in the case of most of the Indian societies, an intricate interplay of castes, sects and gender identities of the individuals along with the strength of their social capital possession triggers the development/backwardness of education of South Malabar Muslims. Overall data shows that the present generation (G2) of Muslims (See Table 5.1-A) in the field does much better in higher education when compared to their parents' generation (G1) (See Table 5.1-B). Now a higher number of students are in schools; there are also a higher number of educational institutions, better educational infrastructure, and transportation and communication facilities. The gap between the parents' generation and present generation with regard to the status of higher education is higher among the Malabaris (increased 3.21 percent points). The proportion of the increase in rates of higher education from parents' generation to present generation among the Barbers continues to be less (0.33 percent point).

While analysing the parental occupation in the previous chapter, above 80 percent of the working population from barber and fishermen communities were found to work in their traditional occupations, and the majority of the present generation participants in these households are also employed in traditional occupations such as barbering and fishing. People from these communities are of the opinion that education is not a mandatory requirement to be able to carry out their traditional occupations and spending more time for education adds to the economic burden on their families. During our conversation, Mansoor, a fisherman in Ponnani, even said that "early entry to job market makes life not just secure, but it saves money that may have been spent on education."

Table: 5.1. Caste-wise breakdown of the graduate and above degrees, Present (G1) and Parent (G2) generation.

A. Present generation (G2)

Caste	Households	Total Population			Graduates and above		
		Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
Malabari	40	91	93	184	13	9	22
Sayyids	40	99	97	196	19	6	25
Barbers	40	102	110	212	4	2	6
Fishermen	40	105	99	204	5	2	7
Total	**160**	**397**	**399**	**796**	**41**	**19**	**60**

B. Parent Generation (G1)

Caste	Households	Total Population*			Graduates and above		
		Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
Malabari	40	40	40	80	5	2	7
Sayyids	40	40	40	80	6	2	8
Barbers	40	40	40	80	1	1	2
Fishermen	40	40	40	80	1	0	1
Total	**160**	**160**	**160**	**320**	**13**	**5**	**18**

C. Present generation (G2)

Caste	Households	Total Population*			Graduates and above		
		Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
Malabari	40	131	133	264	18	11	29
Sayyids	40	139	137	276	25	8	33
Barbers	40	142	150	292	5	3	8
Fishermen	40	145	139	284	6	2	8
Total	**160**	**557**	**559**	**1116**	**54**	**24**	**78**

Source: Based on Author's fieldwork

Note: * total population is excluded members below the age group of twenty

Mansoor further said:

> We value education, and most of us wanted to go to college, but the home atmosphere is not that favorable to continue in higher education. Education can be attained only when you have basic comforts at home. For those who do not have that, education is not important, a job is important. That is the reason we all begin to go fishing for a living.

Such responses are often heard from people belonging to poor families. "Now you tell us how we can study?", (*ini nigal parayu* e*ngine padikkana?)* is often asked at the end of most of the conversations with the Fishermen community members after a long narration of miseries, problems in families and their poor economic conditions. As shown in Table 5.1-C, the number of graduates in this caste group is only eight, which is only 2.82 percent (Table 5.2-C) of their total population. The data and the views expressed by the members of Fishermen caste confirm the Bourdieusian theory that achievement in higher education is a product of better social and economic conditions of an individual.

Anthropologists and sociologists, as argued by Clifford Geertz, are "firm in the conviction that men unmodified by the customs of particular places do not in fact exist, have never existed, and most important, could not in the very nature of the case exist" (Geertz 1973: 35). Though, there might be many reasons than can be considered as general/universal for the educational backwardness of communities, the local reasons, how the customs and beliefs of the locals influence education is important. The caste groups who follow traditional occupations reproduce the traits, knowledge, and skills that the future generation needs to carry out their traditional occupations efficiently. So their focus on education, especially higher education, is minimal and they find it useless to spend money and time for modern education because that education is not something that gives them earnings quickly enough to meet their day to day economic needs. These observations are not contradictory to the arguments provided by the Coleman (1966) following his study of equal educational opportunities (Coleman et.al 1966). For the marginalized communities, the Barbers and Fishermen, it is the family, and the possession of social and cultural capital that matters most in educational development and school, college and university facilities seem to have relatively little effect in this regard.

This must not be taken to mean that they have equal access to all the facilities as other communities but to argue that their schools have less impact on their educational performance when compared to the family conditions, in cases where children from the same locality are educated in the same schools. However, in the case of those few who study in elite schools where they paid a higher amount of money, the results must be different. In this regard, Danial Bell noted that if a student graduates from an elite college or school, it gives them a further differential advantage over graduates from "mass" or state schools (Bell 1972: 31). In South Malabar, most of the fishermen families sent their children to state-run government schools. Only five out of 40 fishermen families choose to send at least one or more of their children to privately paid schools over government schools. However, the preference for private schools over government schools is higher among the Malabaris and Sayyids. This further gives them an edge over the other Muslim communities in terms of educational status.

It is clear that only those who have a better economic capital can afford to send their children to private schools. Monthly school tuition fees in the region vary from one hundred to one thousand in a month. There are even schools that charge more than fifty thousand rupees as tuition fee for one year. Poor economic conditions force the fishermen group to send their children to state-run government schools. While discussing human capital, Becker noted that parents must spend time at home and should devote real resources to foster an environment that promotes and provides formal education (Becker 1964). However, from the families' point of view, the 'quality children' (Becker 1993), in the marginalized caste groups, the Barbers and Fishermen, are those who are equipped with the professional skills of traditional occupations.

The lack of parental involvement in children's education is mainly because of economic reasons, lack of exposure to education, and lack of networks that motivate them to teach their children. In the case of the Barbers and Fishermen, parents spend time with their children not to give formal education and to teach them the school or college syllabi but to teach them the skills to improve their performances in the traditional occupations associated with their castes. For instance, in the field, a fisherman takes his young boy to the sea on the weekends to teach him the basics of fishing. While talking to some of the

school-going children from the fishermen caste, one of the eight standard students told me that on weekends when other students go to tuition centres, he goes to the sea along with his brother and father. His father believes that his age (13) is suitable for learning fishing skills. Parents also believe that if a child does not learn the basics of fishing, nature of the sea, diving and boating techniques at a young age, it will be difficult for them to become professional fishermen later.

Table: 5.2. Caste-wise percentage of persons with graduate degree and above, Parent and Present generation (G1 and G2)

A. Parent generation (G1)

Caste	Household	Persons	Persons	Percentage of GnA
Malabari	40	80	7	8.75
Sayyids	40	80	8	10.00
Barbers	40	80	2	2.50
Fishermen	40	80	1	1.25
Total	**160**	**320**	**18**	**5.63**

B. Present generation (G2)

Caste	Households	Persons	Persons2	Percentage of GnA
Malabari	40	184	22	11.96
Sayyids	40	196	25	12.76
Barbers	40	212	6	2.83
Fishermen	40	204	7	3.43
Total	**160**	**796**	**60**	**7.54**

C. Parent and Present generation (G1+G2)

Caste	Households	Persons	Graduates and above	Percentage of GnA
Malabari	40	264	29	10.98
Sayyids	40	276	33	11.96
Barbers	40	292	8	2.74
Fishermen	40	284	8	2.82
Total	**160**	**1116**	**78**	**6.99**

Note: Total population includes both male and female members above the age of twenty.
GnA= Graduate and above.
Source: Based on Authors Fieldwork

The same pattern can be noticed in the case of Barber caste. All the household heads of this group had the opinion that the children should learn both school and college education along with barbering. "*Randum padikkanam*" (should learn both) is the most common response they gave when asked about education and traditional occupation. Shareef, the Barber from Elaambra village, said:

The SSLC certificate or any degree certificate never guarantees a job; they are just certificates. So I insist my children learn both, modern education and barbering. If they get a better job than barbering they should go for that. However, if they do not learn the skills in this school or college-going age, it is very difficult to master barbering skills later. So learn both, if you do not get a job after studies come back and do your profession.

Most of the parents in this community were of the same view, and they send their children to learn barbering skills either in their shop or their relatives' shops.

Members of both communities believe that basic skills that are needed to become professional fishermen or a professional barber should be given in the school-going age. From the responses in the field, it appears that the poor economic capital and lack of exposure to higher education force them to think that modern education is useless for their future generations. The cultural orientation toward education, or to borrow Weber's thesis (1976) that the cultural ethic of the communities hardly motivates them for schooling. In addition, their friendships in the workplace and family relations are homophilous networks, which to follow McPherson, Lynn Smith and Cook's (2001) theory of homophily, limits their social worlds in a way that has powerful implications for the information they receive on education, the attitudes they form towards education, and the interactions they experience of education (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001). Their homophilous networks hardly generate information on educational opportunities; they seldom place higher values on education, instead, encourage their children to earn early as possible and to value the necessity to learn their traditional occupation. While the enthusiasm and efforts of the present generation youth of these castes to attain higher education cannot be completely negated, field responses suggest that they fail to achieve the desired results due to their poor family conditions and the lack of networks and motivation in the families.

According to the data collected from South Malabar, as shown in Table 5.2 (C), 11.96 percent of the Sayyid population has a graduate degree. It should be noted that they have the highest proportion of graduates in the field. Sayyid men are the one category among the Muslims who are least excluded from the public sphere and need not be afraid of losing their privilege even if they do not perform well educationally. Daniel Bell observed that "the explicit fear created by a post-industrial society is that failure to get on the educational escalator means the exclusion from the privileged places in society" (Bell 1972: 43). However, in the South Malabar context, what I have observed is that even if Sayyids have not achieved educational credentials, the 'birth-identity' provide them with a privileged place in Society. Their privilege hardly fades due to the lack of educational qualifications because of their 'hereditary status' that cannot be changed and questioned. While discussing higher education, Fritz K. Ringer pointed out that, "Of course it is difficult to estimate the social status of any group. Information about income, ranks, and titles are only tangentially relevant since attributed social honour is based largely on intangibles: traditions, values, and mental habits" (Ringer 1967: 127). In the context of South Malabar, Sunnis place a higher value on intangibles such as respect towards the descendants of the Prophet and the prevalent religious customs and values. , As a result, the achievement of educational credentials for a Sayyid man is an addition to his already existing ascribed status, and those who have both ascribed and achieved status become the most powerful among the Sayyids.

The Muslim religious values and traditions here in the field are constructed and reproduced in a way that allows the Sayyids to convert their intangibles into tangibles such as political titles, custodianship of *mahalus* and economic benefits. As noted in the third chapter, their status is mainly ascribed, their status boundaries are harder to cross for Fishermen and Barbers even if achieve educational progress, and it has been constructed and maintained through the various process of Islamic educational learning. In short, for a Sayyid, education is an additional asset that provides him further chances to gain more prestige.

In general, the lack of a specific traditional occupation, and therefore the availability of wider options in the job market allows the Malabaris to focus more on higher

education. This does not imply that the other three caste groups strictly follow their traditional occupation but the availability of a specific caste-bound occupation results in many cases in the early entry to the traditional occupation among the Barbers and Fishermen. In his thesis *On Meritocracy and Equality*, while discussing the post-industrial society, Danial Bell noted that "differential status and differential income are based on technical skills and higher education. Without those achievements, one cannot fulfil the requirements of the new social division of labour which is the feature of that society" (Bell 1972:30). The new social division of labour in industrial society is less influenced by the traditional caste groups because they generate their income mainly through traditional occupation. However, in the case of Malabaris, education is an important source that gives prestige, status and a decent living. Therefore, the competition within the caste is higher, and they invest more in education.

At the same time, the Malabaris tend to negate that there is no caste system among the Muslims. According to Shareef, the Barber, such a denial of caste among the Muslims mainly happens because the Malabaris are among the least discriminated or humiliated caste groups among the Muslims. His argument is true when compared with the field responses of Malabaris. For instance, Anas, a Malabari field respondent who has a post-graduate degree from Mambad College, is of the opinion that there is no caste discrimination in Islam and that there is no discrimination in educational opportunities among Muslims. He believes that Islam respects and values all its adherents equally. There are many from the Malabari and Sayyid caste groups who are in complete denial of the existence of caste system among the Muslims. However, the higher graduate numbers from the two caste groups, Sayyids, and Malabaris shows that they perform much better in education than other caste groups. Although they are aware they fare better than many Muslims, they never attribute the low educational backwardness of many Muslims with caste but instead with economic backwardness.

Table: 5.3. Higher education of caste groups based on Religious sect

A. Higher education of caste groups based on Religious sect-Mujahid

Caste	Total Households	Total Population (G1)	Total Population (G1+G2)	Graduate and Above	Percent of GnA
Malabari*	12	49	73	14	19.18
Sayyid	0	0	0	0	-
Barber	2	9	13	4	30.77
Fishermen	4	15	23	4	17.39
Total	**18**	**73**	**109**	**22**	**20.18**

Note: * Two J*amaat* families included in the data

B. Higher education of the caste groups based on religious sects-Sunnis

Caste	Total Households	Total Population	Total Population (G1+G2)	Graduates and Above	Percent of GnA
Malabari	28	135	191	15	7.85
Sayyids	40	196	276	33	11.96
Barber	38	203	279	4	1.43
Fishermen	36	189	261	4	1.53
Total	**142**	**723**	**1007**	**56**	**5.56**

Note: Both *A.P* and *E.K* Sunni fractions are included in the population

C. Gap between Mujahid and Sunni households in the rate of graduate degree and above

Caste	Graduate and Above (Mujahid)	Graduates and Above	Graduate gap
Malabari	19.18	7.85	11.32
Sayyids	-	11.96	-11.96
Barber	30.77	1.43	29.34
Fishermen	17.39	1.53	15.86
Total	**20.18**	**5.56**	**14.62**

Source: Based on Authors Fieldwork

Apart from caste background, the sectarian affiliation of Muslims also influence their educational outcome: The Mujahid households have been found to have a higher educational status than the Sunni households in all four castes groups. As shown in Table 5.3 (A) and table 5.3 (B), compared to the Barbers and Fishermen, the Malabari group has higher educational credentials, 10.98 percent of the Malabaris in the field are graduates. Apart from their better socioeconomic status, one of the major factors for the higher number of graduates among the Malabari group is because of the inclusion of ten Mujahid households and two Jamaat households. In the ethnographic data, the percentage of graduates in Mujahid and Jamaat households combined is 19.19 percent among the Malabaris, but at the same time, among the Sunni Malabaris, the percentage of the same is 7.85 percent.

The educational status of both the Barber and Fishermen communities is better among the Mujahid sect than that of the same groups among the Sunni sect. Within the former group, there is one person in the Barber caste with an engineering degree, and there is one from the Fishermen caste with a medical degree. The engineering degree holder is the son of the only government employee among the Barbers in this study that was discussed in the last chapter. But the parental education of the person, Ashraf, with a medical degree is below primary level.

During our conversation, Ashraf said he is one of the most respected people in his community. His medical degree is not just celebrated in the coastal village but even in the neighbouring coastal regions. He said that "the people in the coastal region give higher reverence for people with education, but seldom does one meet people with higher educational qualifications. The educational success of a person from a poor family becomes news." He further added that achievements in any field are often celebrated in the villages with gifts from political parties, religious organizations, and sports clubs. Though all his family members, his brother and two sisters, are married within the same community, he said,

> I have better higher educational credentials , but still, people (Muslims who live in non-coastal regions) look at us with prejudice, and many families are still not ready to accept someone from the '*puslan*' community as their *marumakan* (son-in law). I feel that higher education and being male helps one to have more diverse networks, but such networks and educational credentials are in question when you are poor. People are still not ready to marry someone from another caste community even if they share their same educational level or

higher educational level. Even Mujahid families outside the region have a second thought before they marry their daughters to Fishermen boys.

Ashraf's argument, which implicitly blames the *Kizhakkinnu ullavar* for their predicament and discrimination against him and his community with regard to marriage alliances should be considered as the suffering of someone who experienced caste prejudice in his life, notwithstanding higher educational qualifications. Marrying daughters to fishermen boys, even if they are highly educated than the girls whom they marry, is still considered as hypogamous in the region[49].

As found in most societies, here also, hypogamy is strongly excoriated by the girl's family, and it rarely occurs. The upward mobility for Fishermen and Barbers are only possible through educational status attainment and occupational mobility because there is no scope for Sanskritisation (Srinivas 1956) in the Muslim caste where the status of Sayyids is fixed by descent. Even people like Ashraf, who are highly educated, believe that even for educated people, when it comes to marriage, the prejudice against fishermen is still pervasive and it cut across the religious sects. The situation is similar to what is argued by Vidya while discussing caste in contemporary India, where she argues that "we see a persistence of certain dimensions or characteristics of caste such as endogamy, but on the other hand, we see a transformation of the economic domain of caste" (Vaid 2014: 406). Though there is partial mobility in economic activities and education of Barbers and Fishermen, the endogamy character of the caste continued intact.

