

Yatheem Khanas¹ and Human Development: A Study in the Context of Kerala

- Mubashir VP

Introduction

Post-modernism emerged breaking the fetters of biased colonial hegemony and thus approached the discipline of religion in positive and constructive ways. Earlier, religions were perceived as sine qua non of violence and social decadence and, hence, both occidental and oriental scholars demanded gradual weaning away of religion from public space. This rigid concept of putting religions in dock for all social discords was the erroneous contribution of Post-Enlightenment Europe, which lied witness to religion based social and moral suppression under papacy. This apathy towards religion later on crept into social theories and deprived religion of their real constructive agency in mobilizing the faithful communities.

The Functionalist Perspective on Religion, which originates from Emile Durkheim's work on religion, highlights the social role of religion and this study served as trailblazer. Later scholars like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, after Iranian Revolution of 1979, Judith Butler acknowledged the prominence of religion in social formation. Likewise, works of Edward Said, Talal Asad and Barbara Metcalf proved in emancipating the oriental Muslim world from the shrewd constructs of being a lethargic, lagged community due to the fanatical performance of Islam. These studies reinvigorated the exploration into positive role of religion in social mobilization and conflict resolution. As result religions especially Islam among Oriental community was accorded pivotal role in making and unmaking of broader frameworks of communities. Rolland Miller, Francis Robinson and CK Kareem highlighted the role of Islam in the social formation of Mappila community. Francis Robinson after thorough analysis of 'Varieties of South Asian Islam' asserted the unsurmountable presence of Islam in the development of respective regions.

Kerala is exemplar evidence for the religion backed social development and this fact is undeniably true among Muslims and Christians of the state. According to local lore, Islam made its foray into Kerala well during the life time of Prophet. Later on Kerala witnessed Sufi led Islamization, a stark contrast from its north Indian counterpart where religion acted as administrative power.

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¹Throughout the article Yatheem Khanas are expressed in wider perspective. According to state government documents Yatheem Khanas are the institutions providing certain amenities for fixed number of intakes as orphans or from destitute families. But in reality Yatheem Khanas are educational and cultural centres grew around the historical mission of protecting the disadvantaged sections of society. Only when we approach these institutes in this broader framework the article could give moral vindication for their wider role in society.

Muslims contributed immensely to the social, economic and cultural fabric of Kerala society. Faith motivated collective zeal was the principal motive for the advance of Kerala Muslims. Incidentally, religious community promoted institutions like educational hubs, religious and cultural centers, recreational resources and support mechanisms to an extent helped Kerala Muslim community to tide over the vicissitudes of time.

Religiously, Muslim's inherent virtue of charity and philanthropy helped achieve inclusive development. What helped Kerala Muslim community to form largely even, egalitarian society is often answered with the widespread charity highly recommended by Islam.² These activities of donation supported the destitute, orphans, chronically ill, widows and other weaker sections of society to escape the isolation and optimally utilize their human resources. Built for various reasons and for different sections, Yatheem Khana institutions have made stupendous contribution for the development of disadvantaged sections of community.³ Yatheem Khanas that sprang the length and breadth of the Kerala helped both community and state to tread new path of social cohesion and development.

This article has been divided into two parts: first part deals with theoretical analysis of faith based actions in Islam with special focus of Yatheem Khana. Second part is devoted to comprehensive study on contributions of Yatheem Khana in social development in the context of Kerala.

PART ONE

Theoretical analysis of faith based actions for social development in the perspective of Islam

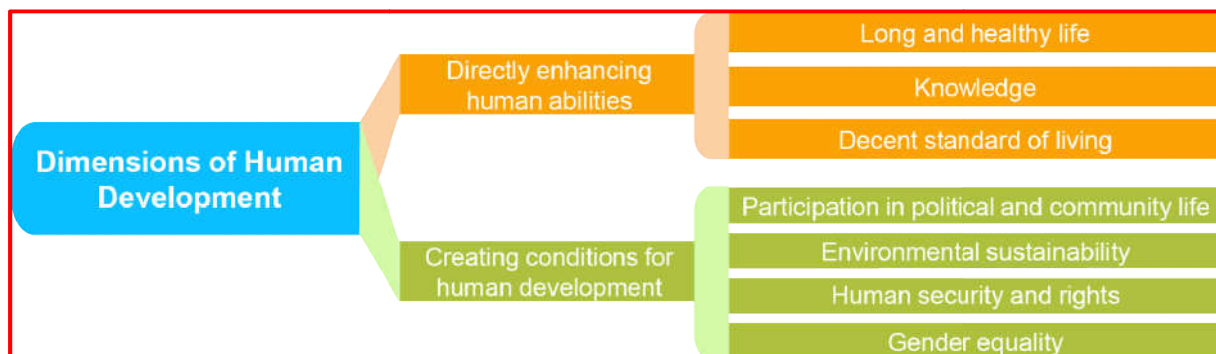
Economic concept is an obsolete concept to study the progress of individual and community. According to Sustainable Development Goals, developed by UNDP, development should be all encompassing and this precisely is incongruence with the modern concept of human development. UNDP defines human development as:

