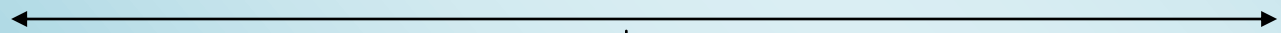


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CULTURAL HEGEMONY AND IT'S AFTERMATHS ON MAPPILA MUSLIMS

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ORIGIN OF MAPPILA MUSLIMS

Mappila Muslims who were supposed to be the first Muslim community in Kerala, are the descendants of the Arab community who visited Kerala for both missionary purpose and to maintain their trades in Indian coast. In history of Malabar, we can see that Kerala was maintained and strengthened by the Arabs and the Muslims before it was colonised its economy and the overseas trades were purely in the hands of Muslims. In the light of available sources, Islam in India was firstly originated in Malabar and the Muslims of Kerala were the great ancestors of Muslims in India

The Mappilas as a Muslim community originated shortly after the beginning of Islam as a part of ongoing process of peaceful communication and economic relationship between Arab and Kerala, that Islam found a receptive and fertilised soil which was apt to the proliferation of Islamic propagation and to extend religious toleration to the natives over there, that's why only the conversions of peasants were happened with the full consent and support of Zamorin, the king of Calicut and he is said to have ordered that one member from every fishermen family should be converted to Islam.

ARABIAN INFLUENCE

Arabs who monopolized the trade and trade routes in the coastal areas, they maintained a very cordial relations with the rulers of Kerala especially with Zamorin of Calicut and enjoyed all types of royal patronage and privileges from the local authority. Because of their loyalty towards Muslims only their mission could succeed and deeply rooted in the minds of locals. It is so obvious that It's only after the advent of European powers like Portuguese, Dutch, French and British one after another and their vested interests, Muslim monopoly was adversely affected by their inhumane or brutal activities throughout the country which caused the Muslim debacle in Kerala. In every life styles or walks of life of mappila Muslims we can see many influences of Arabs because all natives were impressed by their behaviours and conducts.

Geographical feature itself played a crucial role in the arrival of such religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam to Kerala because geographically it was opened to the Arabian Sea which had been a decisive factor for their coming by sea route. The query on origin of mappila is incomplete without reference to Cheraman Perumal who was reigning at Kodungallur in Malabar as headquarters of Perumal rule (800-1122 AD) when his consort fell in love with Padmala Nair, who herself fabricated a story that the minister was molesting her, when the minister refused a sexual intercourse with her, then the furious king gave his verdict to hang the minister but only later he could understand that his sins of punishing an innocent man will not be washed away, then he went to Mecca and embraced Islam but in his back to Kerala became ill and died. Before his death, he wrote letters to his chieftains in Kerala calling upon to provide all facilities for them to spread the new religion. Later Malik Ibn Dinar, the first Muslim missionary to Kerala and his associates landed at Kodungallur and travelled to the different parts of Kerala, and established 10 mosques. This Muslim tradition was also agreed by the Hindu tradition contained in *Keralolpathi*.

FOLK LITERATURE

As a vibrant society, the mappila Muslims had left behind a glowing history which has contributed to a large extent to the development of Indian culture, tradition, legacy, art, literature, music and songs. The Folk literature is one of the oldest surviving genres of literature in the language; it has until very recent times existed only as an oral tradition its historical links with the Dravidian roots of the language, thereby providing an unbroken tradition of different communities. It has the broadest basis of contact with the realities of life of the people of all castes and social hierarchies. Every inhabitants of Kerala had marked their own footsteps and indelible stamp on Malayalam folk literature, likewise mappila Muslims also maintained their own folk culture and tradition which was an admixture of local and Persian Arab traditions. It is why the mappila literature and folk culture which includes tales, ballads, songs and local life style, takes a diversion of the local culture prevailing in Kerala.

In folk art forms of the Mappila Muslims like *Kolkali*, *Oppana*, *Aravana*, *Daffumuttu*, and *mappilapattu* play an important role in lending them with lyrical and rhythmic dimensions. Like all the folk cultures, the folk traditions of Mappilas also had a free and loyal culture which fostered unity and oneness among themselves and particularly in the peasant societies and the culture was moulded on a continuous and concrete set of believers and ideals. All these cultures were the real projections of what the native and immigrant culture have taught us through their cultural dominations or we say cultural hegemony which is introduced by Antonio Gramsci as a part of Marxist

philosophy. really all those who became the part of this colonialisations partly or fully, in any means mappila Muslims were dominated or exploited culturally, economically, physically, psychologically and politically also.