Ashraf is of the opinion that, the educational backwardness of the Fishermen community results from both their cultural and occupational orientations which hardly promote educational attainment and the structural position in which fishermen suffer from economic hardship, unemployment, poverty and lack of government support. He further added that only when his brother migrated to the Gulf and started earning could he devote his complete time for his education. Also, his brother was ambitious and supportive of his education, which further helped him to pursue his higher education. The lower socioeconomic mobility among the Fishermen is directly related to their education. Those

---

[49] Hypogamy, according to Merton, denotes the pattern wherein the female marries into a lower social stratum (1976: 222). For more on Hypogamy see (Merton 1976, Almanzar 2016).

who are highly educated mostly do not go for traditional occupations. They tend to deviate from the path of their forefathers.

Table: 5.4. Caste-wise graduates and gender gap of parent and present generation (G1 and G2)

A. Caste-wise graduates and gender gap of parent generation (G1)

Caste	Total Population		Graduates and above		Percentage of GnA		
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Gap**
Malabari	40	40	5	2	12.50	5.00	7.50
Sayyids	40	40	6	2	15.00	5.00	10.00
Barbers	40	40	1	1	2.50	2.50	0.00
Fishermen	40	40	1	0	2.50	0.00	2.50
Total	**160**	**160**	**13**	**5**	**8.13**	**3.13**	**5.00**

B. Caste-wise graduates and gender gap of present generation (G2)

Caste	Total Population		Graduates and above		Percentage of GnA		
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Gap**
Malabari	91	93	13	9	14.29	9.68	4.61
Sayyids	99	97	19	6	19.19	6.19	13.01
Barbers	102	110	4	2	3.92	1.82	2.10
Fishermen	105	99	5	2	4.76	2.02	2.74
Total	**397**	**399**	**41**	**19**	**10.33**	**4.76**	**5.57**

C. Caste-wise graduates and gender gap in the field (G1+G2)

Caste	Total Population		Graduates and above		Percentage of GnA		
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Gap**
Malabari	131	133	18	11	13.74	8.27	5.47
Sayyids	139	137	25	8	17.99	5.84	12.15
Barbers	142	150	5	3	3.52	2.00	1.52
Fishermen	145	139	6	2	4.14	1.44	2.70
Total	**557**	**559**	**54**	**24**	**9.69**	**4.29**	**5.40**

Note: GnA=Graduate and above
Source: Based on author's fieldwork

Analysing the gender-wise educational status (Table 5. 4-C), men outnumber women in higher education in all the caste groups in both the parent (Table 5. 4-A) and

present generation (Table 5. 4-B). In general, in the state, the number of young Muslim women going to college and getting a graduate degree is low compared to women from any other religious groups. As I argued in the second chapter, Muslims are the only religious community in Kerala where men outnumber women in the number of total graduates.

Among the Sayyids, out of 33 graduates, 25 of them are males, and there are only eight female graduates. As shown in Table 5. 4-C, with a 12.15 percent points gap, the highest gender gap in higher education exists among the Sayyids, followed by Malabaris (5.47 percent points). In the field, the gender gap in education widens with the level of higher education. This phenomenon is found to be true for all the caste groups. The major reason noticed for drop out or absence of girls in higher education is the tradition of early marriage. Female 18-year-old pupils are more likely to get married than their male counterparts. It is difficult to establish gender equality in education in a society where there are special preferences and privileges for boys over girls, 'encouragement' for the tradition of early female marriage and support for early pregnancy.

Even though the communities have improved in their educational condition compared to the parent generation, in general, what they all have in common is the deplorable rate of higher education of girls when compared to their male counterparts. Girls perform better than boys in high school and at the higher secondary level but are far less likely than boys to complete their college education. This trend is evident across all the caste groups in South Malabar (See Table 5. 4-A, Table 5. 4-B and Table 5. 4-C). Even at the district level, as shown in the second chapter, section 3.3, men outnumber women in the number of graduates, and this is an exception to all other districts in the state. Girls are sent to schools, but there is an apprehension within the community when it comes to female higher education beyond school.

Though the consumerist behaviour, dressing patterns and the general life style of Muslim women have changed over time (Abdelhalim 2013), and they spend "more than averagely" for shopping thanks to gulf migration and remittance flows to South Malabar (Osella and Osella 2007), two things that have not changed much over time are their higher educational status and marital age. In all the higher educational streams, the number of

females is less compared to the male members. Relatively fewer number of girls continue their studies after marriage, and in the field, parents of married daughters give less importance to the higher education of their married daughters. Some of the parents even say that *ini avaru nokkatte,* which implies that now it is up to husband's family to decide whether their daughter wants to study or not. This is also one of the many instances during my fieldwork which revealed the thin agency of the women in South Malabar. Whether or not she wants to study or will be 'allowed' to study is not in the girls' control, but it is a matter to be decided by her parents before marriage or by her husband and his in-laws after marriage. During my interview with Hamid Darimi Manjeri, he said that men should earn and provide for the families. After reciting the verse *ar-rijalu qawwamuna 'ala an-nisa* (one of the most discussed/debated verses of the Quran, Chapter 4: 34, which literally means 'men are the guardians/maintainers of women') from *Surat al-Nisa* (Women), he further said that:

> Women should devote time to spend with families; they should learn how to take care of the house and their kids and husband. I am not suggesting that women should not study, but what I am saying is that their education should not stop them from getting married on time and looking after their families

With regard to female child marriage, there are various explanations offered, like that of Hamid's, that support the tradition. As the next section will discuss, data from the field clearly shows that child marriage and early marriage, are some of the main factors that block the entry of girls into higher education. The reasons for the prevalence of child marriage in South Malabar will also be discussed in the next section in detail to understand the educational backwardness of Muslim women.

5.2 Child Marriage and Muslim Educational Backwardness

Kerala has the highest state-level scores on both the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Development Index (GDI) (HDR 2005). However, the latest Census (2011) data shows that 17.63 percent of females in Kerala are married before the legal age of eighteen. Among those married before 18 years in Kerala, those belonging to the Muslim community make up 35.8%. This result is further corroborated by findings of a district level study undertaken by the ICRW to examine the prevalence, trends, and patterns of child marriage among currently married women across India. The ICRW study shows only

one district in Kerala that stands out marked in red in the figure they provide, which indicates percent of child marriage above 20 percent to less than 40 percent - Malappuram, the only Muslim majority district in Kerala. (Srinivasan et al. 2015: 17). These alarming and paradoxical findings notwithstanding, as mentioned in the introduction, the Kerala state government issued a circular in 2013 permitting the marriage registration of Muslim women between 16 and 18 years. There were many supporters and critics of the 2013 circular, but hardly anyone has studied the reasons for child marriage and how it influences the education of Muslim women.

In this section, three important arguments are made in regarding child marriage. Firstly, there is an undeniable relationship between the incidence of child marriage and educational attainment of women. Higher the education level of women, lower the rate of child marriage and vice versa. Secondly, the rate of child marriage is higher among the Muslims of Kerala, and it reflects clearly in their levels of higher education. They have the highest number of child marriages, and at the same time, they have the lowest number of graduates among the various religious communities of Kerala.

Lastly, evidence from the field will be discussed to show how child marriage limits the educational opportunities of Muslims girls in South Malabar even in cases where they perform extremely well in their school education. It contradicts some of the previous studies, which argue that girls with lower education prospects and who are weaker academically are more likely to have a child marriage.

5.2.1 Child Marriage among the Muslims of Kerala

In the field, many parents argue that even if their daughter's marriage happens before the age of 18, they will not consider it as child marriage. For them, their daughter is sufficiently mature enough and well informed about the marriage from the time she attains puberty. From the subjective perspective, such marriages are normal, but the law of the land treats any such marriages as child marriage, even if anyone proves that his or her daughter is mentally prepared and mature enough to get married, and marriage happened with her consent. In the studies of child marriage, the important question one should ask at the beginning is: child marriage for whom? The present study treats all marriages that happened before the age of 18 for girls and 21 for boys as child marriage.

In India, (See Appendix Table 6), Hindus (31.27) have a higher percent of child marriage than the Muslims (30.57) followed by Buddhists (27.80). However, in Kerala, the percentage of child marriage among the Muslims (36.14) is three-fold higher than that of the Hindus (12.79) (See Appendix Table 7). The rate of Muslim child marriage in Kerala is even higher than the national average rate of Muslim child marriage (30.57).There is a higher incidence of child marriages among the Muslims in Kerala than any other religious community, the rate of which is very alarming. Compared to Hindus who have the second highest percentage in child marriage, the rate among the Muslims is three times higher, and compared to the Christians; it is six times higher. The percentage of married women before the age of twenty is also higher among the Muslims compared to other religious communities.

Table: 5.5. Religion-wise and Gender-wise percentage of marriages below 20 years of age in Kerala

No	Religion	Number of ever Married Male below the age of 20	Male %	Number of ever married Female below the age of 20	Female %
1	Hindu	93181	1.94	2195111	34.34
2	Muslim	77754	4.17	1948527	67.63
3	Christian	30909	1.85	461990	22.38
4	Sikh	34	3.14	269	28.14
5	Buddhist	34	4.02	356	30.93
6	Jain	23	1.89	453	29.92
7	Other religion	50	2.57	415	21.47
8	**Total**	**202435**	**2.48**	**4614842**	**40.59**

Source: Author's computaion based on Census of India 2011, Govt. of India

Table 5.5 shows that 67.63 percent of Muslim women (1948527) got married before the age of twenty. Twenty years is considered the minimum required age to get a bachelor's degree in India. It means that 67.63 percent of Muslim women in Kerala married before they officially reached the age to obtain a bachelor degree. As shown in Table 5.6, in the field, 47.87 percent of women in the field were married off before they reached the legal age. In addition, 84.21 percent of the total women in the present generation married before

the age of twenty. Malabaris have the lowest rate of child marriage, at 39.78 percent. In all the four caste groups, eighty and above percent of women were married off before the age of twenty.

Table: 5.6. Caste-wise marriage age among the 20 and above age group in the field (G2)

Caste	House hold	Total Females	Marriage Age			Percentage		
			Before 18	Before 20	20 and Above	Before 18	Before 20	20 and Above
Malabari	40	93	37	39	17	39.78	81.72	18.28
Sayyids	40	97	47	31	19	48.45	80.41	19.59
Barbers	40	110	55	36	19	50.00	82.73	17.27
Fishermen	40	99	52	39	8	52.53	91.92	8.08
Total	160	399	191	145	63	47.87	84.21	15.79

Source: Based on author's fieldwork

Table 5.6 shows that 84.21 percent of the total population in the field were married off before they could complete a graduate degree. Though claimed by many supporters of the 2013 circular, who argued that marriage does not prevent women from pursuing their higher studies (Hamza 2013, Musthafal 2013, Mundupara 2013), field responses of the 'victims' of child marriage reveal a different story. Field responses and stories show that early marriage, which often results in early pregnancy of women, is one of the prime factors that lead to an early drop out of women from schools and colleges. It is clear that "the link between education and marriage timing does not operate in isolation; rather, it is conditioned by the broader cultural and socioeconomic context" (Singh and Samara 1996: 156). Therefore, before examining the cultural and socioeconomic factors behind child marriage, the next sub-section will discuss the relationship between child marriage and educational qualification of women in Kerala focusing on Malappuram district in particular.

5.2.2 Child Marriage and Education: Relations and Reflections

An overwhelming majority of stories from the field present the same trends regarding the relationship between the incidence of child marriage among women and the rate of their higher education, that child marriage blocks the entry of women into higher education. However, the story of Ameena from the Malabari community is an exceptional case. On 8th May 2011, Ameena celebrated her sixteenth birthday, and on the same day, her SSLC results were announced. That was the happiest day of her life; not because she turned sixteen, but because she secured nine A plus grades and one A-minus grade and finished as the second topper in her school. However, her parents were not happy. They were worried about her age. She was sixteen! This is, even today, considered as the 'preferred age' for marriage in her region.

If a girl does not marry in this 'preferred age' or soon after that, she will have to face hurdles in the future. Nevertheless, Nazar, her father, decided to take the risk. He sent her to a prestigious school in the region where she finished as the topper in the plus-two science division. In the same year, Ameena cleared the State level medical entrance test and got admission in Calicut Medical College. Next year, she will complete her course and become a doctor, the first female Muslim doctor in her village. The reader might wonder if this is an exceptional case. Yes, in Elankur Village of Ernad Taluk in Malappuram district, where the majority of the total population comprises Muslims, this is an exceptional story. To put it sociologically, only people who possess social capital can create such exceptional stories in this region. However, many families do not have the positive social networks that can help them to acquire educational credentials.

Some of the studies on child marriage argue that girls who are less interested in studies and/or who score minimum grades in exams are more likely to be married off early. However, the cases of child marriages from the field suggest otherwise: There are nearly 45 percent girls in the 160 households who scored more than 80 percent of marks in SSLC exams, but they were forced to drop out from their higher secondary school because of their marriage. The majority of them scored comparatively better marks than the male siblings., but they each narrated different stories regarding how and why they had to leave

216

school/college. The common thread connecting all their stories being their marriage, early pregnancy and problems thereafter.

NSSO (2014) shows that the major reason for the girls in the age group of 5-29 years dopping out/ discontinuing studies is engagement in domestic activities (33 percent in rural areas and 23 percent in urban areas). However, more specifically in the field, from the present generation (G2) of women who are married, 25 percent college or school drop outs (who enrolled in higher secondary school or college before their marriage) said that their husbands or husband's family members told them not to attend school or college immediately after their marriage. They said pressure from their spouses and in-laws, citing various customs, traditions and religious reasons, are the major reasons for the discontinuation of their studies. In most cases, a newlywed's right to study was thwarted mainly by the mother-in-law (*ammayiamma*), in many households, the latter acting as the final authority in internal family matters. This situation echoes with Sagade's argument regarding child marriage that "women support retrograde traditions, but not on the basis of free will or informed choice. They are compelled by circumstances, lacking as they are in the independence and decision making powers" (Sagade 2005: xxxi). In addition, in South Malabar, the female social capital is mainly formed through 'strong social ties', which in turn work negatively for female higher education, especially in families that are already educationally backward.

The expectation of a mother-in-law from the daughter-in-law, apart from dowry, is not economic incentives, but physical help in household duties. If newlyweds go for higher studies, she loses a potential assistant in the performance of the household duties. Therefore instead of encouraging the daughter-in-law's studies, the mother-in-law tries to block her from pursuing a higher education or completing her studies. At the same time, most of the respondents confirm that countering the mother-in-law and other in-laws and breaking the rules in a new family setting is impossible unless one gets support from one's own parents. However, as I said earlier, most of the parents have the opinion that husband and his family have all the power or authority to take decisions related to a girl after her marriage.

35 percent of the respondents said that they had the opportunity to attend college but were forced to drop out after they conceived their children. 25 percent of them cited various reasons connected to marriage like moving to husband's family after marriage, the distance of college from husband's home after the marriage, difficult to manage household work and studies, and moving with husband to Gulf countries as being responsible for them dropping out of studies. The rest of them (15 percent) cited various economic and other social reasons for dropping out of school/college. Majority respondents in the field clearly state that their early marriage was the main reason they restricted their lives to mainly household duties and/or child rearing and, they believe that stopped them from attaining economic independence. Such a forced discontinuation of a college education has negatively influenced the overall educational status of Malappuram district. There is no doubt that, as argued by many researchers in various contexts (Wodon et al. 2017), if child marriage and early pregnancies could be eliminated completely from South Malabar, this could potentially reduce the gender gap in education and 60 percent (25 percent early marriage plus 35 percent early pregnancies) of the female dropout rate would be reduced.

As I mentioned in the second chapter, Malappuram district, where 70.23 percent of the population are Muslims, ranked lowest in the Kerala on analysing the number of both male and female degree holders. The position of Malappuram with respect to the number of graduates is even below the average of all BIMARU states. .When it comes to the rate of female education, the numbers are even more disturbing in Malappuram. Fewer higher educational opportunities, low level of education among parents, patriarchal values and norms, and low social and cultural capital, etc. are all responsible for female educational backwardness in the district. However, the extensive field work of three years in the region and a comparison of the Census data on education and child marriage suggest that perhaps the primary reason for Malappuram district's lowest position in the state, with regard to the rate of female education, is due to the prevalent tradition of child marriage.

Table: 5.7. Educational Level and Child Marriage Rate in Malappuram District

No	Educational level	No. of Ever Married Male Before the age of 18	No. of Ever Married Female Before the age of 18	Percent of Ever Married Male Before the age of 18	Percent of Ever Married Female Before the age of 18
1	Total	13441	501245	1.55	38.50
2	Illiterate	1367	69464	2.57	50.59
3	Literate	12074	431781	1.48	37.07
4	Literate but below primary	2882	92775	1.86	48.84
5	Primary but below middle	3016	95443	1.65	45.58
6	Middle but below matric or secondary	2295	106265	1.32	41.72
7	Matric or secondary but below graduate	2646	109553	1.21	28.17
8	Graduate and above	455	2302	1.05	3.94

Source: Authors computation based on Census of India 2011, Govt. of India
Note: Ever married and currently married population before the age of 18 and their educational status.

