

History, Distribution and Affiliation of Mosque in Muslim Minority of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss a brief historical setting of mosques in Sri Lanka and then to provide a detailed portrait of basic characteristics of these mosques. The historical overview of the mosque covers from early times to the present day. Therefore, in order to collect evidence and proper documents, the textual records and oral traditions are examined. The quantitative data to identify the basic characteristics of the mosques in Sri Lanka and qualitative approaches to interpret the findings are handled as methods. Beside the history, attempts are made to explain the distribution of the mosques and its affiliations. It is interesting to find that mosque in Sri Lanka has played an important role in the life of Muslim as a minority community. Mosques are found in a major cities, small town and villages where Muslims are living as community. Every mosque is affiliated with a madhhab (sect) or Islamic movement and seems to accomplish religious, social and cultural objectives.

Key Words: Mosque history, mosque distribution, mosque affiliation, Sri Lanka

Introduction

It is rational to assume that the history of the mosques in Sri Lanka is as old as the presence of the Muslims there. As the early Muslim settlers, with no doubt, established the mosques in all their settlement sites to practice religious functions and preserve their identity. In the Muslim historical study, therefore, the mosque is considered as one of the material evidences which prove ancient Muslim's existence in a location. However, there are many factors, as sociological and technical constraints which attend tracing of the early mosques. While the Sinhalese have their *Mahavamsa*, the *Culavamsa* and the *Rajavaliya* and Tamils their *Yalpanavaipavamalai*, the Muslims have no chronicle of their own. Further the earliest mosques were built of impermanent or semi-impermanent material, among which clay, wattle and daub were the important material. Furthermore, the recurrent reconstruction and renovation of mosques militated against any archaeological artifacts surviving into the present investigation. Particular histories of mosques, written in palm leaves, unless secured and adequately cared for, disintegrate in time (Mahroof, 1987).

A History of Mosque Development

Sri Lanka has a long history of contacts with Middle East. It is noticeable that Arab communities gathered and established settlements on the coasts and elsewhere in Sri Lanka. It is assumed that in due course they had become Muslims (Shukry, 1986). By 8th and 9th centuries Muslims traders had accelerated the commercial contact with south and south East Asian countries including Sri Lanka. V. Vamadevan (1999: 6) observed that "In the 9th century, the bays of Ceylon such as Beruwella, Galle and Puttalam, attracted Moor traders to establish depots. They inter-married with the Sinhalese and Tamil (indigenous) women and settled down permanently in this island." The modern historians noted that by the end of the eighth century there were Muslim settlements particularly at port-towns including Colombo, now the Sri Lankan capital (Nicholas and S. Paranawitana, 1961). The Arabic (Cufic) inscriptions on the Tomb-stones those can be dated as early as the 10th century have been found in Colombo and the place near Mannar. One of them was erected over the burial of a Muslim religious teacher, Khalid Ibn Abu Bakaya (Mohammed Sameer, 1965). This evidence suggests that Muslims have ensured religious guidance and various means for the performance of their religious practices.

Therefore it is obvious that there were mosques constructed by the Muslims of the period in those places which are the pivotal point in a Muslim society. On which most of the belief among Muslims and their oral stories revealed such as that in coastal area of Matara district Palathadi *Jum'ah* mosque was built at the end of the 11th Century (Mukhtar, 1995). The works of famous Arab travelers such as SulaimanTajir, Abu Zaid As-Sirafi and Masudi and Ibn Batuta who had visited Sri Lanka between 9th to 14th centuries refer to the mosques. The celebrated Ibn Batuta, who visited Sri Lanka in AH 746 (1345), saw in a town in the middle of Sri Lanka, the mosque of Shaykh Usman of Shiraz, known as "Shaush" (Mahdi Hussain, 1953). This mosque would have been one of the innumerable mosques dotted through the country.

Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, the Muslims' commercial activities had been accelerated in Indian Ocean as well as in Sri Lanka. Consequently, they yielded a great deal of influence at Sri Lankan port-towns and the internal trade of the island also was in their hands. Their dominant role was extended until they were ousted by European colonial powers (K. Indrapala, 1986). In these circumstances it is not surprising that Muslims were present in some areas in numerical strength. The Sinhalese literary works of the 15th century, the *Kokila* and *GiraSandesas* speak of Muslim settlement in southern Sri Lanka (Sirima Kiribamune, 1986). It is therefore, clear that Muslims settlements were established in many parts of Sri Lanka and they built their mosques. When the Muslim settlements were founded, the pattern of growth was as C.R. Boxer describes "These various Muslim trading colonies grew and flourished; and their richest and most influential traders were sooner and later granted the right to build mosques in the ports where they lived" (C.R. Boxer 1969).

