



ARABIC MADRASAS AND COLLEGES IN MELAPALAYAM: A SURVEY

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Abstract

Melapalayam is one of the administrative municipal of Tirunelveli Corporation situated in South Indian State of Tamil Nadu with 80% of Muslims and remaining Hindus and Christians. Melapalayam was formerly known as Keela Veera Ragavapuram in British Rule. It gets a green look in Western side as it is surrounded by fertile paddy fields. Melapalayam is one amongst the Muslim-dominant town in the Tamil Nadu state in which more than one lakh Muslims peoples are living in this area. The main objective of this paper is to produce a detailed survey of Islamic Arabic Institutions in the Melapalayam.

Keywords: *Melapalayam, Arabic Madrasa. Arabic College, Tirunelveli.*

Introduction

The old age Tamil Name of Melapalayam was "Mangai Maa Nagar". It is located in the eastern bank of famous perennial Thamirabarani River. Its east side is covered by Oxford of South India-Palayamkottai. Muslim people are dominantly living in this area. Two Muslim communities namely Shafi and Hanafi Muslim peoples are living for a long period of time and in fact, there is no major differences between these two community peoples. But, they differ in the way of praying the God, culture and food habits. The followers of Shafi Madhhab are referred as "Sheik" and followers of Hanafi Madhhab are referred as "Iravuththar". These two Madhhab peoples have the separate mosque in Melapalayam. There are no restrictions on worshipping one Madhhab followers in another's mosques.

Arabic Institutions

There were many colleges established by eminent leaders of Melapalayam to learn the Islamic studies. Many students from different parts of Tamil Nadu are willingly choosing Melapalayam to get Islamic study in the Madrasas. Several Madrasas were found in Melapalayam in prior to independence. These madrasas are focusing on imparting knowledge of Quran and religious facts to the students. This paper gives the detailed survey of various Arabic Institutions such as Madrasas and Colleges that imparts Islamic studies to the gents and ladies students.

Usmania Arabic College

This Arabic college has been started on 09.11.1964 by the group of Islamic leaders in Melapalayam. At the time of inception, this college had a reputation as "Madrasaththul Kiraaththul Quran". This college had five board members for administration. These board members worked arduously for the development of madrasa and to serve for the Muslim people. Due to the shortage of assets and building for conducting religious classes to the students, this madrasa has been conducted on the campus of Kattu Pallivasal that is situated in the Ekkinpillai street of Melapalayam.

The name of the madrasa has been changed to "Madrasaththul Kirathil Quran" on 10.07.1969. Janab O.A.M. Meeran Mohaideen Sahib of Melapalayam donated his own land of 4 Acre and 34 cents to this Arabic college for constructing the building. On 30.03.1987, this Madrasa has been opened and started functioning. This college has produced hundreds of Hafiz ever since the date of inception. The students of this college working in various mosques as Imam, Teachers at Madrasas and participating in many religious events.

Dharbiyatthuniza Madarasa

This madrasa was exclusively started for teaching religious studies to girl students. In 1984, Dharbiyatthuniza Madrasa was started in Vadaku Rahmanyapuram with 17 girls under the guidance of a religions teacher. In the beginning, this Madrasa was running in the rental house for Rs.150 per month till 1993, after that it had owned a building. In 2000, admissions to this Madrasa has been raised due to its popularity among the people. So, they bought a separate building at Asan Taragar Street of Melapalayam. More than 390 students have got Muballiha (Islamic religious honor) degree from the period 1987-2012. Long before, wearing of Purdah has not been followed among the Muslim girls and women of Melapalayam. But, the madrasa education brought a change among the people to wear Purdah.

Madarasathun Nasigath Leek Niswan

Madharasathun Nasigath Leek Niswan Madarasa was established in the year 1991 by Mohamed Ali well-known Muslim leader of Melapalayam. In the beginning, this Madrasa was started function in the house of Haji. Abdul Kadhea's. There were 50 girl students were admitted in this Madrasa. Thajveedhulquran, Nasayil, Bazhayil (religious sectors) were the subject



taught in this Madrasa. In 1994, a new building was constructed with the donations collected from the people of Melapalayam. The main purpose of this Madrasa is giving religious awareness to the students. All the students were instructed as per the direction stated in the Quran and Hadith and students were insisting on praying 5 times a day, fasting in Ramadan month and so on. This institution regularly conducting religious classes to all women (full time or part time) for imparting the Quran versus.

Shirin Farhana Madrasa

Initially, this Madrasa was started in 1997 at 63, Akbar Street of Melapalayam with the name Shrin Farhana women's Arabic college. Now it is situated in 37, Kattuputhu Street of Melapalayam. They are teaching basic Arabic language at first and then giving practice read and write Arabic language and Quran. The course of training is given to all the students to memorize the Quran. Once after memorizing the Quran, they conduct examinations and award Muballhiga degree. Apart from teaching Islamic studies, they are also helping physically challenged persons, widows, old people, and diseased patients.

Al-Aliyah Arabic College

Al-Aliyah Arabic College was established in the year 1962 with the name "Makthab Hiblu Madrasa". This Arabic College was founded by As-Sheyhu Booali Shah Madhar Aalim Sathuli. Janab Salahudeen Riyahi was the first principal of this Arabic college. At present, principal Janab. Usen Ali is administrating and controlling all the activities of this college. Currently, this college is the best Arabic college for boys. The standard religious education is being taught to all the students. At present, more than 50 students are studying in this institution. This college not only educating the religious study to the students but also taught various domain specific knowledge. Based on the study, the students of this institution awarded by Moulavi, Aalim and degrees. In addition to these degrees, this college offers three year degree program such as B.A, B.Com, and Diploma in Computer Application (DCA) courses to the students.

Al-Irshad Islamic Women College

Education for women is given equal important as men in Islam. All men and women should be educated either it is Islamic or academic. To provide a good education to women, Al-Irshad Islamic women's college is started and free education is given to all the girls and women of Melapalayam. The college provides the good education and excellent hostel facility. This college working hard to achieve 100% results. At present, more than 100 students are studying. This college is administrated by with M.S. Sulaiman (Administrative head), Rifai Rashadi (Secretary) and B.A. Inayathulla (Treasurer). Every year, this college is awarding many Alima and Muballihis degree.

Conclusion

Melapalayam is the most thickly populated Muslim town in Tamil Nadu. Considering the poor educational and economic status, the school, and colleges founded by distinguished Islamic leaders of Melapalayam. Many Madrasas had been established in this town to educate the religious studies to Muslim students. These Madrasas are restlessly enlightening the peoples with Quran and Hadith. Arabic Madrasas are one of the important reason for the present religious status of Melapalayam people.

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