



## Honoring Lakshmana Swami Mudaliar: A Tribute to His Impact at Farook College

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	<p>Sir Arcot Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar was an Indian educationist, Physician, Vice Chancellor of longest period in Madras University and Chairman of the Mudaliar Education commission. Born on October 14, 1887, in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, was an influential figure in Indian education and public health. He was the younger twin brother of Sir Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, a notable lawyer and politician. After excelling in his studies at Madras Christian College and Madras Medical College, Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar joined the faculty at Madras Medical College, eventually becoming its Principal and modernizing its curriculum. In 1936, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Madras University, a position he held for 27 years, during which he supported the establishment of Farook College in Malabar, often referred to as the 'Aligarh of South India.' Farook College, founded in 1948, played a crucial role in empowering Kerala Muslims, offering extensive educational opportunities and promoting social reform. Maulavi Abussabah Ahmed Ali, the founder of Rouzathul Uloom Arabic College and a prominent social reformer, significantly contributed to the college's development. The college honors his legacy through the naming of a hostel founded in 1960 as "A.L.M." in his memory. His sympathy and generosity helped a great deal in the establishment and growth of the College. Mudaliar's tenure saw significant improvements in the university's academic standards, infrastructure, and student welfare.</p>

### INTRODUCTION

Sir Arcot Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar was an Indian educationist, Physician, Vice Chancellor of longest period in Madras University and Chairman of the Mudaliar Education commission. Born on October 14, 1887, in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. He was the identical younger twin brother of Sir Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, a prominent lawyer and politician. Lakshmanaswami completed his early education in Kurnool before moving to Chennai (then Madras) in 1903. He attended the Madras Christian College, where he excelled in his studies, and later enrolled at the Madras Medical College to pursue a career in medicine. After obtaining his medical degree, Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar joined the Madras Medical College as a faculty member. He quickly rose through the ranks due to his dedication and expertise. He served as the Principal of Madras Medical College, where he was instrumental in modernizing the curriculum and improving the quality of medical education.

In 1936, Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar was appointed the Vice-Chancellor of Madras University, a position he held for an unprecedented 27 years. During this period, he provided significant support to establish a college in Malabar called Farook College, which is often referred to as the 'Aligarh of South India'. So Fraook College honors him daily with great pride. One of the hostels, established in 1960, is named "A.L.M" which signifies the influence given by him.<sup>1</sup> During his tenure, he implemented numerous reforms that significantly enhanced the university's academic standards. Some of his key contributions include:

- Curriculum Development: He introduced innovative teaching methods and updated the syllabus to align with global standards.
- Infrastructure Improvements: Under his leadership, several new departments and research facilities were established.

- Student Welfare: He prioritized student welfare by improving hostel facilities and providing scholarships to deserving students.

### **Farook College**

Farook College is a significant landmark that marks the renaissance of Kerala Muslims. The college was founded in 1948 to enlighten and empower a community debilitated by oppressive colonial practices and regressive local perceptions<sup>2</sup>. The Rouzathul Uloom Association, the parent body of the educational complex on the campus, took the lead in transforming the social fabric of the region by initiating a secular and modern educational paradigm, committed to serving the economically and socially marginalised sections of society<sup>3</sup>. Currently it is the biggest residential post-graduate institution in the state. It offers 22 undergraduate and 16 post-graduate programmes. Eleven of the P.G. Departments are recognized research centres, offering Ph D programmes. The autonomous status was conferred by the UGC in 2015. The college has been re-accredited at A+ Grade (CGPA 3.51) by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

Farook college was the only First Grade College in Central Malabar at the time of its inception and was originally affiliated to the Madras University<sup>4</sup>. Following the states reorganization, the college came under the University of Kerala in 1957 and the University of Calicut in 1968<sup>5</sup>. The college modelled on a residential pattern, offers ample opportunities for curricular and co-curricular activities for the mental, moral and physical development of the students. The special care for the moral development of the students operates through religious and spiritual discourses, helping them enrich their personal as well as social identity. The college and its hostels are open to students of all castes and creeds, and promotes a healthy and harmonious ambience on the campus<sup>6</sup>.

The College strives to help every student:

- To understand himself/herself and discover his/her latent capabilities
- To pursue academic excellence and develop personal integrity
- To understand his/her position as a member of human society and of the physical universe
- To think clearly and critically, and to communicate effectively
- To learn how to make practical application of knowledge, perspectives and skills
- To develop a sense of unity in all areas of knowledge, including religious vision.

### **Maulavi Abussabah Ahmed Ali, The founder**

Maulavi Abussabah Ahmed Ali, a visionary leader and renowned scholar, was one of the torch-bearers of the educational revolution that swept across the Malabar region in the nineteen-forties. He was the founding father of Rouzathul Uloom Arabic College, and holds a unique position among the social reformers of his time<sup>7</sup>.

Abussabah was born at Vembanad, a village in Chavakkad, Kerala, into a middle class family. After his elementary education he went to study at places like Mahi and Vellore. Having graduated from Jamaaliya College in Madras, he joined the illustrious Al Azhar University in Egypt for higher studies. As a student at Al Azhar University, Cairo, he displayed exceptional intellectual fervor and integrity. Having completed his graduation, he visited places like Iran, Palestine etc., before finally returning to India. He served as a teacher in Lahore, Bihar and Madras. Dejected by the material pursuits of life, he spent his days in meditation. He retreated, initially into the Himalayas, and later into the dense forests of Karnataka, leading the life of a recluse. During this period, Kunhalikutty Haji of Anakkayam, Manjeri met him in Karnataka; Abussabah was ushered into Malabar<sup>8</sup>.