The 16th Century was marked by the beginning of western colonial powers, first the Portuguese in 1505, then the Dutch from 1658 to 1796 and finally the British from 1796 to 1948 and their subsequent over-lording of Sri Lanka. At the beginning of the 16th century, substantial Muslims community settlements existed at Sri Lankan port-towns, particularly in the western coast. These Muslim communities formed well and integrated. They were strong enough and influential enough to have their own headmen (T.B.H. Abeyasingha, 1986). It is noteworthy that at the time of arrival of Portuguese in Sri Lanka the Colombo was predominantly a Muslim city with mosques. A Portuguese fleet was driven off-course by a storm to Galle, in Sri Lanka. Having victual led there, the ships, hugging the coast, came to Colombo. It was said that as the fleet sailed into Colombo, the Portuguese on board saw first of all the white walls of two mosques (H.A.J. Hulugalle, 1965). A recent historian also noted that "the population of the town (Colombo) was largely Muslim and there was a mosque together with a Muslim cemetery and a court of justice to settle disputes according to Muslim law." (M.I.L. Mohammed Nuhman, 1959). This was, of course, during the pre-Portuguese period.

The arrival and presence of the Portuguese in Sri Lanka was profound political, social and economic consequences, justifiably, "great grief to the Moors (Muslims)" since the Muslims had long been established in Colombo. They were basically a peaceable trading community with religious convictions. While the Portuguese themselves committed to trade, had territorial ambitions and had a way of treating the indigenous people in a distinctly hostile manner. A Portuguese contemporary, de *Queyroz*, speaking of the confrontation of the Portuguese and the local population, wrote "the king (*VijayaBahu*) himself abandoned the camp despairing of success against the Portuguese, and our people (i.e., the Portuguese) on the following day again burnt the town (Colombo) along with the two large mosques built by the former Moors who lived there." (M.I.L. Mohammed Nuhman, 1959).

The Portuguese impact on the Muslims of Sri Lanka, as far as their mosques were concerned, can be assessed as that the Muslims suffered from constraints in many ways. Their arrival set off a wave of panic among Muslims. When the Portuguese Crown ordered in the 1590s, all the temples and mosques in Portuguese domains were destroyed (M.A.M. Shukry, 1986). The Muslims deliberately avoid the building of vast, magnificent mosques. They went back to building mosques which looked like houses. Nevertheless, the anti-Muslim policy and attitude of Portuguese entered into an uncompromising phase. The Portuguese authorities, as they considered the Muslims as their commercial rivals and religious enemies, issued decrees insisting on the expulsion of the Muslims from Portuguese territory in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the Portuguese officials in Colombo expelled the Muslims from Colombo and its environs in 1626. (C.R. de Silva, 1972). Such a mass scale removal of the long-settled Muslims would have certainly caused financial havoc and great emotional disturbance. Those Muslims, who continued to live in the Portuguese-occupied territory, with the help of conniving Portuguese officials, were not many. In any case, their low-profile existence was not conducive to mosque construction.

In those regions where the writ of the Portuguese did not run and which were the major parts of the country, mosques did not suffer from such constraints. The expulsion of the Muslims did not happen without side effects. The Muslims have relocated themselves in other port-towns on the western coast. Further, they, as a community naturally industrious, conscientious and skilled, were welcomed and received by Sinhalese kings particularly by Senerat of Kandyan kingdom. Even long before the advent of the Portuguese the Muslims had found this kingdom fruitful for their commercial activities and residence. It is believed that early history of mosque in Kandy goes back to 14th century (M. Ajwad Hashim, 1996). But after that, there was a large influx of Muslims into the interior of the kingdom. There is reference to the fact that at least 4000 expelled Muslims were accommodated in the fertile lands around south eastern Sri Lanka, where Muslims are living in considerable amount at present. This drift of Muslims towards the kingdom continues throughout the Dutch period. The reception and subsequent accommodation of the Muslims in these regions had three effects on the construction and role of mosques as M.M.M. Mahroof (1987) states that,

“In the first place, the mosques became modest affairs, hardly to be differentiated from large houses. Secondly, Muslim villages were grouped around the mosques. Thirdly, mosques became the centres of Muslim thought and opinion in the villages, in addition, of course, to their religious role. To use an ungainly phrase, the mosques became the ‘spokes-ground’ of the Muslims. Though, as a rule, mosques were managed with the help of voluntary contributions of the Muslims, one mosque, at least, was supported by aid from the general community”.