“Human development approach focuses on improving the lives people lead rather than assuming that economic growth will lead, automatically, to greater opportunities for all. Income growth is an important means to development, rather than an end in itself. Human development is about giving people more freedom and opportunities to live lives they value. In effect this means developing people's abilities and giving them a chance to use them. For example, educating a girl would build her skills, but it is of little use if she is denied access to jobs, or does not have the skills for the local labor market. The diagram below looks at aspects of human development that are foundational (that is they are a fundamental part of human development); and aspects that are more contextual (that is they help to create the conditions that allow people to flourish). Three foundations for human development are to live a healthy and creative life, to be knowledgeable, and to have access to resources needed

²Usman. M. Voluntary Service Movement and Kerala Muslims, in Sira, Souvenir of Seethi Sahib Cultural Centre, Kodyathour, Calicut, 2002, p.3 1 - 34

³ Chandra Mohan. P, Growth of Social Reform Movements in Kerala, in Cheriyan P.J (Ed), Perspectives on Kerala History, Vol. 11 Part 11, p. 461, 199

for a decent standard of living. Many other aspects are important too, especially in helping to create the right conditions for human development, such as environmental sustainability or equality between men and women.”⁴

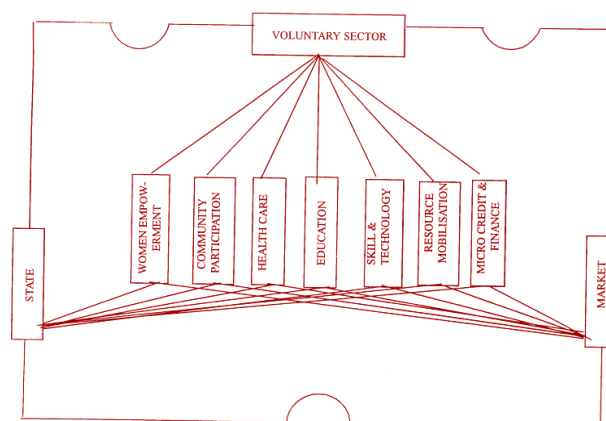


Faith based organizations, voluntary organizations, pressure groups etc. are universally acknowledged as potent tools for alternative social development having far reaching effects. These informal associations can pierce into areas untouched by administrative exigencies or inefficiency.

Voluntary agencies and human development

Democracy, the most popular form governance today, itself means limited government. In a vast and diverse country like India it is a Himalayan task to reach out to all strata of communities and attend to their needs and aspirations. This vacuum of governance is supposed to be overcome by active engagement of voluntary organizations popularly known as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The role of voluntary agencies in ensuring inclusive human development is globally recognized after studying impressive works done by these organizations in various parts of the world furthering the social causes. Realizing this constructive role of these extra-constitutional bodies state machinery gradually assume the role of ‘enabler’ where interested parties can contribute for the development of society. Citizen partnership would excite manifold positive consequences in the long run.

Interface of voluntary organization in promoting the human resource development in collaboration with government and market has been given below:



⁴<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/what-human-development>. Retrieved on 15/11/2018

"Voluntary organization, according to Beveridge, is an organization which, whether its workers are paid or unpaid, is initiated and governed by its own members without external control".⁵

The World Bank defines NGOs as private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.⁶ NGOs include charitable and religious associations that mobilize private funds for development, distribute food and family planning services and promote community organization. They also include independent cooperatives, community associations, water user societies, women's groups and pastoral associations. Citizens Groups that raise awareness and influence policy are also part of this.

To be considered part of the *non-profit sector* the entity must be:

- **Organisational** – an institution with some meaningful structure and permanence;
- **Non-governmental** – not part of the apparatus of government;
- **Non-profit-distributing** – not permitted to distribute profits to its owners or directors. They are required to be ploughed back in the organisation
- **Self-governing** – not controlled by some entity outside the organisation; and
- **Supportive** of some public purpose.

Classification of voluntary agencies

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are part of the development processes of our country. Based on the approaches they adopt and the priority they give, voluntary agencies have been classified into seven categories by J. B. Singh.⁷

1. Charity: Giving food, clothing, medicine, alms in cash and in kind, buildings etc.
2. Welfare: Providing facilities for education, health, drinking water, roads, communications, etc.
3. Relief: Responding to call of duties during natural calamities like floods, drought, earthquakes, and man-made calamities like refugee influx, ravages of war.
4. Rehabilitation: Continuing and follow up of the work in areas struck by calamities and starting activities that are durable in nature.
5. Services: Building up infrastructure in depressed backward areas.

⁵ Beveridge S.W.H, Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advances, London, 1946 and Voluntary Action in a Changing World, National Council of Social Services, Bedford Squares Press, London, 1979. p19