Table 5.7 makes it clear that education plays a central role in reducing the number of child marriages. When the educational qualifications increase, it helps to reduce the likelihood of early marriage. For instance, in Kerala, the rate of female child marriage is 33.70 among the illiterate population but only 15.91% child marriage is reported among the literates. The rate of child marriage is 30.11 among those who are educated below primary level, but it is only 19.06 among those who are educated till metric level. More importantly, according to the 2011 Census report, there are 1134069 ever married females who are educated till graduate level or above. Out of those women, only 1.55 percent (17529 females) was married off before the age of eighteen. The data shows that the rate of child marriage among the category of illiterates is 33.70 percent, but at the same time, it is only 1.55 among the female population who has completed graduation or higher degrees.

The Malappuram District data shows the same results as Kerala, where the higher the educational level, lower is the rate of child marriage. In the district, only 3.94 percent child marriages are reported among the females who are in the category of graduate and above. At the same time, 28.17% of Muslim women among the educational category of 'matric or secondary but below graduate level' and 41.72% of the 'middle but below matric or secondary' educational level had child marriages. Child marriages have been reported among 37.07 percent of the literates and 50.59 percent of the illiterates. A comparative study of Census data on education and child marriage contradicts the view of many who supported the 2013 circular by saying that 'early marriage is not a hindrance to education and even married girls complete their higher education.' In the next subsection, field responses will be analysed to discuss why child marriage is still prevalent in the district.

5.3 Why is Child Marriage prevalent in South Malabar?

Families that were interviewed for this study cited various reasons for marrying off their daughters early. Both internal and external factors contribute towards the persistence of child marriage in the region. The internal factor includes family pressure, the size of the family, appearance, and beauty of the daughter, etc. External factors which were more crucial and much more important than the internal factors include increasing amount of dowry, socio-cultural and religious values, lack of higher educational opportunities, poor enactment of laws, etc. During the focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews, many had cited that family or relatives' pressure was one of the most important reasons for marrying their daughters.

However, such a pressure does not come from a vacuum; it has social, religious and anthropological reasons. Socially, child marriage is considered as a common practice that is rarely questioned and debated in these villages. The villagers do not regard it as a 'social evil,' but are so regarded only by the social activists, policy makers and those who are aware of the negative consequences of child marriage. Even economically well off families in the village rarely chose the alternative practice of later/legal marriage. Moreover, child marriage has always been supported by religious authorities by stating that 'Islam allows the marriage of girls when she attains pubescence.' Anthropologically, such marriages are a part of a cultural tradition that treats women as a subordinate class and asks her to live

under the control of men. These values were internalized not only by men but also by women through the process of socialization and through the educational system and their household environment which are both patriarchal. In these villages, girls, in general, are married earlier, but from Muslim girls, there is an added expectation of early marriage, in which girls cannot have any voice in the decision-making process, especially when they want to get married. Here the agency that girls exercise, especially in the marriage and decision-making process, is thin and vulnerable.

The primary reason for the prevalence of child marriage is the patriarchal system. It is clearly echoed in the higher education of women and their representation in workforces. In both these indexes, Malappuram lags behind all other states, as shown in the second chapter. Also, their number in the government sector in below one percent, which is the lowest compared to other districts. Many of the household heads said that women need not work, and their primary duty is to watch over the child and home affairs. Some even stated that 'it is a shame to run a family with the money earned by women.'

In the field, many ulamas argue that early marriage helps to maintain religious endogamy. In their speeches, they point out that delay in marriage of girls may result in the elopement of girls with boys from other communities. Such notions also strengthen the view that child marriage is better for religious cohesion. Child marriage is also prevalent because men want to dominate over the women. It is widespread in societies that are strongly patriarchal, and men control the economic, political and cultural activities prevalent in such societies.

Table: 5.8. Reasons for Child Marriage: Field Response

Rank	Reason for Child Marriage	Percentage of Responses (Total number of Participants)			
		Mother (71)	Father (48)	Daughter (76)	Total (195)
1	Fear of exorbitant dowry later	89.05	96	78	87.68
2	Fear of not getting a 'suitable groom' later	85.05	80	85	83.35
3	Societal or Family pressure	70	85.05	90.9	81.98
4	Lack of higher educational opportunities	70.05	84.06	87.09	80.4
5	Lack of awareness	78	60	95	77.67
6	Poor enactment of the law	70	60	85.5	71.83
7	Marriage should happen as early as possible	90.05	95	30	71.68
8	Physical appearance or 'size' of the daughter	70	68	60.05	66.02
9	Neighbourhood Impact	60	60.6	25`	40.20
10	Religious pressure	50	40.8	10	33.60
11	Poverty	20.08	15	12.08	15.72
12	Fear of elopement	15.05	20	0	11.68

Source: Based on authors fieldwork

Note: Based on Focused Group Discussion Findings. Every individual in each section was asked to rate the reasons under four categories, (1) below 25 percent, (2) between 25-50 percent, (3) between 50-75 percent, (4) above 75 per cent. The average is given in the last column titled 'total.' The methord of coding and catagorisation was influeced by Biswajit Ghosh study (2011) of Child marriage in the Malda Ditrsict of West Bengal.

Based on responses from various households, Table 5.8 lists 12 reasons for the continuation of child marriage. In South Malabar, unlike many other regions of India, poverty is not cited as the main reason for child marriage. Only 15.72 percent of the respondents consider poverty as one of the reasons for child marriage. Contrary to this, Ghosh's work on the Malda district of West Bengal revealed that nearly 90 percent of the people consider poverty as the main reason for the continuation of child marriage in the Malda region (Ghosh 2011). However, in the same study, 67 percent of the population

consider exorbitant dowry as another reason for child marriage. In this study, 88 percent of the respondents hold exorbitant dowry as one of the most important grounds for child marriage. Among the twelve reasons, exorbitant dowry is considered as the main reason for the continuation of child marriage; followed by fear of not getting a 'suitable groom' later and societal or family pressure. Based on the field stories, narrations and interviews with various 'victims' of child marriage, parents teachers and ulamas the five principal reasons that contribute to the resilience and stability of the tradition of child marriage of girls in South Malabar are discussed below.

5.3.1 Structural Inequality and Thin Agency of Girls

In many regions of South Malabar, for girls, adolescence is not a time for study, or to plan a career and economic independence, or a time for leisure and sports activities, but it is a time to get married or at least it is a preparatory time for marriage. Such a structured gender inequality which favours boys over girls, in the form of restrictions on girls' mobility, their exclusion from public spheres and other forms of discriminations against girls has placed Malappuram on the top of the list of districts with the most number of child marriages. The field responses in the present study suggest that less decision making power and thin agency make girls more vulnerable to child marriage.

'Thin agency,' following Klocker, refers to decisions and actions that are taken in highly restrictive contexts, characterized by few visible alternatives, and is opposed to 'thick agency,' which refers to actions and decisions taken with less restriction and within a broader range of options (Klocker 2007: 85). Thin agency of girls, which never denies the complete agency of girls, directly and negatively influences women's higher education. Nearly half the girls in the field, who were married off before 18 years, said that they are not happy with the family's decision and they were forced to stop education because of marriage. In the decision-making process, girls hardly get a chance to express their views. This does not necessarily imply that the girls are forced to marry men they do not like but that the decision of when to get married is completely under the control of the parents. Girls carry out their families' orders even if they do not want to. Consent of girls on the subject of when to marry is out of the question, and the decision making is completely in the hands of the kinsmen. Boys in the region, however, have thick agency compared to girls. They

223

enjoy a lot more freedom and power in decision-making processes. The fear of bringing shame and dishonour to families is more severely associated with girls' actions than those of boys. A good case in point is for example pregnancy outside marriage. Everyone in the region believes that pregnancy out of wedlock is sacrilege and that it causes great embarrassment and humiliation to families. Such a worry is widespread in one village where a girl got pregnant outside marriage when she was studying in the ninth standard.

The present author had interactions with five girls in her school. All of them said that their parents were worried after the incident and constantly talked about that issue and that there were strict rules regarding when to come home, how and with whom to go to school, whom to meet etc. Such incidents not only create fear in the minds of parents and forces them to marry off their daughters as soon as possible, but also create similar fears in the minds of teachers due to which they hardly respond to the incidents of child marriage, using such incidents to justify the need to marry off girls when they are very young. Even though such incidents are rare and isolated, their repercussions are long lasting. Nabeela, a 10th standard married girl, shared her story:

> When I told my parents, that I want to continue my studies, my father said I could study even after my marriage. He was narrating past incidents of elopement cases that had taken place around our village. He kept saying he was worried about my future.

Such parental talks make it clear that it is not the girl who takes a decision on her marriage but the parents. In South Malabar, parents do not consider girls as an economic burden, but many are worried about family honour and the shame unmarried girls could cause if they get into any trouble. Such an 'honour burden' is clearly evident during conversations with the parents, and thus their preference for early marriage.

Unlike the girls, boys are not forced to marry before the legal age of 21, and the number of dropouts in their case is less compared to that of girls. However, it does not mean that the educational level of boys is better than that of the girls in the region. Most of the boys either choose to work in the village or go abroad in search of work after their secondary school education. Since 2010, however, the number of males going abroad has decreased drastically in South Malabar. Most of the boys in the area get married between the ages of 24-30 years. There tend to be huge age differences between the new bride and

the bridegroom. The idea that women should marry older men, or at least avoid men, who are younger than themselves, has been very persistent in different societies, including South Malabar. The people in South Malabar have been following the same idea, and they believe the older man-younger woman pattern to be an essential characteristic of marriage. In the case of the total women married in 160 households, the average age of their husbands was 27.5 years. However, the mean marital age of girls was 16.3 years. On an average, there was an age gap of 11.2 years between the husband and wife. In future, this large age gap could lead to the problem of 'early widowhood' for women. It has also been noted that "age difference between the spouses has got an inverse relationship with inter-spouse communication i.e. as the age difference between the spouse's increases, communication for family planning among spouses decreases" (Das et al. 2011: 30). Such a lack of communication in the family decreases the use of contraceptives and causes higher fertility rates.

Most of the boys who were interviewed for this study stated their preference to marry younger girls. The demand for school-going girls is very high, and it has been one of the main reasons for the prevalence of child marriage in the region. Boys, on being asked, cited various reasons for such a desire. In general, it is the patriarchal notion of marriage which proposes that women should always stay subordinate to men and protect the interests of men. Most of the boys said that they do not have much preference for the educational interests/achievements of the girls; rather importance was given to the beauty of the woman, her wealth, and her family status. According to many, 'girls' beauty fades away once they get older and following their pregnancy, so many preferred to marry younger women so as to see them beautiful for more years.' To conclude, the thin agency of girls compared to boys in the region and patriarchal norms and values are the main reasons for the prevalence of child marriage in the region.

5.3.2 Fear of exorbitant dowry

As elsewhere in India (Srinivasan and Lee 2004, Banerjee 2013), the forms of dowry or bride price have changed over time, but the practice still continues, and its relevance is not lost among the Muslims of South Malabar. Kerala's dowry rates are escalating out of control and women consider it as one of the most significant problems

they face in life. Dowry, one of the patriarchal tools to oppress women, is considered a primary factor that promotes child marriages. This field view is exactly opposite to what Anthropologist Alice Schlegel (1993) proposed. She argued that "dowry has the effect of delaying marriage" (Schlegel 1993: 155), which further elaborates as "with poorer families postponing the marriage of their daughter until they are able to secure the amount for the dowry payment" (Srinivasan et al. 2015: 16). However, in the field, the amount of dowry increasing with the increase of girls age. Therefore, parents try to marry off their daughters early as possible, therefore, instead of delaying, dowry accelerates marriage.

In particular, the fear of parents regarding the exorbitant dowry they will have to give the groom's family when their daughter crosses the 'acceptable age' for marriage in the region prompts them to go for child marriage. Bridewealth and dowry, former case the woman was paid for and the later paid off (Goody 1973: 46), work in different ways in different cultures in connection with child marriage. For instance, in South Sudan, the high bride wealth the families can get for marrying their daughters off when they are younger is the important reason for child marriage. In such cases, the 'exchange of girls' happens early in a girl's life because her family gets cash, cattle, land, and other material benefits.

However, the situation is just the opposite here. Here the woman or her family pays cash, gold, car, etc. to the bridegroom and/or his family during, after, or before the marriage. In order to reduce the burden of paying such an exorbitant dowry, parents prefer to marry off their daughters early as possible. Dowry, as noted by Goody, part and parcel of family or conjugal fund from the parents to daughter (Goody 1973: 17) is used by the groom to build the house, to the expand his business or even for the expenses of his marriage and any other various purposes. During my interaction with the girl participants in this study, what was clearly evident was that the dowry given to the bride at the time of marriage remains entirely under the control of the men, not under the jurisdiction of the women after marriage. Some said that, before taking the dowry amount, mainly gold and cash, the husbands ask the permission of girl's parents. Almost all of the married women in the field admitted that their parents paid either gold or money or both as dowry at the time of their marriage.

In the field, it has been noted that rate of dowry demanded increases when a woman gets married after she is 25 and above. If the family fails to pay the dowry demanded by the bridegroom and his family, her chances of getting a 'decent' or 'suitable' husband are very less. In the Malabari households in this study, there are five women who married at the age of 30 or 35 due to the dowry problem[50]. These women are not just from poor families, but they are perceived not to have the 'desired beauty,' which prevented their early marriage. They waited for a long time compared to other women in the locality and eventually were married off to either a widower or to those who were looking to marry a second or third time. Their families paid a comparatively higher amount of dowry to marry off these 'older' daughters. Parents' fear of not getting an 'appropriate husband' after the daughter turns 20 and their fear of increasing dowry after the 'preferred age' was one of the main reasons for the community favoring child marriage.

In FGDs, the most often used phrase is "when the age increases, the amount to pay as stridhanam increases" (*vayasukoodum thorum kodukkanulla sthridhanavum koodum*). Fathers are more worried about dowry than most other family members as the entire family is financially dependent on a husband or the male members. As noted by sociologists, dowry societies feature high levels of female dependency on husband's economic and low level of women in the workforce. As seen in South Malabar, women hardly take a job outside their house, and most of them are economically dependent on husbands. So the husband or father of the daughter has more say on marriage-related issues, and they want to marry off their children early as possible. Therefore, it appears that, in the field, fathers marry off their daughters early in order to reduce the economic pressure on families, Among the many reasons, exorbitant dowry rates demanded after daughters cross the 'preferred age' of marriage was rated 80 percent by parents when asked about the reasons for child marriage.

Referring to Huq and Amin's work on dowry in Bangladesh, Mathur, Greene and Malhotra argue that "dowry increases in tandem with age at marriage", placing pressure on parents to marry their daughters early. They further say that "This may be especially true

---

[50] I have not included such cases in the list of legally married families. I kept aside these cases because in all such marriages, the husband was either a widower or one who is performing his second or third marriage.

227

if the family or the bride suffers from other disadvantages in the marriage market (such as the lower social status of her family or darker skin tone)" (Mathur, Greene and Malhotra 2003: 5-6). Similar responses were received during my field work in South Malabar. Not surprisingly, many in the field said that dark skin coupled with poverty is one of the main 'disadvantages' for a prospective bride in the marriage market. The worry of poor parents forces them to think about their daughters' marriage from the time they attain puberty. They are not worried about the legal consequences because no one in the locality has ever been booked under the child marriage law and most of them are not aware that such a law exists. Moreover, the available government data shows that only 13 cases were reported, 8 cases charge sheeted, and only one case convicted under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 in Kerala[51]. This clearly shows that even though there are a number of child marriages occurring, hardly anyone gets punished. Sulaiman, the father of three daughters, all of whom were married before they were eighteen, said that:

> I never knew that marrying my daughters before they reach eighteen was a punishable offense. Only when this problem started after the 2013 circular, I came to know about that. If the government is that concerned about age, let them find a suitable husband for my daughters. If they stay unmarried, I have to answer the questions asked by relatives and society, not the government.

A person who worked hard to pay the dowry for his daughter's marriage finds it difficult to wait for long (three to four years) to marry off daughters. For Sulaiman and many others like him in the field, the long wait invites potential danger, a risk of not getting a suitable husband, a danger of daughters staying at home unmarried and unwanted, a threat to family's honour and a danger of continued questioning by relatives and neighbours. It is clear that dowry acts as a catalyst for child marriage but is hardly recognised as such by the policy makers and academicians.

5.3.3 Number of girl children in the family

The number of girl children in a family has an important bearing on their schooling and their age at marriage. There is a negative association between sibship size and child marriage. If the number of girl children is higher in the families, there is a huge pressure on the eldest sibling to get married 'on time.' If she is not married off 'on time', it will

---

[51] Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (ON1181)

affect the marriage of other girls in the family. It shows that a child's place within the sibship structure may determine when she should get married. Many girls in these villages face such a 'first sibling pressure.' In addition, parents are not aware of the adverse consequences of the child marriage mainly because there have never been discussions and debates within the family or locality on child marriage. Lack of awareness of the negative consequences of child marriage combined with pressure over the number of the girl children in the family forces many parents to get their elder daughters married early.

