

## Archiving The Historical And Cultural Documents Of Mappilas: A Descriptive Account On Arabimalayalam Publications And Its Importance.

Babu C.T. Sunil<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, Email: [sunilbabujnu@gmail.com](mailto:sunilbabujnu@gmail.com). ORCID iD: 0009-0002-7500-4471

**How to cite this article:** Babu C.T. Sunil (2024). 'Archiving The Historical And Cultural Documents Of Mappilas: A Descriptive Account On Arabimalayalam Publications And Its Importance'. *Library Progress International*, 44(2), 539-546.

### Abstract

Mappila Muslims of Malabar have developed a unique community language called Arabimalayalam. Precisely, Arabimalayalam means writing Malayalam by using Arabic and modified Arabic letters. The language developed due to the trade relationship of Malabar with the Arabian world. This article first contextualises historically the trade relationship of Malabar and the Arabian world. For more than six hundred years, the language has been in use. This study is exploratory in nature and, therefore, provides a descriptive explanation of major Arabimalayalam publications, especially those before independence. The article focuses on the descriptive account of major verse texts, prose texts, Newspapers and magazines. The study argues that these historical and cultural documents should be archived and preserved systematically to facilitate social science research especially anthropological studies, since the language is waning from its usage.

**Keywords:** Malabar, Mappilas, Arabimalayalam, Culture, Archive.

### Introduction:

Though Mappilas are Muslims of the Kerala state of the Indian Republic, they are predominantly settled in the Malabar region. They have developed a unique community language called Arabimalayalam. Viewing anthropologically, Mappilas' everyday life is situated within the milieu of Arabimalayalam. From the time the press came into existence in Kerala, there had been plenty of Arabimalayalam publications in the form of books, magazines, newspapers, etc. Much before the print, Arabimalayalam existed in manuscripts/ handwritten document forms. Since this study is an exploratory study, this article provides a descriptive account of some of the important Arabimalayalam cultural documents or publications and argues that these documents should be preserved and archived systematically. The article argues that preservations of these documents help write the cultural and anthropological history of Mappilas since most of the studies on Mappilas are based on colonial documents or local archival materials that is written in the older form of Malayalam such as *Kolezhuthu* and *Vattezhuthu*.<sup>1</sup> These historical studies never consulted Arabimalayalam publications to determine the standpoint of Mappilas. Before we go into the descriptive account of Arabimalayalam publications, we need to have a glance at Mappilas and their community language. Therefore, in the first section of this essay, I will give a historical description about Mappilas and their community language called Arabimalayalam. After this account, a short description of the nature of the study and methods is provided. In the third section, the essay will focus on a descriptive account of Arabimalayalam documents. Then, the essay concludes with a remark on the importance of preserving the Arabimalayalam documents.

### Mappilas and their Community Language

As it is mentioned, Mappilas are Muslims of Kerala. Though historians debates about the period of the emergence of Islam in Kerala and the story of the conversion of a local king, Cheraman Perumal, into Islam and the *Sufi* tradition of Malik-ibn-Dinar (see Barbosa 1921: 2-4), historians conclude that the emergence of Islam in Kerala is almost the same time of Islam in the Arabian continent. Having assessed with the existing historical evidence, both oral and epigraphical, Kunju concludes that "even today we have no conclusive evidence to prove the exact date of the origin of Islam in Kerala.

<sup>1</sup> Prange (2018), relying mostly on Geniza records, contends that between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, 'Monsoon Islam' that characterises Mappilas was developed by merchants and determined by the reality of Muslims residing in non-Muslim civilisations.

... If we leave aside the Cheraman Perumal tradition for the date of the origin of Islam in Kerala, we have strong circumstantial evidence to prove that Islam originated in Kerala soon as it spread in Arabia. The evidence is that Arabia had trade relations with western Indian ports long before the establishment of the Roman Empire in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D” (Kunju 1995: 21-22).