Another effect of the Muslims in Kandyan kingdom was the development of the ‘*tavalam*’ system. The route of the pack-oxen lay across inaccessible territory and which, in course of time, covered a large part of the country. It took several days for a *tavalam* to reach its destination and hence the need arose for resting places at night. It is therefore natural, the Muslims who traveled on that ‘*tavalam*’ road, had to establish mosques for their spiritual sustenance. Consequently the Muslim settlements have emerged surrounding these mosques in the course of time.

The life of the Muslims in Kandyan kingdom went along a comfortable routine, while the kings, Buddhist *vihare* and people welcomed them and made the necessary arrangements to provide for their spiritual needs. There is a historical report which denotes that the Kandyan kings donated land for the maintenance of the mosque on same basis as they gave land to the Buddhist *vihares*. (Lorna Dewaraja, 1986). This clearly shows that the life of the Muslims in the Kandyan kingdom went along a comforting routine, while they enjoy freedom to practice their religion freely. The historic *Meera Maccan* mosque in Kandy was built in 1824 on land gifted by Asgiriya Maha Vihare, that is adjoining to it.

The Dutch who replaced the Portuguese in 1658, also considered Muslims as their enemies, due to religious and commercial factors, of which the latter is more determining. Therefore Dutch policies and attitudes towards Muslims were no less in persecution than their predecessors but they were more mythological in operations. All this was reflected in their official pronouncements and legislation. The decrees issued by Dutch from time to time, confined the dwellings of the Muslims within certain limits and forbade Muslims possessing any land and immovable properties. On the religious ground, the Muslims occupied the lowest position and they were prevented from even performing their religious rites. A new mosque built in Jaffna was broken down. (D.A. Kotlawela, 1986). A Dutch Governor instructed his subordinate in the following rigorous terms “...not to allow them under any circumstance to trespass beyond the graves or trade with anyone outside ... Must not permit the moors (i.e. the Muslims) to perform any religious rites nor tolerate their priests whether within or outside the grave. Among other impositions laid down by the Dutch on the ordinary Muslims were ‘*rajakariya*’ or ‘*uliyam*’ which was forced labor service for a fixed period annually and the polltax of one rix dollar per family (D.A. Kotlawela, 1986).

In those circumstances, building mosques could not have been a flourishing activity. However, two factors tried to lighten the gloom. Conniving or complacent Dutch official could be expected to turn a blind eye to the building of small or inconspicuous mosques in some areas, which were socially essential services of the Muslims. Some of them as tailors, butchers’ and bakers created a sympathetic public opinion on their behalf. The Muslims began to create ‘*kasbahs*’-little knots of Muslim houses grouped around inconspicuous looking mosques-and this in course of time became a complete way of physical existence. All the goods and services which the Muslims needed were provided by the ‘*kasbah*’. Except the services which the Muslims offered to the general community, the ‘*kasbah*’ was self-sufficient (M.M.M. Mahroof, 1987).

The Malay community, made up of the Javanese, Amboinese, and other Indonesians who were brought to Sri Lanka by the Dutch as soldiers apart of whom the Dutch had found politically expedient to exile them to this country were treated with respect (B.A. Hussainmiya, 1986). They had originated with their own ethnic identity in parts of Colombo and other provincial towns like Kurunegala, Hambantota, Kandy and Badulla. They had built mosques during and after the Dutch period, some of these with the appellation 'military mosque'.

British occupation in 1796 and their one hundred and fifty two years rule in Sri Lanka was the removal of the imposition particularly religious intolerance which the Dutch had laid upon Muslims. One result of this removal of constraints was the relative freedom to construct the mosques in the Maritime Provinces. A large number of mosques in Colombo and other principal towns entered into a phase of reconstruction. The Muslims underwent development in their political, social, economic and cultural spheres. The British government helped to break down all the economic barriers and encouraged the free economic enterprises in which Muslims were engaged down the age. (K.D.G. Wimalaratne, 1986). It was resulting in the increase of trading activity among them that enabled some of the more affluent among them to contribute to the reconstruction of the mosques. This was normal in the capital Colombo and principal cities when the British relaxed the laws that Muslims could own land in Sri Lanka. There was some mosque-building in the central region of Sri Lanka during the middle and later part of the last century.