The story of Mubeena from the Barber caste is worth mentioning here. She has three younger sisters and an older brother. She had secured very good marks in the school level exam but was married off immediately after her tenth standard. When her parents asked for her consent, she had said no to the alliance as the only thing she wanted to do at that time was to pursue her studies. In addition to this, she added that her extended family constantly annoyed her with the question "when are you getting married?" They added to the already existing pressure by 'advising' her that she was spoiling the life of her sisters by not getting married in time. Such a situation forced her to marry early and leave aside her education. Mubeena's father said:

> I am afraid for my girls; even if they do not get a job, I will not have any problem at all. But I am afraid that because of their studies, they may not get a suitable husband. If they want, they can study after their marriage. But marrying them off on time is the most important concern for me.

Mubeena's father echoes the general mentality of most of the parents in the region. They value their daughters' marriage over education and from the local perspective the perception is that they made the best decisions for their daughters. Thus, as far as higher education is concerned, the girls who hail from small families appear to have a clear edge over those who hail from larger families. Mubeena further said that "I wanted to study, but my relatives and parents said that if I continue my studies and won't get married early, my sisters will suffer. I would have never thought of marriage if there wasn't this kind of pressure". Mubeena found it difficult to study after marriage; she was pregnant within a year of marriage and could not complete her higher secondary education. Field stories confirm that higher the number of girls in the family, higher the chances for an early marriage for the first child.

5.3.4 Religious Norms and Values

When the circular of 2013 was published, it received wide acceptance from the Muslim faith-based organizations. They had defended the circular by citing various reasons including that "it protects the interests of Muslims", "Islam does not prescribe an age for marriage" and "early marriage will protect girls from having a premarital sex life". The Muslim ulamas unanimously accepted it and mobilized public support. During this time, a programme was organized by the SKSSF in Malappuram to discuss the whereabouts of Law, and they had invited various religious sectarian groups and political parties[52]. They openly challenged the leaders of other organizations who had criticized the circular, especially the A.P Sunnis. The leaders of SKSSF had said that, if needed, they would go to the Supreme Court to reduce the marital age of Muslim women. The head of the organization, Sathar Pandaloor, said:

> During the time of Shabanu case, we united, and it is time to show our unity again. We are not going to accept the law that questions the Sharia Law, and we will ask the honorable Supreme Court to consider the issue, and we will send the best lawyer possible to defend our Sharia rights.

Those who were in the hall were applauding his decisions, and after the programme, many had the confidence that 'no one will be arrested or questioned under the Child Marriage Law.' They were also under the impression that all the child marriages that happened before and after 2013 circular would get legal recognition. The participants of the programme were all males, and without involving women in the discussion, they arrived at the conclusion that it would not create any problem for girls, in terms of their education, social and economic life.

The issue of marriage certificates by *mahalu* authorities without checking the age of girls is common in South Malabar but hardly practiced in the Southern regions of Kerala,

---

[52] The author had the opportunity to attend one of the 'open forums' organised by SKSSF on October 2nd, 3 PM at the Municipal Bus stand Auditorium in Malappuram. Though the organisers announced that Syed Sadiqali Shihab Thangal would inaugurate the programme, he did not come. The state president of the organisation Abbasali Shihab Thangal, also stayed away from the programme saying later that he could not attend 'due to some unavoidable circumstances'. Most of those who spoke argued against imposing the rule and further argued that such a law is a threat to Sharia Law of Muslims. Hamid Ali Shihab Thangal was the chairman of the committee that was constituted by SKSSF to promote the event, which had 13 male members, and not a single female member. Similarly, not a single woman spoke at the event that was attended by nearly 500 men.

where any age proof is a mandatory requirement in order to issue marriage certificates. In South Malabar, after the 2013 circular, instead of discouraging child marriages, the *mahalu* committees and locals have adopted new strategies that circumvent the law. One such strategy is that the parents of the girl child secretly hold the *nikah* of girls and marry them off before they reach the legal age, and *mahalu* committee issues certificates for such marriages after two or three years, usually, after the girl attains the legal age. Until that time the newly married couple does not apply for the government marriage certificate, they officially register their marriages only after they get the *mahalu* certificate. Such incidents are increasingly common after the 2013 Circular was published.

One of the field respondents said that when girls commit any mistakes in her madrasa, the teacher scolds her by saying "*ketti pokkendaval annu*" (you have to be married off to another family which is meant to imply 'learn to obey!'). She also said that "instead of encouraging our studies, what we get are lessons on how to be a good wife, how to build a nice family, and the need to get married as early as possible." During the fieldwork for this study, the author observed that the ulamas in the field had hardly taken any steps that encourage active female participation and achievement in higher education. They talk about the negativity of college education, the problem of elopement, the problem of boy-girl mingling and the problems of staying away from home and safety issues related to travelling away from home. Most of them were not educated in college and come from families that hardly take any interest in educating girls. It is not surprising then that such a religious leadership asks women not to study but to get married early and look after the family. The religious dimension of child marriage in South Malabar is evident from the ulamas' support and encouragement for child marriage which is another major factor for the persistence of child marriage in the region.

5.3.5 Poor economic condition and lack of social capital in the families

Poverty is cited as the main reason for child marriage in many UN reports and previous studies (Mathur, Greene, and Malhotra 2003, Nguyen and Wodon 2015). However, responses from the field show that child marriage not only happens in poor families but also in economically well-off families. Even the rich and affluent families here marry off their daughters in their childhood. Why does such a practice take place in rich

families? One reason could be the lack of exposure to other ways of life and lack of networks in the households. In many such families, the father of the girl child works abroad. Even when the father comes home, he stays for a maximum period of six months. During this period, he rarely participates in the academic activities of the child or attends the parent-teacher meetings. 'Gulf fathers' hardly get time to spend with their families, and they lack regular social networks. Their untimely visits and lack of opportunities to engage continuously with their children's education at times cause lack of confidence and backwardness in education in children.

One of the respondents from the Fishermen community, Nawas, has three daughters. He has been working abroad for the last twenty years and said that whenever he came home for leave, the first question the family members and relatives ask is about his daughters' weddings. He added, "When each of my daughters completes the 10th standard, what we will discuss is not their future education plans but each of their weddings and the time of my next arrival to plan and organise the next wedding". This is the case for many fathers who live abroad.

Compared to the wealthy families, low-income families marry off their daughters earlier, and low-income families possess more bonding social capital than the bridging social capital in families. The weaker economic conditions and lack of education in the poor families decrease the social capital within the families, especially the bridging social capital. Such families' rarely get to know about the wider world that they live in and never get to know about the benefits of higher education. According to the social capital theory of Putnam, bonding social capital is considered to be a negative capital. It does not act as 'sociological mucilage binding different groups in the community to facilitate common action for the common interest' (Putnam 1995). On the other hand, bridging social capital acts as glue to bind different people and groups together for the common interest. Such a lack of bridging social capital and less information regarding educational opportunities forces the poorer families to think about only one alternative,- marrying off the daughters as early as possible. The majority of the religious leaders that they follow, instead of educating them on the problems of child marriage, support the tradition both actively as

palliyile qazi who presides over the *nikah* function[53], and passively by citing various 'benefits' of getting women married early in their speeches and writings. However, the 'benefits' of getting a suitable groom, protecting the honour of the family, etc. are gained at the expense of a greater cause – the higher education, health and future benefits like a job, status and better economic prosperity of the family, community, and region.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter discussed the present educational status of four castes. Three points should be noted here; Firstly, caste as an ascriptive characteristic negatively influences the education of so-called lower castes. There are differences in the attainment of higher education among the four caste groups; the Sayyids and Malabaris have surpassed the Fishermen and Barbers in higher education levels of both the present and parent generations. 12.77 percent of the Sayyids and 7.69 percent of the Malabaris in the field are graduates. However, the representation of the Barbers and the Fishermen in higher education is low, and they are the most excluded Muslim communities from higher education, with only 2.86 percent and 1.79 percent of the Barbers and Fishermen respectively having graduate degrees. The percentage of increase in higher education levels from parent generation (G1) to present generation (G2) is better among the Sayyids, Malabaris and Fishermen when compared to the Barbers where the increase is happening at a slower pace than the rest, with a meagre 0.33 percent points.

Secondly, the so-called low-status groups who follow their traditional occupations tend to have less representation in higher education because of their homophilous networks, and strong ties in workspace and family relations. Also, the Mujahids have better educational credentials compared to the Sunnis, and in all caste groups, Mujahids have more percentage of graduates compared to the Sunnis. These differences are a result of their differential possession of both social and economic capital in the families. Mujahids' early entry to modern education and better parental education helped them to outperform the Sunnis in educational attainment.

---

[53] For more see (Miller 2015: 150)

Lastly, gender, an ascriptive characteristic like caste, tends to be a significant predictor of educational attainment in South Malabar. Women in all caste groups perform poorly in higher education, and one of the most important reasons for this is the continuing prevalence of child marriage in the region. As I mentioned in the last chapter, the women in Barber and Fishermen communities have higher work participation ratio, though mainly in manual labour, and compared to other groups they lag in higher education.

One of the key findings of the ICRW project report titled Knot Ready (Basu et al. 2008: i), published in 2008, is that "Education continues to be the single most important predictor of age at marriage over time". However, the report notes that "keeping girls in school is a relatively untried programmatic intervention". In this chapter, I have also pointed out that from the ever-married population of Malappuram district, the child marriage ratio is only 3.94 percent among those who have a graduate degree and above educational level, but the ratio is 41.72 percent and 50.59 percent among the below metrics and illiterates respectively. The above discussion also shows that students who perform well in their studies are also victims of child marriage. Their parents lack the positive social capital that inspires them to send their daughters for higher studies. In South Malabar, the failure of family, community leaders, policy makers and politicians to keep their girl children in school and colleges is one of the primary factors responsible for its female educational backwardness. In this study, 60 percent of higher secondary dropouts said that early marriage and early pregnancy are the main reasons for the discontinuation of their studies.

Three years since the state government published a controversial circular regarding lowering the age to 16 for marriage registration among Muslims, the above discussion shows that child marriage continues to be the major reason for the educational backwardness of Muslim girls in Malabar and it is the primary reason for the dropout of women from schools and colleges. Child marriage, which happens mainly because of the thin agency of girls, patriarchal values, fear of exorbitant dowry, religious and cultural traditions, poor economic capital and the possession of negative social capital, not only creates health problems for women but also hinders the social and economic development of Muslims in South Malabar as a whole. Apart from adopting direct ways like forming

and implementing child marriage laws, it is equally imperative that awareness is created within the community regarding the negative consequences of child marriage on women and subsequently on the larger society. Furthermore, additional measures must be put in place to ensure that opportunities to pursue higher education are made available to women in regions of South Malabar.

Conclusion

This thesis examines the relationship between the possession of social capital and the educational development of four Muslim caste groups in South Malabar- the Fishermen, Barbers, Sayyids (Thangals) and Malabaris. Three taluks in South Malabar, Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnanni taluks of the erstwhile Malabar District and present day Malappuram district are the fieldwork sites for this study. This study has four main objectives: i) to understand the present educational status of the Muslims in South Malabar ii) to chronicle the experience and implications of caste as an unacknowledged but evident system of social stratification among the Muslims in the region iii) to evaluate the impact of the differential possession of social capital by the four caste groups and its relationship with their educational attainment and iv) to examine the effect of child marriage and early marriage on Muslim women's higher education in South Malabar.

The Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnanni taluks were selected for fieldwork for demographic, historical and social reasons, and also keeping in mind the objectives of this thesis. The three taluks selected, which are part of present day Malappuram district, are Muslim majority areas and Malappuram constitutes 32.56 percent of the total Muslim population in Kerala but has not yet attracted sufficient scholarly attention. Historically, these areas were described by the British as 'fanatic zones' due to their resistance to colonial rule, the colonial language, and the latter's system of 'modern' education and as a result, the natives of these areas have lagged behind other communities, especially with regard to educational progress. Caste, as one of the major systems of social stratification among the Muslims in this region, and its manifestations are unlike that of many other regions in Kerala and has rarely been the subject of empirical research in Indian sociology before. Lastly, the latest Census data shows that 36.1 percent of the female Muslims in Kerala have had child marriages and the majority of these women are from Malappuram district. All of these reasons made these areas the ideal locations to undertake the present study.

The present study adopts the micro-demographic community study approach (which combines both ethnography and survey methods). The basic unit of study is a household, and the sample constitutes members of households both from the present generation (G2) and parent generation (G1). For each of the four caste groups in South Malabar, household surveys were carried out in forty households, and except for the Fishermen community, all households were selected via a non-random snowball sampling method. Ethnographic data was collected from a total of one hundred and sixty households comprising a total of 1116 respondents. Apart from the primary data collected based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in South Malabar, secondary data in the form of the Census reports, NSSO data, etc. and speeches/ writings of religious leaders have also been used to supplement the findings from the qualitative data.

Summary of the findings

Data from the field narratives, conversations and group discussions show that the present educational status of Muslims in South Malabar is closely interrelated to their caste membership, parental education, parental occupation, strength or weakness of their social networks including their kinship bonds, degree and nature of affiliation to religious and to a lesser extent, political organisations.

The first chapter examines the previous literature related to the educational history and development, the social stratification of Kerala Muslims and some of the prominent theoretical views on social capital. It points out that even though Kerala Muslims, in general, are educationally in a far better position than their counterparts in other states, compared to other religious communities and compared to Muslims in South Kerala, Muslims in South Malabar are lagging behind drastically. Part of the reason for this was their anticolonial struggle and rejection of British education when it was first introduced, as it was seen as an attempt to exploit and exert control over their religious education. After a historical overview of the relationship between modern education and Malabar Muslims, the focus shifts to the main system of social stratification in South Malabar- Caste. The denial of the existence of caste as a system of social stratification among the Muslims of South Malabar and the reasons behind this denial are discussed. Since this thesis is interested in the relationship that the differential possession of social capital by various

Muslims communities in South Malabar have in their educational development, the last section of the first chapter deals with the prominent, but mainly Bourdieu and Coleman's, theoretical perspectives related to the concept of social capital and its relationship with education. From a Colemanian perspective, this thesis argues that education reproduces inequality in societies and social capital is a resource that if accessible to the families and communities, helps to reduce that inequality. Furthermore, I also argue throughout the thesis that in South Malabar, social capital is unequally distributed and differences in possession of social capital across caste groups are found to have a significant impact on the educational outcomes of the four caste groups.

The second chapter discusses in detail, on the basis of mainly statistical data, that although the Muslim communities in Kerala fare much better compared to their counterparts in other parts of the country in terms of literacy and primary education, they lag behind in higher education. Although Kerala Muslims enjoy top position in literacy with 93.29 percent and with 5.75 MYS among the Indian Muslims, when it comes to the percent of graduates, with 6.18 percent they are in the eight position among the list of twenty most populated Muslim states. *Within* the state, their higher education indices are abysmally low and serve as a paradox to an otherwise lauded Kerala Model.

When the total graduate percent of Kerala is 11.02 percent, the Muslim graduate percent is only 6.18 percent which raises a lot of important questions. The only Muslim majority district in the state, where the author did his ethnographic research, is the most backward district in Kerala in terms of higher education. The district stands at the bottom of the list in the percentage of graduates with 6.1 percent. Further, analysing the 2011 Census data, the author notes that, the state of Malappuram district in higher education is even worse than the BIMARU states, which in social science literature is considered as the most backward regions in India. How a district in the most developed state in India, Kerala, performs even worse than the BIMARU states has been discussed to some extent in this thesis, but a more comprehensive study is needed and will make an interesting topic for further research.

Almost five decades before, Jack Goody wrote that in Kerala, 'literacy is least advanced among Untouchables and Muslims; most advanced among Syrian Christians and

high-caste Hindus' (Goody 1968: 156). Nearly fifty years later, the statistics reveal that there is a minimal gap in the literacy of the former and latter groups, but the number of graduates is far fewer among the former groups compared to the latter. The second chapter points out that the Muslim women in Kerala are the most excluded group from higher education after the STs. Similar is the case with their workforce participation. Among the Muslims of Kerala, the least workforce participation is noticed among the Malappuram district Muslims with 22.0 percent. Also, the work force participation of Muslim women is only 4.1 percent. This chapter shed light on the fact that ascriptive identities such as gender play an important role in the education and workforce participation of Muslims. The ethnographic data collected in this study further confirms that the other ascriptive characteristics such as caste also play an important role in the educational development of Muslims in South Malabar. Interestingly, hardly any previous work has discussed caste among the Kerala Muslims. Therefore, the longest chapter of this thesis is dedicated to explaining the caste based social stratification among the Kerala Muslims.

Being a native of the area has been an advantage for the author in adopting an ethnographic approach to data collection in a society where the social and cultural systems are complex. Based on the qualitative data in this study and the limited previous research works, I have classified the Muslim castes groups into four categories, namely the Thangals, Malabaris, Barbers and Fishermen. One of the main claims in this study is the reference to the existing social hierarchy among South Malabar Muslims as 'caste'.

