

**STATE AS AN OPPRESSIVE INSTRUMENT:
THE JAIL EXPERIENCES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS
IN MALABAR, 1921-1947**

Thesis
Submitted to the University of Calicut
for the award of the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
HISTORY

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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled '**State as An Oppressive Instrument: The Jail Experiences of Political Prisoners in Colonial Malabar**' submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research carried out by **Shumais. U.**, under my supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any degree or title before.

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I also hereby certify that the corrections/suggestions from the adjudicators have been incorporated in the revised thesis. Content of the CD submitted and the hardcopy of the thesis is one and the same.

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DECLARATION

I, Shumais. U., hereby state that the thesis entitled '**State as an Oppressive Instrument: The Jail Experiences of Political Prisoners in Malabar, 1921-1947**', submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History is done by me and that has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other degree or title before.

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The most important part of the work leading to a PhD Degree is the selection of the research problem. Usually we come across the practice of identifying subjects which has the fortune of the availability of source materials and evidences directly available in various repositories and libraries. Unlike other research students, I entered the field of research work immediately after my post-graduation with a Junior Research Fellowship of the University Grants Commission. The imperfect knowledge regarding research study forced me to seek the assistance of senior scholars and well experienced research students. Fortunately, I was lucky to live among them as learner and then as a real research student where I never came across a problem which was blocking the smooth progress of my PhD work. Thus, the successful completion of the work in the beginning of 2019 is a result of the joint effort and long lasting support given by them. I use this opportunity to express my gratitude to them while submitting the work for adjudication.

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Abbreviation

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ACS</i>	:	Andaman Colonisation Scheme
<i>AICC</i>	:	All India Congress Committee
<i>CJ</i>	:	Central Jail
<i>CDM</i>	:	Civil Disobedience Movement
<i>CID</i>	:	Crime investigation department
<i>CMO</i>	:	Correspondence on Moplah Outrages
<i>CPI</i>	:	Communist Party of India
<i>CSP</i>	:	Congress Socialist Party
<i>CWMG</i>	:	The Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi
<i>DBHPS</i>	:	Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha
<i>DM</i>	:	District Magistrate
<i>DJ</i>	:	District Jail
<i>EEIC</i>	:	English East India Company
<i>FNR</i>	:	Fortnightly Report
<i>FSG</i>	:	<i>Fort St. George Gazette</i>
<i>GO</i>	:	Government Order
<i>GOI</i>	:	Government of India
<i>HFMF</i>	:	History of Freedom Movement File
<i>IG</i>	:	Inspector General
<i>IPC</i>	:	Indian Penal Code
<i>JC</i>	:	Joint Commissioners.
<i>JNU</i>	:	Jawaharlal Nehru University
<i>KPCC</i>	:	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
<i>KSA</i>	:	Kerala State Archives
<i>MAR</i>	:	Madras Administration Report
<i>MCF</i>	:	Madras Correspondence File
<i>MLCP</i>	:	Madras Legislative Council Proceedings
<i>MNNPR</i>	:	Madras Native Newspaper Reports
<i>MOA</i>	:	Moplah Outrages Act
<i>MSA</i>	:	Maharashtra state archives
<i>MSPR</i>	:	Madras State prisoners Regulation

<i>NAI</i>	:	National Archives of India
<i>NCM</i>	:	Non Cooperation Movement
<i>NMML</i>	:	Nehru Memorial Museum Library
<i>OHT</i>	:	Oral History Transcript
<i>OUP</i>	:	Oxford University Press
<i>PDD</i>	:	Political Department Diaries
<i>RAK</i>	:	Regional Archives Kozhikode
<i>SPDD</i>	:	Secret and Political Department Diaries
<i>TSA</i>	:	Tamilnadu State Archives
<i>USSF</i>	:	Undersecretary Secret Safe Files
<i>QIM</i>	:	Quit India Movement

Glossary

<i>adhikari</i>	:	village officer holding revenue and legal powers
<i>amsam</i>	:	village
<i>charka</i>	:	a spinning wheel used by Gandhi and his followers
<i>darogha</i>	:	chief officer, mainly head of police or customs station.
<i>hartal</i>	:	closure of offices and shops as a form of protest
<i>imam</i>	:	worship leaders of Mappila
<i>janmam</i>	:	hereditary right over the land
<i>janmi</i>	:	landlord who possessed <i>janmam</i> right over the land
<i>kaman</i>	:	jail transfer
<i>khadi</i>	:	hand woven indigenous clothes
<i>kolkaran</i>	:	land measuring peon or police man in colonial Malabar
<i>langoti</i>	:	a cloth worn between the legs
<i>mappilamar</i>	:	two or more Mappila
<i>maulavi</i>	:	a title of respect for Muslim religious leader
<i>nadayadi</i>	:	beating of prisoners by jail warden while entering to prison.
<i>pandit</i>	:	an expert in a particular subject
<i>satyagraha</i>	:	a passive form of political resistance
<i>satyagrahi</i>	:	a person who engaged in satyagraha
<i>shahid</i>	:	martyr
<i>swaraj</i>	:	self-rule
<i>tangal</i>	:	descendent of prophet Muhammed
<i>thali</i>	:	a chain ties around brides neck on marriage .

Chapter 1

Introduction

Prisons have played a determinant role in shaping the character of the society. These were human constructed institutions and are related with the power relations in a structured social mechanism. This thesis looks into the role of prison life of the freedom fighters in Malabar during the struggle against colonialism and landlordism from 1921 to 1947. In order to understand the research problem in detail we have to examine the birth of prisons in human history. It is important to state that the prison system that we see in India today is a continuation of the system introduced by the colonial administrators. Thus, it has good connection with the post-industrial European system of imprisonment.

The prison life of the Indian people during the colonial rule has played a vital role in shaping the later struggle for emancipation from the colonial rule and exploitation by the landlords and capitalists. The study is endeavouring to examine this issue in the context of the British rule in Malabar which forms the northern part of the modern Kerala State today.¹

The Research Problem

The study entitled 'State as an Oppressive Instrument: The Jail Experiences of Political Prisoners in Colonial Malabar, 1921-1947' deals with

¹ The term 'Malabar' in colonial period covers Palakkad, Malapuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Wayanad districts of modern Kerala. However this work is not limited to these districts alone. The study includes the territory of the Kasargod district of modern Kerala which was a taluk of the South Canara District of the Madras Presidency. The national movement considered Kasargod as a part of the Malabar District in their political vision. Malabar was initially part of the Bombay Presidency and was later transferred to Madras Presidency in 1800 and remained as a district of the Madras Presidency throughout the colonial period.

the historical process by which the colonial state used prison for oppressing its political opponents and the experiences of political prisoners in colonial Malabar. It was the experience in these colonial prisons that strengthened the understanding of colonialism among the nationalists in India. It was this understanding that made the freedom struggle more strong in all aspects. When these ex-prisoners undertook the leadership of the freedom struggle, the movement became well defined, vibrant and efficient to break the foundations of the colonial system. It was not just a political understanding but was an intellectual realisation of colonialism. The mechanism was in operation in the prison cells as jail experiences and study classes conducted by the prisoners. It was from these experiences, the concept of a new India free from all sorts of miseries including colonialism, feudalism and capitalism was born. The space selected for the study, colonial Malabar enables the scholar to examine the details of the issue supported by different sorts of evidences.

Imprisonment as a form of punishment was a colonial innovation in Malabar. The main aim of colonialism was the extraction of maximum resources from the colony. They never used the European model of prison in India as it would cost a lot of money. Here the colonial state did not construct prisons in European model in order to save money. The development of prison system in Colonial Malabar can be divided into three phases. The initial phase was the Company phase from 1792 to 1858. During this period the entire administration was under English East India Company. The second was the intermediary phase from 1858 to 1921. It was in 1858 that the administration of India was handed over from English East India Company to the British Crown. The last phase was from 1921 to 1947. It was in the last phase that many courted arrest and went to prison as a part of

Indian National Movement under Gandhi. Here the year 1921 is taken because even though the Non Co-operation Movement under Gandhi was launched in 1920, the first political imprisonment in connection with Non-co-Operation Movement occurred in 1921.

As Malabar was one of the district of Madras Presidency the political prisoners from Malabar were mostly confined in the prisons of Madras Presidency. The convicts punished with transportation were usually sent to Andaman Islands. Thus, thousands of Mappila convicts, women and children who were transported to these Islands in connection with Malabar Struggle have become the subject of study. The volunteers from princely states of Travancore and Cochin and different parts of India also became part of the study as many of them were imprisoned in various jails in Malabar.

It is interesting to study the birth of the concept, the political prisoner. The colonial state in its entire regime did not mention anybody as a political prisoner in their official documents and correspondence. The term political prisoner was used to denote a person who was confined by state for challenging the state individually or by groups. The Indian National Congress considered a political prisoner who courted imprisonment for the freedom of nation by non-violent methods. The Congress didn't see prisoners connected to violence as political prisoners. Thus, majority of the Political prisoners were actually outside the definition of colonial state and the perception of the Indian National Congress.² This study, see all those who challenged the colonial state from its very beginning through violent as well as non-violent methods and courted imprisonment as political prisoners.

² Ujwal Kumar Singh, *Political Prisoners in India*, OUP, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 18-22

Thus, the study makes attempt to explore, the origin of modern prisons in colonial Malabar, imprisonment of the political opponents, the evolution of jail rules. These are to be explored to answer the question that how did the jail experience determine the character of freedom struggle in the last few decades of the national movement in India. This character was not limited to the ideology of non-violence but integrated with the idea of socialist revolution and extermination of feudalism and capitalism for the well being of the ordinary people after independence from the colonial rule.

Aims and Objectives

The study is set with certain aims and objectives. Primarily the study endeavours to study the jail life of political prisoners in colonial Malabar. An attempt is made to examine the changing rules and regulations followed by the colonial authorities regarding the management of political prisoners in the jails. The question of political prisoner, the consideration of gender, class, caste and religion in colonial prison is also need to be examined. There are new theoretical methods to examine the management of prisons in history with the arrival of the observations of new scholars like Foucault. The idea of discipline and punishments received new angles in colonies with the advancement of colonial rule in Asia. The colonialists framed new interpretations to the European jail practices in Asian colonies.

It will be interesting to study the role of colonial prisons in generating the influence of new ideologies like terrorism, socialism and communism in India. It has greater significance in the context of Malabar as the Communist ideology became the dominant one over Gandhain teachings by the 1930s. Thus, the conflict between the ideology of the Indian National Congress and the Socialists is to be examined in detail to explore the inner contradictions

in the freedom struggle in the context of jails in colonial India. When we read the autobiographies written by freedom fighters we come to learn that it was the jail life that transformed most of them to accept socialism and communism as their favourite ideology through the study classes they attended in the jail cells. A sincere attempt to examine this will enable us to understand the wider canvas of the national movement in India. It is also very significant to note that a major objective of the study is to critically examine, the way in which the experiences of jail life had transformed the political prisoners in their post-prison life.

Review of Literature

The conventional account of the freedom movement has not made effort to understand the life of freedom fighters in the context of their jail experiences. We have plenty of primary materials to study the colonial prisons, management of prisoners, and the post-prison life of the prisoners. They appear mainly as biographies and auto biographies of the freedom fighters. Many of these were published by the activist or their close relatives after the achievement of Indian independence. Most of the works were examined and they are listed in the bibliography attached to the study. In addition to the examination of archival documents and primary materials, academic publications are to be explored to see the way in which the problem was handled in the study of history over the period.

In order to have a better understanding of the institution called the prison, a close scrutiny of its history is required. Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* is a scholarly work which analysed the emergence of modern prisons. The work starts with the execution of a culprit named Damien in festive condition at public space at Paris in 1757.

His dress was removed, the flesh was torn out from different parts of his body, including from chest, molten lead was poured along with boiling oil, burning resin and sulphur. These were melted together on his body. This body was drawn and quartered by horses and later the body was consumed by fire and was reduced to ashes.³ Eighty years later the punishment turned out to be solitary confinement, where prisoners led a disciplined life at the cell, chapel and workshop. The festive mode of public punishment was replaced by imprisonment without torture. Secondly, the target of punishment was changed to reforming the soul rather than harming the body.⁴ Disciplining of the soul aimed the change in behaviour of a person and it created a self-controlled body without any external force. This new prison was directly linked with the change in political power. The state considered this system as more economic and efficient than medieval punishments.⁵ The panopticon concept was also widely discussed by him. Foucault raises a question regarding why prison still continues as a major form of punishment from the last quarter of eighteenth century. According to him imprisonment still continues as a major punitive mechanism because of two reasons. Firstly, the discipline and other mechanisms of jails have become deeply rooted in the society in general and, secondly, it carried out 'certain very precise functions'.⁶ That is, for the modern state, prison was not only a punitive mechanism but also a tool of political domination over the society. In the last section entitled 'the carceral', Foucault examines the disciplinary function played by other institutions in the society such as the army, school, hospital, factory and lunatic asylums. He concludes that these institutions

³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Penguin, London, 1991, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-11.

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Vintage Books, New York, 1980, pp. 38-39.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, p. 281.

also followed strict discipline. Thus the modern institutions also aimed disciplining the society in general.

Michael Ignatieff, in his book *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution*, analyses the emergence of modern prison system in England from the last quarter of eighteenth century to 1850. The emergence of modern prison in England was directly related with the changing role of modern state as an aftermath of the industrial revolution. All new disciplinary institutions emerged during this period like the hospital, school, lunatic asylum and prison. All of these, more or less, shared the structure and functions of the Factory.⁷ Simply he argues that prison was a product of industrial revolution which aimed at disciplined subjects. He compares prison as a laboratory where experiments were conducted on religion, labour, medicine, education and morality.

Majority of the historians who worked on colonial prison in India had the view that Indian prison was far away from Foucault's concept of discipline and panopticon. Anand A Yang in his article *Disciplining Natives: Prisons and Prisoners in Nineteenth Century India* written by analysing the messing resistances in colonial Bihar in nineteenth century states that Indian prison doesn't suit to Foucault's concept of prison.⁸ The subaltern studies addressed the crime, criminality, prisons and other aspects of colonial India. David Arnold in his article entitled *The Colonial Prison* in subaltern studies states that Indian prison was very different from Foucault's concept of prison discipline and panopticon concept of surveillance. The prison was used as an instrument of political surveillance right from the beginning. The resistances

⁷ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: Penitentiary in Industrial Revolution*, Macmillan, London, 1978, pp. 214-215.

⁸ Anand A Yang, 'Disciplining Natives : Prisons and Prisoners in Early Nineteenth Century India' in *South Asia*, vol. X, no. 2, December 1987, pp. 29-45.

in prison can be traced from the very beginning of nineteenth century itself which was later widely followed by the political prisoners in the nationalist period. The prisoners went on various methods of resistance including hunger strikes which rejects the notion of discipline and docile bodies by Foucault. Satadru Sen in *Disciplining Natives* which deals with prison system in colonial India analyses that Foucault's concept of prison does not have any relevance in India.⁹ Ujwal Kumar Singh in his book *Political Prisoners in India* deals with the concept of political prisoner in colonial as well as in independent India. He argues that the prison was used as an political tool for oppression by colonial state and remained unchanged in independent India.¹⁰ Simply he argues that even in independent India prison was an oppressive tool. *Roads to Freedom: Prisoners in Colonial India* written by Muhsirul Hassan analyses the prison life of political prisoners in colonial India.¹¹ He used a broader concept for the term political prisoner like Ujwal Kumar Singh. The work highlights on the experiences of political prisoners through their autobiographies, memoirs, poems and letters.

It is to be mentioned that the existing works which deals with the national movement in Malabar do not examine the prison life of political prisoners in detail. This happened mainly because of scarcity of primary sources and lack of theoretical understanding of the freedom struggle. Lack of theoretical understanding would result in mis leading results in research work. Taylor C Sherman in his article 'From Hell to Heaven'¹² called had called the 'Andaman scheme' produced a heaven for the imprisoned Mappila people and their families when they got transported to the convict colony.