In the course of 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a coffee boom, when large part of the hill country was cleared for the cultivation of coffee. It was recorded that from 1840 to 1845, the average annual sale of land for coffee cultivation was 42,880 acres (H.A.J. Hulugalle, 1963). The Muslims exploited the prospective business ventures and they invested in plantation industry and also acted as leading general merchants in the 'Bazaar towns' created due to the rise of plantation. This sector also gave the opportunities to bring in workers to cultivate, and resulted in the growth of transport, contract, supply food and labor, whole-sale and retail trade, in which some of the Muslims excelled. The Muslims who had residence in those areas needed mosques. Their comparative affluence made the construction and re-structuring of mosques not an onerous task.

In Sri Lanka, during the British rule, mosques were built in other ways as well. By the middle of the 19th century, they consolidated their hold and control the entire Indian Ocean. There by the empire was open to those who seek their fortune in other lands. As a result many Muslim entrepreneurs came. As their numbers grew they reproduced their own communities with their unique characters such as *Memon* and *Bohras*. By the time these communities became sufficiently large and well endowed to have exclusive mosques of their own in Sri Lanka (Asker S. Moosajee, 1986).

Another thrust towards mosque-building was missionary-derivative. By the last part of the 19th century, due to increased trade contacts between Sri Lanka and southern seaboard of India, some Muslim scholars visited Sri Lanka and they thereby introduced *sufi Tariqah* orders. They had induced their audience to build mosques where Muslims lived in numerical strength. A renowned *sufi* scholar Mapillai Aalim established a number of mosques in Colombo and other main cities and villages of southern Sri Lanka. Similarly, South Indian *sufi* scholar Ibn Ahamadlebbai Alim was actively involved in construction of the many mosques between 1881 to 1886 in Colombo and south of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, each *sufi* order established its 'zaviyas' and 'takkiyas' as centre for spiritual training and prayers or exclusively for the voluntary devotional activities prescribed by each *Tariqah*. These centers arose particularly in the regions of south Sri Lanka.

M.M.M. Mahroof (1987) noted that during World War II, a major shift of people including Muslims from shores of Sri Lanka to the inland due to fear that the country might become a stage of the war. He said that "the surge of urban Muslims into the villages was, to a large extent, instrumental in the reconstruction of mosques in some villages at least." A further spurt of mosque-building took place during the middle part of the 20th century as immediate consequence of the influence of Islamic *da'wah* (missionary) movements, which were formed or introduced to Sri Lanka during this period. *Tabliqh Jama'at*, and *Jama'at-e-Islami* and *Tawhid Jama'at* are example of these movements. They were particularly *Tawhid* movements established their own and independent *markaz* mosques all over the Island, functioning mainly as centers for their proscribed *da'wah* programs.

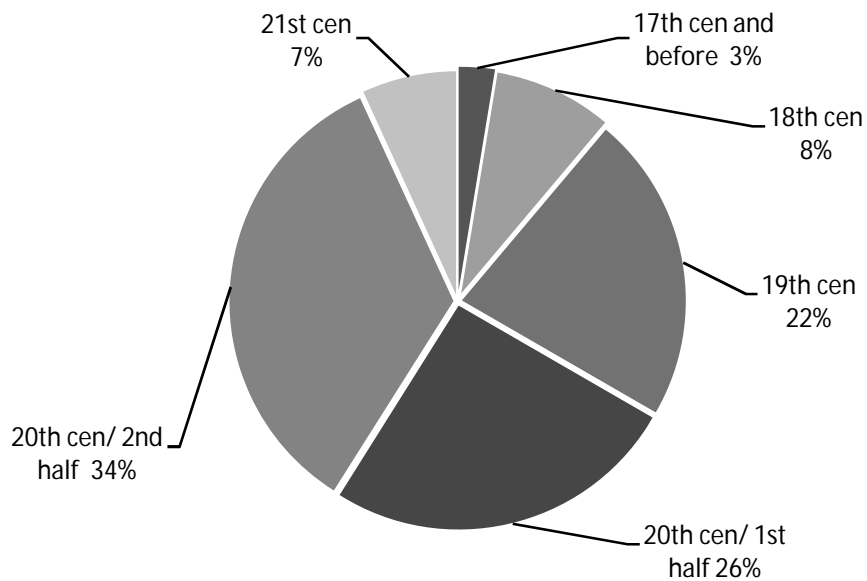


Figure 1 Founding year of the mosque

Source: Survey

Figure 1 illustrates the percentage breakdown of mosque founding for six time periods. 2nd half of the 20th century was marked with great movement of the mosque construction and reconstruction. The rapid increase in total number of mosque was observed in most parts of Sri Lanka. There were many reasons. The main reason was due to the population growth and *da'wah* activities of Islamic movements in Sri Lanka. The founding year of responding mosque ranges from 1180 to 2005; however, 60 percent of the mosques were founded in 20th century. Comparatively, many mosques (one third) were founded by second half of same century.