India as a country of different civilisations it accommodated people of different origins like Aryans, Sakas, Kushans, Afghans, Mongols Arabs who landed in the very soil of Kerala with some trade purpose because at that time, Malabar was the landmark where diamonds, spices, pepper, ginger and cardamoms were great in demand, Arabs being appointed as missionaries, wanted to establish Islamic values peacefully through these regions. Sheik Zaynuddin, author of 'Thuhfat ul- Mujahidin' has expressed that Islam must have originated in the 9th century; most probably it must have been two hundred years after Hijrah (632 AD).

ISLAMIC VALUES

The Islam itself was a foreign creation which taught natives there the meaning of life, it trained them to practice communal harmony and tolerance between other believers and moreover it made them human beings. Really Islamic preaching was done peacefully not with swords and mixed Hindu/Muslim race were not converted by force. The Arabs used mixed half breed as their agents. But they lived in harmony with the local Hindus, till the foreign invaders used them as pawns for 'divide and rule' tactics. The patronage given by Hindu rulers to Muslims which was exemplary is a great example of this communal harmony. It gave a mutual dependency between two. The native rulers received support from the Muslim traders settled down in different places of Malabar, in turn promoting the reputation as an excellent and safe place for trade which resulted in the economic prosperity and political stability of the kingdoms. There are many concepts that Mappilas have adopted from Arabs like the tradition of matrilineal or the prevalence of the *Marumakkathayam*, marriage, birth and death ceremonies and likewise in housing also.

DRESS STYLE

Traditional Mappila Muslims are distinguishable by their dress and dialect. The common dress among men comprises of mundu, a piece of cloth tied round the loins and reaching down to the ankles, a shirt preferably with full sleeves. Their mode of wearing the *mundu* is tying it round the waist by tucking the two ends at either side, or the upper flap fixed at the left hand side. For non-Muslims the upper flap will be fixed at the right hand side. This *mundu* style was adopted from *Ulemas* of yaman and Hadra mouth who lived in Calicut and all who converted into Islam were mostly impressed by their dressing style and they adopted it as a part of culture.

The dress of the traditional Mappila women, who were the wives of Arabs, is also distinctive, they wear Kaachi, white or coloured cloth, if it is white sometimes coloured bluish or reddish at the fringe. Kaachi in white without colour at the fringe was seen in Thalasseri, Mahe and Kannur, and the other was popular in Kozhikode, Koyilandy and Vatakara; coloured Kaachis were used in Malappuram. They wore a blouse which reached below

the waist and a white cloth called *thattam* to cover the head and breast. Still women from almost traditional families are wearing hijabs and scarfs and it became the part of their rituals. Local variations in dressing pattern have seen among the Mappila Muslim women.

MAPPILA SONGS

The evolution of mappila songs, known generally as *Mappilappattu*, was the result of the development of the mappila peasant society to a distinct community .the rural tales and Islamic stories are beautifully amalgamated in the Mappila songs upon which there is a great impact of Tamil styles because at that time Islamic preachings were delivered by the migrants from Tamil Nadu like Makhdums and Marakkayars. Many ardent poets and scholars had journeyed to Tamil Nadu in order to study TamilMuslim songs of the poets known as *Pulavars*. Even the great gifted poet of mappila Mahakawi Moyin kutty had pursued his studies from the Muslim centres of Tamil Nadu like Kayal pattanam and Tanga pattanam.

WAR SONGS

The war songs also became so popular with the commencement of anti-colonial struggles against European powers because it was composed by them including the heroic battles of badr and uhd in Islamic history. It gave a great inspiration for Muslims to be steadfast in their battle fields with enough courage and to fight against colonialists. The first mappila war song as *Zaqqoom padappattu*, it was an Arabic Malayalam translation, which is another genre Arabs had imparted to us as their cultural dominations over mappila Muslims and it was formed as a script in the title of Arabic Malayalam. Arabic Malayalam is still widely used in Madrasa education, we can also see the influence of Arabic language and how it has been taught in later periods.

In Malabar context, Muslims were not anti-nationals or expatriates or traitors of the country as there are some misconceptions and still going on in the case of Salman Khan and Amir Khan in Indian scenario. Really Arabs and mappila Muslims who fought against the brutalities of foreigners like Portuguese, Dutch, French and Britain, they were nationalists and freedom fighters. The patriotism those leaders showed us was salutary and the role of ulemas also in the struggle for freedom and unity of the country was very inevitable. Considering the position of the ulemas, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru complimented, ‘The dust under the feet of these Ulemas is like corryliuin for my eyes and kissing their feet would be a matter of great pride for me’.