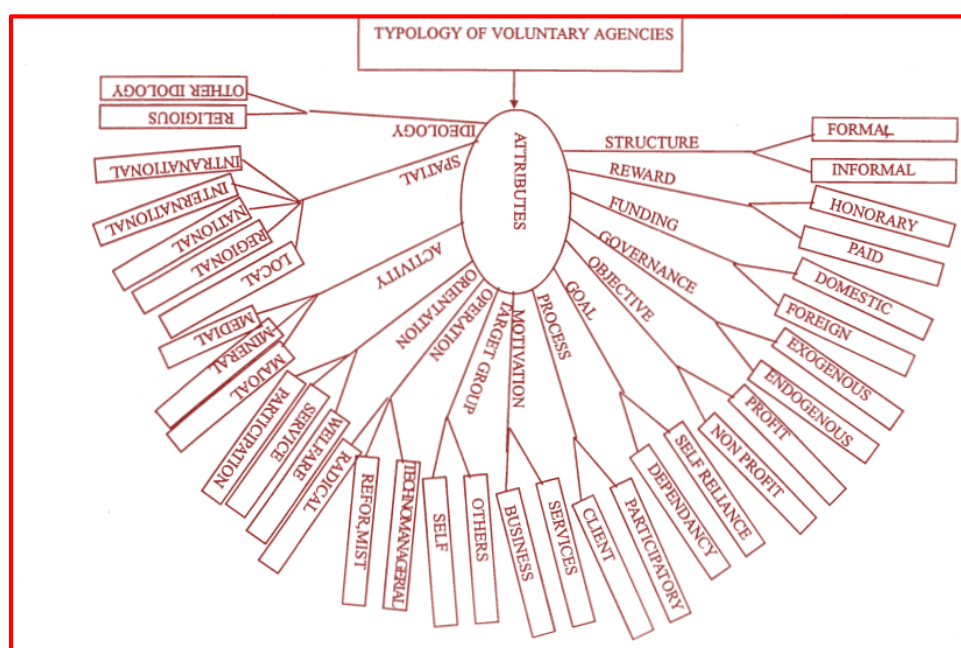
⁶ World Bank, A Practical Guide to Operational Collaboration between The World Bank and Non-governmental Organizations, March 1995, p7

⁷ Singh, J.B, Yojana, November 1984, p. 46, as quoted by I.S. Sundaram in Voluntary Agencies and Rural Development, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1986, p. 66.

Indian NGOs mainly comes under three segments – Societies, Trusts, Charitable Companies.

1. **Societies:** Societies have to register under The societies Registration Act, 1860.
2. **Trusts:** Private trusts are registered under the central government’s Indian Trusts Act, 1882, and public ones are registered under the state legislation concerned.
3. **Charitable companies:** They are set up according to section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. For charitable companies, the compliance requirements are high, as loans and advances are easily available to them compared to a trust or a society. They have to even pay Income tax under IT act 1961.

Various aspects of voluntary agencies working in multicultural society have been given below.



Faith based actions for social development: an ontological analysis from the perspective of Islam

Religion plays key role in social cohesion and disintegration just like any ideology has either constructive or destructive means. To limit religion into rigorous spiritual exercise divorcing from the social realities is basically a flawed concept and unjust reductionism vis-à-vis religion. This is categorically true in case of Islam which was revealed as comprehensive path for better life in this life and after life and champions balanced moderate life.⁸Shahab Ahmed while defining ‘what is Islam’ has highlighted the social aspects of Islam.⁹Maududi is also of the view that Islam is the ultimate path of truth and guidance for entire humanity.

⁸ Thus, We have made you a justly balanced community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you (Surat Al-Baqarah 2:143). The justly balanced (wasat) in reality is the furthest point between two extremes. There is no doubt that the two poles of excess and extravagance are destructive, so to be moderate in character is to be furthest from them, which is to be just and virtuous (Source: al-Tafsīr-al-Kabīr 2:143).

⁹Shahab Ahmed, What Is Islam? – The Importance of Being Islamic, Princeton University Press, pp13-18

“According to Mawdudi Islam encompasses all aspects of life, which includes faith, worship, morality, social, economic and political life. Islam provides guidance to man from the day of his birth till his death. It also provides guidance in matters of war and peace, national and international affairs. Therefore, Islam is a complete and comprehensive way of life”.¹⁰

Islamic literatures primarily Quran and Hadith enjoined the faithful for the construction of egalitarian and just society.

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards the east or the west, but (true) righteousness is (in) one who believe in Allah, the last day, the angels, the books and the Prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller, those who ask (for help) and for freeing slaves (and who) establishes prayer and gives Zakah (those who) fulfill their promise and (those who) are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. These are the ones who have been true and it is those who are the righteous.”¹¹

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with him and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed Allah doesn't love those who are self-deluding and boastful.”¹²

*“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.”*¹³

Yatheem Khana or orphanages: Important sector of voluntary mobilization

Historically, an orphanage was a residential institution, or group home, devoted to the care of orphans and other children who were separated from their biological families. Examples of what would cause a child to be placed in orphanages are when the biological parents were deceased, the biological family was abusive to the child, there was substance abuse or mental illness in the biological home that was detrimental to the child, or the parents had to leave to work elsewhere and were unable or unwilling to take the child. The role of legal responsibility for the support of children whose parent(s) have died or are otherwise unable to provide care differs internationally.¹⁴

Universally a policy shift could be seen as state machineries receding from this social obligation leaving the vacuum dominated by volunteer agencies or private business entities. 1990s witness storm over the efficiency of fondling homes.¹⁵ Researchers skeptical about the performance of orphanages argued psychological retardation of inmates when compared to their counterparts living with parents. The debate provided new insights to the functioning of

¹⁰ Muhammad Rafiuddin Farooqui, The Political Thought of Maulana Mawdudi, p5

¹¹ Chapter 2, Verse 177

¹² Chapter 4, Verse 36

¹³ Al-Maidah, 5:2

¹⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orphanage>

¹⁵ In the middle of 1990s there was a controversy among the social scientists regarding the desirability of these institutions. It came to be known as the "storm over orphanages". The Time Magazine and 'Newsweek' highlighted this controversy in several of their issue.

orphanages and subsequently proven although few institutions end up in stigmatizing the inmates its sweeping generalization is ethically and practically wrong.

