



EDUCATION, OCCUPATION AND MODERNITY AMONG MUSLIMS IN KERALA

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Abstract

Education is one of the most powerful variables that determine modernity of a person. Kerala states' educational development is highly popular and it's being called Kerala Model of development. Education of Muslims in India has been the topic of research for academics and policy makers. Many assumptions modernisation theory are being criticised by the sociologists. They propose that instead of a single type of modernity, there are varieties of modernity or multiple modernity featuring some characteristics that are common to entire world along with some particular characteristics specific for specific cultures. The present paper analyses the individual modernity of Muslims in Kerala with respect to their educational level and occupational status and attempts to find out whether there is any hints of multiple modernity or variety of modernity among Muslims in Kerala

INTRODUCTION

Kerala has the distinction of being India's most literate state. Although in terms of literacy the Muslims of Kerala are slightly behind the Hindus and the Christians of the state, they are considerably ahead of Muslims living elsewhere in India. In contrast to north India, where most of India's Muslims live, Kerala boasts numerous Muslim educational institutions, hospitals, orphanages and other such community-based institutions. There is a distinct Malayali/Keralite identity which unites Hindu-Muslim-Christians in a distinct way. Many historical factors contributed for the evolution of this culture. The friendly attitude of Hindu Rajas towards the Arab traders by considering their contribution towards local economy paved way for the spread of Islam in Kerala. Arabs were allowed to build Mosques and to marry local women. The offspring from these are the Mappilas, the Muslims of Malabar. A key aspect contributed to the Kerala Muslim Model is the various reform movements like, communist-movement, anti-caste movement, activities of various Christian organisations etc. The contribution of Islamic reform movement from Nineteenth Century onwards continues to be influential till now. These reformist movements could be able to bridge the gap between 'Ulemas' and the 'modern' educated class (Sikand,2007). Osella and Osella (2007) studied Islamism and social reforms in Kerala. They highlighted the promotion of education by the reformist groups (Mujahids) primarily for understanding the religion itself. According to the reformers majority of the Muslims do *Shirk* (deviation from monotheism) because of their ignorance in religion. In order to understand the religion better, the community realised the importance of rational thought and promoted education. From this reformers now the traditionalists (Sunnis) are also giving importance to formal education for confronting the earlier. The authors mention the starting of schools that taught Islamic subjects along with 'modern' subjects. The reformists engage with the 'modern' -a universalistic rationalising orientation. The literature has placed reformism as a uniquely 'Muslim way to be modern.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is a good amount of literatures related with education and other socio-economic aspect of Muslims in India in general. In these literatures it is mentioned that Kerala Muslims are far advanced than Muslims in the rest of India, especially in North India. Along with the 'Kerala Model' development, the Muslims in the state are also experienced relative development, thanks to the unique historical and socio- political factors. Researchers are encouraging Muslims in other part of the country to emulate this unique 'Kerala model' of Muslim development (Sikand, 2007). It necessitates to study their individual modernity in terms of attitude, since almost all studies have concentrated on macro-societal level. A society which is modernising or trying to engage with modernity, should have individuals with modern outlook to lead them. The present paper focuses on the individual modernity of Muslims in Kerala. It analyses the educational and occupational profiles of Muslims in a Muslim majority district, Malappuram and tries to find out the difference in modernity with respect to formal education received by the respondents and the difference in modernity with respect to the occupation of respondents. It also finds out whether there is any traces of multiple modernity or variety of modernity by analysing the pattern of response to the various items in the modernity tool used for the study. The present study thus is titled as the "education, occupation and modernity among Muslims in Kerala"

FACTORS OF MODERNITY

Briones and Waisanen (1966) found that there is a point of "Modernisation take-off" for attitudinal variables such as aspirations when individuals receive more than five years of schooling. Individuals with two or three years of schooling did



not show any attitudinal difference from those with no education. He showed that the indicators of modernization rose proportionately with further education.

Kahl (1968) studied modernity in Mexico and Brazil as part of developing a measurement scale of modernism. The result showed that amount of formal schooling a man has is the most powerful variable that determine his modernity. And it was found that modernity increased proportionately for additional years of schooling. This study established convincingly that there is a strong relationship between formal education and modernity.