The history of Mappila Muslims and Arabimalayalam texts is tied to not only the growth of Islam in Kerala but also the Arab-Malabar trade relationship. Before the emergence of Islam, Arab Mariners had established a trading network that stretched from the port cities of the African coast to the great emporia of south China (Ilias 2007), though Arab traders' commercial expansion across the Indian Ocean and Malabar was only recorded in the third century AD (Hourani 1951: 60-61). Malabar's strategic location on trade routes and its agricultural spice production led to its rise to become the import hub of commerce (Arasaratnam 2004). All of the trade communities across the Indian Ocean had to temporarily settle due to the distance between the Arab world and India, as well as the challenges of travelling owing to many factors including the climate. Around the world, trade diasporas began to form during this period. The Arab trading diaspora was the major community settled in the coastal belt of Kerala between the terminal period of their trade. They formed a sort of social and sexual tie with the local ladies when they first settled in Kerala. The origin of the native population known as Mappilas is thought to have been due to the permanent or temporary (Mut'ah) union of Arab males and native women: “and the fact that Arabs had settled for trading purposes carries with it the further probable assumption some of them at least had contracted alliances with women of the country, and the beginning of a mixed race, the Mappillars, had been laid” (Logan 1887/1951: 196).

With the support from powerful Muslim empires like the Islamic Umayyad (661-750 AD) and the Abbasid Empires (750-1258 AD), the Middle Eastern merchants/traders from Arabia and Persia became the prominent trading community in the Indian coasts (More 2013). From the seventh and eighth centuries, these Middle Eastern merchants began to control the trade of the Arabian Sea and gradually controlled the coastal trade networks of South and South East Asia (Pherson 2002: 76). It further enhanced the process of Arabian trade diasporas in the Malabar Coast and by so the growth of Mappila community. By the eighth and ninth centuries, the coasts had become a prominent area of Arab-Mediterranean and Arab Muslim diasporas (Narayanan 1972).

When Arabian merchants engaged with trade in Malabar coast, the issue of the language might have emerged. In order to solve this language issue, either Arabians or Malabarians began to blend the Arabic language with the existing oral form of Malayalam. Arabimalayalam, therefore, in its simplest sense is the Malayalam written by using Arabic letters as well as modified Arabic letters. With only 28 Arabic characters, pronouncing the existing oral Malayalam of the time might have been challenging. As a result, by adding lines and dots to consonants and vowels, the script is adapted to represent all of the sounds of the Malayalam language (Karasseri 1995).

Kunji (1982: 177) broadly categorises the Arabimalayalam literature into eight categories such as (i) translation and interpretation of the Quran, (ii) interpretation of prophet Muhammed's teaching, (iii) texts related to Islamic philosophy, jurisprudence and ritual practices, (iv) history books related to Islam and Mappilas, (v) stories and novels, (vi) texts having scientific nature especially medicine, (vii) literary criticism, and (viii) dictionaries. This classification itself indicates the vast publication of Arabimalayalam literature. Indeed, explaining or giving a descriptive account of all Arabimalayalam publications in this short article is impossible. Our concern is to focus on those publications that are more relevant to understanding the everyday life of Mappilas in the past, or we will focus on those publications that have relevance to understanding the everyday life and events of Mappilas in the past. Consequently, we may essentially divide the Arabimalayalam works into two categories: prose and verse. Prior to providing a detailed analysis of the verse and prose works of Arabimalayalam literature, we shall briefly discuss the literature review and the methodology of the study.

### Literature Review and Methodology.

Though the enormous Literature in Arabimalayalam ranges from religion to science, theological texts, history, medicine, linguistics, sexology, astrology, astronomy, interpretation of dreams, etc., there are only three works that focus entirely on Arabimalayalam of which two are in vernacular, and the third one is in English. Abu's (1970) *Arabi-Malayala Sahithya Charithram* [the literary history of Arabimalayalam] focuses on the historical aspects of the emergence of the Arabimalayalam and the etymological and lexicological elements (see also, Arafath 2020). Aboobaker (2018), in his work *Arabimalayalam: Malayathinte Classical Bhavangal* [Arabimalayalam: The Classical faces of Malayalam], also provides the historical development of Arabimalayalam scripts and linguistic aspects of the language. He tries to compare the literary works of Arabimalayalam with the literary works of modern Malayalam and argues that Arabimalayalam literature is par excellence with modern Malayalam literature. He says that Arabimalayalam is not a different language but only a version of the Malayalam language. However, his work doesn't provide any information about the magazines, newspapers, etc., published in Arabimalayalam; instead, he argues that Arabimalayalam is a classical language. The most notable work is *Arabi-Malayalam: Linguistic-cultural Traditions of Mappila Muslims of Kerala* by Ilias and Shamsah Hussain (2017). They provide morphological and phonological characteristics of the Arabimalayalam script or the linguistic features of the language along with the historical origin of the language. They incorporate ethnographic data into the study and try to provide some of the aspects of poetic and prose tradition of the Arabimalayalam literature.