The author justifies using the term 'caste' in this thesis to refer to the vertical stratification evident in South Malabar based on Ambedkar's three chief characteristics of the caste system-endogamy, traditional occupation and birth-based status. Through various field narratives, the experience of caste among the four communities has been presented from the respondents' subjective perspective. The manifestations of these features in the respondents' lives have been examined in detail in the third and fourth chapters.

Above 90 percent of the Muslims belonging to all the four castes in the sample for the present study reported that they follow the practice of endogamous marriage. The Thangals enjoy the highest status among all the groups due to their claim of being the descendents of the Prophet, which is further cemented by interpretations of religious texts

by traditional ulamas that lend support to their reverential status amongst the Muslim community. The Thangal population believe that their blood is pure; according to kafa'ah rules, they do not marry off their daughters to 'lower caste' people although men receive wives from other castes. Though the Prophet's lineage started with his daughter Fathima, now the lineage is only passed through patrilineal descent. For the Thangals, educational achievements are an additional asset on top of the omnipotent status given to them at birth by the remaining Muslim groups and by the scriptures and religious texts.

Another important finding of the ethnographic research is that nearly 80 percent of Barber and 75 percent of Fishermen households still follow their traditional occupation. Various ethnographic stories discussed in the chapter show that the birth-based identity-the caste tag is hard to remove for a barber and fisherman even if they achieve class mobility through better jobs and economic capital. Though there is higher social mobility from the Barber community to Gulf countries, their occupation pattern continues in migrant countries. However, in the migrant countries, many of the Fishermen deviate from their traditional occupation.

Above 50 percent of the Thangals report that they follow traditional/religious healing practices, and that is their major source of income. However, most of them claim that they have a superior position among the Muslims and their status is something that cannot be denied irrespective of the occupation they are engaged in. According to many of my Mujahid respondents, such an 'ascribed status' cannot be validated using any of the Islamic texts and claiming ascribed status in Islam is a *bid'ah*, but Thangals and traditional ulamas argue that Allah has given them the power and prestige (*Allahu thanna/kodutha fazlu annu*), not any Mujahids, so no one can take it away from the Thangals. The third chapter further mentions how the religious homophily networks have caused the emerging 'sectarian homogamous marriage' trend among the Muslims, in which people prefer to get a spouse from one's own religious sects and religious fractions.

The Malabaris are the odd group among the four caste groups in that they are simultaneously in and out of the caste system in South Malabar. On the one hand, the field stories suggest that they enjoy a position in between that of the Thangals and the Barber, Fishermen communities. On the other hand, they are not characterised by one major

240

traditional occupation like the other groups. While no census data exists on the population of Muslim caste groups in Malabar, it is common knowledge that the Malabaris form the largest subgroup.

It has been suggested in this study that one of the main reasons that the prevalence of caste is so vehemently denied by most Muslims in the region is likely due to the fact that Malabaris comprise the largest subgroup in number and lack a traditional occupation, which implies that they have no experience of being discriminated against on the basis of a traditional occupation considered 'low grade'/ 'despicable'. The other main reason for the denial of caste amongst many Muslims in the region is the unwavering belief that Islam is an egalitarian religion that treats all its followers as equal. While this is true on paper, this study argues based on speeches by religious leaders and interviews with ulamas and the common people that the various religious texts are interpreted to promote and maintain the reverential status that Thangals enjoy, which also feeds into their possession of political, social and economic capital. Also, the same religious texts are interpreted to justify treating certain occupations like that of the Barbers and Fishermen as low grade.

In the fourth chapter, the differential possession of social capital by these four groups is also assessed via indicators like parental education, parental occupation, and membership in organisations/ associations. Based on Coleman's theoretical views (1988), parental education, parental occupation and family background are the most important indicators found to determine the educational attainment of present generation Muslim youth in South Malabar in this study. When most of the Barber and Fishermen follow their traditional occupation, their networks are mainly confined to 'strong ties' within their respective communities. Overall data show that in the parent generation (G1), only 23 people are working as government employees or salaried people, which is only 7.19 percent of the total parent generation, out of which the largest number are from the Malabari group, followed by the Thangals. There is no male member of the Barber community who works in the government sector, but one female work in an aided school. Ethnographic figures from South Malabar show that only below one percent of Barber and Fishermen Muslims are employed in the government sector.

Social capital has been found to play a significant role in obtaining entry into educational institutions. The provisional data of the 8th All India School Education Survey shows that only two states in India, Kerala and Meghalaya, have a higher number of private aided management schools than government schools. In Kerala, 52.38 percent of the schools are under the private aided management (See Appendix Table 4 and Table 5). In recruiting teachers and allotting seats for students, the management has the upper hand. In such a context, I have noticed that apart from having economic capital, social capital possessed by the people is important. I have discussed in the fourth chapter that if one has strong networks with the educational managements, mostly owned by religious organisations and associations, his/her chances of getting admission in educational institutions increases. The ethnographic data show that the Barber and Fishermen possess little social capital when it comes to mobilising educational resources. Hardly, anyone from these caste groups is on PTA committees, hardly have they had useful contact with managements, and their political bargaining capacity is weak compared to other caste groups, especially the Thangals.

The fifth chapter discusses the overall higher educational status of the four caste groups among the Muslims in South Malabar, in which the focus is mainly on the present generation (G2). The interactive role of caste, gender and sectarian identities in their educational status is examined. The data collected shows that the total percentage of graduates in the parent generation is 5.63 percent, out of which Thangals have a higher percent of graduates with 10.00 percent, followed by Malabaris with 8.75 percent. The two groups that lag behind the above two groups in the parent generation are the Barbers and the Fishermen communities with only 2.50 percent and 1.25 percent of graduates respectively.

It has been observed that the parental cultural capital, ulamas' interpretation of texts, and their teachings reproduce the values that allow the Thangals to convert their intangibles into tangibles such as political titles, custodianship of *mahals* and educational benefits. Further, the caste groups who follow traditional occupations through their 'homophile networks' and 'strong ties', reproduce the traits, knowledge, and skills that the future generation needs to carry out their traditional occupations efficiently. So their focus

on education, especially higher education is minimal. The minimal focus combined with a lack of exposure to higher education and daily interaction in families hardly encourages education, and they find it useless to spend money and time for higher education because it is not something that gives them quick and guaranteed earnings.

Apart from the caste, another ascriptive characteristic, gender is also found to be a significant determinant of how Muslims fare in educational development. Muslim women in South Malabar, who are triply disadvantaged, firstly as females, secondly as Muslims and thirdly as South Malabar women, face a systemic and institutional discrimination in the social and educational sphere, and they lag behind their male counterparts in all educational indices both in G1 and G2. It is no secret that many Muslim girls get married off in this region before the age of 18, and the mean marital age of girls is 16.3 years. The author's computation of data from the 2011 Census shows that 67.63 percent of total Muslim marriages in Kerala are before the age of twenty. However, the number of child marriages in South Malabar is higher, and the large majority of the women (84.21 percent) in the sample of the present study married before the age of 20 years. Contrary to the argument of most of the malestream religious scholars of Kerala, I have found that child and early marriages stop nearly 60 percent of women from completing their graduation. Even if they are enrolled in colleges after marriage, either because of increased household responsibilities of a new wife, early pregnancy and/or distance from husband's home to educational institution, most of them are forced to drop out of the course.

An interesting gender-caste interaction appears to play a role in determining educational progress based on the field responses in this study. Women in some caste groups like the Fishermen community (G2) perform better than their male counterparts till higher secondary education. Boys in these communities are forced/expected to go into the sea and assist their elder bread-winners by learning the tricks of the trade early on. Girls in this community, on the other hand, have little pressure on them to stop studying at least not until they enter adolescence. Also, contrary to what one might expect, women in the upper castes have lesser workforce participation, economic independence, and agency compared to the so called lower caste groups. While discussing their mobility, for instance going to the local market, hospital, visiting their relatives, attending weddings, most of the Barber

women (32 in the G1 category) say they take the decision and engage in these activities, even without their male counterparts. However, most of the Thangal females, *Thangala*, report that they hardly go out of home alone, and in most cases, they are accompanied by the men in the families. The author believes that the higher the caste status among the Muslims, the 'thinner agency' they have.

Limitations

The present author being a native of South Malabar is both a boon and could have possibly also been a bane to the work undertaken; a boon because it means an inside knowledge of the sub-cultures, the existing social set-up, forging connections with members of the different groups through friends and friends of friends and likely a bane because it is often easier to reveal truths to a stranger than it is to a friend/acquaintance/. Nevertheless, there has been no clear evidence to suggest that the author's close ties with the region has had any contradictory influences on the observations made. Also, a total stranger to the place and culture would have found it extremely difficult to find sufficient number of participants in each of the four groups and would likely have not been able to converse in the local dialect, which is definitely an advantage in forging connections with the respondents and thereby getting them to open up about their opinions and attitudes as well as sharing their social background and personal stories.

Directions for Future Research

To the best of the author's knowledge, this is one of the handful of research studies, if not the first, to be undertaken on the relationship between social capital possession and community educational development among Muslims in South Malabar, a region that stands as a paradox to the educational excellence boasted by the rest of the state. Future research could take up a comparative study of Muslims in South Malabar and those in other parts of Kerala with regard to the varying and interactive roles of caste and gender in their educational development. In addition, as mentioned above, exploring the nature of educational institutions in Kerala and why Kerala has more private aided management schools compared to other states offer immense scope for research. Another interesting topic for further research would be regarding the communalisation of educational

institutions. As the results of this study have shown, the role of religious and caste groups are tremendous in education, and the withdrawal of government funding and/or involvement from the education sector will create further problems like communalisation of classrooms and seclusion of certain groups based on their birth identities. The short-term and long-term impact of the increasing communalisation of education in the state requires urgent scholarly attention.

A comprehensive demographic survey of the caste groups among the Kerala Muslims would be a helpful source of information for future researchers and policy makers. For that to happen, the first step would be to acknowledge that caste exists among the Muslims. It is sincerely hoped that the data provided here, mainly in the form of ethnographic narratives, albeit a modest attempt, has shed some light on the reality of the caste experience for many Muslims in South Malabar and the implications of this for the differential attainment of education among the various Muslim sub-communities in the region.

References

Abdelhalim, Julten. 2016. *Indian Muslims and Citizenship: Spaces for Jihād in Everyday Life.* New Delhi: Routledge.

Abdelhalim, Julten. 2013. "ISO-certified pardahs and agency mechanisms among Muslim women in Kerala." *The South Asianist* 2 (2): 10–27.

Abraham, Jose. 2014. *Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modernity in India: Socio-Political and Religious Thoughts of Vakkom Moulavi.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2000. "Locating ethnography." *Ethnography* 1 (2): 261-267.

—. 1993. *Writing women's worlds: Bedouin stories.* California: University of California Press.

Adam, Frane, and Bourt Roncevic. 2003. "Social Capital: Recent Debates and Research Trends." *Social Science Information* 42 (2): 155-183.

Afsal, V.V. 2010. *The significance of fath Al-Mu'in in the social and religious life of Kerala muslims : an analytical study.* Unpublished M.Phil dissertation, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Aggarwal, Partap C. 1973. "The Meos of Rajasthan and Haryana." In *Caste and social stratification among the Muslims*, by Imtiaz Ahmad. Delhi: Manohar.

Ahmad, Imtiaz. 1973. *Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India.* New Delhi: Manohar.

—. 2015. "Is there Caste among the Muslims in India?" *Thirteenth D. N. Majumdar Memorial Lecture.* Lucknow: Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society-Lucknow University. 1-14.

Ahmad, Imtiaz. 1981. "Muslim Educational Backwardness: An Inferential Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 16 (36).

Ahmad, Malik Raihan. 2014. "Religion and Educational behaviour of Muslims in Rural India." *Man In India* 94 (1-2): 271-285.

Ahmad, Moulavi, and C.N Kareem. 1978. *Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Parambariyam (Malayalam).* Calicut.

Ahmad, Zarina. 1962. "Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh." *Econoomic and Political Weekly* 14 (7): 325-336.

Alam, Arshad. 2012. *Inside a Madrasa: Knowledge, Power and Islamic Identity in India.* New Delhi: Routledge.

Ali, Mohammed K.T. 1990. *The Development of Education among the Mappilas of Malabar 1800 to 1965.* NewDelhi: Nunes Publications.

Almanzar, Josephine Marie. 2016. "Hypogamy." In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Family Studies*, by Constance L. Shehan, 1087-1089. West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons.

Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 1979. *Annihilation of Caste.* Vol. 1, in *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar : Writings and Speeches*, by Vasant Moon, 23-96. Bombay: The Education Department Government of Maharashtra.

Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 1979[1916]. "Castes in India; Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development." In *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches Vol. 1*, by Vasant Moon, 3-22. New Delhi: Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra.

Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 1990 [1946]. "Pakistan or the Partition of India." In *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar : Writings and Speeches Vol. 8: Pakistan or the Partition of India*, by Vasant Moon. New Delhi: Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra.

Ansari, G. 1960. *Muslim caste in Uttar Pradesh; A Study of Culture Contact.* Lucknow: National Publishing House.

Ansari, M T. 2005. "Refiguring the Fanatic: Malabar 1836-1922." In *Muslims Dalits and Fabrications of History*, by S Mayaram, Pandian and Skaria. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.

Asad, Talal. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity.* California: Stanford University Press.

Ashraf, Ali. 2011. "Forward ." In *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice*, by Rosnani Hashim. Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press.

Ashraf, Ali. 2004. "Forward." In *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice*, by Hashim Rosnani. Kuala Lumpur: The Other Books.

Axinn, William G., and Lisa D. Pearce. 2006. *Mixed Method Data Collection Strategies.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Axinn, Willian G., and Arland Thornton Thomas E.Fricke. 1991. "The Microdemographic Community-Study Approach." *Sociological Methods & Research* 20 (2): 187 - 217.

Azhar, Uzma. 2012. "Issues in Education among the Muslims of Delhi." *Islam and Muslim Societies* 5 (1): 30-38.

Bakshi, Sanchita, Arunish Chawla, and Mihir Shah. 2015. "Regional Disparities in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 50 (1): 44-52.

Ball, Stephen J. 2003. *Class Strategies and the Education Market: The Middle Classes and Social Advantage.* London: ToutledgeFalmer.

Banerjee, Priya R. 2013. "Dowry in 21st-Century India: The Sociocultural Face of Exploitation." *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* 15 (1): 34 - 40.

Banu, Shareena. 2007. *Education and identity construction among muslims in Kerala: a study of select schools in Malappuram district.* PhD dissertation , New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Bappu, Kottumala T.M. 2013. "Shariathu Niyamam Penninu Rakshayannu: Interview with Salam Valanjeri (Malayalam)." *Sunni Afkar* 4 (7): 12-14.

Barcellos, Silvia Helena, Leandro S. Carvalho, and Adriana Lleras-Muney. 2014. "Child Gender and Parental Investments In India: Are Boys And Girls Treated Differently?" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 6 (1): 157–189.

Basheer, K. Mohammed. 2016. *Quality Enhancement in Madrasa Education: An Exploratory Study.* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Basheer, K.P.M. 2011. *Where Muslim League lets Muslim women down*. July 6. Accessed March 3, 2016. http://www.thehindu.com/2001/07/06/stories/0406211o.htm.

Basheer, KPM. 2015. *Sunday to be new Tuesday for hairstylists in Kerala.* February 25. Accessed April 12, 2016. http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/variety/sunday-to-be-new-tuesday-for-hairstylists-in-kerala/article6933704.ece.

Basu, Sharmishtha, Sreela Das Gupta, Sushmita Mukherjee, Rohini Pande, and Sampurna Singh. 2008. "Knot Ready: Lessons From India on Delaying Marriage for Girls." ICRW Project Report.

Bayly, Susan. 1989. *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Becker, Gary. 1964. *Human Capital.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Becker, Gary S. 1965. "A Theory of the Allocation of Time." *The Economic Journal* 75 (299): 493-517.

Becker, Gary S. 1993. *A Treatise on the Family.* London: Harvard University Press.

Bell, Daniel. 1972. "Meritocracy and equality." *The Public Interest* 29: 29-68.

Ben-Porath, Yoram. 1980. "The F-connection: Families, Friends, and Firms and the Organization of Exchange." *Population and Development Review* 6 (1): 1-30.

Beteille, Andre. 1965. *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Béteille, André. 2006. *Ideology and Social Science.* New Delhi: Penguin.

Beteille, Andre. 1969. *Social Inequality: Selected Readings.* Midlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.

Béteille, André. 2012. "The Peculiar Tenacity of Caste." *Economic and Political Weekly* 47 (13): 41-48.

Bhattacharya, R. K. 1973. "The concept and ideology of caste among the Muslims of rural West Bengal." In *Caste and social stratification among the Muslims*, by mtiaz Ahmad, 107-132. Delhi: Manohar.

Bhatty, Zarina. 1996. "Social stratification among Muslims in India." In *Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar*, by MN Srinivas, 244–62. New Delhi: Viking.

Bhatty, Zarina. 1976. "Status and Power in a Muslim Dominanted Village in U.P." In *Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India*, by Imtiaz Ahmad. Delhi: Manohar Press.