⁹ Vide Satadru Sen, *Disciplining Natives*, Primus Publications, New Delhi, 2012.

¹⁰ Ujwal Kumar Singh, *Political Prisoners in India*, pp. 18-22.

¹¹ Muhsirul Hassan, *Roads to Freedom: Prisoners in Colonial India*, OUP, New Delhi, 2016.

¹² Taylor C Sherman, 'Voluntary transfer of convicts to the Andaman Islands, 1921-1940' in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 367-388.

Taylor C Sherman analysed the transportation of prisoners on the basis of colonial sources and did not examine the sources available in vernacular languages and oral accounts available for the study. In order to save the study from mistakes like this, the present endeavour has made effort to tap non-conventional sources like vernacular literature, oral interviews, autobiographies etc. In order to help further research and scrutiny of sources used, a detailed bibliography is incorporated in the study.

Methodology and Sources

The methodology intended for this research study is primarily analytical and descriptive. Primary as well as secondary sources were collected from various archival repositories, libraries and other institutions. Primary sources mainly consist of archival data, government's official correspondences, government reports, jail administration reports, police reports, newspapers, autobiographies, memoirs, interviews, official letters mainly of letters sent from prison to individuals and organisations. These were accessed at the National Archives of India, New Delhi, Archives of Contemporary History, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum Library (NMML), New Delhi; Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai; Tamil Nadu State Archives (TSA), Egmore, Kerala State Archives (KSA), Thiruvananthapuram, Regional Archives Kozhikode (RAK) and from Kerala History Archives, Department of History, University of Calicut. The newspapers and journals of that period like *Mathrubhumi*, *Al Ameen*, *Malayala Manorama*, *The Hindu*, *Unni Namboodiri*, and the *Bombay Chronicle* were also perused for the study.

The most important category among the primary sources was none other than autobiographies, memoirs and letters by political prisoners. It

contains a lot of information on the prison experience of political prisoners. This include, works written by persons from Malabar as well as from outside. Some important accounts of political prisoners in Malayalam are Mozhikunath Brahmadhathan Namboodiripad's *Khilafat Smaranakal*, A K Gopalan's *In the Cause of People*, E Moidu Moulavi's *Moulaviyude Atmakadha*, E M S Namboodiripad's *Aatmakadha* , N C Shekar's *Agniveedhi*, V A Keshavan Nair's *Irumbazhikullil*, Samuel Aron's *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, Sankaran Moyyarth's *Athmakatha*, Dairies of A C Kannan Nair, *Jail Dairy* of C Rajagoplachari, *An Autobiography* of Jawaharlal Nehru and so on. Details regarding the availability of these sources are given in the end of the study for perusal. Interviews were also conducted for oral evidence among the political prisoners from freedom movement as well as from their successive generations.

Besides this, various other primary and secondary sources were collected from libraries which include Nehru Memorial Museum Library (New Delhi), JNU Central Library of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Connemara Public Library Chennai, K N Raj Library, Centre For Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Sri Chitra Thirunal Granthasala, Thiruvananthapuram, Library of the Kerala Council for Historical Research, Thiruvananthapuram, the Kerala University Library, Thiruvananthapuram, the Library of the Kerala Sahitya Academy and the Appan Thampuran Library at Thrissur, Revenue Recovery Library at Thalassery, C H Mohammed Koya Library and so on. Online resources were also accessed and details of such documents are explained in the end of the thesis.

Organisation of the Study

The work is divided into eight chapters including the introduction and conclusion. The 'Introduction' examines the research problem, methodology, scheme of the thesis and the methodology followed. 'The Colonial Prison in Malabar' which forms the second chapter, analyses the birth of the jails in Europe and the arrival of this institution in colonial India. Punishments were introduced by the colonial state right from its beginning in India. This chapter explains the emergence of prison system in colonial Malabar, its administration, architecture, staff, labour etc. Various punishments and acts introduced by the colonial state to deal with the early resistance to the colonial state are analysed in this chapter. The colonial state used the prison as an instrument of political oppression from the early period itself.

The third chapter, 'The Political Prisoner' analyses the prison life of political prisoners in connection with various movements. This chapter discusses the treatment of prisoners as politicians and criminals and discrimination or classification of prisoners on the basis of wealth, class, religion, caste, education etc. The discussion roams around food, labour dress and the colonial medicine in the context of the prison. An important subject of debate in this chapter is the consideration given to the prisoners who behaved as Gandhians in the colonial prison. It is in this context, the notion of prison discipline is analysed. Political prisoners who obeyed and imitated M K Gandhi and his ideals behaved in a distinct way in the prison, They organised hunger strikes and other peaceful resistances against injustices in the prison. They were managed in changing methods by the prison authorities. The life of such prisoners in their post-prison life was also different. This chapter gives sufficient space to debate this issue in detail.

The fourth chapter examines the prison life of women political prisoners in colonial Malabar. When women began to participate in political movements, they were also subjected to severe punishments by the colonial government. The journey of women from the house to public space was not well received by the authorities. The arrest of women political prisoners and public reaction to it is debated in details in this chapter. Moreover, this chapter also analyses the question of gender discrimination in prison. The post prison life of women is also discussed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter entitled 'Malabar Struggle and Prison Life' examines various punishments used by the colonial state in connection with the Malabar Struggle. The colonial state encountered a new problem with the strong resistance to colonial state due to the Malabar Struggle of the *mappilamar*. The colonial state found it as a 'penal crisis' with the arrest of thousands of prisoners. The hardships faced by the *mappilamar* during their prison life in various jails of the Madras Presidency and the attitude of jail staff towards the prisoners is also studied in detail in this chapter. The imprisonment of *mappilamar* was part of a larger plan designed by the state to end resistance to colonialism. The colonial state attempted to discipline the *mappilamar* in prison and post-prison life. The 'Andaman Colonisation Scheme' is examined in this context. The study explores the resistance of *mappilamar* in jails and the action of the colonial government. The discussion also see the continuation of the disciplining policy of the government after the commencement of the release of prisoners in 1923. It is also seen that the disciplining attitude continued through changed faces after 1923.

The sixth chapter 'prison as a school' examines prison as an institution of learning. This chapter analyses the political prisoners utilising prison as an academic institution to debate the issues prevalent in colonial India. Various ideologies like Socialism and Communism spread to the Gandhian political prisoners in Malabar through these prisons. How the Gandhians, socialists and communists utilised their prison life in learning and studying various languages and subjects. Whether Mappillas were able to utilise prison for learning or reading is another subject of discussion the various work written in prison by political prisoners. It is also interesting to study, the communication between arrested political prisoners, method of breaking rules, handing over of messages etc. The class character of the prisoners and their treatment in jails and its impact upon the remaining prisoner community also need to be attended. The question of caste and religion also reflected in the premises of colonial prisons and this created contradictions in the resistances in jails.

The seventh chapter 'Prison life of the Communists' deals with the role of prison in the growth of socialist and communist movements in Malabar. The role of prison in spreading Communist and Socialist ideologies is an important issue in the study of the freedom movement in Malabar. This was a stage in which Gandhism clashed with the Socialism and Communist. It took place in the prisons where there was serious conflict between non-violence and armed resistance to the oppression of the colonial state.

The last chapter of the thesis is the 'Conclusion' which fields the findings of the study. The thesis ends with a detailed glossary, bibliography and appendix.

Chapter 2

The Colonial Prison in Malabar

The words prison, jail, gaol, penitentiary etc., means a place or building used for the confinement of persons accused or convicted of crime. Prison or its proto types existed from ancient time onwards in India as well as in Europe. These prisons were mainly used as a space for confining persons awaiting trial and various punishments. The last quarter of eighteenth century witnessed a lot of political, social, economic and other changes throughout the globe. The industrial revolution was prime among them.

The introduction of prison system with hard labour as a major form of punishment was one of the major shifts in the punitive mechanism in Europe. Imprisonment as a punishment was not widely practiced before the last quarter of eighteenth century in England. Modes of punishments in medieval and in the beginning of eighteenth century Europe was capital punishment mainly by hanging, transportation, fines and symbolic inflictions such as pillory whipping and branding.¹ The torture of human body, public exhibition and festival mode were the main features of these punishments. Most of these punishments like hanging, branding, pillory whipping etc., inflicted pain to human body. Punishments were practised publicly as an example and a lesson to the public.²

Transportation was also another prominent form of punishment. The convicts from Britain were mainly transported to American colonies. Virginia

¹ For details see F A Barker, *Imprisonment*, Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1930. Also see Norval Morris and David Roth Man (eds.), *The Oxford History of Prison*, OUP, London, 1998.

² Randal McGowan, 'The Well-Ordered Prison' in Norval Morris and David Roth Man (eds.), *The Oxford History of Prison*, p. 72.

in America was one of the first places to which English convicts were transported and such convicts were mainly handed over to the Virginia Company established in 1606 by James I.³ In between 1718 and 1775 around thirty thousand convicts were transported to American colonies.⁴ The transported convicts worked hard and some attained high positions and honours. The transportation of convicts to the colonies came to an end by the declaration of independence in 1776.

Imprisonment as a punishment was not widely practiced before the last quarter of eighteenth century in England. Prisons or its proto type were used as a place of confinement of convicts awaiting trial, execution, transportation or other punishment.⁵ Besides debtors, vagrants comprised the major population of the prison. Vagrancy was one of the main problems of London city. Hence, to solve the growing problem of vagrancy 'house of correction' or 'bride well' was introduced in late sixteenth century London.⁶ After its initial success new bride wells were opened in the different parts of London. This institution had a dual purpose and that was punishment and reform prisoners. The prisoners were forced to learn industrial skill as a part of reforming the prisoner.⁷ Most of the early prisoners were debtors. The debtors were imprisoned not as a form of punishment rather its aim was to secure the debtor until his debt was paid. John Howards 'Prison Census' in 1777 indicates that about sixty percentage of the prison population were

³ F A Barker, *Imprisonment*, p. 14.

⁴ Randal McGowan, 'The Well-ordered Prison' in Norval Morris and David Rothman (eds.), *The Oxford History of Prison*, p. 76.

⁵ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: Penitentiary in Industrial Revolution*, pp. 28-29.

⁶ Sean Maconile, *A History of English Prison Administration*, London, 1981, pp. 50-51.

⁷ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: Penitentiary in Industrial Revolution*, p. 93.

debtors.⁸ The imprisonment of debtors always created a lot of criticism, debates and complaints.⁹

The main feature of these prisons was that these were not state undertakings. Rather it was owned by private individuals. These prison owners used prison as an income generating one by the sale of food, labour, liquor, prostitution and various other means.¹⁰ Thus the jail life was a happiest place and for some prisoners it was a most difficult space. The condition of these prisons was extremely miserable due to disorder and neglect. Defective building , overcrowding, improper sanitation, lack of proper food , dress and sleeping facility, unhygienic water , foul and polluted smell, frequent outbreak of diseases were the basic features of these prisons.¹¹

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century a lot of changes occurred in the punitive mechanism. They were due to the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, the revolution in France, the Industrial Revolution, and the prison reforms advocated by John Howard and others. After 1776, America started adopting imprisonment as a major punishment. In France, the fall of Bastille Jail in 1789 marked the end of an entire regime of cruel punishment which targeted the body alone and imprisonment as a punishment.¹² Moreover, the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 ended the transportation of English convicts to America. The end of transportation to American colonies resulted in the overcrowding of prisons

⁸ Michael Ignatieff, *State Civil society and Total Institutions* in *Crime and Justice*, vol. III, 1981, p. 159.

⁹ This question is discussed in Sean Maconile, *A History of English Prison Administration*.

¹⁰ F A Barker, *Imprisonment*, p. 15.

¹¹ Sean Maconile, *A History of English Prison Administration*, pp. 50-51.

¹² Frank Dikotter, 'Introduction' in Frank Dikotter & Ian Brown (eds.), *Cultures Of Confinement*, London, 2007, p. 4.

in England. Various measures were tried to solve this problem. One of the temporary solutions was the introduction of 'hulks'. Hulks were old vessels which were anchored at Thames and other ports in England used as places of temporary confinement of convicts.¹³ Those prisoners confined in hulks were used as labourers doing various hard jobs in the ports. The condition in the hulks was pathetic due to bad food, hard labour, improper sanitation, unhealthy, immoral and cruel treatment towards prisoners. This temporary system of punishment was finally give up by the middle of nineteenth century.

Britain also started their search for new colonies for convict transportation. They found out a new place that was Australia. In 1787, the first fleet of eleven British ships carrying 750 convicts and 250 marines set for Botany Bay, a harbour in the eastern coast of Australia.¹⁴ Plenty of ships started to Australia after this discovery in the following decades. As a result, the first batch settled in the Sydney harbour.¹⁵

The transportation to Australia or confinement in hulks didn't solve the penal crisis in England. It was in the same period that the reformers like John Howard and others strongly advocated for imprisonment as a major punishment replacing the public hanging, transportation, corporal punishment and other punishments which mainly targeted to harm the human body.¹⁶ The Penitentiary Act passed in England in 1779 was mainly drafted by John Howard, Blackstone and Eden brought revolutionary

¹³ F A Barker, *Imprisonment*, p. 15.

¹⁴ John Hirst, 'The Australian Experience' in Norval Morris and David Roth Man (eds.), *The Oxford History of Prison*, p. 237.

¹⁵ There was increase in the number of law breakers in Britain which was due to the widening gap between the rich and poor which was an outcome of the new industrialized society ordered by the state and wealthy classes.

¹⁶ The study has utilized the observations developed by Foucault regarding the prison, power, knowledge and the human body.

changes in prisons of England.¹⁷ The act mainly recommended for new prisons with solitary confinement and hard labour which naturally caused for the introduction of imprisonment as a form of punishment. In between 1770 and 1800, the prison population in England got doubled. There were debates about the necessity of reforms in prison management to accommodate the increasing number of inmates. Major persons who advocated prison reforms during this period were Quakers, Jeremy Bentham, Elizabeth Fry, Cesare, Becarie etc. They strongly opposed punishments that targeted the body and stated that punishment must be humane.¹⁸ There was criticism against the private ownership of prison and they urged for nationalisation of the prison. Another major drawback they found in the prisons was that the wardens were paid by prisoners which resulted in corruption and torture. Hence, they suggested for adopting wardens under the government service.

The utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham in his work, *National Penitentiary or the Panopticon* published in 1791 put forward the concept of prison which he called 'panopticon'. In this concept, a tower was located in centre of the prison from there the wardens were able to observe or monitor the entire cells and prisoners inside it. The prisoners never knew whether the warden is present inside it or not but they were aware that they were being observed at every moment in day and night. Thus, the prisoner himself was forced to both enact and inspect his own activities without any external force and thus follow a disciplined life. Bentham himself stated that this architecture was not only suited to prison but also for factories, schools,

¹⁷ For details see Sean Maconile, *A History of English Prison Administration*.

¹⁸ See for details Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: Penitentiary in Industrial Revolution*.

army, hospitals, asylums etc. The concept 'panopticon' highly influenced the later prison management in Britain.¹⁹

Rothman, Foucault and Ignatieff rejected the notion on emergence of modern prison. The earlier argument was that the modern prison emerged as a result of humanitarian reforms as advocated by John Howard, Jeremy Bentham, Quakers Elizabeth Fry. Against this stand, Michael Foucault argued that the birth of the modern prison with disciplinary mechanism came into existence due to the emergence of the modern state. This prison system was directly related with the change in political power where the state understood that, 'it was more efficient and profitable in terms of economy of power to place people under surveillance rather than keeping them to some exemplary penalty'.²⁰

Whatever it be, the process started from last quarter of eighteenth century and before the second half of nineteenth century imprisonment as a major punishment emerged in Europe America and the colonies of European countries with lot of regional variations. Thus, an era of punishment which targeted the human body was replaced by prison which aimed at disciplined life.