Apart from these three important works, there are some of the notable works that deal with the cultural history of Mappilas give some sections on Arabimalayalam, among which the notable works are Ahmad Moulavi and Mohammad Abdul Kareem's (1978) *Mahathaya Mappila Sahitya Parampanyam* [the great Mappila literary tradition] and Kunji's

(1982) *Muslingalum Kerala Samskaravum* [Muslims and Kerala culture]. Although these two works covered some aspects of Arabimalayalam, they did not go deep into the language analysis. In short, these works help understand different aspects of the language but do not provide a detailed account of the Arabimalayalam publications especially magazines and newspapers. Therefore, this study is exploratory in nature or a firsthand research. The study has used secondary literature to gather information on the Arabimalayalam publication. The study also used the interview method. The experts in the field of Arabimalayalam were interviewed to gather information on Arabimalayalam publications.

### Verse Texts in Arabimalayalam

Our concern is to highlight the prose texts, magazines, and newspapers in Arabimalayalam. Prose texts are more important cultural documents in writing the history or anthropological history of Mappilas. But at the same time, verse texts are also essential since most of the verse texts are related to the religious and cultural aspects of Mappilas' everyday life. Therefore, we give a concise description of verse texts before we look into the prose texts, magazines and newspapers. Much of the Literature in Arabimalayalam is in the poetic form, and it is also related to both sacred and secular. The literature related to the sacred that was first developed in poetic style was because of the mass conversion of lower caste people to Islam who were mostly illiterate. Religious rules, duties, heroism etc., portrayed in the form of songs (especially *maalas*) were for easy remembrance since the reciting of such songs made the newly converted people learn and by-heart the content of the texts. As indicated, there can also be two sections in the poetic texts. One is written for religious purposes and others are in secular arts and literature. The religious poetic texts are called *Maalas*, and others include different forms of *Mappilappaattu*<sup>2</sup> such as *Padappattu*, *Kissappattu*, *Sarkkeettu-pattu*, and *Kathu-pattu*.

Singing Mappilappaattu was common in Malabar's marriage ceremony. Apart from the marriage ceremony, Mappilappaattu also sings on many other important occasions such as housewarming, delivery time or new-baby born time and also used to sing as a part of other Mappila performing arts such as *Oppana*, *Kolkkali* and *Vattappattu*. Mhakavi<sup>3</sup> Moyeen Kutty Vaidyar is credited with the major chunk of Mappilappaattu written in Arabimalayalam. Mostly, he is famous for his *padappattu*, especially *Badar padappattu*. *Padappattu* is one variety of Mappilappaattu which describes about any of the struggles of Islam (especially the war related to Islam) or Mappilas.<sup>4</sup> There are also *padappattu* related to the history of Malabar and the struggle between the Mappilas and the British. *Malappuram Padappattu* and *Cheroor padappattu* were the most energetic forces behind the fighting of Mappilas against British colonialism, and *Cheroor padappattu* was confiscated by the colonial power.<sup>5</sup>

*Maalas* or *Maalappaattu* (also known as *nercha ppattu*) are more critical when we try to understand the cultural history of Malabar Muslims. *Maalas* are sacred texts that are often recited in many occasions especially in times of calamities and in times of *nercha*; commemorating of any saints in Islam or independent issues related to the life of the people. *Maalas* cannot be considered as Mappilappaattu because it is much religious and spiritual in nature. The contents of *maalas* are certainly religious but in the *Sufi* tradition. Each *maala* denotes the biography of any of the saints, and it recites with spiritual bending.