Bianchi, Suzanne, and John Robinson. 1997. "What Did You Do Today? Children's Use of Time, Family Composition, and the Acquisition of Social Capital." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 59 (2): 332-344.

Biernacki, Patrick, and Dan Waldorf. 1981. "Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling." *Sociological Methods and Research* 10 (2): 141 - 163.

Bose, N K. 1975. *The Structure of Hindu Society.* New Delhi: Orient Longman.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction." In *Power and Ideology in Education*, by A.H Hasley Jerome Karbel, 497. New york: Oxford University Press.

—. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste.* Translated by Richard Nice. Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, by John Richardson. New York: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1974. "The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities." In *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education* , by J Egglestone. London: Methuen.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean Claude Passeron. 1990. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture.* Sage Publications: London.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology.* University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Buchmann, Claudia, and Emily Hannum. 2001. "Education and Stratification in Developing Countries: A Review of Theories and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 77-102.

Burman, J. J. Roy. 1996. "Hindu-Muslim Syncretism in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 30 (2): 1211-1215.

Burt, Ronald. 2000. "The Network Structure of Social Capital." *Research In Organisational Behavior* 22: 345-423.

Centola, Damon. 2007. "Homophily, Cultural Drift, and the Co-Evolution of Cultural Groups." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51 (6): 905-930.

Chakraborty, Pinaki. 1999. "Intra-Regional Inequality and the Role of Public Policy: Lessons Learnt from Kerala." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44 (26 &27): 274-281.

Chakravarty, Sveta Davé. 2008. "Multicultural Education in India." In *Global Constructions of Multicultural Education: Theories and Realities*, by Carl A. Grant and Joy L. Lei. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Chandramohan, P. 2016. *Developmental Modernity in Kerala: Narayana Guru, S.n.d.p Yogam and Social Reform.* New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Chevalier, Arnaud, Colm Harmon, and Vincent O' Sullivan. 2013. "The Impact of Parental Income and Education on the Schooling of their Children." *Journal of Labor Economics* 2 (8).

Cleaver, Frances. 2005. "The inequality of social capital and the reproduction of chronic poverty." *World Development* 33 (6): 893-906.

Clifford, James. 1999. "After Writing Culture." *American Anthropologist* 101 (3): 643-645.

—. 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cohen, Elizabeth G. 1965. "Parental factors in Educational Mobility." *Sociology of Education* 38: 404-425.

Cohn, Bernard S. 1966. *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge: the British India.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Coleman, James S., and Thomas Hoffer. 1987. *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities.* New York: Basic Books.

—. 1987. *Public and private high schools: The impact of communities.* New York: Basic Books.

Coleman, James Samuel. 1972. "Coleman on Coleman Report." *Educational Researcher* 1 (3).

Coleman, James Samuel. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human capital." *American Journal of Sociology* (94) S95-S 120.

—. 1961. *The Adolescent Society.* Glencoe II: The Free Press.

Coleman, James Samuel. 1968. "The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity." *Harvard Educational Review* 38 (1): 7-22.

Coleman, James Samuel. 1975. "What is Meant by 'An Equal Educational Opportunity?" *Oxford Review of Education* 1 (1): 27-29.

Coleman, James Samuel, Campbell E. Q, Hobson C. J, McPartland F, Mood A. M, and Weinfeld F. D. 1966. *Equality of Educational Opportunity.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Crompton, Rosemary. 1993. *Class and Social Stratification.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Crossley, Nick, Elisa Bellotti, Gemma Edwards, Martin G Everett, and Johan Koskinen. 2015. *Social Network Analysis for Ego-Nets: Social Network Analysis for Actor-Centred Networks.* London: Sage Publications.

Dale, Stephen F., and M. Gangadhara Menon. 1978. "Nerccas: saint-martyr worship among the Muslims of Kerala." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 41 (3): 523-538.

Dale, Stephen. 1980. *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier: The Máppilas of Malabar, 1498-1922.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Dale, Stephen. 1997. "The Hadhrami diaspora in south-western India: the role of the Sayyids of the Malabar coast." In *Hadhrami traders, scholars and statesmen in the Indian Ocean*, by Ulrike Freitag and William G. ClarenceSmith, 175—184. Leiden: Brill.

Das, Gurcharan. 2002. *India Unbound From Independence to the Global Transformation Age.* New Delhi: Penguin Books India.

Das, K.C., Vandana Gautam, Kumudini, and P.K. Tripathy. 2011. "Influence of age gap between couples on contraception and fertility." *The Journal of Family Welfare* 57 (2): 30-38.

Davis-Kean, Pamela E. 2005. "The Influence of Parent Education and Family Income on Child Achievement: The Indirect Role of Parental Expectations and the Home Environment." *Journal of Family Psychology* 19 (2): 294-304.

DCH. 2011. *Databook for DCH.* New Delhi: Planning Commission, Goverment of India.

DCH. 2011. *DISTRICT CENSUS HANDBOOK Malappuram.* Kerala: Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala.

Delong-Bas, Natana J. 2004. *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Desai, I P. 1981. "Muslim Educational Backwardness." *Economic and Political Weekly* 16 (47): 1923-24.

Deshpande, Rajeshwari, and Suhas Palshikar. 2008. "Occupational Mobility: How Much Does caste Matter?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 43 (34): 61-70.

Dhanuraj, D. 1995. "Uneconomic schools of Kerala. Research Report." New Delhi: Centre for Public Policy Research.

Dreze, Jean, and Amartya Sen. 2004. "Gender Inequality and Women's Agency." In *Calss, Caste, Gender*, by Manoranjan Mohanty, 338-387. New Delhi: Sage Publication.

D'Souza, Victor S. 1959. "Social Organization and Marriage Customs of the Moplahs on the South West Coast of India." *Athropos* (54) 3-4: 487-516.

D'Souza, Victor S. 1973. "Status Groups among the Moplahs on the South-West coast of India." In *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims*, by Imtiaz Ahamad, 45-60. Delhi: Manohar.

Dufur, Mikaela J., Toby L. Parcelb, and Kelly P. Troutman. 2013. "Does capital at home matter more than capital at school? Social capital effects on academic achievement." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 31: 1-21.

Dumont, Louis. 1970. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications.* Translated by MSainsbury. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Durant, Will. 2007 [1930]. *The Case for India.* Strand Book Stall: Mumbai.

Durkheim, Émile. 1956. *Education and Sociology.* Translated by Sherwood D. Fox. New York: The Free Press.

Engineer, Asghar Ali. 2001. "Indian Muslims and Education." *Economic and Political Weekly* 36 (34).

—. 2007. *Islam in Contemporary World.* New Delhi: New Dawn Press.

—. 1995. *Kerala Muslims a Historical Perspective.* New Delhi: Ajanta Publications.

Fahimuddin. 2004. *Modernization of Muslim Education in India.* New Delhi: Adhyayan Publication.

Faisal, K.P. 2010. *Rites of Passage among the Muslims of Kerala: A sociological Study on Texts and Practices.* Unpublished PhD Thesis, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Fanselow, F.S. 1996. "The disinvention of caste among Tamil Muslims." In *Caste Today.*, by Fuller CJ, 202–26. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Faridi, FR, and Mahmood Mustafa Siddiqui. 1992. *The Social Structure of Indian Muslims.* New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies .

Farr, James. 2204. "Social Capital: A Conceptual History." *Political Theory* 32 (1): 6-33.

Fernandes, Leela. 2006. *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform.* Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press.

Field, John. 2003. *Social Capital.* London: Routledge.

Fitzpatrick, Coeli, and Adam Hani Walker. 2014. *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God.* California: ABC-CLIO.

Foucault, Michel. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the discourse of Language.* London: Pantheon.

Fuchs, Stephen. 1981. *At the Bottom of Indian Society: The Harijan and Other Low Castes.* Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays.* New York: Basic Books.

Gennep, Arnold van. 1960. *The Rites of Passage.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul .

Ghosh, Biswajit. 2011. "Early Marriage of Girls in Contemporary Bengal a Field View." *Social Change* 41 (1): 41 - 61.

Ghurey, G.S. 1961. *Caste, Class and Occupation* . Bombay : Popular Book Depot.

GKER. 2014. *Ecnomic Review.* Economic Review 2016, Thiruvanthapuram: Kerala State Planning Board.

GKER. 2016. *Economic Review* . Economic Review 2016, Thiruvanthapuram : Kerala State Planning Board.

Glewwe, Paul. 2000. "Household Roster." In *Designing household survey questionnaires for developing countries: Lessons from 15 years of the Living Standards*

Development Study, by Margaret Grosh and Paul Glewwe, 135-142. Washington, DC: Oxford University Press (for the World Bank).

Goody, Jack. 1973. "Bridewealth and dowry in Africa and Eurasia." In *Bridewealth and dowry*, by Jack Goody and Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, 1-58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—. 1968. *Literacy in Traditional Societies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gough, Kathleen. 1959. "Criteria of Caste Ranking in South India." *Man in India* 39: 115-26.

Gough, Kathleen. 1968. "Literacy in Kerala." In *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, by Jack Goody, 132-160. London: Cambridge University Press.

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (6): 1360–80.

Gude, Mary Louise. 1996. *Louis Massignon: The Crucible of Compassion.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Guha, Ranajith. 1982. " On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India ." In *Writings on South Asian History & Society*, by Ranajith Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Gupta, Monica Das. 1987. "Selective Discrimination against Female Children in Rural Punjab, India." *Population and Development Review* 13 (1): 77-100.

Guru, Gopal. 2002. "How Egalitarian Are the Social Sciences in India?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (50): 5003-09.

—. 2009. *Humiliation : Claims and Context.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Habib, Irfan, Iqtidar Alam Khan, and K. P. Singh. 1976. "Problems of the Muslim Minority in India." *Social Scientist* 4 (11): 67-72.

Hamza, C. 2013. "Padanam Mudakkunnidathannu Niyamam Avashyam." *Sunni Afkar* 4 (7): 15-18.

Handcock, Mark S., and Krista J. Gile. 2011. "Comment: On the Concept of Snowball Sampling." *Sociological Methodology* 41 (1): 367 - 371.

Hanifan, Lyda J. 1916. "The Rural School Community Center." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (67) 130-38.

Hardgrave, Rober L. 1964. "Caste in Kerala: a Preface to the Elections." *Economic and Political Weekly* 1841-48.

Hardgrave, Robert L. 1977. "The Mappilla Rebellion, 1921: Peasant Revolt in Malabar." *Modern Asian Studies* 11 (1): 57-99.

Hardy, Peter. 1972. *The Muslims of British India.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Harinath, Silveru. 2013. *Dalit Women and Dropout Rates in Collegiate Education: A Study of the Warangal District of Andhra Pradesh.* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Harman, S. 1977. *Plight of Muslims in India.* Delhi: DL Publications.

Hasan, A, and J C Das. 2005. *People of India Uttar Pradesh.* Vol. XLII . New Delhi: Manohar Publications.

Hasan, Zoya, and Ritu Menon. 2005a. *Educating Muslim Girls: A Comparison of Five Cities.* New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Hasan, Zoya, and Ritu Menon. 2005. "Reviewing Muslim Women and Marriage: A Preliminary Analysis of Survey Finding." In *Women of India: Colonial and Post-colonial Periods*, by Bharati Ray, 53-81. New Delhi: Sage.

Hashim, Rosnani. 2004. *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice.* Kuala Lumpur: The Other Books.

—. 1996. *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hasnain, Nadeem. 2005. "Muslims in India: Caste Affinity and Social Boundaries of Backwardness." In *The OBCs and the Ruling Classes in India*, by HS Verma, 85-97. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

257

HDR. 2005. *Human Development Report 2005.* UNDP Human Development Report, Thiruvananthapuram: State Planning Board, Government of Kerala. http://www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/human_develop_report_kerala_2005 _full_report.pdf.

Helliwell, John F., and Robert D. Putnam. 2007. "Education and Social Capital." *Eastern Economic Journal* 33 (1): 1-19.

Herpen, Van N. 1989. "Conceptual models in use for educational indicators." Paper Presented at the General Assembly of the INES in Semmering Sep. 1989.

Heyneman, Stephen P. 1976. "Influences on Academic Achievement: A Comparison of Results from Uganda and More Industrialized Societies." *Sociology of Education* 49 (3): 200-211.

Hirst, Jacqueline S., and John Zavos. 2011. *Religious Traditions in Modern South Asia.* New York: Routledge.

Ho, Engseng. 2006. *he Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hyman, H H. 1953. "The Value Systems of Different Classes." In *Class, Status and Power*, by R Bendix and S M Lipsett, 488-99,. New York: The Free Press and Macmillan.

Innes, C.A. 1908. *Malabar and Anjengo.* Madras.

ISCO-08. 2012. *International Standard Classification of Occupations: Structure, group definitions and correspondence tables.* International Labour Organization, Geneva: International Labour Office.

Iyengar, Radhika. 2001. *Social Capital as a Determinant of School Participation in Rural India: A Mixed Methods Study.* Unpublished PhD. Thesis, Columbia University .

Jacob, Suraj. 2014. "The Kerala Regime and Regional Disparities in Health Infrastructure Versus Outcomes." *India Review* 13 (1): 58-77.

Jadhav, Vishal. 2012. "Caste as Social capital: A case of citizenship and Maratha Rule in Maharashtra, India." In *Exclusion, Social Capital and Citizenship: Contested*

Transitions in South Africa and India, by Sujata Patel and Tina Uya. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Jaireth, Sushma, Shiraz.S, and Khadija Siddiqui. 2010. "A Study of Madrasas of Kerala: An Overview'." *NCERT.* http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dws/activities/past_proj/study_madrasas. pdf.

Jamous, R. 1996. "The Meos as a Rajput caste and a Muslim community." In *Caste Today*, by C. Fuller. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Jayappa, K.S, and Narayana. 2009. *Coastal Environments: Problems, Perspectives.* I K International Pvt. Ltd: Delhi.

Jeffrey, Robin. 2010. *Media and Modernity Communications, Women and State in India.* Delhi: Permanent Black.

—. 1992. *Politics, Women and Well-Being: How Kerala became 'a Model'.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jodhka, Surinder S. 2012. *Caste: Oxford India Short Introductions.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press India.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. 1994. "Assortative Mating by Cultural and Economic Occupational Status." *American Journal of Sociology* 100 (2): 422-452.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. 1998. "Intermarriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns, Trends." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 395-421.

Kanchana, Radhika. 2012. "Kozhikode (Calicut)'s Kuttichira: Exclusivity Maintained Proudly." In *Muslims in Indian Cities: Trajectories of Marginalisation*, by Laurent Gayer and Christopher Jaffrelot. New Delhi: HaperCollins.

Khan, Dominique-Sila. 2009. *Sacred Kerala: A Spiritual Pilgrimage.* New Delhi: Penguin India.

Khan, Dominique-Sila. 2013. "Vavar Swami: A Hindu–Muslim Saint of Kerala." In *Lines in Water: Religious Boundaries in South Asia*, by Eliza F. Kent and Tazim R Kassam, 78-98. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Khan, Quadir Husain. 1910. "South Indian Musalmans." Madras.

Klocker, N. 2007. "An example of 'thin' agency: child domestic workers in Tanzania." In *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: young rural lives*, by S. Punch Panelli and E. Robson, 83-94. New York: Routledge.

Kolenda, Pauline. 2003. *Caste, Marriage and Inequality Essays on North and South India.* New Delhi: Rawat Publication.

Kumar, Krishna. 1997. "Educational Inequality and Language." In *Inequality in Indian Education*, by R.P Sinha, 47-60. New Delhi: Vikas.

Kumar, Ratheesh. 2010. *Classrooms and Playgrounds: Mapping Educational Change, Kerala.* Newcastle: Cambride Scholars Publishing.

Kumar, Vivek. 2014. *Caste and Democracy in India: A perspective from Below.* New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

Kumar, Vivek. 2016. "How Egalitarian Is Indian Sociology?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 51 (28): 33-39.

Kumar, Vivek. 2014. "Inequality in India: Caste and Hindu Social Order." *Transcience* 5 (1): 36-52.

Kunjammu, A.P. 2013. "Muslim Penkuttikalkku Vendathu Puthiyoru Kannada (Malayalam)." *Tejas Fortnightly* 17 (20).

Kunju, A.P Ibrahim. 1989. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala.* Thiruvananthapuram: Sandhya Publications.

Kurup, Madusodana. 2009. "Coastal and Marine Fisheries resources of Kerala-Conservation and Sustainable Development." In *Coastal Environments: Problems and Perspectives*, by A.C Narayana K. S. Jayappa, 19-38. New Delhi: I. K. International Publishing House.

Lakshmi, L. R. S. 2012. *The Malabar Muslims: A Different Perspective.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Laude, Patrick. 2011. *Louis Massignon: The Vow and the Oath.* London: The Matheson Trust.

Lazarsfeld, P. F, and R. K Merton. 1954. "Friendship as a social process a substantive and methodological analysis." In *Freedom and Control in Modern Society*, by Morroe Berger, 18–66. New York: Van Nostrand.

Lehman, Jeffrey, and Shirelle Phelps. 2005. *West's encyclopedia of American law.* Detroit : Thomson/Gale.