The Establishment of British Supremacy

The English East India Company got Malabar from Tipu Sultan by the Treaty of Srirangapatanam on 18th March 1792.²¹ Thus, the British got control of spice trade in Malabar just after the treaty and as per Lord Cornwallis order, General Abercrombie the Governor of Bombay, appointed

¹⁹ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: Penitentiary in Industrial Revolution*, p. 77.

²⁰ Michael Foucault, *Power/ Knowledge*, Vintage, New York, 1980, p. 39.

²¹ Initially Malabar was under Bombay Presidency and in 1800 it was transferred and became a district of Madras Presidency.

William S Farmer and Major Alexander Dow as commissioners on behalf of Bombay Presidency. In course of time, Jonathan Duncan and Charles Boddam joined as Commissioners representing Governor General comprised the Joint Commissioners. The main duty of the Joint Commissioners was political settlement with the local rulers and to recommend new administrative system in Malabar. The Joint Commissioners submitted their report in 1793 and elaborately mentioned the local rulers of Malabar.²² The Joint Commissioners settlement with local rulers and chiefs was mainly focused on revenue collection and tribute to be paid by the rulers to English East India Company.

The British initially established courts and appointed proper person as judges in July 1792. Hindus and Muslims were tried separately by the laws of Vedas and Quran respectively. As economic ambition was the main reason for annexation of Malabar, the Joint Commissioners declared freedom of trade in all articles except pepper. As its trade was proclaimed as English East India Company's monopoly. On 1st January 1793 the Joint Commissioners established two separate courts at Kozhikode, first dealt with revenue and land related cases while the second dealt with cases of claims other than revenue and land relations.²³ Similarly, changes were introduced in land ownership too.²⁴

It was on 18th March 1793 that the administration of Malabar was formally and publicly established by the British as 'Province of Malabar,'

²² *Report of a Joint Commission from Bengal and Bombay appointed to Inspect into the State and Condition of the Province of Malabar 1792-1793(Hereafter JCR 1792-1793)*, Reprint, Kerala State Archives, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, pp. 28-29.

²³ William Logan, *Malabar*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000 (1887), p. 484.

²⁴ For details see K N Ganesh, 'Ownership and control of land in Medieval Kerala: *janmam- kanam* relations during the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Sage, New Delhi, 1991.

divided into two superintendencies, under the control of a supervisor at Kozhikode and assisted by two superintendents located at Thalassery and Cherpulassery.²⁵ Thus, William G Farmer sworn in as the first Supervisor and Magistrate of Malabar and he was the head of political, revenue and judicial department. The supervisor post was later abolished in 1801.²⁶ From October 1801 onwards, the principal collector became the head of Malabar.

New Judicial System

The British revised the traditional judicial system in Malabar. The major change effected was the establishment of civil and criminal courts for the administration of justice since 1st July 1793. This new judicial system was an adaptation of 'Bengal Code' which was modified considering the local circumstances of the Malabar.²⁷ In the Judicial department, the provincial courts of superintendents at Kozhikode, Thalassery and Cherpulassery were subordinated by seven local *darogas*²⁸ located at Kannur, Koyilandy, Tirurangadi, Ponnani, Palakkad, Tanur and Chetwai.²⁹

The cases against Hindus and Muslims were judged and punished separately according to the laws of *Vedas* and *Quran* in the initial period. The main feature of early courts in Malabar was the appointment of *maulavies* and *pundits* representing Muslims and Hindus to assist the British judges. These native officers of the courts are appointed and dismissed by the British

²⁵ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 489.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 531.

²⁷ *JCR 1792-1793*, p. 313.

²⁸ The darogas or native judges were actually Mughal subordinate officials which was later continued by British in their early period in Bengal as collaborators and the same collaborative network was introduced by the British in civil and criminal regulations of Malabar. Santhosh Abraham, 'Colonial law in Early British Malabar Transparent Colonial State and Formality of Practices' in *South Asia Research*, Sage Publications, vol. 31, no. 3, 2011, p. 250.

²⁹ *JCR 1792-1793*, pp. 317 - 329. Also in William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 495.

Judges but its final authority rested in the hands of Supervisor or Chief Magistrate.³⁰ Thus, a collaborative system was seen in the early judicial system of colonial regime in Malabar. Santosh Abraham argues that 'this was not just the case of Malabar but all over India in the early colonial periods. The Company officials recruited Indians as subordinate officials in judiciary and revenue departments as a part of their collaborative network'.³¹

The native rulers who earlier exercised the judicial powers were transformed as the audience of new judicial system. The *samoothiri* of Calicut requested to the joint commissioners that he exercised the sovereignty of administration of justice including capital punishment and hence to permit him to continue his sovereignty.³² The Joint Commissioners were not interested in giving judicial power to local kings as they suspected that it will create problems in future.

Punishments in Colonial Malabar

Prior to British, the punishments of Malabar were mainly on the basis of local customs and traditions. Capital punishment mainly by torture, banishment, mutilation of body parts, excommunication from caste and fines were some of the major punishments. These punishments were mainly inflicted on the body. The local rulers of Malabar stated to the joint commissioners that mutilation of the human body formed the main part punishment even for minor offences like thefts and petty robberies.³³ This does not mean that Malabar was the only place where the torture methods of punishment existed in eighteenth century. In India as well as in Europe

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

³¹ Santhosh Abraham, 'Colonial law in Early British Malabar : Transparent Colonial State and Formality of Practices', p. 250.

³² *JCR 1792-1793*, p. 133.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

mutilation was one of the major forms of punishment during that period. The torture form of punishment was also practised in Europe up to the last quarter of eighteenth century. In the mid eighteenth century, the two main features of punishment in France were extreme torture and its public nature.³⁴

Imprisonment as a form of punishment was not practiced in pre-colonial Malabar. Confinement places for criminal existed and a tax called *ara* was levied for keeping the suspect under detention.³⁵ The main punishments in early British Malabar were Capital Punishment, transportation, deportation, collective and individual fines, confiscation of property, corporal punishment, fines and imprisonment.

Capital Punishment

The British widely practised capital punishment in colonial Malabar. The torture of body and mutilation was replaced by gallows. In the early phase of British rule, hanging was mostly done at public places. The dead bodies of the hanged were displayed at public places and this practice continued until 1836.³⁶ Most of the earlier capital punishments in Malabar were awarded for offences against the state mainly by the native rulers, their associates and Mappila chiefs, which actually disturbed or resisted the British revenue collection in Malabar. The *EEIC* not only used hanging as capital punishment but also used primitive punitive methods towards their political opponents in Malabar.

³⁴ Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 1-7.

³⁵ K V Krishna Ayyer, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut University Press, Kozhikode, 1999, p. 265.

³⁶ David Arnold, 'The Colonial Prison' in David Arnold & David Hardiman (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VIII*, OUP, New Delhi, 1994, p. 161.

Transportation

Transportation was another important punishment used by the colonial state from the early period onwards. Transportation was awarded as a punishment for various offences including murder and banditry. The prisoners escaped from confinement were sentenced to transportation by the Regulation of 1799.³⁷ Transportation compared to capital punishment seemed merciful but in reality it was much severe than capital punishment considering its culturally transgressive nature.³⁸ Even the first Prison Reform Committee under Macaulay supported transportation as a fear factor in Indian population as the colonial state had ended earlier punishments like mutilation in India.³⁹ Convict labour was another important benefit of transportation as the convicts were the source of free labour to the colonial state. They were used for clearing forests and road constructions besides being hired out to the planters for labour work.⁴⁰

Punishment by transportation started in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the main sites to which Indian convicts were sent were Bencoolen, Penang, Botany Bay, Andaman etc. The first penal settlement was Bencoolen situated in South west Sumatra and it was in 1787 that the first batch of Indian convicts reached there.⁴¹ Penang was the second Indian convict settlement which was better known as Prince of Wales Island. Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General, recommended transportation to Penang in 1788. Convicts were transported to Penang Island since 1790.

³⁷ Anand A Yang, 'Indian Convict Workers in South East Asia in late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries' in *Journal of World History*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2003, p. 192.

³⁸ Anand A Yang, 'Bandits and Kings Moral Authority and Resistance in Early Colonial India' in *The Journal Of Asian Studies*, vol. 66, no. 4, November 2007, p. 884.

³⁹ Anand A Yang, 'Disciplining Natives : Prisons and Prisoners in Early Nineteenth Century India' in *South Asia*, vol. X, no. 2, December 1987, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁰ F A Barker, *Imprisonment*, p. 69.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

The ship journey to Penang at that time took more than two months' time as a result, transportation to Penang ended in 1825 and two new penal settlements were opened at Malacca and Singapore.⁴²

Andaman was the other penal settlement that started in 1789. However the convict settlement was soon abandoned in 1796. Andaman as a convict settlement was reopened due to the revolt of 1857-1858. A lot of rebels were transported to the Andaman Islands. A total of 3697 convicts were transported to Andaman in between March 1858 and October 1859 in connection with revolt of 1857.⁴³ Andaman soon became the major transportation point in Asia. It was also known *kalapani* in Indian vision.⁴⁴ The women convicts from India were also transported to Andaman from 1862.⁴⁵ The male and female convicts of Andaman after a fixed period of imprisonment were allowed to marry each other and allowed to live in a separate settlement with special ration.⁴⁶ The construction of cellular jail using convict labour was completed in the year 1896.

Anand A Yang observes that the British authorities not only used transportation as a punishment to criminals but also widely used it as a political tool by transporting those who resisted or threatened them from the initial period of colonial rule.⁴⁷ The Mappila prisoners were transported to Andaman from Bombay as Malabar was a part of Bombay Presidency at that time. They were also transported to the Botany Bay.⁴⁸ The convicts of

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁴³ Clare Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857-58*, Anthem, New Delhi, 2012, p. 144.

⁴⁴ Which means black water. The Hindu convicts feared Transportation as crossing the sea results in loss of caste status.

⁴⁵ Satadru Sen, *Disciplining Punishment*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁶ F A Barker, *Imprisonment*, p. 69.

⁴⁷ Anand A Yang, 'Bandits and Kings Moral Authority and Resistance in Early Colonial India', pp. 882-884.

⁴⁸ For details see William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 501.

the *Poligar Rebellion* were mainly transported to Penang.⁴⁹ Pallor Emman Nair, one of the principal follower of Pazhassi, was transported to this island along with other convicts of rebellion in 1806.⁵⁰ Some of the convicts were allowed to comeback to Madras Presidency and lodged far away from their residence with state allowance.⁵¹ Most of the convicts from Malabar were not allowed to reside in Malabar. Many including Emman Nair took their last breath in Penang itself. The transportation as a punishment continued until 1939 and Andaman became the only site of convict transportation.

Imprisonment was not widely practised as a punishment in pre-colonial Malabar and prison as a punitive institution was a colonial innovation in Malabar.⁵² The jails were also mentioned as 'gaols' in the official correspondences between the Company officials of Malabar and Bombay. Most of the towns like Kozhikode, Kochi, Palakkad, Thalassery and Kannur had its own prisons. The jails in southern division of Malabar were at Palakkad, Angadippuram and Cherpulassery in 1806.⁵³ Prisoners from the early period onwards were used for outdoor labour too. Mortality was very high in Malabar jails during the early period and epidemics like cholera and smallpox were frequent in such prisons.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ For details see K Rajayan, *South Indian Rebellion*, Ratha, New Delhi, 2000.

⁵⁰ During the Poligar Rebellion against the Company, Pazhassi Raja of Malabar also revolted the British. Several assistants of the revolt were captured by the British after suppression of the resistance. For details see William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 551.

⁵¹ *Madras Correspondence File* (hereafter MCF) No-2291, Year-1819, RAK.

⁵² C A Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Government Press, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, p. 392.

⁵³ MCF no. 8412, Year 1806, RAK.

⁵⁴ *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Sanitary Commissioner*, Madras, 1878, RAK.

Anti-colonial Struggles: Prison 1792-1920

The *EEIC* in Malabar had faced a lot of political resistances from its initial period onwards. This was mainly due to the newly introduced polices of the Joint Commissioners without considering the customs and practices of Malabar. The rulers were from *samoothiri* dynasty, Kolathiri, Kottayam, Arrakal, Palakkad. Most of the rulers or family members revolted against the *EEIC* company. The main reasons were the wrong decisions of Joint Commissioners with these rulers. The resistances in Malabar were not only offered by kings but also by mid-feudal lords, peasants, tribal people etc. The other major group who offered resistance in early period were the Mappila chiefs and their gangs. In Malabar the Mappila people of south Malabar were included in the bandit category. The resistances under local rulers and other chiefs occurred not only in Malabar but also it was seen throughout India in this period.

The main rulers who resisted the Company included the kings of *padinjare kovilakam* branch of *samoothiri* Family, the Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja , Itty Komby Achan of Palakkad, and the Mappila men under Unni Mootha Moopan, Chemban Poker, Attan Gurukal, the tribes of Wayanad all revolted against the colonial state between 1792 and 1812. This resistance didn't end in 1812 as it was later followed by Mappila struggles mainly in south Malabar from 1836 to 1921.

The present chapter deals with how the colonial state suppressed these revolts. The focus was also given to various acts and punishments used by state to its political opponents. The basic nature of this early resistance was anti colonial in nature.

Padinjare Kovilakam

The kings of *padinjare kovilakam*⁵⁵ were also the victims of revenue policy taken by the Joint Commissioners. The revenue from Nedunganad areas was earlier collected by *padinjare kovilakam* but it was not restored to them by Joint Commissioners. Shamnath Putter, who was the chief minister of the Zamorin, collaborated with *EEIC* officials. One percentage of the land revenue of *samoothiri* was granted to Shamnath putter for his services to British.⁵⁶ They understood Shamnath putter's collaboration with *EEIC* was the reason behind it. As a revenge, two Rajas of the *padinjare kovilakam* attempt to murder Shamnath putter in 1792. He was severely wounded but was soon recovered by the English surgeon Wye's treatment.⁵⁷ The Raja, family members and his associates proceeded towards south. They got support from Kunhi Achan who also was a victim of *JC* as his claim of Management of Palakkad was rejected by them. The *mappilamar* under Unni Mootha Moopan, and some *polygars* of Coimbatore also supported the kings of Padinjare Kovilakam. The Malabar supervisor offered a reward of five thousand rupees for the capture of the rebel Rajas of *samoothiri* family. The Raja was later captured by Captain Burchall at Cherpullassery and his brother and nephew were also captured and imprisoned along with him. The Padinjara Kovilakam Raja died within two or three days of his confinement.⁵⁸ The rebel Rajas nephew and brother along with their *karyasthan* Uni Narie Unny Numbi were released only after obtaining security for their good

⁵⁵ *Padinjare Kovilakam* was one of the branches of Zamorin family. For details see K V Krishna Iyyer, *Zamorins of Calicut*.

⁵⁶ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, p. 496.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 481.

behaviour by *kilakka kovilakam Raja* and payment of one lakh of rupees as arrears of revenue to British in 1793.⁵⁹

The *padinjara kovilakam* Rajas who later resided at Kalladikod in the Walluvanad Taluk were later concluded a treaty with British on 6th January 1797. They got an annual pension of ten thousand rupees and agreed to reside at Kozhikode.⁶⁰ The main problem here also was revenue dispute with British. This didn't end their resistance against British as they secretly helped Pazhassi and his associates who resisted against *EEIC*

Palakkad Achan and Jail Life

The Palakkad throne like other local kingdoms of Malabar had so many branches or about eight houses and the eldest one among them ascend the throne.⁶¹ This created so many problems in the political settlement of Palakkad. The Joint Commissioners concluded the political settlement on Palakkad district with Itty Pungy Achan. Itty Pungy Achan died in 1792 itself and he was soon succeeded by his nephew Itty Comby Achan. The members of other branches raised opposition to the appointment of Itty Comby Achan. The Achan of Palakkad was accused of using his judicial power and awarded punishments without obtaining the permission of *EEIC*. He put a lower caste person to death and the JC forced him enter in a written agreement stating he would not exercise any judicial power in future without obtaining the sanction of government.⁶² The main reason of the conflict was actually the dispute over revenue collection and the share of Raja. The British accused that itty Comby Achan again sentenced capital punishment to

⁵⁹ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Relating To British Affairs in Malabar*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1998, pp. 200-201.