*Mohiyudheen Maala*, penned by Kazi Muhammad-ibnu Abdul Abee, the priest or kazhi of Calicut Mazjid, is one of the well-known *maalas*. The text mentions the year of composition of Mohiyudheen maala as 1607, making it the earliest Arabimalayalam document currently in existence (Moulavi and Kareem 1978: 44). Every Mappila home recited the Mohiyudheen maala as part of a daily devotional ritual. Apart from *Mohiyudheen maala*, the other major *maalas* are *Badar maala*, *Shifayee maala*, *Nafeesath maala*, *Manjakkulam maala*, *Mamburam maala*, *Rifayee maala*, *shadooli maala*, *Shahul hameed maala*, *Suhravardhi maala*, *Jifri maala*, *Maqdoom maala*, *Malappuram maala* etc. *Badar maala* is recited when epidemic diseases are spread. And *Nafeesath maala* is mostly recited at the time of delivery.<sup>6</sup> There are also non-sacred *maalas* such as *vellappokka maala* by Pulikkottil Hyder and *Kilathi maala* of Moyeen Kutty Vaidyar.

The other form of Arabimalayalam Mappilappaattu is *Kissappattu*<sup>7</sup>, which is a combination of story narration and songs. Most of the *Kissappattu* are also related to the story of the prophet<sup>8</sup> of Islam or about the life and deeds of *swahabees* (Companions and disciples of prophet Muhammed). There are also romantic *Kissappattu*, which is non-sacred in its character such as *Kissathu Noorjahan* and *Kissathu Barbagiyan*. One of the other varieties of unique Literature in Arabimalayalam Mappilappaattu is *Kathupattu* (Singing Letters/correspondence), but *Kathupattu* has no relation with sacred things. There is also another variety of literature called *Sarkeettu pattugal* which describes about the travels of any author to any particular place, or it is a short travelogue account. In short, though most of the Mappilappaattus are not

<sup>2</sup> Ppattu menas song.

<sup>3</sup> Mening the 'great poet'.

<sup>4</sup> Major *padappattus* are *Badar*, *Uhad*, *Hijra*, *Futuhussam*, *Bahanas val ahnass*, *Thabookku*, *Yarmukku*, *Yasoodu pada*, *Makkam fathu*, *Twaef padappattu*, *Hunain padappattu*, *Muatha padappattu*, *Khaibar padappattu*, *Jinnu padappattu*, etc.

<sup>5</sup> There are plenty of works in the field of Mappilappaattu which cannot be explained in detail here.

<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to explain every *maalas*. *Badar maala* was written by Kunji Rayeen of Mampad, *Nafeeth maala* was by Nalakathu Kunji Moideen of Ponnani and *Nool maala* by Kunjayan Musliyar,

<sup>7</sup> *Kissa* means story.

<sup>8</sup> Adam Nabi Kissa, Yusuf Kissa, Sulaiman Nabi Kissa etc, (Nabi means prophet).

sacred but they have cultural significance in understanding Mappilas. But Maalappaattus are having not only religious significance, but also historical significance. Most of the Maalappaattus are originated in a specific historical context (Arafath 2015).

### Prose Texts, Magazines and Newspapers in Arabimalayalam

The number of prose texts are comparatively lesser than that of poetry texts. In most prose, the narrative style of language is a 'conversation style', and the language is more straightforward than the poetic texts. In the prose variety of Arabimalayalam texts, some of the books are translated works from any other language, preferably Arabic, and instead of 'prose text', they use the word *Tharjuma*. Though many *tharjumas* are independent work, they still keep the word *tharjuma* for religious authenticity. However, it does not mean that all the prose texts written in Arabimalayalam were for spiritual purposes or only translations. The prose texts include topics such as religious history and theological texts on the one hand and history, medicine, linguistics, etc., on the other hand. In the first category, it is primarily the translation of the Quran, the Sharia of Islam, etc. The translation of the Quran might be used to convince the correct pronunciation of Arabic for the newly converted Muslim population who were not acquainted with the Arabic language. And it is Mayeen Kutti Elaya, from the Arakkal Raja, who translated the Quran first to Arabimalayalam in the year 1866 which has six volumes. However, before him, there were also many successful attempts to translate some portions of the Quran into Arabimalayalam. Other than the Quran, it is the religious duty and the deeds of Islam which are the subject matters of other prose texts. The most notable text in this category is *Baithulya*, written by Padur Koyakkutti Thangal. The other major *tharjumas* of Arabi texts are *Humdathil Musalwin*, *Riyalu swaliheeen*, *Fat-ul Mu-eeen*, etc.<sup>9</sup>