INVASION OF MYSORE

In Mysorian invasion, Mappilas welcomed the changes brought-about by the Mysore rulers. One among them was social distance that developed with Hindu communities, especially with Nayars. Conversions occurred willingly and forcefully. Miller confirmed: Family names, the existence of wealthy Muslim land owners and the prevalence of the *Marumakkathayam* system of inheritance among north Malabar Mappilas was some changes they have brought as a sign. It is very obvious fact that great warriors like Tipu sultan and Hyder Ali would not have been to terrorise north Kerala, but it was for the local support of mappila Muslims. Tipu sultan is traditionally pictured as a religious begot, but in recent years efforts have been made to rehabilitate that image. Reports are noted that he gave gifts and rewards to temples at Guruvayur and Kollenkode. And we can't forget that harmony Tipu kept in the native Hindus because when he landed in Kerala even the 7000 year old Guruvayur idol was sent to south Kerala for safe keeping. This is the reason why Sri Padmanabha swami temple unearthed 24 billion USD worth treasure and some vaults yet to be opened or excavated. Even though many treasures were looted by British forces and exported in to England.

PORTUGUESE INFLUENCE

Colonialism and the anti-colonial resistance in India had its first appearance in Malabar. The first European power penetrated in Kerala was Portuguese by the advent of Vasco da Gama (1460-1524) with his caravans and fleets. He started a journey in July 1497 and rounding the Cape of Good Hope he travelled along the coast of Eastern Africa and with the help of Muslim navigator Ibn Majid), Gama reached the coast of Malabar on 20th May 1498. The entry of the Portuguese to Malabar marked the end of the era of peace and prosperity, amity and religious harmony of the region. There started a saga of aggression and resistance.

CHRISTIANITY

The Portuguese voyagers reached the shore of Malabar Coast as the descendants of the crusaders, it was not by mistake and they had in their mind the age old animosity towards the Muslims. Economic and religious motivations led them to the east with a deep animus against the Muslims, an offshoot of the long rivalry between Muslims and the Christians in the Iberian Peninsula and of the Crusades in the 11th and 12th centuries. The Pope granted the king of Portugal the right to conquer the countries of Pagans. Moreover the spices of Kerala brought by the Arab merchants attracted them and they decided to continue direct commercial contacts with Kerala. There happened an open clash between two ideologies or faiths and it was a real battle of Christianity against Islam (moors). these missionaries made some disputes between two believers. Their arrival changed the whole situation

as this posed a challenge not only to the commercial and trade interests of the Muslims, but also to their religious and cultural interests also.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Vasco da Gama in his second expedition (1502) deliberately committed many inhumane deeds and atrocities against the Muslims and he set fire to the whole city of Calicut. When the effort to create a rift between the Zamorins and the Muslims failed, the Portuguese retreated to be extremely cruel, inhumane and severely attacked on Muslims on the sea as well as on land. They considered the Muslims as their natural enemies and went about achieving their objective of colonization by resorting to extreme cruelty. They bombarded the city in which many civilians especially Muslims were burnt alive and were brutally killed even some Hindu fishermen were chopped of their hands, feet and heads. These inhumane deeds were not digested by the Zamorins, Therefore their demand to expel the Muslims was rejected.

The long 100 years of Muslim fights under Kunjali Marakkar of Kottakkal, the supreme commander of the Zamorins army who fought bravely against the Portuguese caused the socio-economic backwardness of the Muslim community. The traditional Arabs and Muslims merchants dislocated from Calicut and, it disrupted the Muslim trade. The main effort of the Portuguese in India was to dislodge the Muslims from their prominent positions in trade and commerce and to establish their sway over the Eastern trade. But here mappila Muslims suffered many hardships under Portuguese and from the side of landlords also. Here Mappilas never made an alliance with colonisers as Hindu landlords did. They betrayed the country to enemies but they have been never considered as anti-nationals or traitors.

CULTURAL INFLUENCE

As a consequence of the Portuguese intrusion, the trade, settlements, agriculture, cultural life and even the political stability of the region were adversely affected. They tried to impose their culture, faith and oceanic domination over the people of Malabar. Their introduction of Cartaz in maritime trade proves their colonial aim beyond doubt. When the Portuguese were eventually repulsed, there came the Dutch and the French. But their activities and influence were not predominant in Malabar except for a few pockets.

BRITISH HEGEMONY

Unlike other foreigners British intended both to trade purpose and to settle here also. They came with more sophisticated stratagem than that of their predecessors. The first British Navigator, the Captain Keiling reached in the Coast of Kerala in 1650 with a fleet of three ships. They got permission from Zamorin to construct fort at Ponnani in order to accomplish their commercial purposes. British who became successful in raising the Calicut and Ponnani as their trading centres, they maintained cordial relations with the Queen of Attingal and Raja of Kolathiri who granted land for erecting forts and trading centres at Thalasseri and compromised with the landlords and the influential strata of the society. Together they exploited the people economically, politically, culturally and psychologically.