Holsinger and Inkeles (1974) further showed the causal link between schooling and increased modernity in their study in Brasilia.

The “individual modernity” paradigm, which grew out of the study of developing countries, argued that modern experiences, such as schooling and participation in modern economic activities, help produce values and attitudes regardless of cultural backgrounds of a given society (wang, 2011).

Processes like urbanisation, industrialisation and spread of education results in the movement of more and more people to the cities, and leaving farming to manufacturing, managerial and service jobs.

As far as settlement is concerned, Kerala state is unique as compared to rest of the country. In Kerala, in most of its part, it is a continuous spread of habitation without much open lands or fields separating habitation. It gives the colour of urbanisation in the state. There is no much variation regarding the infrastructure facilities available for rural and urban population, especially in the case of access to educational and health care facilities. It is reported that in Malappuram district, a wide variation between share of urban population in 2001 and 2011 is seen. The district had only less than 10 percent people living in urban area in 2001 which has now risen to a much higher level of 44.19 percent mainly on account of formation of 39 new census towns in 2011 (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011>).

MODERNITY VERSUS MULTIPLE MODERNITY

Many assumptions of modernisation theory, say for e.g. 1) ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ as mutually exclusive phenomenon, 2) all the social change happening outside the west occurs as a consequence solely of the impact of the west, 3) the belief that modernity is replacing tradition would have the same effect across the globe etc. are being criticised by the sociologists. The idea of a linear assumption for modernisation theory is also been criticised. Modernity outside the Europe claims that even though it does not follow the European trajectory of modernisation, it leads to form complexity of modernity. These societies were not that traditional as said by western modernists and they were also in the developmental path transforming their own cultural and intuitional contexts (www2.warwick.ac.uk).

Critics of this unidirectional, linear type of modernisation argue that since the modernisation movement started as a result of Enlightenment and European renaissance, it is suitable for western culture and civilisation. They propose that instead of a single type of modernity there are varieties of modernity or ‘multiple modernity’ featuring some characteristics that are common to entire world along with some particular characteristics specific for respective cultures.

Multiple modernity is a new theory of modernity. It does not believe that modernity is a single pattern derived from west. It is essentially a critique of classical theory of modernisation. Based on evidences, multiple modernists argue against classical modernists that modernisation does not lead to a unification and convergence of social structures. There are many modernities, not only a single pattern of modernisation (Eisenstad, 2007).

Multiple Modernities does not assume that global modernity is derived from the West as a single pattern and does not describe a plurality of societal structures. Multiple Modernities has to be understood as a critique of the classical theory of modernization. We have evidence that modernization does not lead to a unification and convergence of social structures. Therefore, modernization is neither a way towards evolutionary universals, nor is it based on them. Multiple Modernities is a structural change that continuously modifies belief-systems and their implementation in a process of translation. There are many modernities, not only one single pattern of modernization.



RELIGION AND MODERNITY

Early sociologists had predicted that the forces of modernization would result in the secularization of society: the inevitable and irreversible erosion of traditional religious commitments. Yet religion clearly "survives" and even flourishes in modern secular societies; in fact, throughout history religious traditions and institutions have shown a remarkable resiliency and ability to adapt to changing social conditions. Thus the question of how religion and modernity intersect is far from settled and continues to be a major concern within the sociology. The strategy adopted by religion to deal with modernity is accommodation and resistance. Religion accommodates many elements of secular life and thereby reduces the tension between the two. At the same time it upholds many of its traditional religious way of life. But some religious communities observe strong resistance to modernity by setting itself a radical alternative to modernity in many ways. For example, the basic needs of its members like job, residence and spouse etc. will be met within the confines of the community (Davidman, 1990)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the educational profile of Muslims in Malappuram district
2. To understand the occupational profile of Muslims in Malappuram District
3. To find out the overall modernity of Muslims in Malappuram District.
4. To study whether there is a significant difference in the modernity constructs of Muslim community based on the following status factors:
 - a. Educational status
 - b. Occupational status
5. To study whether there is a trend of multiple modernity among Muslims in Kerala

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in modernity scores of the respondents with respect their educational status
2. There is no significant difference in modernity scores of the respondents with respect to their occupational status.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Data collection

Muslims in Malappuram district, one of the Muslim majority district in Kerala is selected as the universe of the study. Data from 431 randomly selected Muslim respondents; aged 25-40 from twenty four election wards of 10 Panchayats and one municipality in Malappuram district of Kerala State in India is used for the study. Respondents aged 25 to 40 were selected from the 2011 Socio Economic and Caste Census of Kerala. A total of 4310 respondents were listed from the wards and its 10% is randomly selected for the study.