In the section on linguistics and grammar, many of the works are mostly related to the Arabic language. Or to say, the texts are written to explain the grammar of the Arabic language only, but written in Arabimalayalam to communicate well. The major works in this category are *Ahakamu Thajveedhu* [in 1952] by Muhammed Abdul Kahdir Maulavi *Irshadu Subiyan Ala Thajveedil Quran* [1955] by Muhammed Maulavi, *Duroosunnahvu* [1978] by E.K Kunji Ahmed Kutti Maulavi, etc.

Some of the historical works are on Islamic history based on the Quran and hadiths, and not based on scientific historiography. *Seerathul Rasool* [1929] by K.C Komukkutty, *Kassasul Israhu Val Mihraju* [1927] by Angathodu P. Bappu Musliyar are the most notable works in this category. But it also has the history work on the Malabar. The prominent one which is recently republished is *Malabar Charithram* [Malabar History] written by Kidangayan Ibrahim Musliyar (Musliyar/ Malayamma 2023), and notably the translation or *Tharjuma* of the wonderful work of Sayyid Sainudheen, *Thuhfat-Ul-Mujahideen*, translated by K. Moosankutty (Kasim 2016: 29).

There is also literature in the field of medicine. The first one is in tune with the Arabian medicinal system in which the herbal medicine is explained and how it works with the religious faith and *mantras* are emphasised. The other kind of medicinal book relates to Kerala's cultural setting and her own herbal medicinal system. Most of these kinds of works were produced by Konaganam Veetil Ahmed, nicknamed Bava Musliyar. His major works are *Valiya Vaidya Saram* [1890], *Praopagaram* (serving others, in 1895) and his *Ottamoolikal* (panaceas). Mappilas widely used these works till modern medicine took place (Salahuddin 2014; Nadvi 2014). There are also monographs on healthy sexual relations, medicine related to sexology etc.<sup>10</sup> Recently, many such works began to be republished (for instance, Ahmed 2001). Many Arabimalayalam medicinal works did not have an author or place of publication etc., for instance *Bala Chikilsa* published by C.H Muhammed and Sons from Thirurangadi.

Though we often think that novels are not so crucial in understanding the history of any community, novels also provide a cultural setting of a community. However, like the Malayalam language, Arabi Malayalam also suffered from its creativity until the end of the nineteenth century. But it is interesting to note that six years before the publication of the much-celebrated work of Chandu Menon's *Indulakha*, a novel named *Chahardarvesh*, a Persian novel translated by Mohiyunuddhen-ibnu-Maheen Ali, had appeared in Arabimalayalam in the year of 1883<sup>11</sup> (Ilias and Hussain 2017: 73). There are more than fifty books in this category of literature (see also Ramesh 2017).

To write an anthropological history of any community, it is necessary to understand the people's phenomenological life world or how people's consciousness is constructed. To understand the consciousness of people or community, one needs to look at the life world of people in the past and the present. Most of the discourses of the past of a community are understandable if we analyse the newspapers and magazines because discourse is carried out through newspapers, magazines, and periodicals. From the very beginning of the printing press in Kerala, there had been many Arabimalayalam publications in the form of newspapers and magazines. Therefore, now we will have a glance at major newspapers and magazines in Arabimalayalam.

<sup>9</sup> Such as *Bajibahathul Avval* [1890], *Thauba* [1899]), *Umdathul-ila Irshadil Muslimeen*, in 10 volumes, [1927]), *Failul Bari* [1930]), *Al Hidayathul Islamiya* [1949], *Ahlamuswalathu* [1961] and many other works comes under this category.

<sup>10</sup> Examples are *Sthree Sugham* (women sexual pleasure, in 1890), *Ahla-munnisah* (the duty of spinsterhood, written by Chalgath Ibrahim Kutty in 1910).