In Kerala context orphanages have larger dimensions beyond safeguarding the interests of orphans and the destitute. The Board of Control for Orphanages and other Charitable Homes in Kerala has been established as per State Government Gazette for the supervision and control of Homes in the State. As per the Orphanages and Other Charitable Homes (Supervision and Control) Act 1960- "home" means an institution, whether called an orphanage, a home for neglected women or children, a widow's home, or by any other name, maintained or intended to be maintained for the reception, care, protection and welfare of women or children.

The category of homes functioning under the Orphanage Control Board are as follows:-

- Foundling Homes
- Home for Children and Orphanages
- Home for Women in Distress
- Old Age Homes
- Home for Differently Abled
- Beggar Homes
- Others (Home for destitutes, Psychosocial rehabilitation centers for Mentally ill persons, Home for Cancer patients, Home for children of HIV +ve patients, Pain & Palliative Care centers, etc.

Detailed information of various care homes working in Kerala has been given below. This data is taken from **Report on NPI-Orphanage / Care home Survey 2013-14**, conducted by **Survey Design Division Directorate of Economics & Statistics, April 2016**, Government of Kerala.

Table NO.1. District wise number of orphanages in Kerala

Sl No	Name of District	No of Care homes/Orphanages	Percentage
1	Kasargode	70	3.10
2	Kannur	154	6.81
3	Wayanad	98	4.34
4	Kozhikode	122	5.40
5	Malappuram	136	6.02
6	Palakkad	164	7.26
7	Thrissur	260	11.50
8	Eranakulam	383	16.95
9	Idukki	151	6.68
10	Kottayam	238	10.53
11	Alappuzha	93	4.11
12	Pathanamthitta	91	4.03
13	Kollam	101	4.47
14	Thiruvananthapuram	199	8.80
	Total	2260	100

District wise No. of Care Homes in Kerala by Type of Institution

Sl No	District	Type of Institution					Total
		Govt	Institution run by NGO's			Proprietorship	
			under SJD	under OCB	Unrecognized		
1	Kasaragod	11	13	35	9	2	70
2	Kannur	5	17	129	1	2	154
3	Wayanad	4	24	56	10	4	98
4	Kozhikkode	15	27	68	11	1	122
5	Malappuram	7	27	89	9	4	136
6	Palakkad	7	29	107	17	4	164
7	Thrissur	13	60	166	13	8	260
8	Ernakulam	21	89	219	44	10	383
9	Idukki	6	35	74	10	26	151
10	Kottayam	7	47	160	16	8	238
11	Alappuzha	6	16	63	4	4	93
12	Pathanamthitta	4	22	52	9	4	91
13	Kollam	10	29	41	6	15	101
14	Thiruvananthapuram	20	42	108	14	15	199
Total		136	477	1367	173	107	2260