⁶⁰ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 519.

⁶¹ *JCR 1792-1793*, pp. 116-276.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 277-299.

a Nair and taken out the eye of a Brahmin. The problems continued for next few years.

The Company's sepoys marched to the residence of Achan at Kalpathy on 7th July 1798, stating to arrest and to put Raja on trial for using the judicial powers. However the Raja managed to escape from there⁶³. This clearly indicates that the British restored the old kings as just revenue collectors and they only needed to collect revenue while the judicial power and punishments were dealt by colonial state. The government issued proclamation stating Itty Comby Achan to surrender within twenty days. As he didn't surrender within that time a reward of twenty thousand was offered for capturing him.

The military operation also started for his capture and at the same time a negotiation under Shamnath Patter was carried for Achan's surrender by British. When the negotiations started the military action was temporarily suspended. Achan through Shamnath Putter put three conditions for his surrender exemption from death, exile or life term imprisonment.⁶⁴ The government rejected these conditions and ordered him to surrender conditionally as if he does receive an impartial trial.⁶⁵ On 6th September 1798, Achan surrendered before Major Romney at Palakkad. The British appreciated Shamnath Patter for his mediator job.⁶⁶ Achan was soon imprisoned at Palakkad fort. He was confined at a separate place in the upstairs of the Fort.⁶⁷

⁶³ Secret and Political Department Diary (hereafter *SPDD*), No. 66A, Year- 1798 Maharashtra State Archives(here after *MSA*), Mumbai.

⁶⁴ *SPDD* no. 66, Year- 1798, *MSA*, Mumbai.

⁶⁵ *SPDD* no. 66A, Year- 1798, *MSA*, Mumbai.

⁶⁶ *SPDD* no. 67 , Year- 1798, *MSA*, Mumbai.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

The government decided to conduct his trial at Palakkad *cutchery* near by the Palakkad fort under the escort of Major Romney.⁶⁸ Jonathan Duncan from Bombay Castle in his letter to Malabar Supervisor stated the same principle of trial which was expected to conduct on Pazhassi Raja in 1795 was to be done in Achan case.⁶⁹ However Pazhassi Raja managed to escape from the British and started his revolt against Company. Both the kings were accused of the same thing which was sentencing some persons to capital punishment. This was to be analysed as a colonial strategy that the kings who revolted against British on their revenue or economic exploitation of Malabar were branded by the colonial state as despotic rulers who practised cruel punishments. Thus, the archival sources also indicate that the main reason was economic and it was the ideology of state to oppress its early opponents mainly native rulers and reducing their status of king to just a criminal. Some of the associates of Achan were released later by state by giving security.⁷⁰

In the beginning of 1799, the state understood that there existed wide public support to Achan at Palakkad. it was not safe to continue his confinement at Palakkad Fort as it was his area and chances were high for him to escape.⁷¹ It was in 1798 itself the so called bandit chief Chemban Poker escaped from Palakkad Fort. They also feared Achan's escape from prison. Thus the colonial state shifted him to Thalassery Fort. The shifting of Achan was mainly on the fear of state that a revolt will start at Palakkad and it was a hard task to rescue Achan from Thalassery by his supporters as it was miles away from Palakkad. Itty Comby Achan passed away on 2nd March

⁶⁸ SPDD no. 68 , Year- 1798 MSA, Mumbai.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ SPDD no. 69 , Year- 1798 MSA, Mumbai.

⁷¹ SPDD no. 73 , Year- 1799 MSA, Mumbai.

1799 at Thalassery Fort Jail as a prisoner and his reason for death was a mystery.⁷² Thus a local ruler died as a prisoner after six months of confinement.

Pazhassi Revolts

Pazhassi Raja also known as Kerala Varma and *kotiyot raja, pychy* in colonial records belonged to the *Padinjara Kovilakam* of *Kottayam*⁷³ royal dynasty of Malabar. Like other small kingdoms of Malabar *Kottayam* also has so many branches. Wayanad was also a part of *Kottayam* district and managed by *padinjare kovilakom* Branch of *Kottayam*. It was in 1787 during the Mysore regime in Malabar that Wayanad was handed over to Tipu Sultan by the king of *Kottayam* to reduce his *kappam*⁷⁴.

During the Third Anglo-Mysore War of 1790-1792, Pazhassi Raja actively supported the *EEIC* in its war against Tipu Sultan. The victory of *EEIC* and the conclusion of Srirangapatnam Treaty in 1792 made Pazhassi happy and he expected that his kingdom of *Kottayam* would be given back to him.

Veera Varma, the ruler of Kuruumbanad and Kurumbranad Raja also claimed the throne of *Kottayam*. However, the Joint Commissioners rather than giving the right to manage *kottayam* to Pazhassi Raja, gave it to the Kurumbranad Raja, Pazhassi Raja's uncle who offered larger tribute. The Kurumbranad Raja did not possess any legal power over *Kottayam* as he was adopted by an another kingdom nor had any influence over the people of *Kottayam*. Thus, the chief reason of the later Pazhassi struggle was the policy taken by Joint Commissioners. C A Innes in his *Malabar Gazetteer*

⁷² William Logan, *A collection of Treaties Engagements and other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, p.306.

⁷³ *Kottayam* dynasty was one of the local rulers located in North Malabar. For details on Raja see William Logan, *Malabar*.

⁷⁴ *kappam* means annual tribute to be paid to the British by local rulers.

stated that the mistaken revenue policy of the Joint Commissioners ultimately resulted in the Pazhassi Rebellion.⁷⁵ In 1793, Pazhassi showed the signs of revolt. Pazhassi and his followers stopped the Company officials from collecting tributes in Kottayam. They did not allow the Company officials from collecting taxes in Kottayam. By about 1796, Pazhassi became a staunch opponent of the Company. The Company's troops attempted to capture Pazhassi in 1796 but ended in a failure. Pazhassi withdrew to Wayanad and with the help of his Nair soldiers and tribal army, started armed resistance mainly by guerrilla warfare against the *EEIC*. He continued his resistance until he took his last breath on 30th November 1805.

K K N Kurup who studied the Pazhassi struggles stated that the struggle was part of the nationalist consciousness of the Raja.⁷⁶ While Kathleen Gough interpreted the nature of Pazhassi struggle as a restorative struggle.⁷⁷ Pazhassi was not alone in the struggle against British and Tipu sultan also helped him in the struggle against East India Company.⁷⁸ He was supported by many other feudal lords, merchants, peasants. The tribal people within Kottayam and Wayanad also helped Pazhassi Raja. The Mappila chiefs of south Malabar like Unni Mootha Moopan, Chemban Poker and Manjeri Attan Gurukul and their gangs also helped Pazhassi. The major persons who assisted Pazhassi Raja includes his two nephews Veera Varma Raja and Ravi Varma Raja, Paloor Emman Nair, Kaitheri Ambu, Edachana Kungan , his brothers, Yogimala Machan and Talakal Chandu. Yogimala

⁷⁵ C A Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, p. 73.

⁷⁶ Wide K K N Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal*, Kerala Bhasa Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 2015.

⁷⁷ Kathleen Gough, 'Indian peasant uprising' in A R Desai (ed.), *Peasant Struggles in India*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 85-126.

⁷⁸ K K N Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal*, pp. 43-44.

Machan and Thalakal Chandu belonged to the tribal community of Wayanad.⁷⁹

William Logan and other British officials have stated tribal community of Wayanad especially Kurichya and Kurumas joined only in the later stages of revolt.⁸⁰ But there are records to un prove this argument. Chiefly by using their bow and arrow, they attacked the British soldiers and sepoys in nights. A report of January 1797 clearly states that rebels attack in the night of 13th January 1797 with bow and arrow and forced the Company's men to move back from Wayanad.⁸¹ However, the Company's officials who did not know much about the tribal people misunderstood that it was done by the Nairs. In reality, this was done by the *kurichyas*⁸² or *Kurumars*.⁸³ William Logan has stated that the *kurumar* joined with Pazhassi revolt by the influence of Paloor Emman. The *kurumar* were said to be excellent bowmen. The authorities have stated *kurumar* as cruellest group in the Pazhassi side.⁸⁴

One of the major incidents in the Pazhassi revolts was the attack and capture of Panamaram Fort in Wayanad. The event took place on the night of 11th October 1802. The Panamaramkotta was not actually a fort like Thalassery, Kannur or Palakkad forts as it was just a military outpost of the British. Seventy persons of the first battalion of the fourth Bombay infantry including Captain Dickenson and Lieutenant Maxwell were there. The raid was said to be done under the leadership of Edachenna Kungan and his two

⁷⁹ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 536.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 536.

⁸¹ SPDD no. 55, 1797, MSA, Mumbai.

⁸² Kurichyas, on of the tribal group of Wayanad. for details see. Edgar Thurston, *Castes & Tribes of South India*, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, 2010.

⁸³ Kurumar were the another major tribal group of Wayanad, vide Edgar Thurston, *Castes & Tribes of South India*.

⁸⁴ Letter from T H Babar, MCF 2172, year 1805, RAK.

brothers, Talakkal Chandu and Yogimoola Machan.⁸⁵ The immediate correspondence after the attack with Lord Wellesley stated and it was done by the Nairs consisting in between five hundred and four hundred. In later correspondences, the strength of Nairs were reduced to in between four hundred and three hundred and finally below three hundred.⁸⁶ The main weapon used was bow and arrow and this is pointed out by Wellesley.⁸⁷ Wellesley was not aware of the major role played by the tribal people in the attack. However William Logan has stated that around one hundred and fifty *kurichya* were in the gang of Edachenna Kungan who attacked the Panamaram fort.⁸⁸ The whole battalion was said to be killed. The rebels captured arms and ammunitions and set fire to the barracks, bungalows and outhouses.

T. H. Baber was appointed as the Sub Collector of north Malabar in 1804 to deal the resistance of Pazhassi Raja. He started that the search for Pazhassi troops in various parts of Kottayam taluk and was able to capture many persons. Baber confiscated 548 Nair knives, 2715 muskets, 1862 swords from the rebels. Later in October 1805, T H Baber got the charge of Wayanad from Pearson. T H Baber blocked the supply of resources to rebels from different parts of Malabar and Mysore. The Wayanadan *chettimar* supplied resources to Pazhassi and suspected families were deported from

⁸⁵ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 536.

⁸⁶ Arthur Wellesly, *The Dispatches of Field Marshall The Duke of Wellington*, vol. V, London, 1844, pp. 325-366.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 325-366.

⁸⁸ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 536.

Wayanad.⁸⁹ T H Babar also recruited *kolkar* from Wayanad population itself.⁹⁰

Spies were widely used to trace the location and movements of Pazhassi and his associates. Even government confined their associates suspecting as double agents for supporting Pazhassi. Two prisoners were released from the Kannur Jail and employed as spies to locate the movements of Pazhassi Raja and his associates. The plan ended in a failure and by March 1802 both were again sent behind the bars.⁹¹ It was T H Babar who utilised spies efficiently to suppress the revolt. From the landlords to the tribal people were used as spies by Babar. The *paniars* who worked as labourers of landlords were also widely used for tracing Pazhassi's movements. It was *paniyars* who had given the exact location of Pazhassi to Baber.

Soon after getting the news of Pazhassi's location Babar along with Captain Clapham, fifty *sepoys*, one hundred *kolkar* and locals recruited by Babar proceeded towards Pulpally.⁹² Pazhassi Raja was among the first persons who had fallen in the firing of Babar's troops at Mavilamthode near Pulpally in Wayanad on 30th November 1805. Later Raja's lady along with her female attendants were taken to Manathavady along with two rebels who were taken as prisoners.⁹³ Soon after the death of Pazhassi, the government was able to suppress the revolt.

⁸⁹ MCF 2172, year 1805, RAK.

⁹⁰ A detailed description of the movement launched by the Company's army is given in the record preserved at the Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode, See MCF 2172, year 1805, RAK.

⁹¹ Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, OUP, New Delhi, 2003, p. 123.

⁹² For a detailed description of the captured prisoners see William Logan, *Malabar*, pp. 543-548.

⁹³ Letter from T H Baber, Kannur, 31st December 1805, MCF 2172, RAK.

Trial, Punishments and Imprisonment

Majority of the rebels in Pazhassi revolt died during the armed resistance with the British forces. Many were captured and surrendered in connection with the Pazhassi rebellion and they were sentenced to death and transportation. The death sentence was carried after improper trial for a procedure. The death sentence was usually carried at public places with huge crowd. The main nature of capital punishment was death by hanging. Kannavat Nambiar, one of the feudal lords who also revolted against company along with his twenty four year old son, was captured in September 1801 from Kuttiyadi by British troops under Lt. Edward.⁹⁴ They were taken to Kannavanam where their property belongs and both were publicly beheaded near Traveller's Bungalow and later their dead bodies were hanged on 27th November 1801. Their estates were also confiscated by the British.⁹⁵ The cruelty towards Kannavath Nambiar and son created great fear to the people. Even the aim of company was to create fear to rebels and their supporters. Thus the people will not help the rebels. Even now the spot of punishment was known as *kuruthikalam* or the spot of blood sacrifice.

Many rebels were publicly hanged in different parts of north Malabar in connection with the Pazhassi rebellion. Two persons were hanged at Irikkur in Chirakal taluk in 1801. It was in the same year in December that Changateri Chandu was also hanged.⁹⁶ The justification for this punishment was "as an awful warning to the people."⁹⁷ Thus, the purpose of hanging was not only a punishment but also to generate fear among general public. The

⁹⁴ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 533.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

⁹⁶ For details see, K K N Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal*.

⁹⁷ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 532.

dead bodies of hanged, beheaded and those who died in encounter were put on public display.

Before the death of Pazhassi Raja, the officials hanged twenty two followers of him at different parts of north Malabar. Thalakal Chandu was captured in treachery. Chandu was captured in the beginning of November 1805. The oral sources state that Chandu was betrayed by his wife.⁹⁸ T H Baber had given a gold bangle to Kurichya Kelappan as a presentation for Chandu's capture for his spy work.⁹⁹ He actually worked as an informer to the Company. T H Baber states that his musket had misfired and Chandu was seized by Company's officials. However he was able to wound one of the *kolkar* with his knife. While oral sources states that Chandu's wife put water into his musket and took away his bow and arrow when the Company officials approached to capture him he realised that his gun was not working. He had a small knife which he hid inside his *kuduma*¹⁰⁰ and tried to defend.

T H Baber in his letter only mentioned that Chandu was captured and confined at Panamaram Fort.¹⁰¹ His death or mode of punishment was not mentioned. While majority of the oral sources confirm he was beheaded near the *kolly* tree in the banks of Kabani River in Panamaram Fort.¹⁰² The oral tradition can be right because of two reasons. First one was that the English as a justification to colonial rule stated that their aim was to civilise Indians and the earlier punishments of Indians were barbaric. They replaced

⁹⁸ Interview with C Raman at his residence, 8th January 2017 Manathavady and Thalakal Chandu's present family members at Kunjome, 6th June 2017.

⁹⁹ Letter from T H Baber, Kannur, 31st December 1805. MCF 2172, RAK.

¹⁰⁰ Lock or tuft of hair behind the head of Hindus.

¹⁰¹ Letter from T H Baber, Kannur, 31st December 1805. MCF 2172, RAK.