<sup>11</sup> In the same year there is also another translation of a novel named *Thathayude Katha* (the story of parrot) published from Thalasseri.

When Malayalam was systematically developed in Kerala, Arabimalayalam had already become an acceptable language among the entire Mappila community. Hence the Mappilas did not need to acquire the Malayalam language's new script. It was not indifference towards Malayalam. The first Malayalam journal/magazine, *Rajya Samacharam*, was published in June 1847 by the Basal Mission Press in Thalasseri, with Hermen Gundart as editor (Sam 2003). The early journals were primarily concerned with religious reformation in their communities, and *Rajya Samacharam* was associated with Christian missionaries.

Because the Mappila population was highly literate in Arabimalayalam, Muslim reformers preferred to bring Arabimalayalam newspapers and magazines from small towns for political and community reasons, despite the fact that the first Arabimalayalam printing press was established in Telicheri in 1867 (Moulavi and Kareem 1978). A magazine called *Hidayathul Iquvan* was published in Arabimalayalam before *Kerala Pathrika* [1884], which is sometimes cited as the first vernacular newspaper in Malayalam, Malabar, or Kerala. The founder of Hidayathul Iquvan was Abdullakkoya Thangal and printed from a press called *Ameerul Islam fi Mahdinil Uloom*, which Chalilagath Ahmed of Thiroorangi owned<sup>12</sup>(Majida 1998: 1; Mangad 2009: 2; Moulavi and Kareem 1978: 51). Kareem (1998: 2) states that the first Arabimalayalam *vruthantha Masika* (monthly) was published from Thirurangadi in the early part of the 19th century, indicating that the magazine was published before 1850. The main motive behind this paper was to impart religious and secular education to the Muslim population. Ironically, the newspaper also suggested that Mappilas should not engage in anti-British activities (Mangad 2015: 413). In 1892, the reformer Sayed Sanaulla Maudani Thangal published a newspaper named *Thuhfathul Akhyar va Hidayathul Ashrar*, which lasted only for one year. However, the motive of the journal was highly progressive in nature (Mangad 2015: 413). In 1894, Sulaiman Maulavi of Alappuzha had set-up a Litho press named *Ameerul Islam* and subsequently he began to publish a monthly in Arabimalayalam named *Manivilakku* in 1899. The monthly had continued for three years, and all the leading Muslim reformers such as Vakkam Maulavi, Makthi Thangal, P.S Muhammed Sahib, Shaikk Muhammed Maheen Hamdani Thangal etc., are engaged in contributing to its contents.

1899 witnessed another wonderful publication in Arabimalayalam named *Swalahul Iquvan* from Ponnani (Sunil 2022: 144). A bilinguist Saidalikkutty Master of Tirur ran it. He also ran another newspaper called *Rafeequl Islam*. Unlike the early magazines, *Swalahul Iquvan* was multipurpose in nature and engaged with scientific and intellectual discussions. It created a wonderful public sphere among the Mappila community. It was run by a registered company named the same; *Swalahul Iquvan*. Muhammed Akram, Pattathil Moideen Kutty, Aniyapurathu Ammu Sahib and Kizhekkam Kunnathu Ahmed were in the director board. *Swalahul Iquvan* was widely accepted among the Mappilas, indicating their engagement with scientific issues (Moulavi and Kareem 1978: 65). *Swalahul Iquvan's* only goal was to promote scientific knowledge and reasoning among Muslims and the Mappila people. Siadalikkutty master translated scientific pieces from English and Arabic publications, including *the Review of Regional Health Magazine* and *Al Muayyad*. When some of the Muslim scholars, like Kaleekara Suhuk Musliyar, argued that those who believe in the new scientific discovery that the earth is in elliptical shape, are *kafirs* (non-believers), Saidalikkutty Master continuously attacked such irrational arguments through the editorial section of his *Swalahul Iquvan* and in support of scientific debate regarding the shape of Earth, Master documented his argument with pictures.