They colonised many of the territories by establishing East India Company in 1600 AD, for the sake of achieving the power on powerless people and to obtain the greatest possible amount of raw materials especially pepper at the lowest possible price. The heroic struggles organised by the society against these colonial invaders, the love and amity maintained by the community in a multi-cultural society and their adaptations to the indigenous culture was salutary and much notable. Some Valiants even they were ready to scarify himself for the sake of the country.

Mappila resistance during the British rule was a religious war by the community against the landlords and the British government. As far as the Mappilas were concerned, the revolt against the oppression was a religious obligation. Therefore they fought for independence till the last. There occurred 32 outbreaks from 1836 to 1919, among them the two bitter outbreaks were that of Angadipuram-Outbreak in 1849 and Manjeri outbreak in 1896 and the greatest of them was Malabar rebellion which broke out in 1921, in which many Mappilas lost their lives.

CHRISTIANITY

There is a general scholarly consensus that Christianity was established in India by the 6th century AD, including some communities. Syrian Christians or Nasranis is a community of Christians in Kerala, which is historically united in leadership and liturgy, but since the 17th century have been split into several church denominations and traditions. Some partisan fund allocation for the churches by the British officials triggered a breakdown in the relationship between Saint Thomas Christians and prominent Hindu castes, who were converted into Christianity then some Anglican missionaries were invited for the theological education of Jacobite Christian priests to teach there. British forces were some missionary caravans who landed everywhere especially in Malabar where Muslims practiced their own values and believes, to convert them into Christianity and they spread over the

regions to diffuse their mission of Christianity, even some of the people were brain washed in to Christendom. But they could succeed only partially but the missionaries could make some influences on Kerala people

DIVIDE AND RULE

Divide and Rule was a very political strategy of Britishers in Malabar. It basically means that you divide the population into manageable chunks and that makes it impossible for them to come together and fight against the sovereign authority. This strategy is also used in economics and society. Having a glowing history of social harmony before us between Muslims and Hindus as they fought shoulder to shoulder and battled hand in hand against colonial forces and their inhumane deeds in the time of the freedom struggle, but they could succeed in making some clashes among them and to make hostility in every mind. The first step that they have taken is that the cartridges which were bitten by Muslims and Hindus In their rifles were made up with the pieces of pigs and cows which were forbidden in their believes and cultures.

ENGLISH EDUCATION

The patronage to higher education by the feudal chieftains was a prominent feature of Malabar. They changed their attitude later with the advent of the British. They lost supremacy and thus obeyed what the colonial masters suggested. They ignored the indigenous education and favoured English education. But the indigenous education did not disappear completely. It was One of the great cultural domination which is imparted in to the minds of mappila Muslims The British were not at all supportive of the old system of education since it never addressed the needs of the colonial administration.

The Government needed English educated people so that they could rule the illiterate masses in a better way. So they were interested in imparting English education instead of the traditional one. The British wanted only clerks to form the lowest layer of bureaucracy apart from lawyers and teachers. Then all subjects were taught in English language instead of Sanskrit language that is why there happened some movements like boycotting their schools because through these educations they were dominating on our education, schooling and culture also.

WESTERNISATION

As a result of these modern education there emerged some trends in the society that to imitate western countries and live the life of English a man in all walks of life. Then they accepted the life style of Europeans and blindly believed that the dressing style they adopted is the best style or model and we can't ignore it in any walks of life. Muslims also ran away behind these models and trends which European adapted and introduced to us, moreover

they used only the productions which are manufactured by them like cool drinks and other eatables also, then these foreign products became the routines of our day to day life. Really these were not due to their compulsion but it was culturally dominated in our bloods without any force at all.

NATIONALISM

The unique feature of India's struggle for freedom was the participation of all types of people irrespective of their status and positions in the society. The long struggles of anti-colonial struggles in Malabar stand witness to the presence of the different groups like rural, urban, labours, capitalists, rich, poor, high castes, low castes, Tribals etc. it was only happened as a result of nationalism in the minds of people, where the Muslim traders and Nair landlords jointly fought at Anchuthengu in 1697 against the British trade monopoly in Kerala. It was the pioneer attempt of mass outbreak against the British colonialism in Kerala and opened a new era of incessant war against them, even though in these movements many have lost their lives but they fought for the sake of the country.

Muslim scholars imparted such a nationalistic or patriotic thoughts in to the minds of mappila Muslims and gave them some ideological foundation to them in their struggle against colonial and imperialist powers. The ulemas who constitute the steering class among the Muslims, interpreted the Holy Scriptures to the general public. The scholars like Sheikh Zainudhin Makhdums of Ponnani, Sayyid Alawi Thangal and Sayyid Fazl Pookoya Thangal of Mamburam were world-renowned scholars, who had strong popular support both on the basis of the commands of religion and due to their scholarship also.

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