¹⁰² Interview with C Raman at his residence, 8th January 2017 Manathavady and Thalakal Chandu's present family members at Kunjome, 6th June 2017.

it with humane form of punishments. The punishments towards their political opponents were more barbaric than medieval punishments.

The British imprisoned many in connection with the Pazhassi struggle. The family members of the rebels were also imprisoned without any reasons. The British right from the beginning converted their buildings and forts as prisons to confine these prisoners in Wayanad and Kottayam taluks besides the existing jails in different parts of Malabar. They were confined not only in Malabar but also outside Malabar. Majority of the prison population in early colonial prisons were political prisoners. The colonial state rather than giving any privileges to them stated them as convicted for committing offences against the state. Thus, the king's feudal lords, traders, *mappilamar* and tribes were branded as criminals and confined in prisons without any privileges as political prisoners.

The colonial officials even imprisoned the supporters of the Company suspecting them as double agents. Unnikora Nambiar who was one of the associates of Pazhaveedan Chandu worked for the Company. But the government confined Nambiar suspecting that he was supporting Pazhassi Raja in the beginning of 1797 itself.¹⁰³ The exact number of prisoners confined in connection with Pazhassi struggle is not available. Two nephews of Pazhassi Raja, Vira Varma Raja and Ravi Varma Raja were confined at the Kannur Fort Jail in 1803.¹⁰⁴

The rebels were not ready to give up their revolutionary spirit in jail and they revolted and tried to escape from imprisonment. The greatest resistance by these political prisoners along with other prisoners against

¹⁰³ SPDD no. 55, 18th February 1797, MSA, Mumbai.

¹⁰⁴ William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties Engagements and other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, p. 370.

colonial authorities took place at the Kozhikode Jail. On 1st march 1803, the entire prisoners of Kozhikode jail started a revolt which ultimately culminated in the escape of majority of the prisoners.¹⁰⁵ The total inmates in the prison were two hundred and ten prisoners. The government officials classified them as under trials, charged with crimes against the state, and those who were sentenced by court. In the above classification the second category of those who were charged with offences against the state were political prisoners imprisoned mainly in connection with the Pazhassi rebellion and Mappila resistances.

The prisoners started the revolt at four o'clock in the evening of 1st march 1803. They attacked the sepoy and seized arms and ammunitions possessed by them. It can be noted that these rebels in the jail were experts in using guns and other weapons. The sepoy and other prison staff were very few compared with the prisoners at that time. Military troops soon arrived under Capt. Carsellis. The Europeans as well as Indian officials tried their best to suppress the revolt.

The revolt continued for hours and by 11 PM in the night, the sepoy and officials set fire to the main gate of the prison. In between the prisoners were able to make a breach on the prison wall for escape. The prisoners started to escape one by one even though the officials tried to resist them. Forty were killed in the revolt, thirty eight were taken by the sepoy and wardens and the remaining one hundred and thirty two managed to escape from prison.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Letter from William Macleod, 2nd March 1803 in K K N Kurup, *Adhunika Keralam*, Kerala Bhasa Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 2011, pp. 12-14.

¹⁰⁶ K K N Kurup, 'Peasant Protests and Revolts' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p. 405.

T H Baber's letter point out that the revolt not only occurred at Kozhikode Jail but also at Thalassery Jail. The details of Thalassery Jail revolt is not available. The total causality Babar recorded in jails is forty eight.¹⁰⁷ It can be the combined number of deaths from both jails or including eight among thirty eight captured prisoners who died later due to the injuries occurred during attack.

Even though the revolt was an internal one the government suspected outside interference in it as the escaped prisoners created problems in Kozhikode and its nearby areas. The two suspected groups were Pazhassi Raja's associates under Pallor Emman and secondly the Mappila chiefs and their men from Ernad and Valluvanad taluks.

The prison buildings also created a lot of tensions to colonial authorities. Even in the Kozhikode Jail revolt the building was a problem. The Malabar collector clearly stated that the "construction of the jail itself which was calculated to repel an attack from without rather than to be exposed to it".¹⁰⁸ Not only the Kozhikode prison building was insecure but also majority of the prisons of Malabar as well as of the Madras Presidency were in the same condition.

The government suspected the presence of around twenty *mappilamar* including Muhammad Kutty with muskets and bayonets.¹⁰⁹ K K N Kurup argues that it as a part of Pazhassi rebellion.¹¹⁰ It was completely an internal revolt. The political prisoners including Pazhassi rebels and *mappilamar* were in prison at that time for offences against the state were

¹⁰⁷ T H Babar letter to Malabar District Collector, from Kozhikode, 8th March 1803. *MCF 2225, RAK.*

¹⁰⁸ Letter, Foreign Consultations no 37-40, 14th May 1803, Copy, G/11 Department of History, University of Calicut.

¹⁰⁹ Letter dated 2nd March 1803. *MCF 2225, RAK.*

¹¹⁰ K K N Kurup, *Adhunika Keralam*, pp. 12-13.

mainly behind the revolt. The prisoners in jail were divided into three classes as under trials, those charged with crimes against the state and finally who were under sentence.¹¹¹ The lack of proper jail building was one of the main problems to which lead to prison mutiny and escapes. Babar also requested to construct a secure prison in Malabar.¹¹²

The prisoners mostly preferred night hours for escaping and the nephews of Pazhassi Raja did the same. The two nephews of Pazhassi Raja Ravi Varma and Veera Varma along with Chaukara Menon who were confined at St. Angelo fort at Kannur escaped from jail. The sub collector mentioned that they escaped on 19th September 1803 in the early morning at two A.M. and three sepoy who were in charge were also found missing.¹¹³ The jail escape was a great blow to the Company. The government issued proclamation demanding them to surrender before 24th September 1803 or within sixty days. And a reward of one thousand rupees was offered for their capturers. They did not surrender before the Company as they joined with Pazhassi and revolted against the British.

It took a long time to recapture them. After the death of Pazhassi, government issued a new proclamation on 8th December 1805 ordering the nephews of Pazhassi Raja to surrender.¹¹⁴ The two nephews of Raja were found at *Kalladikod* under the protection of *Padinjara Kovilakam* Raja. The nephews and Padinjara Kovilakam Raja were captured. The government seized muskets, swords Nair knives and arrows from there.¹¹⁵ The Padinjara Kovilakam Raja was taken as a prisoner and sent to Dindigal Fort in

¹¹¹ T H Babar letter to Malabar District Collector from Kozhikode, 8th March 1803. *MCF* 2225, RAK.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Letter from sub collector to Malabar District Collector from Kannur, 19th September 1803, *MCF* 2231, RAK.

¹¹⁴ William Logan, *A collection of Treaties Engagements and other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, p. 370.

¹¹⁵ *MCF* 2170, 1805-1806, RAK.

Tamilnadu and his house was demolished. The Padinjara Kovilakam Raja died before trial on 3rd March 1806 as a prisoner at Dindigul Fort.¹¹⁶ The nephews of Raja were deported to Travancore as state prisoners.

The captured prisoners were also subjected to transportation for life to various penal colonies. Emman Nair, the close associate of Pazhassi Raja was captured after the death of Raja in 1806.¹¹⁷ He was one of the influential landlord of Wayanad who had maintained good relation with Tipu Sultan, Pazhassi and British. The British later identified him as a double agent. He was influential in recruiting persons to Pazhassi's gangs and acted as mediator in arms supply. The official correspondence states that Emman Nair's presence strongly increased the power of rebels.¹¹⁸ Emman Nair was actually sentenced to death but later it was commuted to transportation for life in 1806 itself. The Macleod proclamation on 16th June 1805 offered one thousand rupees for capturing Emman Nair dead or alive.¹¹⁹ The reason for not awarding death to Paloor Emman may be because of his long period secret service to company as an agent. He was punished by transportation to Prince of Wales Island.

He submitted applications from time to time to allow him to return back to Malabar. In 1814, he again submitted another application to allow him to return to Malabar. But it was also rejected stating the same reason that his return would jeopardize the tranquillity of Malabar.¹²⁰ He submitted application again in 1819 and the government stated that this old man's return would cause disturbance and revolts in Malabar and hence he could

¹¹⁶ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 551.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 551.

¹¹⁸ Foreign Consultations No 37-40, 14th May 1803 Copy, G/11 Department of History, University of Calicut.

¹¹⁹ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 541.

¹²⁰ Letter from Fort St George, 10th April 1819 in *MCF* 2291, RAK.

not be permitted to return.¹²¹ The petitions were continuously rejected by the government and he passed away in 1820 at Penang itself.¹²²

Confiscation of Property

The government confiscated the properties of rebels in and demolished their houses. The Kovilakam of Pazhassi Raja at Pazhassi and Padinjara Kovilakam at Kalladikotta were demolished. The properties of Edachana family were also confiscated by the government as four members of family participated in the rebellion namely Edachenna Kungan, Edachenna Othennan, Edachann Komappan and Edachanna Amu. The family members later failed suits to get back the confiscated properties.¹²³ Not only the properties of rebel leaders but the properties of supporters were also confiscated.

The Kurichya Revolt

The Pazhassi revolt was not the last resistance against British in Wayanad. The sparks of Pazhassi rebellion culminated in Kurichya revolt of 1812. After the brutal suppression of Pazhassi rebellion the *EEIC* established its administration and revenue collection in Wayanad. The tribal especially *kurichyar* and *kurumbar* who supported the Pazhassi Raja suffered by this Company rule. The land properties of so many tribes were confiscated by the government, and further they were also not allowed to continue their traditional method of agriculture that is slash and burn method of cultivation in forests.¹²⁴ The Company officials especially *kolkar* and revenue officials

¹²¹ From Secretary to Madras Government to the Magistrate of Malabar, Fort St George, 19th March 1819, *MCF 2292, RAK*.

¹²² For details see Anand A Yang, 'Bandits and Kings Moral Authority and Resistance in Early Colonial India'.

¹²³ Private papers, no. I, 114 of the Year 1890, Vythiri Court, Kerala History Archives, Department of History, University of Calicut.

¹²⁴ K K N Kurup, 'Pazhassi Revolts, Velu Thampi Rebellion, Kurichya Revolts and the Koots Disturbance' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 411.

tortured the tribes. The Pazhassi memories remained strong in the life of the tribal people.

The tax in the initial period was share of produce however in 1812 the rent in kind paid by people was shifted to rent in cash which resulted in a lot of difficulties to the tribal. They were not able to find market to sell their products and the low prices to products and high tax also troubled the people. All these ultimately resulted in the revolt.

The tribal people started the revolt in March 1812. It was not completely a tribal revolt as the people from other communities especially Nairs also joined the revolt. K K N Kurup called the revolt as 'bamboo blossom'.¹²⁵ The rebels requested the *kolkar* and revenue officials to give up their jobs and to join in the fight against Company. As a result, some gave up their jobs and took arms in hand.¹²⁶ The main leaders of the revolt were Rama Namby, Vankalon Kelu , Ayiraveetil Kontappan, Palaka Chandu, Yamu, Mambil Athodan and soon. The rebels disarmed the Company official of Karachal in Kurichiap mountains of Wayanad on 25th March 1812. The Company detachment at Sulthan Bathery and Manathavady were besieged by the rebels. The rebels were able to block all passes leading to Wayanad especially Kuttiadi and Elachuram and for several weeks Wayanad was completely isolated from outside regions.

Troops marched from plains to Wayanad. It was T H Baber who suppressed the Pazhassi rebellion and requested for military aid to suppress this revolt too. Thus, the troops from Mysore also proceeded to Wayanad. The troop's activities in Wayanad are available to us through the record of Col. James Welsh one of the military officials.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

¹²⁷ James Welsh, *Military Reminiscences*, vol. II, London, 1830.

The rebel leaders like Ayiraveetil Kontappan, Palaka Chandu, Yamu, Mambil Athodan were killed by the Company's forces in the battle. On the 1st May 1812, the Company officials captured Ramanamby one of the major leaders of revolt and was beheaded. James Welsh recorded that his mutilated head was shown to his son.¹²⁸ The revolt came to an end by the capture of Vankalon Kelu in 8th May 1812 by Company's troops. Thus, in May 1812, the British again established their supremacy by brutally suppressing the revolt.

The Mappila Resistances, 1792-1920

The Mappila people also known in colonial records as *moplahs* were the members of the Muslim community of Malabar. They were either the descendants of the Arabs or from the Indian converts to Islam. Islam soon after its emergence in Arabia in seventh century was spread to Malabar through Arab traders. *mappilamar* in the medieval period engaged in long distance trade.

The advent of Portuguese in fifteenth century adversely affected the *mappilamar*.¹²⁹ The Portuguese aim was not limited in exploitation of economic resources but also included religious propagation. The Portuguese traders including Vasco Da Gamma mercilessly attacked and killed the people of Malabar especially the Muslims of Malabar. The Mappila traders were the chief victims of these attacks. They even attacked and set fire to ships carrying *hajj* pilgrims from Malabar.¹³⁰ Majority of *mappilamar* who engaged in long distance trade were forced to give up their job and to settle as agriculture labourers in the interior parts of Malabar. Most of them shifted their profession to agriculture. The land relation in Malabar during

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹²⁹ For details see, *William Logan, Malabar*.

¹³⁰ Stephen F Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier: The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, Clarendon press, Oxford, 1980, p. 40.

that period was *jenmi* system¹³¹. Even William Logan stated that prior to the British both *jenmi* and *kanakkar* were the co proprietors of the land who were bounded by the laws and customs of Malabar.¹³²

When the British established their political supremacy in Malabar that introduced a lot of changes in the land ownership. The joint commissioners without thoroughly analysing the *jenmi* system of Malabar used their knowledge on European feudalism made *jenmi* as the complete owner of the land. The *kanakkar* lost the right over the land and became as lessee. Thus the *jenmi* got the right to evict the *kanakkar* for de-payment of *pattam* due to crop failure or other reasons. Majority of *mappilamar* in Ernad and Valluvanad Taluk of south Malabar became the victims of this legislation. William Logan and other historians who worked on Mappila outbreaks analysed that the mistaken policy of Joint Commissioners was the root cause of Mappila outbreaks in colonial Malabar.¹³³

The *mappilamar* of south Malabar were forced to take arms against the British due to the policies of Joint Commissioners. The Joint Commissioners deliberately classified *mappilamar* of Malabar into two category one as 'coastal *mappilamar*' and another as 'jungle *mappilamar*.'¹³⁴This was done deliberately as this costal *mappilamar* who were mainly traders supporting the British while the *mappilamar* of south Malabar with agrarian background resisted the British policies. Hence, as a part to include *mappilamar* in the collective group of criminals they used the

¹³¹ For details on Land relations see K N Ganesh, 'Agrarian Society in Kerala 1500-1800' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives of Kerala History*.

¹³² William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 687.

¹³³ Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987, p. 5.

¹³⁴ They described the Mappila community of south Malabar mainly of Ernad and Valluvanad taluk as jungle Mappila mainly public robbers by profession. They subsisted by the depredations conducted by their gang on neighbourhoods. For details see *Report of A Joint Commission From Bengal and Bombay appointed to inspect into the state and condition of the province of Malabar 1792-1793*,

term 'jungle *mappilamar*'. People included in the definition of 'jungle *mappilamar*' were the Mappila chiefs like Unni Mootha Moopan, Attan Gurukal and Chemban Poker. The British considered Unni Moota Moopan as the main bandit chief who had numerous fortified houses in jungles and support of hundreds of armed men.¹³⁵ He belonged to the Elampulassery *amsom* and was actually an influential chieftain with a lot of followers. He resisted the Mysore officials in Malabar and they later appointed him as a revenue collector in Malabar. Unni Mootha Moopan's claim over a large area of land was rejected by the Joint Commissioners as he supported Tipu Sultan in the third Anglo-Mysore War.¹³⁶

Attan Gurukal of Manjeri was one of the person mentioned as bandit in colonial records. Before the advent of Mysore Attan Gurukal and his father was a revenue collector of *samoothiri*. Attan Gurukal and his father resisted against the Mysorian authority in Malabar both were deported to Mysore and his father died at Srirangapatanam.¹³⁷ After the establishment of British rule, Attan Gurukal was appointed as head of the police of Ernad taluk. However, he soon raised his protest against the high tax rate.¹³⁸ The Joint commissioners has recorded that Unni Motha Moopan and Attan Gurukal possessed extensive landed properties which was not hereditary and obtained by bloodshed and violence.¹³⁹ This was a colonial construction of criminality which was a strategy used against any group of people which opposed the colonial state.