Location and Distribution

Sri Lanka is an island that has a total area of 65,610 square kilometers having three zones that are distinguishable by elevation: the Central Highlands, the plains, and the coastal belt. Therefore it is not easy to give location analysis and building typology of around 2000 mosques that lie throughout the island that requires a separate study. However, it is appropriate to focus randomly on the mosques where they were built and what was the main purpose of the mosque constructed from early time to date. It seems that Muslims of Sri Lanka have followed some principles in the site selection, design, construction and use of the mosques. It can be assessed based on the facts such as the impact of the early mosque of Prophet in Madinah, the development of mosques, selecting location and also notes the influence of the spatial arrangements and pattern of the settlement on the mosque allocation.

According to Islamic history, the manner in which the Prophet decided on mosque location was divine guidance to let his camel loose, and choose the site where it finally stopped to rest. The Mosque of the Prophet, the second holiest shrine of Islam, is the heart of Madinah and the center around which it has been planned. In the cases where the Muslims conquered principal cities, they constructed the mosque in the place that was the centre of the religion. Accordingly the mosque was located in central part of the cities established in the Muslim world. Therefore it is to be noted that "The centrality of congregational mosques in an early Islamic urban context is generally agreed, based upon our current understanding of city topography in the first Islamic centuries. The mosque, both as a building and by way of its social function, became an increasingly potent marker of Muslim hegemony and, when partnered with a *dar al-'imarah*, an unconcealed proclamation of the indisputable right to rule." (Alan G. Walmsley, 2008). Throughout the Islamic history, the mosque is considered to be the heart and center of the residential district, with homes and public utilities built in its surroundings. The historical records describes historical mosques are very few and so far not available. According to stories and oral traditions, early mosques were built by Muslim traders who frequently visited Sri Lanka for their commercial activities. It was not possible for these traders to travel from one place to another at once and to the large extent it was determined by the wind direction of the Indian Ocean.

Therefore, they had to break while in the journey and wait until favorable monsoon start after six months. They established mosque for their worship in the coastal port-towns of the island. It is traced out that early Muslim settlements were established and developed surrounding these mosques. There are numerous cities and villages where considerable numbers of Muslims are living along the coastal line of Sri Lanka with their mosques built in relatively significant places. Furthermore, it was observed that the existing mosques that are believed as age-old ones were found today near to Sri Lanka ports as well as sea shores. For instance, the well-known Kechimale mosque is located at the edge of deep sea in Beruwela. Conversely, there are some mosques in port locations where not a single Muslim is living now.

It seems that Muslims of Sri Lanka have selected sites near the mouth of rivers and shallow of waters for their erection of mosques from the early period. According to the oral evidence, Muslims settled in Palathady near the area of Polwattu river-valley built their mosque in 1200. There are more reasons, those can be traced that during early period, the Muslims had chosen to reside in coastal Sri Lanka as trading community. However, later they gradually moved towards inland part of the country due to various reasons. Then they settled down in fertile lands to convene themselves with agriculture. Particularly, they involved in agriculture when they were prevented from the trading activities during the Portuguese and Dutch periods. In addition most of the island's coastal plains are between 30 and 200 meters above sea level. In the southwest, ridges and valleys rise gradually to merge with the Central Highlands, giving a dissected appearance to the plain. Extensive erosion in this area has worn down the ridges and deposited rich soil for agriculture downstream.

More than half (about 60%) of total registered mosques in Sri Lanka are *jum'ah* mosques. According to Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs, there were 1820 mosques other than *Dharga* and Shrine in 2002. They are found in every major cities, small town and villages where Muslims are living as community. The site selection seems to accomplish the social and cultural objectives such as encouraging and enabling residents to participate in congregational prayers and fulfill social obligations. These mosques lie in key site mostly in the centre of a city or village and in a small extent on the periphery of the settlement. They are free standing structures located apart from the continuous buildings except in Colombo the capital, where public building and commercial complex are tightly interconnected. It is noteworthy that most of these mosques are located in the main street surrounded by shopping centers and markets.

Some of these mosques possess their own markets and shopping complex. Therefore, it can be assessed that the establishment of a new mosque often facilitates the emergence of a city centre. The Muslims of Sri Lanka has maintained a tradition of one *jum'ah* mosque in an area of the community. But in recent past, the population growth that resulted in development of large residential area necessitated another *jum'ah* mosque to be established in certain distance or to convert normal mosque as a *jum'ah* mosque. It is therefore, to have more than one *jum'ah* mosques in the large Muslim villages that consist of considerable numbers of Muslims. Further, increasing differences among Muslims in *madhhab*, *tariqah*, theology and management has created an atmosphere to construct two *jum'ah* mosques in same area, unfortunately, in a few areas both are found in a nearby location. These recently built mosques most likely not consider the previously said elements in sitting to locate the building. The reasons are various as socio-economic and political in minority context.