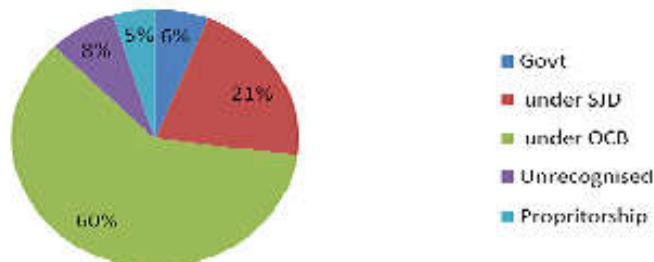
* SJD - Social Justice Department

* OCB -Orphanage Control Board

* NGO -Non Governmental Organisation

Table No 2: district wise number of care homes by category of institution

Carehomes/Orphanages according to control under different agencies

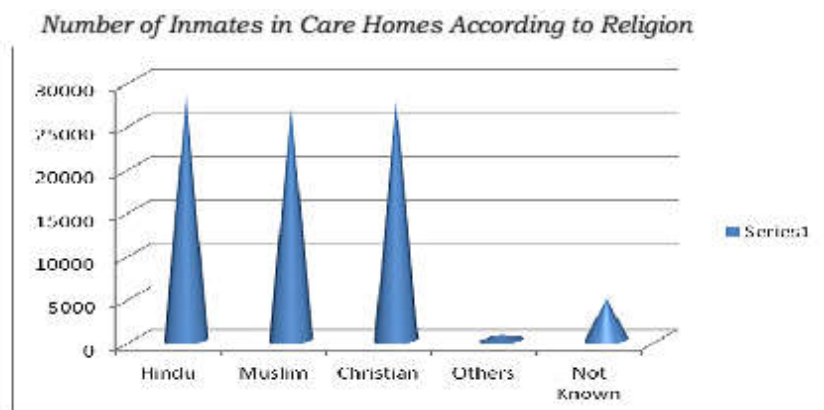


Sl No	District	Category Of Institution					Total
		for Children	for Disabled	for Old Age	for Women	for Others	
1	Kasaragod	41	9	16	3	1	70
2	Kannur	85	22	35	7	5	154
3	Wayanad	60	17	15	6	0	98
4	Kozhikkode	76	13	23	5	5	122
5	Malappuram	112	9	7	5	3	136
6	Palakkad	104	19	32	4	5	164
7	Thrissur	133	36	78	10	3	260
8	Ernakulam	160	73	115	19	16	383
9	Idukki	101	20	18	9	3	151
10	Kottayam	105	45	69	10	9	238
11	Alappuzha	46	16	23	4	4	93
12	Pathanamthitta	42	16	28	5	0	91
13	Kollam	59	15	20	5	2	101
14	Thiruvananthapuram	96	32	42	10	19	199
Total		1220	342	521	102	75	2260

District wise No. of Care Homes in Kerala run by Religious Organizations

Sl No	District	Religion				Non Religious
		Hindu	Christian	Muslim	Total	
1	Kasaragod	3	13	25	41	29
2	Kannur	3	83	39	125	29
3	Wayanad	2	61	11	74	24
4	Kozhikkode	3	35	46	84	38
5	Malappuram	2	11	100	113	23
6	Palakkad	6	59	57	122	42
7	Thrissur	15	158	27	200	60
8	Ernakulam	18	224	31	273	110
9	Idukki	4	97	1	102	49
10	Kottayam	3	193	6	202	36
11	Alappuzha	4	56	6	66	27
12	Pathanamthitta	5	58	1	64	27
13	Kollam	5	35	15	55	46
14	Thiruvananthapuram	7	97	19	123	76
Total		80	1180	384	1644	616

Religion	No of care homes/Orphanages	Percentage
Hindu	80	3.5
Christian	1180	52.2
Muslim	384	17.0
Non religious	616	27.3
Total	2260	100



PART TWO

Yatheem Khanas and human development: A comprehensive study in Kerala context

Yatheem Khanas are fondling home or care homes run by Muslim voluntary agencies for the development for various sections of community like orphans, destitute, widows, terminally ill etc. kick started after devastating Mappila Rebellion of 1921 this movement got wider currency among Muslim community of Kerala. Reform movements spearheaded by leaders of various factions accentuated the pace voluntary mobilization of community resources for the comprehensive development of Muslims. These expedient efforts helped the community

to actively participate in post-independence development of the state along with sustaining religious and cultural identity.

The researcher has many constraints while dealing with Yatheem Khanas and primarily is data crunch. Non availability of coordinated data of various Muslim orphanages makes the study a cumbersome task and necessitates overdependence on government provided data base. Lack of coordination seems to dissipate the wider importance of these institutions in the society. However limited data has been given below on some important aspects of Yatheem Khanas.

Table No 3: Community wise initiative of social welfare institutions in Kerala

Sl. No.	Community	No. of Orphanages and Social Welfare Institutions	Percentage of Total
1.	Christians	597	72.27
2.	Muslims	198	23.97
3.	Hindus	20	2.42
4.	Others	11	1.33
	Total	826	100

Table No 4: category of institution wise numbers of inmates in care home according to religious and social groups

Sl. No	General Category of Institution	Religion										Social Group											
		Hindu		Muslim		Christian		Others		Not Known		Total	SC		ST		OBC		Others		Not Known		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	Children	5219	8668	15737	7871	4100	7927	78	183	620	572	50975	1374	2093	1034	1982	17794	12555	4293	7491	1223	1136	50975
2	Disabled	3066	2910	770	479	2938	3665	82	38	1373	665	15986	317	361	44	143	1916	1702	3705	4241	2247	1310	15986
3	Old Age	2474	3471	410	363	1975	4566	88	68	265	255	13935	125	253	60	72	1709	2684	2486	4711	827	1008	13935
4	Women	0	1225	0	381	0	1415	0	47	0	267	3335	0	166	0	52	0	849	0	1610	0	658	3335
5	Others	751	565	488	370	486	456	28	15	420	382	3961	57	57	10	5	971	757	538	458	597	511	3961
	Total	11510	16839	17405	9464	9499	18029	276	351	2678	2141	88192	1873	2930	1148	2254	22390	18547	11022	18511	4894	4623	88192

Table No 5: age group wise number of inmates according to religion and social groups

Sl No	Age Group	Religion											Social Group										
		Hindu		Muslim		Christian		Others		Not Known			SC		ST		OBC		Others		Not Known		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
1	0-6	645	812	331	299	359	480	19	13	225	205	3388	86	125	142	216	512	505	566	682	273	281	3388
4	7-18	5519	9038	15875	7998	4576	8448	78	196	668	504	52900	1420	2169	927	1870	18200	12923	4807	8156	1329	1099	52900
2	19-60	2982	3642	833	766	2626	4603	62	78	1136	799	17527	249	396	50	117	2023	2480	3263	5095	2051	1803	17527
3	61-70	1145	1597	220	230	864	1955	61	21	472	442	7007	56	116	11	32	770	1297	1108	2012	815	790	7007
5	71-80	863	1145	109	125	708	1628	40	30	150	154	4952	50	79	16	12	660	927	832	1605	298	473	4952
6	81-90	317	537	33	41	319	803	14	12	24	31	2131	9	39	2	5	200	377	390	845	103	161	2131
7	90+	39	68	4	5	47	112	2	1	3	6	287	3	6		2	25	38	56	116	12	29	287
Total		11510	16839	17405	9464	9499	18029	276	351	2678	2141	88192	1873	2930	1148	2254	22390	18547	11022	18511	4881	4636	88192

Brief history of Yatheem Khana movement in Kerala

Malabar Rebellion had sweeping effect on Mappila Muslims. The upheaval and resultant British suppression wreaked havoc upon the community. Sympathized with pauperization of Muslim community of Malabar after Rebellion, philanthropists from Punjab laid the foundation for first Yatheem Khana in Kerala in 1922. This effectively brought the kindle for the wider Yatheem Khana movements in later years.