Maulavi emerged from the shell of self-confinement, a pioneer set out to eradicate social backwardness with the light of knowledge. On 5 January 1942, he started an Arabic College at Anakkayam which was shifted to Manjeri in 1945 for further expansion. The social uplift of the community through education was his major concern. As a preliminary move, he endeavored to acquire adequate land for an educational venture. Many who supported this novel initiative, registered their association with the mission, and thus Rouzathul Uloom Association took shape in 1946<sup>9</sup>. It housed a conglomeration of social reformers and numerous benefactors. Subsequently, in 1948 it was re-established in Feroke as 'Rouzathul Uloom Arabic College'. It was his exemplary selflessness and visionary zeal that steered Farook College to its present repute and glory.

Abussabah was an enigmatic personality who never faltered in the face of financial adversity or physical disability. He strove to realize higher ideals with admirable dignity. Ever agile and active, he was successful in the execution of all the ventures undertaken, with immaculate perfection. A distinguished scholar, all his academic ventures were marked by a homogenous fusion of both ancient and modern thoughts. His sense of inclusiveness, enabled him to work harmoniously with people of differing views. Fondly addressed by his students as 'Shaikhuna' (Our mentor,) he won a permanent place in their hearts. He passed away in 1971 following a period of illness, and was buried in the premise of Masjid-ul-Azhar, the campus mosque<sup>10</sup>. His pioneering role in establishing the institutions of Farookabad is indeed a matchless socio-cultural achievement.

### **Contributions of Lakshmana Swami Mudaliar**

Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar's contributions extended beyond India. He was a key figure in the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) and played a vital role in its early years. He served as the Chairman of the WHO Executive Board from 1949 to 1950 and was the Deputy Leader of the Indian delegation to the First World Health Assembly in Geneva in 1948.

### Honors and Awards

Throughout his illustrious career, Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar received numerous accolades for his contributions to education and public health:

- **Knighted:** He was knighted in the 1945 New Year Honours for his services to education and medicine.
- **Padma Bhushan:** He was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award, in 1954.
- **Padma Vibhushan:** In 1963, he received the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award, in recognition of his outstanding contributions.

### Mudaliar Commission

The Mudaliar Commission, officially known as the Secondary Education Commission, was appointed by the Government of India on September 23, 1952, under the chairmanship of Dr. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar, the then Vice-Chancellor of Madras University. The commission was tasked with examining the state of secondary education in India and suggesting measures for its improvement. The commission aimed to:

- Study the condition of contemporary secondary education and suggest measures for its reorganization.
- Examine the aims, curriculum, and teaching standards of secondary education in every province.
- Study the scales and service conditions of secondary school teachers.
- Investigate the examination system at the secondary level.
- Identify problems in secondary education and propose remedies.

The commission made several recommendations to address these issues:

- **Organization of Secondary Education:** Suggested a seven-year duration for secondary education, divided into junior secondary (three years) and higher secondary (four years) stages.
- **Curriculum:** Recommended a curriculum that is related to real life, extensive, and flexible. It should include inter-related subjects and activities<sup>1</sup>.
- **Teacher Training:** Emphasized the importance of proper training for teachers and suggested the establishment of educational and vocational guidance bureaus in every province.
- **Examination System:** Proposed reforms to make the examination system more flexible and relevant.
- **Special Schools:** Recommended the establishment of special schools for handicapped children.
- **Co-curricular Activities:** Suggested the inclusion of co-curricular activities to develop students' personality and leadership qualities.

The Mudaliar Commission Report was a comprehensive document that provided a detailed analysis of the state of secondary education in India and offered practical recommendations for its improvement. The report has had a lasting impact on the Indian education system and continues to be referenced in educational reforms.

Sir Arcot Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar passed away on April 15, 1974, leaving behind a lasting legacy in the fields of education and public health. His contributions have had a profound impact on the academic and medical communities in India and around the world. Likewise Farook College continues to honor his legacy throughout the years, bringing immense joy to everyone.

### Conclusion

Sir Arcot Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar was a visionary educationist, dedicated physician, and an influential figure in Indian education and public health. Born in 1887 in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, he pursued excellence in his studies and career, eventually becoming the Vice-Chancellor of Madras University for a record 27 years.

Farook College, known as the 'Aligarh of South India', stands as a testament to his enduring legacy, naming a hostel after him. The college's role in empowering Kerala Muslims and promoting modern education reflects Mudaliar's vision of societal upliftment through education.

Additionally, Mudaliar played a crucial role in the global arena, contributing to the establishment of the World Health Organization. His efforts were recognized with numerous accolades, including knighthood and India's prestigious Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan awards. The Mudaliar Commission, under his leadership, provided a comprehensive blueprint for improving secondary education in India, leaving a lasting impact on the nation's educational landscape.

Sir Arcot Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar's life and work continue to inspire and bring immense joy to countless individuals, as his legacy is honored and celebrated by institutions like Farook College. His contributions have profoundly influenced both the academic and medical communities, ensuring his place as a distinguished figure in India's history.

### References and End Notes

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