Table 1 Mosque type and its distribution, district wise

District	Muslim Population	Total Mosque	Jum ^c ah Mosque	%	Normal Mosque	%	Takkiyah	%	Zaviyyah	%	Darga/Shrine
Ampara	245285	180	59	32.8	79	43.9	42	20.4	0	0.0	11
Anuradhapura	61557	96	82	85.4	8	8.3	6	4.7	0	0.0	0
Badulla	42499	55	41	74.5	8	14.5	5	7.1	1	1.8	2
Batticaloa	113473	121	38	31.4	58	47.9	23	18.3	2	1.7	3
Colombo	243278	106	48	45.3	36	34.0	16	15.3	6	5.7	1
Hambantota	13100	19	14	73.7	4	21.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
Galle	35870	56	22	39.3	14	25.0	15	31.3	5	8.9	3
Gampaha	94325	65	41	63.1	12	18.5	10	15.7	2	3.1	1
Jaffna*		18	7	38.9	9	50.0	2	11.8	0	0.0	1
Kalutara	94865	74	29	39.2	23	31.1	18	23.9	4	5.4	5
Kandy	173837	164	117	71.3	15	9.1	29	20.1	3	1.8	5
Kegalle	52872	78	48	61.5	14	17.9	12	16.7	4	5.1	2
Kilinochchi		5	4	80.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
Kurunegala	99677	154	115	74.7	21	13.6	18	11.9	0	0.0	1
Mannar*		59	48	81.4	9	15.3	2	3.7	0	0.0	3
Matale	39993	47	31	66.0	8	17.0	8	15.0	0	0.0	0
.....CO ntinued											Continue.....
Matara	22730	44	24	54.5	12	27.3	5	13.3	3	6.8	2
Monaragala	8145	17	14	82.4	3	17.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
Mullativu*		4	3	75.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	0	0.0	0
NuwaraEliya	20000	23	17	73.9	4	17.4	2	5.6	0	0.0	0
Polonnaruwa	27501	57	44	77.2	7	12.3	6	10.3	0	0.0	0
Puttalam	133697	146	97	66.4	36	24.7	13	10.9	0	0.0	9
Ratnapura	21818	43	25	58.1	11	25.6	5	14.8	2	4.7	1
Trincomalee	84349	158	107	67.7	29	18.4	22	13.5	0	0.0	5
Vavuniya*		29	23	79.3	6	20.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1

* In Mannar District, out of 5 D.S. Divisions only one was enumerated partially. In Vavuniya, out of 4 D.S. Divisions, one was enumerated completely and 2 were enumerated partially. In Batticaloa, out of 12 D.S. Divisions, 5 were enumerated completely and 6 were enumerated partially. In Trincomalee, out of 11 D.S. Divisions, 7 were enumerated completely and two were enumerated partially. The data are not included for these districts due to incomplete enumeration. In Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts, no enumeration was done. Census of Population and Housing 2001, Department of Census and Statistics- Sri Lanka (online) <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/index.asp>, (01 June 2009)