“The absolute impoverishment after the rebellion was an eye opener for the leaders of Muslim community. The J.D.T. Islam Orphanage of Kozhikode was set up in 1922 to provide institutional care to the orphans and destitute who had lost their parents and close relatives during the rebellion. It was the first orphanage of Muslim community in the entire nation. Gradually in different parts of Malabar, similar institutions came up for providing food, shelter health care and education. Thousands of people lost lives in the cholera of 1943 also. Cholera was very rampant in the Eranadu taluk where hundreds of children lost their parents. This pointed towards the need for sustainable mechanism for the protection of poor, destitute and orphans. The Pokker Sahib Memorial Orphanage of Thirurangadi was set up in 1943 for their rehabilitation. The success of J.D.T and Thirurangadi models prompted the community leaders of other parts of the state to start similar organizations in their regions also. These efforts were unanimously backed by all members of the community, irrespective of economic inequalities and difference of opinion on Islamic practices.”

These two proto types acted as stimulus for the establishment of care homes for various purposes. The post-Gulf migration Malabar witnessed remarkable growth of these institutions with better infrastructure facilities. However the successful implementation of

integrated religious educational systems like Darul Huda Islamic University and Wafi initiatives has progressively dampened the community interest in this field.¹⁶

Contribution of Yatheem Khanas in human development of Kerala

Lack of literatures and adequate data compel the research to approach the topic from superficial level though not outright departure from ground realities. A detailed quantitative study should have been done to precisely determine the contours of social development enabled by these institutions. In a bird view these movements have cause far-reaching social and physical developments. Due to these efforts along with reform activities, Mappila Muslims recuperated rapidly from the traumas of 1921. Beside tangible developments they exerted, deeper psychological impact. They helped boost the existential morale of war torn, neglected community and largely aided in recovering from confidence crisis. Sincere evaluation of the impact of voluntary agencies will be extremely worthwhile to chart next course of social action to suit the modernity.

Psychological impact and confidence building

Thorough analysis of damages inflicted by Rebellion of 1921 emphatically presents Mappila community as highly marginalized and oppressed with grim future. Khilafat movement took a heavy toll on the body fabric of Muslim community and challenged the very existence of community. Tenants were illegally evicted, suspects were either hanged or exiled leading to the overall deprivation of community. Psychological disasters followed and community thrown to existential threat. Growth of communalism and lopsided administrative machinery discriminating against Mappila were more than enough to plant the sense of alienation and isolation. While north Indian Muslims failed to withstand the confidence crises after the fall of Mughal Empire and the deprivation of 1857 upheaval Mappila Muslims, for the time being, seemed to take up the same trajectory.

At this juncture, efforts by voluntary agencies to instill confidence like establishing J.D.T Yatheem Khana, proved highly beneficial. Initially funded by philanthropist outside the Kerala, came in the way of bringing the community to mainstream. Providing education to the affected and grievance redressal mechanism alongside giving positive developmental growth had served as catalyst for assimilation and new political thought. Their intervention convinced the community to shed blind anti-imperial attitude and to make amends with the ruling mechanism to exploit new avenues of political participation and educational opportunities thrown by the advent of British.

Mobilization of community resources

Social integrity and collective sense could be seen as a major factor for their socio economic development. Along with religious instruction of organized collaborative growth, when the geographical and historical factors united the community it yielded umpteen positive results. Voluntary intuitions established by community like Yatheem Khana, Madrassa, religious

¹⁶Zubair Hudawi Chekannur, *indyayile islamika vidhyabhasam*, Jamia Pattikkad Souvenir, 2015, p69

palaces are the beneficiaries of this collective mentality. It is to be noted that although these institutions got and are getting outside financial support major chunk of their working expenditure were met by community through the means of crowd funding. *Pidiyari* system, whereby each household donated according to their ability is an example of how these institutions helped in streamlining the community resources. *Waqf* properties were effectively channelized. After Kerala Muslims witness surplus economic development due to whooping remittances, these institutions flourished leading to better human resource development of community.

Physical strength of community was also oriented towards larger causes by way of these institutions. This community participation yielded two pronged results. Firstly, these activities promoted social integration which was used by religious and political leadership for the welfare of the community in post-independence period. Secondly, it promoted and channelized individual efforts in the making of a developed region.