Interestingly, the primary motive behind such magazines and newspapers was to educate the community<sup>13</sup> rather than for business purposes, which is evident from the writings of Makthi Thangal in *Swalahul Iquvan*. Through *Swalahul Iquvan*, Makthi Thangal announced his intention to launch the journal *Nithyajeevan* in 1902. *Swalahul Iquvan* served as a forum for reasoned discourse. *Swalahul Iquvan* also discussed the social and political problems of the Mappilas, along with international politics. It also attempted to provide a reasoned response to the critical essays on Islam penned by Christian missionaries. *Swalahul Iquvan* published two or three editions every month for over eight years.

After *Swalahul Iquvan*, one of the remarkable monthly magazines was Vakkam Maulavi's *Al Islam*, which came into existence in 1917. Vakkam Maulavi engaged in translating the reformative ideas that appeared in magazines like *Al-Manar*, which was run by Egyptian reformer Sayyid Rasheed Rida. Vakkam Maulavi engaged in interpreting the Quran in a new and reformative direction.<sup>14</sup> Apart from Vakkam Maulavi, scholars like M. Muhammed Yousuf Thangal and E. Moidu Maulavi also contributed to *Al Islam*. Unfortunately, the magazine could not continue more than five issues, though *Al Islam* had its own Litho press. However, there was a gigantic impact on the Muslims from the essays that appeared in *Al Islam* especially its reformative ideas, and there was propagation to not read *Al Islam* by many fundamentalists. *Al Islam* discussed many relevant issues among Muslims including women's education, literacy, and the role of leaders in degenerating the values of Islam. Vakkam Maulavi extensively used the Quran and Hadiths for his rational argument, which had a powerful impact on the community. It also engaged in discussing other socially relevant issues (Mangad 2015: 417-419).

<sup>12</sup> No copies of Hidayathul Iquvan or Kerala Pathrika have been located in any archives. Hidayathul Iquvan is profiled in the inaugural edition of *Al-Murshid*, edited by K.M Maulavi. Though the journal's founding year is not given in the article, he says that it was the first Arabimalayalam magazine extensively distributed and read (Maulavi, KM 1935: *Al-Murshid*, Vol 1, issue1).

<sup>13</sup> Based on primary observation.

<sup>14</sup> Which later combined and published in the name of *Thafseerul manaar*.

Under the editorship of E.K Maulavi, *Al Irshad*, a monthly, was began to publish from Eriadu, nearby Kodungalloor in the year of 1923. It was much religious in nature and appealed to the Muslims that the people who are not following the principles of Islam are the reason why Muslims are facing a degeneration. It also argued that Muslims in Kerala have developed fractions among themselves such as *Mappila*, *Ravuthar*, *Pattani* etc. It also discussed the economic marginalisation of Muslims in Kerala. However, after fourteen issues, it ceased (Mangad 2015: 419). Another Arabimalayalam weekly named *Al Islah* was published from Kodungallur in October 1925 with similar style and content. It was also published from *Eriadu* Muhiyudheen Litho Press. The editor of the weekly was the nationalist E. Moidu Maulavi.

In September 1929, *Nisa-ul Islam*, probably one of the earliest magazines for women in the history of Kerala, began to publish under the editorial-ship of K.C. Komukkutty. Haidariya Press published it from Irimblyam (Mangad 2015: 423). Though *Nisa-ul Islam* lasted only for one year and four months, it had great importance in bringing reformative ideas among Muslim women. In the same year, another magazine for women, *Al Hidayah*, was also published from Irimblyam of Malappuram, edited by Hyder Vaidyar. Much of its content was to bring education among the Muslim population and stressed the importance of women's education. In its first issue, the magazine discussed the limitations of Muslim education, especially for women, and the importance of new media in educating the people (Mangad 2009: 5).