Hydrose Kutty of Ernad was another branded bandit of this period. He was also a close associate of Unni Mootha Moopan. William Logan has stated

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹³⁶ C K Kareem, *Malappuram District Gazetteer*, Government Press, Ernakulum, 1986, p. 105.

¹³⁷ K N Ganesh (ed.), *Exercises in Modern Kerala History*, Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society (hereafter SPCS), Kottayam, 2012, p. 60.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹³⁹ J Spencer and A Ward, *Report of Second Commissioners of Malabar*, Kozhikode, 1910, p. 54.

that Mooppan was captured in 1794 by the *mappilamar* of Ponnani.¹⁴⁰ While the Supervisors' Diary of Malabar in 1794 has recorded that Hydrose was submitted to Col. Hartley and he was sent to Kozhikode for trial.¹⁴¹ The court awarded death sentence on Hydrose. The sentence was later commuted to transportation for life and he was transported to Botany Bay Island in Australia in the same year.¹⁴² Chemban Poker belonged to the Shernad taluk of south Malabar. C K Kareem argues they were actually land owning chieftains of pre British period and the rejection of their claim over the land by Joint Commissioners resulted in the revolt.¹⁴³ The Company official and sepoys were not able to suppress their revolts and military had been employed against the so called bandits under Unni Moosa Moopan in south Malabar.¹⁴⁴ .

Some scholars who worked on this area tried to compare this so called bandits with the concept of social bandits used by Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm states that 'in every society the myth of 'social bandit' would exist and this banditry was one of the primitive method of organised social protest'.¹⁴⁵ Hobsbawm defines 'social bandits' as peasant outlaws whom the feudal lord and the state consider as criminals but the society consider them as champions, heroes, fighters and even leader of their liberation.¹⁴⁶ These bandits steal wealth from the rich and distribute it among the poor and unlike ordinary bandits, social bandits would not attack peasants, landless labourers and oppressed people. These bandits are received, appreciated

¹⁴⁰ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 501.

¹⁴¹ Malabar Supervisors Diary, Law & Magisterial, 10th July 1793, no. -2586, Microfilm, Kerala State Archives (hereafter KSA), Thiruvananthapuram.

¹⁴² William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 501.

¹⁴³ C K Kareem, *Malapuram District Gazetteer*, p. 105.

¹⁴⁴ C A Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, Penguin, Suffolk, 1985, pp. 135-137.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

and supported by the people. Other scholars who recently worked on this topic argues that they cannot be mentioned as social bandits.¹⁴⁷ To an extent they were social bandits as they got wide support from the people of south Malabar which was even recognised by the colonial officials. Most of the followers of these leaders belonged to agrarian backgrounds.

Unni Mootha Moopan, Attan Gurukal and Chemban Pokker individually and along with Pazhassi resisted the English. This trio created serious trouble to revenue collection and administration in south Malabar. The Company's officials even engaged treaty with this chiefs. A Treaty between Unni Mootha and the Company took place in 1794 in which his estate was given back to him and a pension or appointment under government was offered.¹⁴⁸ However this Treaty did not last for long. A settlement took place between Unni Moosa Moopan and the Governor and Commander General from Bombay in 1797 in which Elampulassery was restored to Unni Moosa Moopan.¹⁴⁹ In 1797 itself, Attan Gurukal was also placed at the head of police establishment of Ernad consisting of 100 men.¹⁵⁰ Both the agreements did not last for long and they again started revolt. In 1801, by a Treaty, Chemban Pokker was pardoned and allowed to move freely by the sureties of three persons.¹⁵¹ However the Treaty was for a short period and the revolt continued. It may be seen that the treaties were only temporary negations not had any particular results.

¹⁴⁷ M P MujeebuRahiman, 'Formation of Society and Economy in Malabar 1750-1810', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009.

¹⁴⁸ SPDD no 48, 1794, MSA, Mumbai.

¹⁴⁹ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 522.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 522..

¹⁵¹ William Logan, A Collection of Treaties Engagements and other Papers of Importance relating to British affairs in Malabar, p. 337.

Cash rewards were offered for the capture of these rebels in various intervals. Chemban Poker was arrested and imprisoned in Palakkad Fort in 1798. Chemban Poker was not ready to give up his resistance even inside prisons as he focused on escaping from the prison. He escaped from Palakkad Fort in June 1798.¹⁵² Chemban Poker moved to the jungle and he strongly opposed the Company. In 1799, T H Baber was given the assignment to capture Chemban Poker and confiscate his properties.¹⁵³ The Company records states that Poker was assisted by Attan Gurukal to and they had fifty and two hundred persons respectively in their gangs. Baber located the hideouts of Chemban Poker which were fortified houses in the hills by using spies. These hide outs were destroyed and directed Chemban Poker's gang men to leave him.¹⁵⁴ Baber's attempt to capture Pokker ended in failure and Baber's troop were repulsed by Chemban Poker and his troops. Soon after the repulsion of T H Baber, Chemban Pokker had made an attempt to murder G Wadwell, the southern superintendent of Malabar while he was proceeding from Angadippuram. However, Waddell managed to escape alive.¹⁵⁵

In a letter written in 1800, the Company recorded that they could not seize Unni Mootha or Chemban Poker by means of their own troops.¹⁵⁶ It is also reported that the family members of Chemban Poker were imprisoned and it included women too.¹⁵⁷ The Company officials took various measures to capture them however most of the time they managed to escape. However, Unni Moota Moopan was shot dead along with his associates by

¹⁵² SPDD no. 88, MSA, Mumbai,

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 527.

¹⁵⁶ SPDD no. 94, 1800, MSA, Mumbai.

¹⁵⁷ C K Kareem, *Malapuram District Gazetteer*, Government Press, Ernakulam, 1986, p. 117.

Captain Watsons *kolkar* in his fortified house at Kaliparkil in 1802.¹⁵⁸ It was in the same year Attan Gurukal and his followers were killed by British troops.¹⁵⁹ Later Chemban Poker also lost his life in the revolt against the Company and his tomb is located at Munniyur *desam*. Most of the landed properties of these chiefs were confiscated by the Company.¹⁶⁰ William Thackeray has stated that the rebellion of Pazhassi Raja in north Malabar and Mappila resistances in the south Malabar were civil wars which disturbed the revenue collection of the *EEIC*.¹⁶¹

From 1836, a series of outbreaks took place in south Malabar against the landlords and the British raj. The colonial officials recorded them as fanatical outbreaks in official correspondences. K N Panikkar argues that the government entered the revolts against them in official correspondence and records in misleading titles like fanatic, communal riots, outbreaks, riots, religious disturbance etc.¹⁶² Twenty-nine revolts occurred in between 1836 and 1919. The total participants in these outbreak were three hundred and fifty two and only twenty four of them were able to capture alive. The remaining lost their life with the fight against military and police. This was mainly because the belief of *shahid* was deeply enrooted in this *mappilamar*. K N Panikkar rejected this argument that the Mappilas participated the in struggles for *shahid* status rather they were driven to lose their life by the state.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Letter by Captain Watson, *Malabar Supervisors Diary*, 29th June 1802, TSA. Quoted in C K Kareem, *Malappuram District Gazetteer*, p. 118.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 492.

¹⁶¹ William Thackeray, *A Report on the Revenue Affairs of Malabar and Canara* (1807), Kozhikode, 1911, p. 9.

¹⁶² K N Panikkar, 'Peasant Revolts in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' in A R Desai (ed.), *Peasant Struggles in India*, p. 601.

¹⁶³ KN Panikar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprising in Malabar 1836-1921*, pp. 73-74.

The participants of these struggles were not wealthy *mappilamar* rather they were from the lower strata of society who mainly worked as agricultural labourers, porters, mendicants and so on.¹⁶⁴ The poor tenants and wage labourers comprised the major group of participants. The main reason was agrarian as these peasants were evicted from their land by landlords. Even the suits filed in courts against eviction did not help this Mappila peasantry as the court always supported the *janmi*. The main targets of these revolts were *janmi* landlords and persons associated with *janmi* system mainly belonging to the Hindu community. Not only Muslims but Hindu peasants were also the victims of landlordism and eviction from the land. However, they didn't revolt and only the *mappilamar* revolted. This was mainly because of the role played by the religion and its leaders in supporting the oppressed Mappila peasantry.

The State and Traditional Intellectuals

The traditional intellectuals played a pivotal role in the Malabar Struggle against colonialism and landlordism. Realising this, the colonial state began to punish the religious heads of Mappila people in Malabar and it caused for further resistances in the region. The traditional intellectuals among *mappilamar* in nineteenth century include *ulema*, *khazi*, and *mussaliar*. These *ulema* influenced the oppressed Mappila to a great extent.¹⁶⁵ The chief persons included in this group were Umar Khazi of Veliyankod, Sayid Alavi *Tangal*, Sayyid Fazal *Tangal* and finally Sanaullah Makti *Tangal*. Sayyif Fasal Thangal and Umar Khasi were punished either by imprisonment or deportation in the nineteenth century.

¹⁶⁴ Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁵ KN Panikar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprising in Malabar 1836-1921*, pp. 59-60.

Umar Khasi of Veliyancode was a religious leader of Malabar. He was born in 1757 and educated at Ponnani. He later served as the *khazi* of Veliyancode. His area of activity was not limited in religious aspects as he even agitated against the huge tax imposed by the British administration. He refused to pay tax and also issued *fatwa* criticising British. He was one of the close associates of Sayyid Alavi *Tangal* of Tirurangadi. He was arrested and sent to prison on 18th December 1819.¹⁶⁶ It is said that he wrote letters and poems while in prison.¹⁶⁷

Most important role was played by Mamburam Sayyid Alavi *Tangal* and his son Sayyid Fazal Pookoya *Tangal*.¹⁶⁸ The British suspected Sayyid Alavi for his involvement in the uprisings of 1801 and 1817. However, he was not arrested due to fear of protests and uprisings. Sayyid Fazal Pookoya *Tangal* succeeded his father Sayid Alavi and was more active than his father. He established a Jamait Mosque at Mamburam. The Mappila people who were converted from the lower classes continued the practice of taking leftover food of *jenmi*, used honorary titles while addressing them and even worked on the field on Fridays. Sayyid Fazl in his preaching's urged the Mappila people to end all such practices.¹⁶⁹ Makti *Tangal* was not an orthodox Muslim rather a reformer of the Muslim community. He advocated education of girls and he was a product of colonial modernity who tried to reform the community.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Hussain Randathani, *Mappila Muslims A Study on Society and Struggles*, Other Books, Kozhikode, 2007, p. 121.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

¹⁶⁸ Vide K N Panikar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprising in Malabar 1836-1921*.

¹⁶⁹ For details see Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis*.

¹⁷⁰ P P Abdurazak, unpublished PhD- *Colonialism and Community Formation in Malabar*, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007.

H V Connolly, the District Collector of Malabar District appointed T L Strange, a judge of the Sadar Adalat to enquire and submit report on Mappila revolts on 17th February 1852. T L Strange in his report pointed out that the reason of Mappila revolts was fanaticism of the Mappilas who were primarily influenced by the teachings of Sayyid Alavi *Tangal* and Sayyid Fazal Pookoya *Tangal*.¹⁷¹ He did not see the agrarian background of these revolts. As a result, H V Connolly soon started his work to remove Sayyid Fazal from Malabar. By using mediators, he tried to pursue Sayyid Fazal to leave Malabar to Arabia. The condition laid for leaving Malabar to Arabia was the abandonment of all proceedings and cases against Sayyid Fazal.¹⁷² The Mappila people tried their best to stop Sayyid Fazal from leaving Malabar. However, he left Malabar along with his family members and servants. Thus, on 19th March 1852, Sayyid Fazal Pookoya *Tangal* sailed to Arabia along with his family and servants consisting of 57 persons.¹⁷³ This was implementation of punishment in the form of transportation. It was not capable to end the problem and on the contrary it worsened the issue and newer resistances broke out in Malabar against the British.

Framing of Oppressive Acts

Initially, the *mappilamar* were dealt with the Madras State Prisoner's Regulation of 1819. By the Act, the state could arrest suspected persons and confine them as 'state prisoner'.¹⁷⁴ This was done without any judicial

¹⁷¹ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 654.

¹⁷² T Pycroft, secretary to government of Madras, Judicial department, FSG, 24th December 1852. in *Correspondence on Moplah Outrages* (hereafter CMO), vol. 1, RAK.

¹⁷³ *CMO*, vol. 1, RAK.

¹⁷⁴ The state prisoners were persons against whom there may not be sufficient charges to institute any judicial proceedings. Simply they were not punished by court rather the district magistrate of the concerned district in his letter to Governor in council of Madras Presidency requests to take action. Thus the concerned person will moved from his district ad confined either at any fortress, jail or any other place under police surveillance with monthly allowance from state.

proceedings and until the wish of government. T L Strange recommended a separate act to deal with the Mappila resistances. On the recommendation of T L strange, the Madras government passed two acts, Act XXIII and Act XXIV of 1854 in the year 1854 itself. This act was also known *War Knifes Act* and the *Moplah Act*.¹⁷⁵ The act resulted in the possession of *War knife* as illegal, provision for imposing collective fine on any areas and finally the most important provision was the power to confine and deport any Mappila suspected by the state as dangerous person. In general Mappila by birth was branded in to a general category and was able to be confined in jail without any reasons.

The *Moplah Act* was not the first act targeting a community or group. It was one of the acts of colonial state to deal with native poor's who resisted them. One of the most important acts was the *Thuggee Act* of 1836. In this act they defines the dacoits in colonial India were robbers by profession and even by birth belonged to various gangs hence who ever belonged to the group will be punished with life term imprisonment with hard labour. Radhika Singha Argues the purpose of the act was it makes easy to punish a prisoner in so called definition if he belonged to that tribe.¹⁷⁶

In December 1854 soon after the passing of *War Knifes Act* a group under H V Connolly conducted an extensive tour in south Malabar especially at errand and Valluvanad taluk for collecting war knives. The government ordered Mappilas to surrender war knives kept by them. By 31st January 1855, the total number of war knives surrendered to the authorities were 7561.¹⁷⁷ Besides, Connolly ordered to arrest and confine Mappila whom the

¹⁷⁵ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 572.

¹⁷⁶ Radhika Singha, *A Despotism of Law: Crime and Justice in Colonial India*, OUP, New Delhi, 2000, p. 170.

¹⁷⁷ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 643.

officials considered as a threat. Thus, the *mappilamar* were arrested and sent to the jail at Kozhikode and other jails as state prisoners.¹⁷⁸

Four prisoners named Vellattadayatta Parambil Moideen, Chemban Moideen Kutty, Valasseri Emalu and Puliyakunat Tenu who were confined at Kozhikode Jail escaped from there during their outdoor labour on 4th August 1855.¹⁷⁹ Their intention was to murder Connolly because of his responsibility in the deportation of Fasal Tangal. The police were not able to trace them. They were at south Malabar planning to murder Connolly. They got war knife during a *nercha* conducted at a house on 10th September 1855. Soon they proceeded towards Kozhikode. On the night of 11th September 1855 Connolly was brutally murdered in his well-guarded bungalow at the West Hill in Kozhikode.¹⁸⁰ These four persons soon managed to escape from the bungalow. The police and military tried to capture them and on 17th September 1855 four of them and were shot dead by the Company's troops.¹⁸¹

After these police actions connected with the murder, nine *amsom* of Malabar were fined and collected around rupees 39000 of which 30936 was given to the widow of Connolly.¹⁸² Twenty four cases were registered after the murder of Connolly. One hundred and sixty four Mappila people were charged in connection with the case including fourteen women and one boy.¹⁸³ Twenty five Mappila people died in course of the investigation. The

¹⁷⁸ *CMO*, vol. II, RAK

¹⁷⁹ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 573.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 644.