Religious and cultural identity protection

Yatheem Khanas provided educational services in both religious and secular streams. Religious education was provided to all inmates through special classes after schooling or through Madrassa system. Exclusive centers for religious education were provided through the establishment of *PalliDars*, Arabic colleges, or off-campus of any other religious institutions. Strings of Madrassas providing elementary religious education were started for the wider benefit of community. To provide secular education various institutes were begun like schools colleges, training centers and so on. But a sense of religiosity and moral education was given to ensure formation of virtuous community according to the teachings of Islam.

These efforts to partake in religious educational activities later proved to be instrumental in institutionalizing the Mappila identity. Protected Mappila identity paced up secular identity formation of community thus facilitating assimilation to the broader 'Indianness'. The identity protection offered by these institutions reinvigorated the space of community to recover from the ruins of destruction. As complimentary Yatheem Khanas are characterized as the defender of diverse Mappila identity.

Emergence of educational and cultural hubs: analysis of general services to entire society

Activities of Yatheem Khanas are not limited to the numerous intakes only. Started as boarding institutions for boys and girls later Yatheem Khanas were upgraded to centers of higher education and learning. Yatheem Khanas wider social services were all encompassing and to limit them to old historical background is an injustice. This misconception is rooted in the attitudes of state governments Social Justice Department.¹⁷ Present academic contribution limit the role of Yatheem Khanas to the welfare of intakes only leaving aside the wider constructive activities undertaken by these institutes. For better understanding Yatheem

¹⁷According to government documents Yatheem Khanas are assessed only by the strength of intake of students. This masks the wider role of Yatheem Khanas in human development. No government documents discuss the topic from the extended view of being mother institution for sister organizations.

Khanas are to be understood from wider perspective as a center of educational and cultural mobilization with special focus of their historical responsibilities.¹⁸

These services include:

- Arts and Science College
- LP and UP school
- Arabic College
- English Academy
- Special School
- Tailoring Institute,
- Kinder Garden
- Quran Centre
- Dars education
- Libraries and recreational resources
- Teachers Training Institute
- Industrial Training Institute
- B.Ed. Training College
- Commercial enterprises (Rice & Flour Mill, Wood Industries, Offset Press, Bakery, Dairy Farm, Shopping Complex,)

Child protection

Yatheem Khanas were erected basically to cater to the needs of orphans and students from deprived families. Children admitted to Yatheem Khana are provided with support system both psychologically and financially. Quality education provided by Yatheem Khana ensured inclusive development of community. Children are the valuable asset for society making if they were groomed well and this responsibility was shouldered by Yatheem Khana system and its direct impact was seen in the enrichment of human resource development of society.

They provided protection from Protection of children from:

- Abuse
- Exploitation
- Neglect
- Violence
- Unnecessary family separation¹⁹

Contributions of Yatheem Khanas for the children's development can be summarized as:

1. **Emotional support:** these institutions provided a feeling of family and protection to the children from vulnerable families. Through adequate care given to them they were easily brought to the mainstream of society. In case of children affected with mental or physical traumas the services of these institutions were highly beneficial.

¹⁸Muhammed U, Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims: A Socio- Historical Perspective. Other books publishers.2007. pp. 45-69

¹⁹UNICEF, Child Protection and Orphanages, P7

2. **Quality education for free:** the success of these institutions is largely from the educational and job opportunity it offered to the inmates. Special attention was given by the authorities to support them to secure a better future. Muhammad Ali Shihab IAS, an alumnus of Mukkam Muslim Orphanage, reached the highest echelons of Indian bureaucracy bears witness to this fact.²⁰

Examples for higher education centers offered by Yatheem Khanas²¹

WMO Arts and Science

AL-hidhaya Yatheemkhana, Thattathumala, Thiruvananthapuram

Anvarul Islamic Yatheemkhana, Pallisserukal, Sasthamkotta

Tipu Sulthan Orphanage Padanakurissi, Nadarani, Palakkad

3. **Vocational training:** this is not much advanced from its infancy. The section focuses more on job availability to inmates after completion of courses. The courses are different for males and females. The training includes micro agriculture, sewing center, and computer training and so on.

Bafakhy Yatheem Khana VHSC²²

Calicut Orphanage Industrial Training Institute²³

Women empowerment

A society can develop when its women are empowered and are ready to helm. Kerala Muslim community is generally categorized as patriarchal community. But these riddles were not excuses for these agencies to work for the protection and empowerment of womenfolk. The report of social justice department manifests around 30 specialized centers for the development of girls and women.²⁴

“Raising the girl child in orphanages and making them stand on their own feet might look as a tough task for these shelter homes but ultimately after becoming independent these women become contributors to the welfare and upliftment of the society. That is why empowering orphan girls is equally important just as empowering other normal girls who live with their

²⁰ *Viralattam*, the book he authored and published by DC Books, gives in full details his life struggle at Yatheem Khana to reach highest avenues.

²¹ Information of this this section is taken from SOCIAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

BOARD OF CONTROL FOR ORPHANGES AND OTHER CHARITABLE HOMES LIST OF INSTITUTIONS RECOGNIZED BY THE CONTROL BOARD AS ON 07/10/15.