Instrument used for data collection

Data was collected through interview method using the social economic and educational survey schedule and Individual Modernity Scale (1975) by Alex Inkeles and SK Singh

VARIABLES

1. **Educational status:** it is the formal level of education the respondent has received. It is categorised as

- 1) Illiterates
- 2) Primary - 1- 4th standard
- 3) Middle(Elementary) - 5th -7th standard
- 4) Secondary - 8th-10th Standard
- 5) Higher Secondary - 11th - 12th standard
- 6) Graduation(Liberal Arts) - BA/ B.Sc./ B.Com
- 7) Professional Graduation - BE/B.Tech/M.B.B.S/B.V.Sc/ B.Sc Agriculture
- 8) Post-Graduation
- 9) Research - M.Phil. / Ph.D.



2. **Occupation:** it is the major job a person is engaged in.

The following Classification of Occupation will be used for analysing occupational mobility:

- 1) Manual Labour
- 2) Last grade
- 3) Skilled Labour
- 4) Clerical
- 5) Business III (Small Business)
- 6) Business II Medium Business)
- 7) Teachers
- 8) Business I (Big Business)
- 9) Professionals(Doctor, Engineers, Lawyers, Architects, Lecturers)
- 10) Administration (MPs and MLAs).

(Based on Sovani & Pradhan (1955))

3. **Modernity**

Modernity is a personality and attitudinal trait necessary for the overall development of an individual. It is conceived as a syndrome of attitude, value orientation and behavioural patterns of the individual (Inkeles and Smith, 1974). Modern man is considered to be prepared to accept new ideas, new ways of feeling and acting and the changes in social organization. He will possess educational and occupational aspirations, self-confidence and traits of work ethics which may express in varieties of forms (Govanakoppa, 2011).

Modernity of the respondent is studied by using **Individual modernity Scale (Inkeles and Singh, 1975):** The modernity scale is a five-point Likert scale with dimensions: **Personality, Socio- cultural, Political and Health.** Each dimension has five themes. Each theme comprises five items so that there are 100 items in the tool. Maximum score for one item is 5. So maximum for the tool is 500. A score of 300 and below is considered as traditional and a score above 300 is considered as modern.

Multiple modernity is analysed by the response pattern towards selected items in the modernity tool.

1. Man has progressed because of his powers. He has invented medicines for diseases, and seeds and fertilizer for agriculture; he has invented railway and aeroplane for transport. Man has progressed because of his own efforts and not because of God and prayers.
2. The main reason for difficulties and worries of a person is his own mistakes and not his fate.
3. Social and religious customs, which are becoming costly and causing economic strain should be discarded even if they are old and sacred.
4. God has not created man. Man has slowly evolved from animals in millions of years
5. All religions should be respected, but I believe that my religion is better than other religions

OBJECTIVE 1

To understand the educational profile of Muslims in Malappuram district

Count		EDUCATIONAL STATUS								Total
		PRIMARY	MIDDLE	SECNDRY	PLUS TWO	GRADUATE	PROFESSION AL	POST GRADUATE	RESEARCH	
GENDER	MALE	1	25	99	57	23	9	16	1	231
	FEMALE	0	8	85	74	26	4	3	0	200
Total		1	38	176	131	58	13	19	1	431

Educational profile of Muslims in Malappuram district shows that there are no illiterate respondents among them. Barring one primary educated male, remaining respondents are educated at middle school level and above. It reflects the Kerala states



unique achievement in literacy. An analysis into the gender differentials in education reveals that at the higher secondary and graduate level girls have slight advantage than boys. Kerala state is having highest gender development index in the country (Mitra and Singh, 2007). Educational achievement is one of the important factor counted for calculating human development index. Men have more advantage at education above graduation level. Marriage and less preference for labour force participation are the important possible reason for this (Menon, 1979). Poor labour force participation of women in Kerala is reported by many researchers and it is a paradox to Kerala model development.