*Al Bayan*, a monthly magazine that began to publish in the same year 1929, from Calicut (Naseer 2017: 129) which was set up by A.P Ahmed Musliyar, who was also one of the founding fathers of the Sunni Islamic Education Board named *Samatha Kerala Jam Iyathul Ulama*. *Al Murshid*, a monthly magazine, began to publish in February 1935. Though it is run by *Kerala Jam-iiyathul-Ulma*, it invites special attention when we look Arabimalayalam as a language and its creation of public-sphere. *Al Murshid* was published under the name of Chalilgath Ali Hasan Maulavi as its publisher but was under the editorial-ship of social and religious reformer K.M Maulavi. In its first issue, it said that the reason for publishing *Al Murshid* in Arabimalayalam is for a variety of reasons, including the recognition that the number of Muslims who are familiar with the Malayalam language is quite small. However, they are well-versed in Arabimalayalam, particularly women (Ilias and Hussain 2017; Sunil 2018), who are as well-literate as males (Sunil 2022). But they also justified their religious agenda on the ground that it is difficult to recite and convey the messages of religious texts through Malayalam, which can't represent the exact pronunciation of Arabic, but Arabimalayalam can do it (Mangad 2015: 422). The importance of *Al Murshid* is its engagement with the historical texts. The most important text that talks of Malabar history, and the most old in its historical sense, is Thaufatul Mughahideen, which began to appear in Arabimalayalam only through *Al Murshid*.

Many relevant issues related to Islam have been discussed by *Al Murshid*, though mostly religious, it is within the cultural specificity of Malabar. M.C.C. Ahmed Maulavi translated *Swaheehul Buqari* (Hadith) from its first issue. Interestingly, P.V Muhammed Maulavi's translation of Shaik Thwanthavi Jauhari's *Al Quran va-ulumul Aswareeyaa* (Quran and science) also appeared in *Al Murshid*. Even the freedom fighter Maulana Abdul Kalam Asad's translation also appeared in *Al Murshid*. Unfortunately, in 1939, *Al Murshid* was closed off. In 1949, with the effort of K. M Maulavi, *Al Murshid* began to republish but could not continue more than five issues. In short, there had been much literature in Arabimalayalam especially before the independence in the form of newspapers, magazines etc., though many of the magazines could not continue for a long time. And, a massive growth of such literature was witnessed after 1930s, which invites a fresh attention. Only some information regarding these publications that came before 1930 is available. These magazines include *Al Muallim*, published in 1927 by *Jam-iiyathul Muallim*, but now they have stopped Arabimalayalam articles. Another remarkable monthly magazine was *Al Hidayah*, published from *Irumbilyam* in September 1929 and edited by P.N Haider Vaidyar (Mangad 2015: 424). In other words, "other major Arabimalayalam publications during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century include *Malabar Islam* [1910], *Muslim Vrithantham* [1917], *Khilafat Pthrika* [1921], *Islam Deepam* [1922], *Islam Dhoodan* [1922], *Muslim Aikyam* [1923], *Hidayathu Monthly* [1923], *Shamsul Islam* [1924], *Kerala Chandrika* [1924], *Sarasan* [1925], *Muneerul Islam* [1925], *Malabari* [weekly in 1926]," (Sunil 2022: 145).

## Conclusion

Different aspects of the Mappila community have been studied extensively, but most of the works are historical in character (for instance, Panikkar 1989, Prange 2018). However none of the historical works has consulted Arabimalayalam publications. For an understanding of the anthropological history of Mappilas, Arabimalayalam publications are essential since it is the Arabimalayalam publications that can reveal the meaning of the lifeworld of Mappilas particularly in the past. Maalappaattus help understand the significance of Mappilas' ritual in the Malabar context. Similarly, the newspapers and magazines can help understand the everyday discourse that Mappilas had in the past. But a good number of newspapers and magazines are not readily available though the efforts of two libraries such as C.H Muhammed Koya Library of Calicut University and the library of Mahakavi Moyinkutty Vaidyar Mappila Kala Academy are commendable in terms of their attempt to collect Arabimalayalam documents. The unavailability of these literatures makes the anthropological study difficult. A good number of newspapers and magazines are located in the wealthy or traditionally feudal Mappila families but unable to access them. Many Arabimalayalam documents are also located in the British Library (Kooria 2022). Therefore, Anthropological, Sociological and Historical societies should make an immediate effort to archive these documents systematically to facilitate the social science research on Mappila communities since the language is waning day by day.

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank T. Mansoorali, Yasser Arafath, Abdurahiman Mangad, Thangal, Abdul Sathar and Anwar.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning authorship, the research, and the publication of this article.

### Funding

The author received no financial support for this article's research, authorship and/or publication.

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