¹⁸¹ *CMO*, vol. II, RAK.

¹⁸² Common fining of the villages where the guilty lived was a form of punishment followed by the colonial authorities in India. See William Logan, *Malabar*, pp. 575-576.

¹⁸³ *CMO*, vol. II, RAK.

reason of their death was smallpox.¹⁸⁴ In detention they were kept at improper places mainly at the tobacco farm. More than eight prisoners were undergone for smallpox treatment. Thus, cases were conducted against the remaining hundred and thirty nine persons. The Joint Magistrate in his judgement awarded short term punishment to eight persons and they were sent to the Jail at Kozhikode. Seventy six persons were sentenced to deportation from Malabar as state prisoners and to be confined at various jails in the Madras Presidency and thirty-five persons were released unconditionally.¹⁸⁵ The state prisoners deported from Malabar were kept in jails at Bellary, Cudapah, Kurnool, Rajamundry and Vizhakatatanam or Guntoor and Nellore outside the Malabar District.¹⁸⁶

David Arnold has argued that one of the major reasons for the formation of an organised police force in Madras Presidency was the murder of H V Connolly. The Madras government formed an organised police force in the Presidency after the murder.¹⁸⁷ After the passing of the above acts, the frequency of outbreaks decreased to an extent. In between 1836 and 1854, there occurred 17 outbreaks while in between 1855 and 1877 there were only seven outbreaks.¹⁸⁸

'The Moplah Act'

Initially the district officials of Malabar used the Madras State Prisoners Regulation of 1819 for confining Mappila as state prisoner. The Governor in Council of Madras Presidency had the power to decide on the matters of state prisoner under *MSPR* 1819. Later in 1854 on the

¹⁸⁴ *MCF* 7348-7351, RAK.

¹⁸⁵ No-2 of 1857 Judicial Department, Governor in Council, Fort St George, 10th March 1857, RAK.

¹⁸⁶ *CMO*, vol. II, RAK.

¹⁸⁷ For details see David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule*, OUP, New Delhi, 1986.

¹⁸⁸ Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis*, p. 25.

recommendation of T L Strange two acts were passed to deal with the Mappilas. The state prisoner after releasing from jail was able to live a normal life with his family but outside Malabar. The *Malabar War Knifes Act* of 1854 was one of the act. The *Malabar War Knifes Act* also known as *Act XXIV* of 1854 prohibited the possession of certain offensive weapons in Malabar mainly the use of war Knife. The possession of war knife was made illegal and if anybody possessed it will be confiscated and the concerned person will be fined up to sixty rupees or imprisoned up to six months with or without hard labour or both fine and imprisonment.¹⁸⁹

Even after the deportation of Sayyid Fazal the British officials always watched his movements and activities. This was mainly to avoid his return to Malabar. Sayyid Fazal also intended to return to Malabar and tried every possible methods and he even visited the *Khalifa*¹⁹⁰ at Turkey for that in 1853. Government suspected Sayyid Fazal was returning to Malabar. Hence government issued order that if Sayyid Fazal will landed in Malabar or Canara District he must be arrested as a state prisoner and confined at any jail in or outside Malabar.¹⁹¹ Later government decided to Confine Sayyid Fazal in any jail far away from Malabar. This was mainly due to the fear that Mappilas will break the prison and release him. However Sayyid Fazal hadn't landed in India. His three family members returned to Malabar in September 1853 without government permission. Connolly send back two persons to Arabia and allowed the third person to reside at Kannur rather than at

¹⁸⁹ Madras Code: chronological table of un-repealed regulations of the governor of Fort St George in Council, B 413, no. 1029, Revenue Recovery Library (hereafter RRL), Thalassery, p. 114.

¹⁹⁰ Khalifa was the spiritual head of Muslims

¹⁹¹ Order by Madras Government, Fort St George, 10th September 1853. *CMO*, vol. 2, RAK.

Tirurangadi.¹⁹² This act was done deliberately because Connolly suspected he will also become a religious leader to the Mappila community.

Soon after the act of 1854 Connolly ordered to imprison Mappila whom he suspected as trouble to Malabar. This act was not only used against outrages even against the political acts by Mappila the best example was in the case of prisoners arrested in connection with the 1857 revolt.

The impact of revolt of 1857 was not limited in north India as it had created some impacts in Malabar. Two incidents in connection with revolt took place in Malabar. the first incident took place at Ponmalla village in Ernad Taluk were seven persons including a *mukri*¹⁹³ of the mosque was arrested for planning murder a Hindu and also for spreading the revolt of north in Malabar in August 1857. the second event took place at Thalassery were an ex-prisoner Vanji Kadavat Kunji Mayan in his speech in September 1857 explained about the revolt in north India and the scarcity of rice in Malabar due to it.¹⁹⁴ He urged the people to liberate the country from British.

In the two cases Madras government recommended to use the *Act XIV* of 1857 used to deal with north Indian rebels of 1857 revolt. The district officials of Malabar rather than using it use the provision of *Malabar War Knife Act* of 1854. The prisoners were decided to deport from Malabar and confine in prison as state prisoners by using section IV and XIII of Malabar war knives act of 1854. T Ali and P Kunjappa Hajji were imprisoned at Nellore Jail, P Kunjoolen Mullah and P Coonjian in the Chittor Jail of south Arcot and

¹⁹² *CMO*, vol. II, RAK.

¹⁹³ The official at mosque.

¹⁹⁴ Robinson District Magistrate of Malabar to Chief Secretary, Madras, 24th September 1857, *MCF* 7363, RAK.

finally Moideenkutty, Avaran Kammoo and M Kunji Marakar at Thrichinopoly Jail.¹⁹⁵ V Kunji Mayan of Thalassery was also imprisoned using the Moplah act as state prisoner at Trichinopoly Jail rather using the Act XIV of 1857. Kunjimayan died from Jail hospital mainly due to stomach diseases as a result of bad food in prison on 8th August 1859.¹⁹⁶ The using of *Moplah Act* rather than act to deal the north Indian rebels clearly shows that the *Moplah Act* was much powerful and the state can use it against any Mappilas who resist the state in any means. Even innocent persons were also became the victims of this black act.

In 1859 the government passed ACT XX of 1859 better known as *Moplah Outrages Act* by repealing the *Malabar War Knifes Act* stating the existing acts were not capable to suppress Mappila outrages. The act was much powerful than the previous one. The act defines a lot of criteria by which a Mappila can be imprisoned simply a person by birth included in Mappila community was eligible to be confined as a state prisoner by the colonial state. The Act not only provides imprisonment but also had the provision of forfeiture the property belonged to them. Thus the whole family of the prisoner became the victim of the act. A important provision of the act was on dealing the bodies of *mappilamar* died in the open fight with the state or those who were hanged for such offence. The dead bodies will be burned or buried within the precautions of jail.¹⁹⁷ The burning of dead bodies was against the laws of Islamic religion. That's much cruelty was done even towards the corpse of died *mappilamar*. The another provision of act was those state prisoners who were released from jail and allowed to reside

¹⁹⁵ Chief Secretary to Malabar Magistrate Order no 1359, Judicial Department, 16th October 1857, MCF 7363, RAK

¹⁹⁶ Judicial Department, no.1033, August 1859, MCF 7363, RAK.

¹⁹⁷ Chronological table of un-repealed regulations of the Governor of Fort St. George in Council, nob 1029, p. 128, RRL, Thalassery.

outside Malabar under police surveillance if they visit Malabar without obtaining government sanction they will be punished with seven years imprisonment with hard labour or fine or both.¹⁹⁸ The Mappila as state prisoner had not only compelled to reside out of Malabar but also like in the case of Sayyid Fazal were forced to leave India. In 1873 by using the provision six of *Moplah Outrages Act* of 1859 two Mappila men were forced to leave India for seven years and both of them chose Mecca for that.¹⁹⁹

Puttanveetil Said Muhammed Koya was confined from 1855 to 1870. In 1870 he was released and put as state prisoner in the same year he married his cousin.²⁰⁰ In 1884 he filed a petition to get more allowance this shows he was not allowed to return to Malabar and still a prisoner even after 30 years. In twentieth century majority of state prisoners were *mappilamar* from Malabar. Even before the outbreak of Malabar Struggle there were more than twenty Mappila state prisoners in various jails and outside jails under police surveillance.²⁰¹ The agrarian grievances ultimately along with the unnecessary use of *MOA* resulted in the Malabar Struggle of 1921. Majority of the persons who resisted the colonial state in this early were punished by sending behind the bars.

The Prison in Malabar

The colonial government used prison as political tool for dealing their political opponents in Malabar. The British did not construct new buildings as prisons and they used existing buildings and forts as prisons. The three forts

¹⁹⁸ Chronological table of un-repealed regulations of the Governor of Fort St. George in council, nob 1029, p. 130, RRL, Thalassery.

¹⁹⁹ William Logan, *Malabar*, p. 579.

²⁰⁰ Correspondence File, no. 25, RAK.

²⁰¹ List of state prisoners in Madras Presidency until 31st December 1924, Public Confidential, Go No 211, 9th February 1925, RAK.

of Malabar St Angelo at Kannur, the Thalassery Fort and the Fort at Palakkad were used as Company's prisons. The St. Angelo Fort was constructed by the Portuguese in 1505. Even during their time they used fort for imprisoning Valiya Hassan. The capital punishment awarded to Valiya Hassan was also carried out inside the Fort. Later the Dutch captured the Fort from the Portuguese. It was the Dutch who converted a part of the Fort as a Jail.²⁰² The Thalassery Fort was the only fort build by the *EEIC* in Malabar. The land for constructing the fort was given by the northern regent of the *kolathiri* royal family.²⁰³ The work started in 1703 was completed in 1708. The officials of the Company used the Thalassery Fort as office of the Magistrate and Sub Collector and the lower part of the fort as a prison.²⁰⁴ The Palakkad Fort was one of the forts in Malabar built by Hyder Ali after his conquest of Malabar in the second half of the eighteenth century.²⁰⁵ A building inside the Fort was used as prison and even after independence it continued to be used as a prison.

It is seen from the records there were no jails of the modern sense in Malabar. The survey report of Ward and Conner says that there were pre modern jails in Malabar made out of mud to keep prisoners.²⁰⁶ Other records talks about *karagriham* to keep law breakers and a tax called *ara* was collected from the people who filed complaints against law breakers.²⁰⁷ Records about the system followed by Mysorean rulers in Malabar is not

²⁰² K Sivasankaran Nair, *Keralam Dutchukarude Drishtiyil*, State Institute of languages, Thiruvananthapuram, 2018, p. 204.

²⁰³ N Rajendran, *Establishment of British Power in Malabar*, Allahabad, 1979, p. 35.

²⁰⁴ Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1995(1906), p. 39.

²⁰⁵ Francis Buchannan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries, Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, London, 1807, p. 347.

²⁰⁶ Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, pp. 14-160.

²⁰⁷ K V Krishna Ayyer, *Zamorins of Calicut*, p. 265.

clearly known to us. The East India Company introduced the modern jail system after the European practice and opened prisons attached to forts.

Most of the prison buildings were unfit for confining prisoners as they were constructed for different purposes. The jail at Kozhikode in the early period of the Company regime was a formidable building situated in the Portuguese town near the District Court.²⁰⁸ The jail at Kozhikode in the early period was not a big one and the officials frequently reported problem of overcrowding and requested for a new building. The officials from Malabar sent a letters to Bombay requesting them to allow the French Loge at Kozhikode to be used as a prison by paying some amount between ten thousand to twelve thousand rupees to France.²⁰⁹ The officials rejected it completely on economic grounds as it was too costly for the Company. The official records of Malabar have stated that the most spacious prison in Malabar in 1805 was at Kozhikode and all of the jails in Malabar were overpopulated.²¹⁰ David Arnold states that the prisoners waited for the monsoon as it caused prison collapses in the rain which helped them to escape'.²¹¹

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the abolition of old jails and construction of new jails in India. Most of the early jails of Malabar were also abolished in the second half of nineteenth century itself. The jails existed in the forts were not abolished. The jail existed at Angadippuram had also collapsed by 1824.²¹² The jail at Palakkad was

²⁰⁸ Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, p.100.

²⁰⁹ PDD vol. 107, MSA, Mumbai.

²¹⁰ Letter from Malabar, 12th march 1805, MCF, No. 8412, RAK.

²¹¹ David Arnold, *The Colonial Prison*, David Arnold & David Hardiman (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VIII*, p. 164.

²¹² Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, p.160.

abolished in 1868 and the Thalassery Jail was abolished in 1885.²¹³ However, these were used for confining under trial prisoners. New jails were constructed in these places.

These were constructed after the Pentonville Prison model of England started in 1842. This model had revolutionised the prison construction throughout the globe. It was a five block model and not the exact panopticon.²¹⁴ The aim of constructing Pentonville model according to the Surveyor General was the enhancement of discipline among the prisoners.²¹⁵ The Pentonville model prisons spread to many countries after 1842.

The new model influenced the Indian prisons too and a lot of central jails were constructed in India the second half of nineteenth century. In Malabar, the Central Jail at Kannur was constructed during this period. The raja of *chirakal kovilagam* gave fifty acres of land at Kannur in 1865, to the colonial government for constructing the jail. This was done on the condition that the land was to be returned to the raja at that time of the abolition of the jail.²¹⁶ The estimate for building the Central Jail at Kannur was 327000 rupees and the public works department started its work in November 1866 and the jail was opened in 1869.²¹⁷ It is seen that convict labour was widely used for constructing the Kannur Central Jail. The work was completed in March 1873 with a cost of 314264 rupees. In the initial stage, the jail Kannur had the facility to accommodate around 1062 prisoners constructed after

²¹³ Go No 1071, 24th April 1885, Correspondence File, Number 25, RAK.

²¹⁴ Jeremy Bentham's work '*Panopticon*' or inspection house' in 1791, put forward the panopticon concept in prison. Panopticon was an architectural concept in which the wardens were located at the central tower of prison and from there it was possible to see all inmates of prison while the prisoner never knows whether he is watched at one moment or not but he is sure that he is watched which forced the prisoner to self discipline without excising any external force. Foucault considers panopticon as the perfect example of power knowledge operations on body. For details see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

²¹⁵ *Report of the Surveyor General of Prisons of the Construction of ventilation and details of Pentonville prison, London, 1844*, p. 11, TSA, Chennai.

²¹⁶ Bundle Number 4, Serial Number 2, Revenue Folded, 1865, RAK.

²¹⁷ *Manual of Administration of Madras Presidency*, vol. I, Madras, 1885, p. 375.

the semi panopticon block system.²¹⁸ It helped the Company to bring prisoners from Mangalore to the Central Jail at Kannur.²¹⁹ The whole model was not implemented in India due to the over-crowding of prisoners and lack of facility for solitary confinement in the prison.²²⁰ Thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century there was one Central Jail at Kannur, one Special Sub Jail at Kozhikode and twenty sub jails in the Malabar District.²²¹

Commencement of Classification of Prisoners

Prisoners in the early period included debtors, criminals and those who were convicted for offences against the state. More than half of the prisoners in Malabar jails during the initial period were convicted for offences against the state. The *Report of Principal Collector of Malabar* in 1804 stated that the total number of prisoners in various jails of Malabar were two hundred and fifty in which two third of them were charged with rebellion against the state.²²² These prisoners also can be considered as political prisoners. IT was for the safety of the state these prisoners were imprisoned by the police. Thus, the colonial state from the very beginning itself used prison as an instrument for oppressing its political opponents.