OBJECTIVE 2

To understand the occupational profile of Muslims in Malappuram District

	No Job	Manual	Last Grade	Small Business	Skilled	Clerical	Medium Business	School Teacher	Professional	Total
Male		38	6	34	89	35	3	10	16	231
Female	170	1	2	0	0	5	0	12	5	200

Occupational profile of respondents reveals that a major proportion of men are doing skilled job; wiring, plumbing, masonry, driving, tailoring. Then a good proportion is doing manual job. 14% men are involved in small business; street vendor, petty shop owner, tea stall, etc. 7% men are in professional job; engineers, doctors, CEOs, college lecturer etc. 4% men are teachers.

Out of 200 women, 170 are doing no job other than household duties. The labour force participation of women in Kerala is the lowest among other states in India. Kerala state is hailed for its high level of female literacy, custom of matrilineal inheritance, political achievement regarding decentralised governance and commitment towards social welfare, high levels of life expectancy, low infant mortality and cohesive social structure promoting effective interpersonal channels of communication (Bhatt and Rajan: 1990; Kannan: 1990; Kumar: 1995). These achievements obtained it the 'Kerala-Model' of development. But paradoxically to this model, participation of the women in the labour force has been consistently on a decline (Mitra and Singh, 2007). The gulf money effect called by Mazumder and Guruswamy (2006) as 'income effect' may be the reason for the low level of labour participation of women.

OBJECTIVE 3

To find out the overall modernity of Muslims in Malappuram District

Education	Modernity(Mean Score)	N
Up to Secondary	249	218
Plus Two	261	131
Graduation	308	49
Post-Graduation	331	33
Total	266	431

Personality Modernity	Health Modernity	Political Modernity	Socio-Cultural Modernity
70.09/125	96.18/125	92.61/125	88.25/125

The above tables shows that there is an overall modernity score of 345. It means that the respondents are modern since a score of 300 and above in considered as modern by Inkeles and Singh. Dimension wise analysis reveals that they are modern in all dimensions except personality modernity. Each dimension is having 5 sub themes and each sub themes contains 5 items. So 25 items and 125 the total score for a dimension. A score of 75 and above is considered modern. Overall personality modernity score is 70. So respondents are not modern in this dimension. Further analysis into the sub-themes shows that in Rationality sub-themes their average is 2.1, in Locus of Control it is 2.65 and in Aspiration sub themes it is 2.43. So we can see that in between modernity, traditional mind set also prevails.

OBJECTIVE 4

To study whether there is a significant difference in the modernity constructs of Muslim community based on the following status factors:



- a. Educational status
b. Occupational status
- a. **Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in modernity scores of the respondents with respect their educational status

ANOVA					
Overall Modernity					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	290037.050	3	96679.017	112.542	.000
Within Groups	366813.470	427	859.048		
Total	656850.520	430			

There was a significant difference of level of education on the modernity score of respondents.
F (3,427) =112.54, P<0.01. Hence null hypothesis is rejected.

One-Way Anova and Post-Hoc analysis shows that there is significant difference (at .05) in the modernity scores of the respondents for all the educational groups. With the help of descriptive analysis we can see that higher the educational status, more the modernity of the respondents. Here secondary and below group scored lowest modernity score among the groups and professional and post graduate groups scored highest.

- b. **Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in modernity score of the respondents with respect to their occupation

Occupation Category	N	Mean
GROUP 1	167	256.29
GROUP 2	11	274.09
GROUP 3	83	306.47
Total	261	273.00

ANOVA					
Overall Modernity					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	139637.209	2	69818.604	61.745	.000
Within Groups	291735.787	258	1130.759		
Total	431372.996	260			

There was a significant difference of occupation on the scores of modernity of respondents.
F (2,258) = 61.74, P<0.01. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected.

Occupation of the respondents has been regrouped into three groups by considering the nature of work, education and skill involved and the status of occupation in the society. Accordingly manual, last grade jobs, small business are grouped together into Group 1. People doing skilled labour and medium business are grouped into Group2 and people doing clerical job, teachers and professionals are grouped into group3.

One-Way Anova shows that there is significant difference in modernity across occupation groups at .05 significance level. Post-Hoc analysis shows that group3 is significantly different in their modernity score with group1 and group 2. There is no significant difference among group1 and group2 with respect to their modernity score. Group3 people comprises respondents having relatively higher education and the nature of their job is more organised than other two groups.