Leni, V. 2006. *Regional Disparities in Human Development in Kerala.* Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Kottayam: Mahatma Gandhi University.

Lin, Nan. 1999. "Building a Network Theory of Social Capital." *Connections* 22 (1): 28-51.

Lin, Nan. 2000. "Inequality in Social Capital." *Contemporary Sociology* 29 (6): 785-795.

—. 2001. *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lindholm, Charles. 1986. "Caste in Islam and the Problem of Deviant Systems: A Critique of Recent Theory." *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 20 (1): 61 - 73.

Lindt, Benjamin. 2013. "Towards a Comprehensive Model of Caste." *Contribution to Indian Sociology* 47 (1).

Logan, William. 2009 [1887]. *Malabar Manual.* New Delhi: Asian Educational Services.

Lutz, Wolfgang, and Samir KC. 2010. "Dimensions of global population projections: what do we know about future population trends and structures?" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences* 365 (1554): 2779-2791.

Madan, T.N. 2001 [1976]. "The Social Construction of Cultural Identities in Rural Kashmir." In *Muslim Communities of South Asia*, by T.N Madan, 229-268. New Delhi: Manohar.

Madhani, Taslim. 2006. *North America.* Vol. 3, in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, by Suad Joseph, 71-72. Leiden: Brill.

Mahmood, Saba. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject.* Princeton University Press: New Jersey.

Makhdoom, Zainuddin. 2015. *Fath-ul Mueen.* Translated by Abdulla Fazi Kodasheri. Asrafi Book Centre: Thirurangadi.

Malinowski, Bronisław. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.* London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd.

Marsden, Magnus. 2005. *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mathew, E T. 1999. "Growth of literacy in Kerala: State Intervention, missionary initiatives and social movements." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34 (39): 2811-2820.

Mathew, George. 1989. *Communal Roads to Secular Kerala.* New Delhi: Concept Publication.

Mathur, P.R.G. 2011. "Social Stratification among the Muslims of Kerala." In *Frontiers of Embedded Muslim Communities*, by Vinod K Jairath. New Delhi: Routledge.

—. 1977. *The Mappila Fisherfolk of Kerala: A Study in Inter-relationship Between Habitat, Technology, Economy, Society, and Culture.* Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Historical Society.

Mathur, Sanyukta, Margaret Greene, and Anju Malhotra. 2003. *Too Young to Wed: the Lives, Rights and Health of Young Married Girls.* International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

McCleary, Rachel M., and Robert J. Barro. 2006. "Religion and Economy." *Journal of Economic Perspective* 20 (2): 49–72.

McLachlan, Rosalie, Geoff Gilfillan, and Jenny Gordon. 2013. *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia.* Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Melbourne: Media and Publications Productivity Commission.

McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M Cook. 2001. "Birds of Feather: Homophily in Social Networks." *Annual Reviews of Sociology* 27: 415–44.

Menon, Indu. 1981. *Status of Muslim women in India : a case study of Kerala.* New Delhi: Uppal.

Merton, Robert King. 1976. *Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays.* New York: The Free Press.

Miller, Roland E. 2015. *Mappila Muslim Culture: How a Historic Muslim Community in India Has Blended Tradition and Modernity.* New York: SUNY Press.

—. 1976. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: a study in Islamic Trends.* Madras: Orient Logman.

Mines, Mattison. 1972. "Muslim Social Stratification in India: The Basis for Variation." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 28 (4): 333-349.

Mobini-Kesheh, Natalie. 2004. *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies.* Ithaka: Southeast Asia Program Publications.

Mohamed, K.M. 1981. "Influence of Hinduism on Muslims in Kerela." *Journal of Kerela Studies* 8 (1-4): 111-118.

Mohammed, U. 1995. "Educational Problems of the Muslims Minority in Keral." In *Kerala Muslims a Historical Perspective,*, by Asghar Ali Engineer, 147-56. New Delhi: Ajanta Publications.

Mohammed, U. 2007. *Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims: A Socio-historical Perspective.* Other Books : Calicut.

Morimoto, Kazuo. 2012. *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet.* New York: Routledge.

263

Morrison, Arnold, and Donald McIntyre. 1971. *Schools and socialization.* Penguin books.

Muhammed, U. 2007. *Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims: a Socio-Historical Perspective .* Calicut: Other Books.

Mundupara, Musthafa. 2013. "Parishkarathinte Prayam Ethrayannu (Malayalam)." *Sunni Afkar* 4 (7).

Musthafal, M.P. 2013. "Thayidathe Mazyu Kandal Maram Bayakkilla (Malayalam)." *Sunni Afkar* 4 (7).

Muthukoyathangal Sayyid O.P.M. 2009. *Sayyid Vamsham Keralathil.* August 3. http://www.mathrubhumi.com/specials/politics/thangal/.

Mythili, N. 2002. "Community Pressure for Higher Quality of Education." *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (24): 2349-55.

Naha, Abdul Latheef. 2014. *Nitaqat is Malabar's new catchword.* January 11. Accessed March 11, 2016. http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/nitaqat-is-malabars-new-catchword/article5565101.ece.

Naqvi, Saeed. 2016. *Being the Other: The Muslim in India.* New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.

Nations, United. 1989. "Household income and expenditure surveys: A technical study." National Household Survey Capability Program, New York.

Nazeer, P. 2011. *History of Muslim Educational Institutions in Kerala during 20th Century.* Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Thiruvananthapuram: University of Kerala.

NCERT. 2007. *Schholing Fecilities in Rural Areas.* 7th All India School Education Survey Reports, New Delhi: NCERT.

Nguyen, Minh Cong, and Quentin Wodon. 2015. "Global and Regional Trends in Child Marriage." *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 6-11.

Nisar, M., and Meena Kandasamy. 2007. *Ayyankali: A Dalit Leader of Organic Protest.* Calicut: Other Books.

NSSO. 2014. *Education in India.* NSS 71st Round, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.

O'Brien, Margaret, and Deborah Jones. 1999. "Children, parental employment and educational attainment: an English case study ." *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 23 (5): 599-621.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. 1984. ""Native" Anthropologists." *American Ethnologist* 11 (3): 584-586.

Oommen, T K. 1999. "Social Structure and Social Change." In *Rethinking Development: Kerala's Development Experience*, by M.A Oommen, 111-117. New Delhi: Concept Publishing.

Osella, Caroline, and Filippo Osella. 2007. "Muslim Style in South India." *Fashion Theory* 11 (2-3): 233-252.

Osella, Filippo, and Caroline Osella. 2008. "Islamism and social reform in Kerala, South India." *Modern Asian Studies* 42 (2-3): 317-46.

Osella, Filippo, and Caroline Osella. 2013. "Islamism and Social Reform in Kerala, South India." In *Islamic Reform in South Asia*, by Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, 139-170. Cambride University Press: Delhi.

Osella, Filippo, and Caroline Osella. 2008. "Islamism and Social Reform in Kerala, South India." *Modern Asian Studies,* 42 (2): 317–346.

Panikkar, K.N. 1989. *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836–1921.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Pappu, Rekha, and Nirmali Gowsami. 2015. "The common Sense about Gender Issues in Education." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 22 (2).

Pasha, Kamal. 1995. "Muslim Religious Education." In *Kerala Muslims a Historical Perspective*, by Asghar Ali Engineer, 133-146. New Delhi: Ajanta Publications.

Peaker, Gilbert Fawcett. 1971. "Plowden Children Four Years Later." National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales.

Perna, Laura W, and Marvin A Titus. 2005. "The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment: An examination of racial/ethnic group Differences." *Journal of Higher Education* 76 (5): 485-518.

Philips, Emo. 2015. *The best God joke ever - and it's mine!* September 29. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/sep/29/comedy.religion.

Portes, Alejandro. 1998. "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 1-24.

Portes, Alejandro. 2000. "The Two Meanings of Social Capital." *Sociological Forum* 15 (1): 1-12.

Purewal, Navtej K. 2010. *Son Preference: Sex Selection, Gender and Culture in South Asia.* New York: Berg Publishers.

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6: 65-78.

—. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.* New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

Rajan, Irudaya S. 2005. "District level fertility estimates for Hindus and Muslims." *Economic and Political Weekly* 40 (5): 437-446.

Ram, Kalpana. 1992. *Mukkuvar Women; Gender, Hegemony and Capitalist transformation in a South Indian fishing Community.* New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Ramachandran, A. 1992. "Appraisal of Indira Avas Yojana-Experience from Kerala." In *Shelter for the Rural Poor*, by Joseph P. John and N. Sridharan, 117-125. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House.

Randathani, Hussain. 2007. *Mappila Muslims: A Study on Society and Anti-colonial Struggles.* Calicut: Other Books Publications.

Rao, M S A. 2005. "Caste and Joint Family: in Kerala." In *The Family in India: Structure and Practice*, by Tusli Patel, 126-131. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Rao, M.S.A. 1957. *Social Change in Malabar.* New Delhi: Popular Book Depot.

Razak, Abdul. 2007. *Colonialism and Community Formation in Malabar: a Study of Muslims of Malabar.* Unpublished PhD. Thesis, Calicut: University of Calicut.

Report, Census. 2011. *Population Enumeration Data (Final Population).* Census Report, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India. http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/population_enumeration.html.

Ringer, Fritz K. 1967. "Higher Education in Germany in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (3): 123-138.

Rogosic, Silvia, and Baranovic Branislava. 2016. "Social capital and educational achievements: Coleman vs. Bourdieu." *CEPS Journal: Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal* 6 (2): 81-100.

Rosenfeld, Michael J. 2008. "Racial, Educational and Religious Endogamy in the United States: A Comparative HistoricalPerspective." *Social Forces* 87 (1): 1-31.

Roy, Arundhati. 2017. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.* New Delhi: Hamish Hamilton.

Sachar, Rajindar. 2006. *Social, Economic and Educational status of the Muslims Community of India- A report.* Prime Ministers High Level Committee, New Delhi:: Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India.

Sagade, Jaya. 2005. *Child Marriage in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Saidalavi, P.C. 2017. "Muslim Social Organisation and Cultural Islamisation In Malabar." *South Asia Research* 37 (1): 19-36.

Salam, Faizi. 2013. "Kalyana Panthalil Ottapedunnavar (Malayalam)." *Sathyadhara Fortnightly* 3 (23).

Sancho, David. 2016. *Youth, Class and Education in Urban India: The Year that Can Break or Make You.* New York: Routledge.

Sangari, Kumkum. 2001. *Politics of the Possible: Essays on Gender, History, Narratives, Colonial English.* Anthem Press: London.

Sarkar, Jayanta. 1984. *Caste occupation and Change.* Delhi: B.R Publishing Corporation.

Scheerens, Jaap. 1990. "chool effectiveness research and the development of process indicators of school functioning." *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 1 (1): 61-80.

Scheerens, Jaap. 2001. "Measuring Educational Quality by Means of Indicators." *Perspectives on Educational Quality* (Springer Briefs in Education) 1: 35-50.

Scheerens, Jaap. 2001. "Measuring Educational Quality by Means of Indicators." *Perspectives on Educational Quality* 1 (1): 35-50.

Schlegel, Alice. 1993. "Dowry: Who Competes for What?" *American Anthropologist* 95 (1): 155-157.

Schmink, Marianne. 1984. "Household Economic Strategies: Review and Research Agenda." *Latin American Research Review* 19 (3): 87-101.

Shakir, Moin. 1974. *Muslim Attitudes: A Trend Report* . Aurangabad: Primal Prakashan.

Sharma, Ursula. 2002. *Caste.* New Delhi: Viva Books.

Shefi, A.E. 2008. *Islamic Education in Kerala with special reference to Madrasa Education.* Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Kalady: Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit.

Shoukath, Aryadan. 2013. "Muslim Penkuttilakkku Vendi Oru Abhyarthana (Malayalam)." *Mathrubhumi Illustrated Weekly* 91 (30).

Siddiqui, M K A. 1974. *Muslims of Calcutta: a study in aspects of their social organisation.* Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India.

Siddiqui, M.K.A. 2004. *Marginal Muslim communities in India.* New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies.

Sikand, Yoginder. 2009. " Muslim Education Society, Kerala: A Community Initiative For Educational Empowerment." *Countercurrents.org,*, March 17. http://www.countercurrents.org/sikand170309.htm.

Sikand, Yoginder. 2004. " Madrasa and Arabic Colleges in Contemporary Kerala." *TheMilli Gazette* 22 (8).

—. 2004. *Islam, Caste and Dalit-Muslim Relstions in India.* New Delhi: Global Media Publications.

Sikand, Yoginder. 2004. "Reforming the Indian Madrassas: Contemporary Muslim Voices." In *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, by S. P. Limaye, R. Wirsing and M. Malik, 117-143. Honolulu: Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies.

Sila, Muhammad Adlin. 2015 (1970). *Maudu': A Way of Union with God.* Australia: ANU Press.

Singh, Meenakshi. 2010. "Theory and Social Structure: Perspectives from a Village Study." In *Social Sciences: Communication, Anthropology, and Sociology*, by Yogendra Singh, 89-134. New Delhi: Longman.

Singh, Soran. 1976. "Occupational Mobility Among Scheduled Castes." *Indian Journal of Social Work* 37 (3): 267-273.

Singh, Susheela, and Renee Samara. 1996. "Early Marriage Among Women In Developing Countries." *International Family Planning Perspectives* 22: 148–157 & 175.

Smith, Marshall S. 1988. "Educational Indicators." *The Phi Delta Kappa* 69 (7): 487-491.

Sreekumar, T T. 1990. "Neither Rural Nor Urban-Spatial Formation and Development Process." *Economic and Political Weekly* 25 (35-36): 1981-1990.

Srinivas, M. N. 1965. "A note on Sanskritization and Westernization." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 15 (4): 481-496.

Srinivas, M. N. 1959. "The dominant caste in Rampura." *American anthropologist* 61 (1): 1-16.

Srinivas, M.N. 1996. *Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar.* New Delhi: Viking.

—. 1962. *Caste in Modern India and other Essay.* Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

—. 1955. *India's Villages.* Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

Srinivas, M.N. 1956. "Sanskritization and Westernization." *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15 (4): 481-496.

Srinivas, M.N. 1965. "The Social Structure." *The Gazatte of India* (Govt. of India) 1.

Srinivasan, Padma, and Gary R Lee. 2004. "The dowry system in Northern India: Women's attitudes and social change." 66 (5): 1108–1117.

Srinivasan, Padmavathi, Nizamuddin Khan, Ravi Verma, Dora Giusti, Joachim Theis, and Supriti Chakraborty. 2015. *District-level study on child marriage in India: What do we know about the prevalence, trends* . ICRW Report, New Delhi, India: International Center for Research on Women.

Sulfath, M. 2013. "Sulfath Anungalude Indiayile Pennungalude Kalyanam (Malayalam)." *Mathrubhumi Illustrated Weekly* 91 (35).

Sullivan, Alice. 2002. "Bourdieu and education: How useful is Bourdieu's theory for researchers?" *The Netherlands Journal of Social Sciences* 38 (2): 144-166.

Svendsen, Gert Tinggaard, and Gunnar Lind Haase Svendsen. 2009. *Handbook of Social Capital: The Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics.* Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Taslim, Madhani. 2006. "North America." In *Encyclopedia of women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health Vol.3*, by Afsaneh Najmabadi uad Joseph. Leiden: Brill.

Teachman, Jay D, Kathleen Paasch, and Karen Carver. 1996. "Social Capital and Dropping Out of School Early." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 58 (3): 773-783.

Thapar, Romila. 2017. *Religion based nationalism back full force.* March 29. https://sabrangindia.in/article/religion-based-nationalism-back-full-force-romila-thapar.

Thurston, Edgar. 1909a. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India (C-J).* Vol. II. VII vols. Madras: Government Press.

—. 1909b. *Castes And Tribes Of Southern India (K-M).* Vol. IV. VII vols. Madras: Goverment Press.

—. 1909c. *Castes And Tribes Of Southern India (M-P).* Vol. V. VII vols. Madras: Goverment Press.

Trivedi, Prashant K, Srinivas Goli, Fahimuddin, and Surinder Kumar. 2016. "Does Untouchability Exist among Muslims? Evidence from Uttar Pradesh." *Economic and Political Weekly* 51 (15): 32-36.

Turner, Bryan S. 2013. "Islam, Capitalism and Weber Theses." In *The Sociology of Islam: Collected Essays of Bryan S. Turner*, by Bryan S. Turner and Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, 23-36. Routledge : London.

UNDY. 2004. *National reporting of household characteristics, living arrangements and homeless households.* United Nations Demographic Yearbook Review, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/techreport/hhchar.pdf.

Vaid, Divya. 2014. "Caste in Contemporary India: Flexibility and Persistence." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40: 391-410.

Vaidyanathan, R. 2012. "India Growth: The Untold Story Caste as Social Capital." *India Behind the Lens (IBTL).* October 19. Accessed May 30, 2016. http://www.ibtl.in/column/1309/india-growth-the-untold-story-caste-as-social-capital/,.