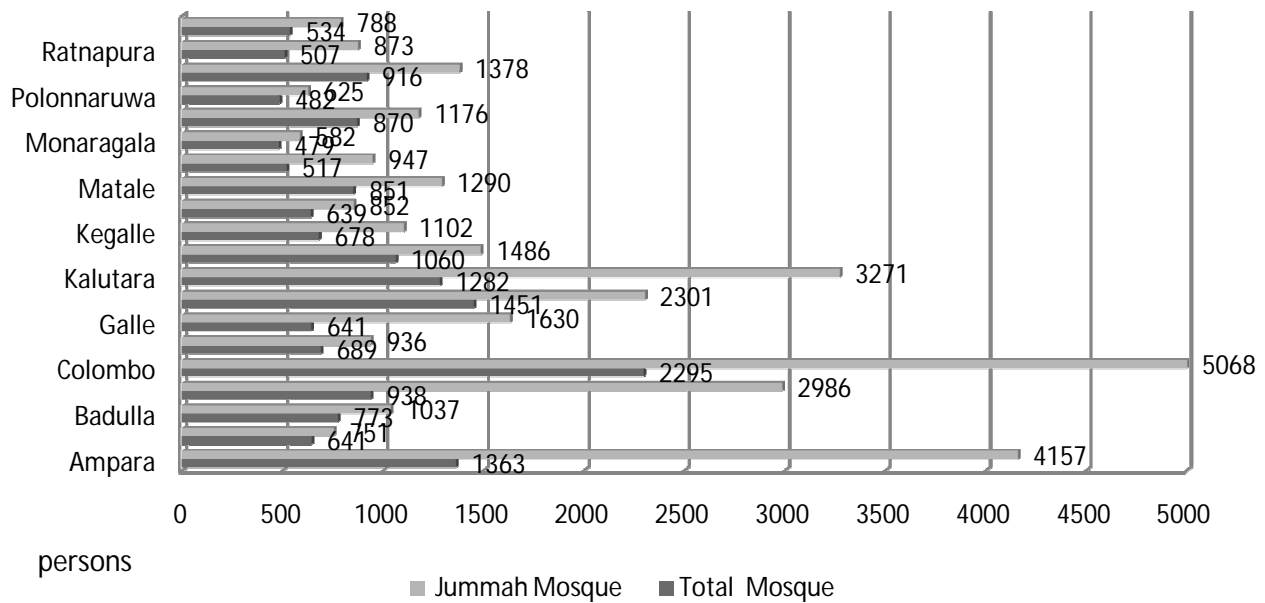


Figure 2 Distribution of one mosque by Muslim population, district wise

Source: Department of Muslim Religious & Cultural Affairs, 2007

For instance in Ampara and Batticalo Districts in the east coast of Sri Lanka where Muslims are living in considerable numerical strength and density, only 36% and 30% respectively of the mosques are jumcah mosques. On contrary, most of the Muslim villages have one jumcah mosque. For instance, the Muslim villages in the districts Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Monaragalamost like have only one jumcah mosque. There are from 75% to 85% jumcah mosques out of the total mosques as it is shown in figure2. In Ampara and Batticalo districts, one jumcah mosque now serves a community of about 3000 persons but in latter districts 600 to 700 persons have one jumcah mosque. In Colombo the capital of Sri Lanka, one jumcah mosque is to accommodate 5000 persons (figure2).

There are many normal mosques found across Muslim dwellings for their five time prayers, particularly in considerable number in those districts where Muslims are living in density. Each of main residential sections was served by its own mosque. Some mosques are woven into the Muslim settlement fabric. This is clearly shown in Ampara, Batticalo, Colombo, Galle and Kaluthura districts where more than 50% of the mosque are normal, takkiyah and zaviyah mosques (figure2). In addition, some of the public institutions, academic and health in nature, seem to have an ordinary mosque in their premises

The town mosques were built by Muslim merchants and they are always located in bazaars where they run their business. In this manner most of the towns of Sri Lanka have at least one mosque in a strategically significant location that helps to boost the Muslim business presence in the area. They are usually large in size with architectural elements at the rich of its financial prosperity. The mosques stand freely in the middle of the bazaar connecting the streets where hundreds of people who cross the area can view it in close proximity. Malay military mosques are located inside or near the forts established during the colonial period because of their service in army as garrisons with high sense of loyalty and fighting prowess. The Malay mosques are reported to have unique elements. For instance, Mohideen mosque built in near Matara fort in 1920, which is similar to a mosque in Alexandria in characteristics. Further it is said that the line mosque of Kandy which was built by Malay Muslims based on the example of Indian and Indonesian architectural elements.

There was a tradition of building and locating mosque attached to maqbarah (cemetery). Despite that most of Sri Lankan mosques have cemetery in the nearby surrounding; these mosques are complement of cemetery complex built upon graveyards of the person who is believed as wali. The mosques are intended and located always attached to cemetery complex for the visitors.

Dharga and shrine mosques are regarded as examples of this group. This kind of mosques is mostly located in southern coastal region of Sri Lanka. Few mosques are found in isolated places on the slope of mountain and upland.

Type and Affiliation

In Sri Lanka as it is in all over the Muslim world, the mosques are customarily categorized into two main types: simple and jumcah mosques in terms of their functions and status in a similar fashion to that of the salat prayers. The five times daily prayers are attributed to the individual and can be performed in the mosque. Daily prayers can be performed in a congregation that has higher merit. A mosque providing for the individual and daily congregational prayers is a first category mosque. The Friday prayer, however is performed once a week with the gathering of the whole community in one bigger place that is called as jumcah mosque. Jumcah is an Arabic term that denotes Friday prayer. "Grand Mosque" or "Great Mosque" is the common terms. The term 'jami' , an Arabic reference to gathering the faithful from all corners of the built area, is rarely used.