²² The School consists of a High school. Higher Secondary class (Science, Humanities, Commerce) and vocational Courses (Medical Lab technician, Domestic nursing, Account and Auditing)

²³ Recognized by the Government of Kerala and the Government of India, Calicut Orphanage ITC was established in 1980. It is one of the reputed Industrial Training Institutes in North Malabar. The ITI is affiliated to National Council for Vocational Training, New Delhi. The institution offers Draughtsman, Civil, Electronic, Mechanic, Interior Decoration and Designing, Plumbing, Wireman courses. The students who have completed their courses are well placed in India and abroad.

²⁴

families. They have equal rights to live in better society, to make their carriers in good fields and moreover living a good life.”²⁵



Yatheem Khana led women developments include:

- basic education and literacy
Literacy is at the heart of basic education for all and essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. Literacy is a significant and specific goal for Yatheem Khanas.
- livelihood and women empowerment program
This program offers women the opportunity for a better life through mentorship, life-skills training, financial literacy and microfinance.
- Support mechanism against violence and personal care

Name of few Yatheem Khanas working on these areas are given below:

Al-Falah Girls Orphanage, Fathimapuram ,Chanaganassery
 Muslims women Association, Yatheemkhana, Pullepaddy, Cochin
 HimayuthulMuslimeen Orphanage, Muvattupuzha
 Darul BenathYatheemkhana, Edappally
 Shahid Faisal Girls Orphanage, Farook Nagar, Vatanappally
 Nasarul Islam Orphanage and destitute protection Centre, Thrissur
 DaulAmanIstamic Women’s Orphanage, Palakkad
 DarullThawa Girls Orphanage and Destitute Home, Palakkad
 MarkazUssalamathilIslamiyya, Palakkad
 LivaUlhada Girls Orphanage, Areekkodu
 Huyathul Islam Orphanage, Malappuram
 Wayanad Muslim Orphanage, Wayanad

²⁵SandhyaRagaur, Women empowerment through orphanage homes in India, International Research Journal of Commerce Arts and Science, p382

Protection to the marginalized sections of community

In fact, Yatheem Khanas in Kerala are not exclusive centers of child protection. But they play a crucial role in the development of community altogether. Marginalization of disadvantaged sections of society like patients, disabled and old people challenges the concept of inclusive development. Yatheem Khanas have played significant role in ensuring decent life for these sections of community.

Initiatives to help the marginalized people include:²⁶

- Charity homes for old people
- Homes for handicapped and disabled
- home for poor and destitute

MSI Banath Yatheemkhana Agathimandiram, Palakkad

Malik Dinar Tha Ava Centre, Ernakulam

- Boarding for boys and girls

New age metamorphosis of Yatheem Khana system: how to cope with new realities?

1980s heralded new beginning in the educational arena of Kerala Muslim. Breaking from century old tradition of separating religious and secular knowledge, new age institutions like Darul Huda Islamic University and Wafi initiatives integrated both strands. So following the trend, various Yatheem Khanas adopted new method while promoting earlier school educational system for the wider community members. M.I.C Valluvambram and Valavannor Bafaqi Yatheem Khana are the forerunner in this respect.

Acknowledging the progressive nature of community many Yatheem Khanas have been always open to innovative changes. Beginning of professional institutions, spreading to new areas of social progress are the latest strides. These reforms of restructuring the Yatheem Khanas should be undertaken to retain the relevance of these institutions. Management and community in general if not taking streamlining efforts to modify the activities the losing steam of these voluntary agencies would be obsolete in the near future.

Rise to the expectations of beneficiary members of the society is of paramount importance. Activities like micro finance, sustainable economic development and palliative initiatives are to be encouraged. As the crisis of community is manifest aghast in various socio economic problems, still being obstinate in traditional way of working will be disastrous for the entire community.

Major criticisms against Yatheem Khana

- 1) Problems of inmates
- 2) Infrastructural deficiencies
- 3) Social isolation of old students

²⁶According to my conversation with a couple of older inmates, although there has no separate institutions for the support of these people Yatheem Khana provide these facilities on need base. Lack of data prevents going deeper into the issue. I had to entirely bank upon government data which is undeniably deficient.

- 4) Lack of utilizing the women skills and resources
- 5) Lack of interface with government agencies and mutual trust deficit
- 6) Financial worries
- 7) Problems of relevance in modern atmosphere

Conclusion

Kerala Muslim community has undeniably achieved higher standards of human development. Transformation of community from revolt ravaged, impoverished pitiful social structure to well-knit institutionalized society is well hinged upon the concerted efforts by voluntary agencies along with religious and political reorientation. Yatheem Khana system deserves special attention in this respect. Community provided amenities were advantageous for the upliftment of deprived communities and this fact is reasoned primarily for the egalitarian social formation of Kerala Muslims. Active participation of Yatheem Khanas has paid off well for mainstreaming the society.

How to cope with modern challenges should be well studied and appropriate measures adopted by Yatheem Khanas. The historical and social realities that necessitated the formation of Yatheem Khanas are on dissipation, urgent modification is needed to comply with the compounded problems of community. Keeping abreast of time will be challenge but non response to the changing needs and aspirations of society will render these institutions unfeasible.

Lack of adequate data about various aspects of Yatheem Khanas speaks volumes about the informal nature of working. To evaluate the sheer extent of human development enabled by these institutions there is a dire need for well compiled data to prove with. Studies should be promoted to qualitatively study about Yatheem Khanas and thus ascertaining the social responsibility entrusted to them and also helping to change according the demands of society.

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