OBJECTIVE 5

To study the trend of multiple modernity among Muslims in Kerala

From the descriptive analysis it is revealed that the respondents are traditional in personality dimension of modernity. In order to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, five items are selected which are having direct relationship with belief system.



Item 1

Man has progressed because of his powers. He has invented medicines for diseases, and seeds and fertilizer for agriculture; he has invented railway and aeroplane for transport. Man has progressed because of his own efforts and not

For the above question, about 95% said either strongly disagree or disagree. That means they are not agreeing that human being can progress only because of their effort and intelligence. To put other way, they are of the opinion that human beings cannot progress without the support of supernatural power, God. Out of 58 graduates, 54 have the same opinion. Same is the case for professional and post graduates. Here we can say that irrespective of their education respondents are sticking to their belief in god. It is contrary to the theories of modernity and secularisation.

Item 2

The main reason for difficulties and worries of a person is his own mistakes and not his fate.

Here also respondents are of the opinion that even if there is no personal mistake committed, there may be difficulties and worries in once life. 90% are disagreeing the statement on the ground that hardships in life are coming from the supernatural power to test their belief. Irrespective of their education this pattern of response could be seen.

Item 3

Social and religious customs, which are becoming costly and causing economic strain should be discarded even if they are old and sacred

Here the response is heterogeneously distributed. 51% of the respondents are in favour of discarding social and religious customs which are making economic strains. 15% restrained from responding. 32% respondents are against discarding social and religious customs.

Item 4

God has not created man. Man has slowly evolved from animals in millions of years

98% respondents are believing in creation. Irrespective of their education they are agreeing the statement. It is against theories of modernity and secularisation.

Item 5

All religions should be respected, but I believe that my religion is better than other religions

98% respondents believes that their religion is the best religion. It is not a modern attitude by the theory of modernity. Irrespective education almost all the respondents responded similarly.

DISCUSSION

From the study it is revealed that Muslims in Kerala possess overall individual modernity while holding traditional psychological characteristics in some aspects of individual modernity. From the demographic analysis, it is seen that they are also progressed in education along with the “Kerala Model” of development. There is no illiterate among 25-40years aged group. Barring one primary educated male, all are educated middle and above level of formal education. If we look education in gender perspective, more girls are there at higher secondary and graduation level. But above graduation it is more Muslim men than women. Another important demographic characteristic labour force participation of Muslim women. Very few Muslim women enter in labour force.

The claim of modernity thesis is that as education goes higher, so the modernity of people. It is partially correct among Muslims in Kerala. There is significant difference in overall modernity score with respect to the level of education and occupational status. But if we analyse dimension wise, they are modern in three dimensions considered in the Individual Modernity tool by Alex Inkeles and RK Singh. These are Political Modernity, Health Modernity and Socio-Cultural Modernity. In Personal Modernity dimension they are more of traditional.

Insight from this lead to item wise analysis on some selected items. This analysis revealed that there are some modernity items for which respondents have given almost same response. Level of education could not influence this pattern of responding. The items selected are related with belief and religiosity. Here we can see a trend of accommodation of modern values along with stiff resistance to change some value system, especially religious belief. Davidman (1990) said that the strategy adopted by religion to deal with modernity is accommodation and resistance. Religion accommodates many elements of secular life and thereby reduces the tension between the two. At the same time it upholds many of its traditional religious way of life.

Critics of unidirectional, linear type of modernisation argues that since the modernisation movement started as a result of enlightenment and European renaissance, it is suitable for western culture and civilisation. They propose that instead of a



single type of modernity there are varieties of modernity or 'multiple modernity' featuring some characteristics that are common to entire world along with some particular characteristics specific for respective cultures. Peter L. Berger says that there is some secularising effect of modernisation and this very effect created a counter- secularising movement. As a result, the present world is furiously religious as it was before. He went on to call the assumption that we are living in a secular world as false. The body of literature made by historians and social scientist loosely labelled as 'secularisation theory' is essentially a mistaken one (Berger, 1999).

The present paper shows that within the larger formulations of modernity, the scope for an alternative forms of modernity is emerging.

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