Vijayabaskar, M, and Kalaiyarasan A. 2014. "Caste as Social Capital: The Tiruppur Story." *Ecnomic and Political Weekly* 49 (10): 34-38.

Vos, Rob. 1996. *Educational Indicators: What's To Be Measured?* INDES Working Papers Series 1-1, International Development Bank: Washington D.C.

Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and society : an outline of interpretive sociology.* Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press.

—. 1976. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Scribner's.

Wodon, Quentin, Chata Male, Adenike Onagoruwa, Aboudrahyme Savadogo, Ali Yedan, Jeff Edmeades, Aslihan Kes, et al. 2017. *Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: Global Synthesis Report.* ICRW Report: Conference Edition, Washington: ICRW.

Woolcock, Michael. 1998. "Social Capital and Economic Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis and Policy Framework." *Theory and Society* 27 (2): 151-208.

Woolcock, Michael, and Deepa Narayan. 2000. "Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research, and Policy." *The World bank Research Observer* 15 (2): 225-49.

Zachariah, K. C, E. T Mathew, and S.I Rajan. 2003. *Dynamics of Migration in Kerala: Dimensions, Differentials, and Consequences.* New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Zachariah, K. C., and S. Irudaya Rajan. 2015. "Dynamics of Emigration and Remittances in Kerala: Results from the Kerala Migration Survey 2014." Working Paper 463.

Zachariah, K.C. 2016. *Religious Denominations of Kerala.* Working Paper 468, Thiruvananthapuram: Centre For Development Studies. http://cds.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WP468.pdf.

Zachariah, K.C., E.T Mathew, and S. Irudaya Rajan. 2000. *Socio-Economic and demographic consequences of migration in Kerala.* Working Paper No. 303, Thiruvananthapuram: Centre for Development Studies.

Ziadeh, Farhat J. 1957. "Equality (Kafā'ah) in the Muslim Law of Marriage." *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 6 (4): 503-517.

Appendix

Table 1 Literacy Rate, Literacy Gap, and Change of Kerala and India 2001-2011

| | Year | Muslims | | | Gap (2)-(3) | Total | | | Gap (5)-(6) |
		Person (1)	Male (2)	Female (3)		Person (4)	Male (5)	Female (6)	
INDIA	2001 (a)	59.1	67.6	50.1	17.5	64.8	75.3	53.7	21.6
	2011(b)	68.5	74.7	62.0	12.7	73.0	80.9	64.6	16.3
	Change (b)-(a)	9.4	7.1	11.9		8.2	5.6	10.9	
KERALA	2001 (c)	89.4	93.7	85.5	8.2	90.9	94.2	87.7	6.5
	2011 (d)	93.3	95.9	91.1	4.8	94.0	96.1	92.1	4
	Change (d)-(c)	3.9	2.2	5.6		3.1	1.9	4.4	

Source: Author's computation based on Census Report of India 2011

Table 2 Ranking of Districts (Rural) by Percentage of graduates in Kerala (As per 2011 Census).

	Total Population	Total Graduates	%	Total Male	Male Graduates	%	Total Females	Female Graduates	%
KERALA	12.24	1.03	8.4	5.74	0.46	8.1	6.49	0.57	8.7
Kottayam	1.02	0.12	12.3	0.49	0.06	12	0.53	0.07	12.5
Ernakulam	0.76	0.09	11.5	0.37	0.04	10.7	0.39	0.05	12.3
Pathanamthitta	0.78	0.08	10.6	0.36	0.03	9.8	0.43	0.05	11.2
Kollam	1.03	0.1	9.8	0.47	0.04	8.7	0.56	0.06	10.7
Thiruvananthapuram	1.07	0.1	9.8	0.49	0.04	8.7	0.58	0.06	10.6
Thrissur	0.72	0.07	9.3	0.33	0.03	7.6	0.39	0.04	10.8
Alappuzha	0.71	0.06	9.1	0.33	0.03	8	0.38	0.04	10
Idukki	0.75	0.06	8.1	0.37	0.03	8	0.38	0.03	8.3
Kannur	0.62	0.05	7.9	0.29	0.02	7.9	0.33	0.03	8
Wayanad	0.53	0.04	6.7	0.26	0.02	6.8	0.28	0.02	6.6
Kasaragod	0.54	0.03	6.2	0.25	0.02	6.6	0.28	0.02	5.8
Palakkad	1.47	0.09	6.2	0.7	0.04	6	0.78	0.05	6.4
Malappuram	1.38	0.08	5.6	0.63	0.04	6.3	0.75	0.04	5
Kozhikode	0.69	0	0	0.32	0	0	0.37	0	0

Note: Total population and total graduates are in millions. Also data shown here is after excluding the population below 20 years old
Source: Author's calculation based on Census Report 2011

Table 3 Ranking of Districts (Urban) by Percentage of graduates in Kerala (As per 2011 Census).

	Total Population	Total Graduates	%	Total Male	Male Graduates	%	Total Females	Female Graduates	%
KERALA	11.24	1.5	13.4	5.22	0.67	12.8	6.01	0.83	13.8
Thiruvananthapuram	1.27	0.26	20.2	0.6	0.12	19.7	0.67	0.14	20.6
Idukki	0.04	0.01	19.6	0.02	0	19.5	0.02	0	19.7
Ernakulam	1.6	0.3	18.5	0.78	0.13	17.2	0.82	0.16	19.7
Pathanamthitta	0.1	0.02	18	0.04	0.01	17.9	0.05	0.01	18
Kottayam	0.4	0.07	16.9	0.19	0.03	16.7	0.21	0.04	17.2
Thrissur	1.47	0.2	13.8	0.67	0.08	12.1	0.8	0.12	15.3
Kollam	0.83	0.1	12.6	0.39	0.04	11.6	0.45	0.06	13.3
Wayanad	0.02	0.003	12	0.01	0.001	12.7	0.01	0.004	11.5
Palakkad	0.48	0.06	12	0.23	0.03	11.9	0.25	0.03	12.1
Alappuzha	0.83	0.1	11.9	0.38	0.04	10.9	0.44	0.06	12.8
Kannur	1.15	0.13	11.2	0.51	0.05	10.5	0.65	0.08	11.8
Kozhikode	1.45	0.16	10.8	0.67	0.07	10.6	0.78	0.09	11
Kasaragod	0.34	0.03	8.3	0.15	0.01	9.1	0.18	0.01	7.7
Malappuram	1.09	0.08	6.9	0.5	0.04	7.7	0.6	0.04	6.2

Note: Total population and total graduates are in millions. Also data shown here is after excluding the population below 20 years old
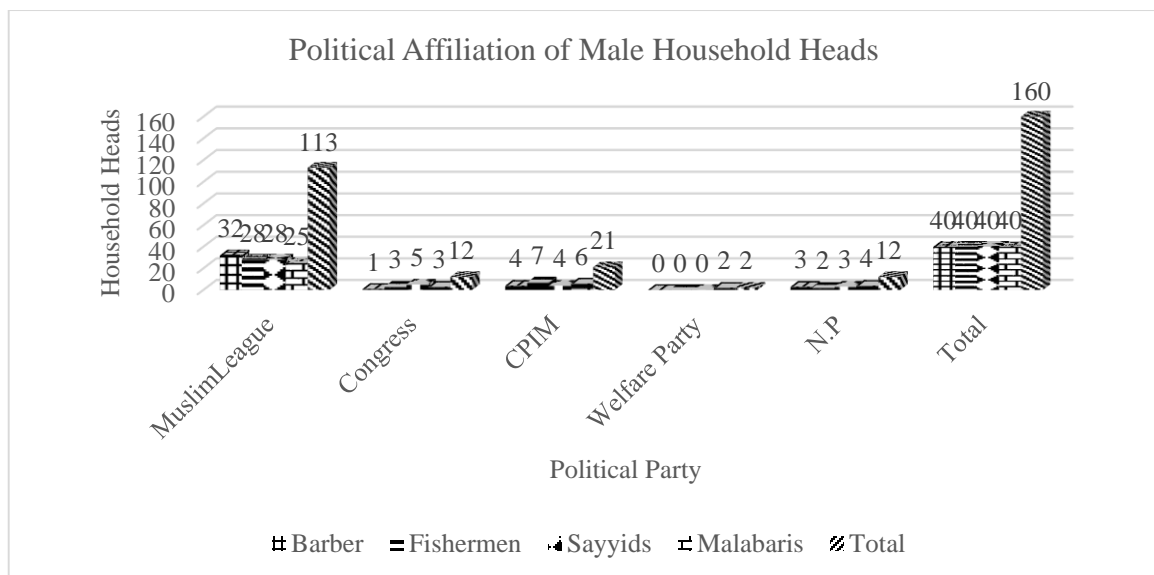Source: Author's calculation based on Census Report 2011

Figure 1 Political Affiliation of Male Household Head

Note: N.P= Not supporting any political party
Source: Based on author's fieldwork

Table 4 Number and Percentage of Schools according to State, type and management

Sl. No.	State/U.T.	Govt.	L.B	P.A	P.U	Total	Govt.%	L.B %	P.A %	P.U %
1	Andaman Nicobar Islands	271	7	10	39	327	82.87	2.14	3.06	11.93
2	Andhra Pradesh	8842	58146	2890	12858	82736	10.69	70.28	3.49	15.54
3	Arunachal Pradesh	2511	34	58	225	2828	88.79	1.20	2.05	7.96
4	Assam	36266	1743	2447	393	40849	88.78	4.27	5.99	0.96
5	Bihar	66253	261	683	126	67323	98.41	0.39	1.01	0.19
6	Chandigarh	69	0	4	43	116	59.48	0.00	3.45	37.07
7	Chhattisgarh	46187	378	744	3587	50896	90.75	0.74	1.46	7.05
8	Dadra Nagar Haveli	266	1	7	11	285	93.33	0.35	2.46	3.86
9	Daman Diu	77	5	2	10	94	81.91	5.32	2.13	10.64
10	Delhi	1387	1215	245	1644	4491	30.88	27.05	5.46	36.61
11	Goa	939	6	110	117	1172	80.12	0.51	9.39	9.98
12	Gujarat	5834	26115	2908	5483	40340	14.46	64.74	7.21	13.59
13	Haryana	12521	51	245	2858	15675	79.88	0.33	1.56	18.23
14	Himachal Pradesh	14153	141	64	1017	15375	92.05	0.92	0.42	6.61
15	Jammu Kashmir	19964	402	223	2711	23300	85.68	1.73	0.96	11.64
16	Jharkhand	36792	190	1461	157	38600	95.32	0.49	3.78	0.41
17	Karnataka	46541	440	3312	7391	57684	80.68	0.76	5.74	12.81
18	Kerala	4529	116	6387	1162	12194	37.14	0.95	52.38	9.53
19	Lakshadweep	44	0	0	0	44	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	Madhya Pradesh	106652	1365	1851	16714	126582	84.26	1.08	1.46	13.20
21	Maharashtra	5289	59636	10146	5156	80227	6.59	74.33	12.65	6.43
22	Manipur	2361	23	406	425	3215	73.44	0.72	12.63	13.22
23	Meghalaya	4366	445	4590	229	9630	45.34	4.62	47.66	2.38
24	Mizoram	1722	153	368	339	2582	66.69	5.93	14.25	13.13
25	Nagaland	1814	26	37	315	2192	82.76	1.19	1.69	14.37
26	Orissa	51063	341	1532	1456	54392	93.88	0.63	2.82	2.68
27	Puducherry	368	0	18	141	527	69.83	0.00	3.42	26.76
28	Punjab	15061	2900	549	2291	20801	72.41	13.94	2.64	11.01
29	Rajasthan	45501	24708	1203	16241	87653	51.91	28.19	1.37	18.53
30	Sikkim	653	16	25	164	858	76.11	1.86	2.91	19.11
31	Tamil Nadu	21063	12431	7799	7345	48638	43.31	25.56	16.03	15.10
32	Tripura	3713	28	46	65	3852	96.39	0.73	1.19	1.69
33	Uttar Pradesh	139893	8618	11557	57688	217756	64.24	3.96	5.31	26.49
34	Uttarakhand	16289	107	678	3805	20879	78.02	0.51	3.25	18.22
35	West Bengal	49239	2525	3923	186	55873	88.13	4.52	7.02	0.33
	INDIA	768493	202573	66528	152392	1189986	64.58	17.02	5.59	12.81

Source: Author's computation based on 8th All India School Education Survey (provisional data), NCERT
Note: Govt.-Government, LB-Local Body, PA-Private Aided, PUA-Private Unaided, U.T- Union Territory

Table 5 Number and Percentage of Schools according to State, type and management (In descending order of percentage of private aided schools)

Sl. No.	State/U.T.	Govt.	L.B	P.A	P.U	Total	Govt.%	L.B %	P.A %	P.U %
1	Kerala	4529	116	6387	1162	12194	37.14	0.95	52.38	9.53
2	Meghalaya	4366	445	4590	229	9630	45.34	4.62	47.66	2.38
3	Tamil Nadu	21063	12431	7799	7345	48638	43.31	25.56	16.03	15.10
4	Mizoram	1722	153	368	339	2582	66.69	5.93	14.25	13.13
5	Maharashtra	5289	59636	10146	5156	80227	6.59	74.33	12.65	6.43
6	Manipur	2361	23	406	425	3215	73.44	0.72	12.63	13.22
7	Goa	939	6	110	117	1172	80.12	0.51	9.39	9.98
8	Gujarat	5834	26115	2908	5483	40340	14.46	64.74	7.21	13.59
9	West Bengal	49239	2525	3923	186	55873	88.13	4.52	7.02	0.33
10	Assam	36266	1743	2447	393	40849	88.78	4.27	5.99	0.96
11	Karnataka	46541	440	3312	7391	57684	80.68	0.76	5.74	12.81
12	INDIA	768493	202573	66528	152392	1189986	64.58	17.02	5.59	12.81
13	Delhi	1387	1215	245	1644	4491	30.88	27.05	5.46	36.61
14	Uttar Pradesh	139893	8618	11557	57688	217756	64.24	3.96	5.31	26.49
15	Jharkhand	36792	190	1461	157	38600	95.32	0.49	3.78	0.41
16	Andhra Pradesh	8842	58146	2890	12858	82736	10.69	70.28	3.49	15.54
17	Chandigarh	69	0	4	43	116	59.48	0.00	3.45	37.07
18	Puducherry	368	0	18	141	527	69.83	0.00	3.42	26.76
19	Uttarakhand	16289	107	678	3805	20879	78.02	0.51	3.25	18.22
20	Andaman Nicobar Islands	271	7	10	39	327	82.87	2.14	3.06	11.93
21	Sikkim	653	16	25	164	858	76.11	1.86	2.91	19.11
22	Orissa	51063	341	1532	1456	54392	93.88	0.63	2.82	2.68
23	Punjab	15061	2900	549	2291	20801	72.41	13.94	2.64	11.01
24	Dadra Nagar Haveli	266	1	7	11	285	93.33	0.35	2.46	3.86
25	Daman Diu	77	5	2	10	94	81.91	5.32	2.13	10.64
26	Arunachal Pradesh	2511	34	58	225	2828	88.79	1.20	2.05	7.96
27	Nagaland	1814	26	37	315	2192	82.76	1.19	1.69	14.37
28	Haryana	12521	51	245	2858	15675	79.88	0.33	1.56	18.23
29	Madhya Pradesh	106652	1365	1851	16714	126582	84.26	1.08	1.46	13.20
30	Chhattisgarh	46187	378	744	3587	50896	90.75	0.74	1.46	7.05
31	Rajasthan	45501	24708	1203	16241	87653	51.91	28.19	1.37	18.53
32	Tripura	3713	28	46	65	3852	96.39	0.73	1.19	1.69
33	Bihar	66253	261	683	126	67323	98.41	0.39	1.01	0.19
34	Jammu Kashmir	19964	402	223	2711	23300	85.68	1.73	0.96	11.64
35	Himachal Pradesh	14153	141	64	1017	15375	92.05	0.92	0.42	6.61
INDIA	Lakshadweep	44	0	0	0	44	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: Author's computation based on 8th All India School Education Survey (provincial data), NCERT

Note: Govt.-Government, LB-Local Body, PA-Private Aided, PUA-Private Unaided, U.T- Union Territory

Table 6 Religious wise percentage of marriages in India below the age of 18

No	Religion	Male	Female
1	India total	6.48	30.21
2	Hindu	7.26	31.27
3	Muslim	5.03	30.57
4	Christian	2.37	12.04
5	Sikh	2.77	10.86
6	Buddhist	5.05	27.80
7	Jain	3.64	16.18
8	Other religions	4.50	23.96

Source: Author's computation based on 2011 Census Report, Government of India

Table 7 Percentage of marriages below the age of 18 in Kerala

No	Religion	Male %	Female %
1	Hindu	0.95	12.79
2	Muslim	1.40	36.14
3	Christian	0.88	6.84
4	Sikh	1.29	11.61
5	Buddhist	2.25	11.73
6	Jain	0.74	12.35
7	Other religions	1.03	7.50
8	Kerala Total	1.04	17.63

Source: Author's computation based on Census of India 2011, Government of India