Besides, we find other small mosques having a special names "takkiyah" and "zaviyah" in relation to their other function rather than congregational prayer. Basically, takkiyah and zaviyah were terms used for institutions where the sufi shaykh provides a spiritual training to his disciples (M.A.M. Shukry, 1986) and where the devoted faithful could be retired from this world into a holy environment. But it is observed that in Sri Lanka, the term zaviyah is used to denote exclusively the centers of Shadhliyah orders whereas the term takkiyah is generally used to denote centers of all Tariqas. But it is interesting to note that all takkiyah mosques are presently not functioning in this sense. Takkiyah and simple mosque are almost interchangeable. Dhargahor Shrine is a building erected upon graveyards of the person who was almost of shaykh of sufi order and he or she is believed as a wali. Presently, there is an emerging of new category of mosques identified as 'Markaz' mosque', affiliated with any Islamic movement, particularly with Tablighi Jamcat.

The sampled mosques were asked to indicate their affiliation with to any Islamic movement or school of jurisprudence found in Sri Lanka. According to the responses given, majority of the mosques are affiliated with at least one movement or madhhab. The table 1 below shows the percentage of mosques affiliated with each of the several Islamic movements as well as of prominent schools of jurisprudences found in Sri Lanka.

Table 1 presents the mosque affiliation in Sri Lanka. The majority of the mosques (51.9%) is either associated with the Tablighi Jamcat or Madhhab Ash-Shafici. The former is a most popular movement among the Muslims of Sri Lanka particularly, Muslim laymen. It is noteworthy that most of the Tablighi mosques belong to Ash-Shafici school of thought (Madhhab). Tawhid movements with its sub- divisions, work in separate entities, have some mosques (8.3%), mostly jumcah mosques type (9%). It is said that many mosques were established by tariqah orders and these sufi Tariqah orders namely: Qadiriyyah, Shadhliyyah, Ahadaliyyah, Alawiyah, Haddaiyyah and Aidarusiyah, were introduced in Sri Lanka during the 19th century.

All the mosques that are registered in the name of 'Muhideen mosque' are associated with these sufi schools of thought (Y.L.M.Navai, 2008). However, relatively some mosques are affiliated with these associations. Few mosques are associated with others, which were described as Madhhab al-Hanafi, Jamcat al-Muslimin, and Jamcat-e-Islami (Jamcat-e-Islami that is organization established in Sri Lanka in 1952, and works in the area of political, social and educational awakening.) It is important to note that very few mosques are affiliated with Jamcat-e-Islami, an organization in which participants are mostly from educational background including students, professional and practitioners and it has long history in Sri Lanka. Even though it is claimed that most of Muslims in Sri Lanka are following shafici madhhab, the response of mosque indicates that about one out of four mosques is affiliated with this school of jurisprudence. It is quite natural that very few mosques belong to Hanafi school. It is noteworthy that nearly more than one third of jumcah mosques (34.9%) are not affiliated with any organizations.

Table1 Affiliation with Islamic organizations and madhhab Percentage affiliated with each

Affiliation	Jum^h Mosque	All mosques
Not Associated with Any	34.9%	31.5%
TablighJama ^h at	28.3%	27.8%
MadhhabAsh-Shafi ^h i	22.3%	24.1%
TawhidJama ^h at	9.0%	8.3%
Tariqah orders	4.2%	5.1%
all other	1.2%	3.24%

Source: Survey

Conclusion

The early history of the mosques based on the oral stories as they dated back to the Muslim presence in Sri Lanka before one thousand years. The mosques were gradually losing its centrality in the Muslim community from the 16th century due to the socio-political and economic constraints faced the Muslims during western colonial rule of the Sri Lanka. As result of the removal of these constraints in the 19th century, there were many mosques established or reconstructed. The 20th century especially its second half was marked with great movement in the sense of mosque construction. The mosques are categorized into jumcah mosques, ordinary mosques, takkiyah, Tarigah and shrine mosques based on their special function, size etc. Furthermore, the majority of the mosques are affiliated to a madhhab, an Islamic movement or sufi order found in Sri Lanka. The location and the presence of the centrality of mosque appear to be influential factors and this tendency was maintained until recent time. With a few minorexception, every city and village where Muslims exist has a jumcah mosque. The building and architecture of the mosque are most likely reflected by the customary view that mosque is a house of worship thus the prayer hall is the main requirement of the building. The physical facilities found in the mosque complex are functional requirements of a mosque, mostly to provide particular religious services.

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