Race, caste and religion also played an important role in colonial prisons. *The Madras Manual* itself states that caste system of outside society was also recognised in colonial jails.²²³ The caste system was observed

²¹⁸ C A Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, p. 392.

²¹⁹ *South Canara Manual*, Madras, 1894, p. 201.

²²⁰ Madhurima Sen , *Prisons in Colonial Bengal*, Thema, Kolkota, 2007, p. 6

²²¹ C A Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, p. 392.

²²² Letter from Thomas Warden, Principal collector of Malabar, Secretary to Government Judicial Department, Fort St. George Madras, September 1804, Extract from Malabar Commissioners' Report, pp. 15-17, vol. 2318, in *K N Panikkar Collection*, Kerala Council for Historical Research (hereafter KCHR), Thiruvananthapuram.

²²³ *Manual of Administration of Madras Presidency*, vol. II, p. 182.

mainly to provide suitable cooks for all castes and exemption from special works for higher castes like scavenger work, shoe making etc.²²⁴

Solitary confinement was not in question from the early period of Company's rule as the state looked at everything in an economic point of view. Thus, most of the prisons became overcrowded. David Arnold argues that the prison population was directly linked with food scarcities and famines that took place in the society.²²⁵ The case of Malabar was also not different as famines resulted in overcrowding of prisons. Malabar was also a victim of famine and food scarcity in different periods. These famines resulted in the increase of crime rate and thus prison population of Malabar also increased. The Jail at Palakkad was reopened in 1876 due to this overcrowding.²²⁶ Epidemics and death rate in prisons also increased to a great extent during the famines.

Management of Prisons in Malabar

The charges of prisons in the early period were given to revenue officials, magistrates and judges. They had not given much attention to prisons which worsened the condition of prisons and prisoners.²²⁷ The chief prison staff in the initial period were jailor, *duffedar*, *ditto* and *kolkar*.²²⁸ The job of the jail warden was performed by the *kolkar*.²²⁹

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ David Arnold, 'The Colonial Prison' in David Arnold & David Hardiman (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VIII*, pp. 168-169.

²²⁶ *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Sanitary Commissioner 1878*, Madras, p. 137, RAK.

²²⁷ T K Raveendran, *Institutions and Movements in Kerala History*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1978, pp. 114-115.

²²⁸ Prison staffs of jails in Malabar, *MCF 5017*, Year- 1827, RAK.

²²⁹ *kolkar* were polices recruited in the early colonial period from native population. William Thackeray in his report in 1807 stated that the *kolkar* force from Malabar mainly comprised Nair men. This shows the colonial state right from the beginning used the martial races theory in recruiting police and military. Vedika Kant argues that during First World War the recruitment in Indian army was reserved for some social groups who were described as martial races. Thus caste also played a role in colonial recruitment and administration. For details See Vedika Kant, *India and the First World War*, Roli Books, New Delhi, 2014. William Thackeray, *A Report on the Revenue Affairs of Malabar and Canara* (1807), Kozhikode, 1911.

It was in the second half of the eighteenth century that new officials were appointed for the management of prisons. All the prisons in the Madras Presidency were under the control of Inspector General of Jails.²³⁰ The *IG* was appointed under the Act V of 1869. The *IG* of prisons was also the ex-officio visitor of all lunatic asylums of the Presidency.²³¹ The executive management of jail was in the hands of the Jail Superintendent. Majority of powers relating to jail discipline, internal economy, expenditure, labour, internal punishment and controls generally rests with jail superintendent.²³² The superintendent of the Central Jail was appointed by the Madras Government while the civil surgeon of the district was also appointed as superintendent of District Jail, and finally the superintendent of subsidiary jails was the magistrate or a sub magistrate.²³³ The superintendent of central jails were usually doctors hence they were also given the duty of medical officership of the prison.

Under the jail superintendent, there was a well-disciplined staff of jailors, wardens to control prisoners. Besides them there were clerks, store keepers and a small staff of artisans to guide the prisoners on their jail labour of various trades. It was the subordinate staff especially wardens who actually dealt with the prisoners. The wardens were not highly paid and didn't require any educational qualification hence they remained as uncivilised and corrupted in the colonial period.²³⁴ These wardens had made widespread illegal and informal relationship with the prisoners.²³⁵ These wardens were actually responsible for most of the crimes in the prison.

²³⁰ *Manual of Administration of Madras Presidency*, vol. II, p. 180.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ Madhurima Sen, *Prisons in Colonial Bengal*, p. 6.

²³⁵ Frank Dickotter & Ian Brown (eds.), *Cultures of Confinement*, p. 11.

The last category of staff were the convict wardens recruited from the prisoners. The convict wardens were usually selected from convicts undergoing long term punishment who had completed major portion of their sentence. The convict warden system was started in Malaya Jails. The Madras Government, on 31st July 1868 sanctioned the system of convict wardens in certain prisons of Madras Presidency.²³⁶ Below to the convict wardens, there were two categories recruited from prisoners and they were convict night watchmen and convict overseas. These convict wardens were given a lot of concession including in food, letter and interviews. Later in the twentieth century, the convict warden system was used in all jails of the Madras Presidency. The system was utilised mainly on economic grounds.

Sanitation and Health

The prison was one of the sites which provided direct access to the colonial medicine on Indian body.²³⁷ The prison was one of the area of frequent epidemics and other diseases throughout the colonial era. From the initial period, the rate of sick prisoners was high and many prisoners died due to diseases and lack of medical care. Major diseases spread in the prison were cholera and small pox which were frequent in colonial Malabar. These diseases had taken the life of many prisoners. In the nineteenth century prisons in Malabar, the death rate was very high particularly at the Jail in Kozhikode near French Loge mainly due to the recurring smallpox and cholera.²³⁸

²³⁶ *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency 1870-1871*, Government Press, Madras, 1872, p. 58.

²³⁷ David Arnold, *Colonising the Body*, OUP, New Delhi, 1993, p. 98.

²³⁸ C A Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, p. 392.

Doctors were not appointed in jails in the initial phase as the doctors from outside visited jails to treat prisoners. The high sick rate and mortality resulted in continues visiting of doctors in the prison. The payments of these doctors were always created a lot of problems to officials. In 1805 a question raised at Kannur Fort Jail that who will pay the bill for doctors for attending sick prisoners.²³⁹ T H Baber in his letter written in 1804 stated the high sick rate in prisons was mainly due to very low diet allowed to prisoners.²⁴⁰ Baber also urged the government to stop the practice of using doctors from outside rather to appoint medical officer to every jails.²⁴¹ Later the government appointed doctors in prisons in the mid nineteenth century. Radhika Sinhga argues that the appointment of doctors in prisons was not actually a humanitarian concern rather its aim was to utilise prisoners labour as well as to enhance jail severities.²⁴²

Even after appointing doctors, the high mortality rate and epidemics continued in the prisons in Malabar as well as in the Madras Presidency. Cholera and small pox continued and took away the lives of majority of prisoners. A severe outbreak of cholera occurred in Kozhikode jail in 1862 which took away the lives of ninety two prisoners and the main reason government identified was overcrowding.²⁴³ Prison throughout the colonial period was a site of recurring epidemics. The prisoner in a jail was not safe in terms of health and when he was released from the prison he had become the carrier of many deceases.

²³⁹ MCF, 2168, RAK.

²⁴⁰ letter from T H Baber, MCF 2167, Year-1804, RAK.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² Radhika Sinhga, 'Penal Reform in the Colony 1825-1845', p. 33.

²⁴³ *Report of the Administration of Madras Presidency 1862-1863*, Madras, 1863, pp. 25-26.

Prison Labour

The colonial prison was also an institution of economic exploitation.²⁴⁴ The prisoners were used as labourers by company. The main labour of prisoners in the last decade of eighteenth century and in the first half of nineteenth century in India was the construction of roads.²⁴⁵ Most of the prisoners were put in gangs for working in road construction even at long distances away from their prisons. One convict gangs usually consists hundred prisoners. In Malabar the working times was from 7 A.M to 4 P M and for a gang of 100 convicts, 25 *kolkar* and one *hawildar* were put in supervision charge mainly to prevent escapes.²⁴⁶ The punishment awarded for house breaking and robbery was five years hard labour on roads in 1820.²⁴⁷ T B Macaulay the head of first Prison Reform Committee, 1836-1838 was against the use of prisoners in road work. Even after the committee prisoners were widely used for road construction.²⁴⁸ Thus majority of early roads in Malabar were constructed using prisoners labour which was done at free of cost to the colonial state.

In the second half of eighteenth century, when new prisons were constructed, the outdoor labour of prisoners was shifted to indoor labour. Even these prisons were constructed using prisoners labour. The prisoners from the beginning were used for construction of the Kannur Central Jail.²⁴⁹ This indoor labour itself was divided into two intra mural and extra mural. New industries were established in prisons. The main work at the Central Jail

²⁴⁴ Madhurima Sen, *Prisons in Colonial Bengal*, p. 14.

²⁴⁵ F A Barker, *Imprisonment*, p. 67.

²⁴⁶ P Wales, Overseer Kozhikode, 17th August 1856, MCF-7442, RAK.

²⁴⁷ MCF- 2160, RAK.

²⁴⁸ Working Gang Report, MCF 7442, 23rd August 1856, RAK.

²⁴⁹ *Report of Administration of Jails of Madras Presidency 1865-1866*, Madras, 1866, p. 27.

in Kannur were carpentry, wood and coconut shell carving, weaving of blankets and coarse rugs besides a printing press was also set up.²⁵⁰

The caste system was also followed in prisons mainly among the Brahmins who enjoyed certain privileges out of this.²⁵¹ They were exempted from shoe making and scavenger work. Radhika Singha argues that the dirty and polluting work in prisons always vested with the lower caste people and if there were no lower class prisoners they hired them from outside.²⁵² The prisoners were put into the hardest form of labour while admitting to prisons and later shifted to less risk tasks. The works assigned to political prisoners were not available however they were also forced to do hard labour including road construction.

Prison discipline: Remission and internal Punishment

The superintendent of jails had the power to punish the prisoners for violating prison rules. The punishment given for the violation of prison rules were mainly forfeiture of remission, degradation to the lower class, separate confinement, loss of privileges, reduction in diet, corporal punishment and other punishments.²⁵³ While the criminal offences in jails were punished by the court of justice.

Food and Resistances of the Prisoners

Food always remained as the most important reason for resistances in prison. In 1879, the government decided to change the diet of prisoners in the Kannur Central Jail. The rice diet was replaced with twelve ragi and two

²⁵⁰ C A Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, p. 392.

²⁵¹ *Madras Jail Manual*, Madras, 1915, p. 109, RAK.

²⁵² Radhika Sinha, *A Despotism of Law: Crime and Justice in Colonial India*, OUP, New Delhi, 2000, p. 276.

²⁵³ *Manual of Administration of Madras Presidency*, vol. II, p. 184.

rice diets in a week. The people in Malabar were mainly consuming rice and they were against this decision. The prisoners came to know about the new change and started hunger strike by more than hundred prisoners on 1st January 1879.²⁵⁴ The gang leader of the striking prisoners was punished by flogging. The strike ultimately resulted in jail riot when the leader was flogged.²⁵⁵ The government report says that about four hundred prisoners took part in the revolt. The wardens fired and one prisoner lost his life and many were severely injured. Twenty nine prisoners were later transferred to various jails to break the 'Valluvanad gang of dacoits' in the jail.²⁵⁶

Escape

Escape was considered as the greatest breach of discipline in colonial jails. We can see that the escape of criminals as well as political prisoners right from the beginning to the end of British rule in Malabar. The authorities not only punished prisoners for escape but also punished jail officials especially wardens. The escaped prisoners in early phase of company rule were usually punished by transportation. While the wardens were either terminated from service or punished by imprisonment, corporal punishment or by all the above. The time of escape was most important as usually it was in night, monsoon season or festival days were the main days selected by prisoners. Twenty one Mappila prisoners escaped from the Cherpulasserry jail on 15th March 1796.²⁵⁷ The darkness of night was selected for this escape. The guards were also put to punishment by five hundred lashes on their back.²⁵⁸ Chemban Poker's escape from the Kannur Central Jail was a

²⁵⁴ Go No 239, 7th February 1879, Miscellaneous Series, Bundle no. 297, Sl. 11, RAK.

²⁵⁵ Miscellaneous Series, Bn no. 297, Sl no. 11, year 1879, RAK.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ PDD No. 119, 1796, MSA, Mumbai.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

great blow to the colonial officials. Another major escape took place in night at Kannur fort in 1803. Here the persons escaped were the two nephews of Pazhassi Raja and they also escaped in night.²⁵⁹ Throughout the colonial regime wardens were also punished for the escape of prisoners.

Thus, the prison in colonial Malabar was an institution representing the power of the colonial state and offences of the Indian people. This institution was part of the larger society and all aspects of the outside society and state's interests reflected in these prisons. The prison system developed along with the transformation of the colonial government and the changes in the Indian society. Thus, study of the colonial prison becomes important to understand the resistance to colonialism in the period selected for study in this thesis.

²⁵⁹ William Logan, A collection Of Treaties Engagements and other Papers of Importance relating to British Affairs in Malabar, p. 370.

Chapter 3

The Political Prisoner

When did the prisons began to have a class of inmates called ‘political prisoners’ ? and how did they enjoy certain privileges distinct from other prisoners ?. How did the freedom fighters began to be identified as ‘political prisoners’ ? and in what way the participants of the ‘Malabar Struggle’ and the Communist movement were treated in the prison ?. These are few questions that emerge in the mind of a scholar who examines the life of freedom fighters in the prisons in colonial India. This chapter is making an effort to study this issue in the context of colonial Malabar.

The advent of M K Gandhi into the Indian political scenario transformed the Indian National Congress into a mass organisation. The Non Co-operation Movement started on 1st August 1920 under the Indian National Congress became the first nationwide movement under M K Gandhi. The *khilafat*¹ movement was also launched parallel to the Non Cooperation Movement. The aim of the mass movement was attainment of *swaraj* by non-violent methods.² The participants and organisers of the movement were middle class people and majority of them were the educated urban middle class like lawyers. The rural population and the peasants never played a major part in it.³ Courting arrest and going to the prison was one of the major element of this Gandhian movement. Quite against tradition, a huge number of Indian people were imprisoned

¹ The movement started for the restoration of *khilifa* of turkey who was the spiritual head of world Muslims. As the British soon after the First World War disrupted the Turkish Sultan.

² To Gandhi ‘swaraj’ meant self-rule or self-governance.

³ David Arnold, *The Congress in Tamilnadu*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1977, p. 46.

throughout the country during the movement. Thus, the prison also became an area of public attention from colonial India from 1920.

M K Gandhi and the Prison

This unconventional strategy of the national movement was unknown in India till that time. Thus, the Non Cooperation and the *khilafat* movements created a turning point in the national movement against the British government. M K Gandhi was becoming 'mahatma' to the masses living in the urban and rural spaces through the movement. Courting arrest in a peaceful way for taking part in the anti- government activity was taking place under the leadership of M K Gandhi. Life in a prison was a new type of political activity and the individual courting arrest on account of national political activity was to be defined to distinct him from ordinary criminals in the eye of the government. The national movement began to see courting arrest by the members of the anti-government activities was doing a good activity for the sake of freedom. These people became 'political prisoners' in the eye of the national movement. M K Gandhi considered prison as a place where a subject is really free in an oppressive colonial state.⁴ He urged the *satyagrahi*⁵ volunteers to turn the prison into a heaven because the colonial state was only able to confine the body not the spirit of prisoners. To Gandhi, the political prisoner had to strictly observe jail rules and become a disciplined one in the prison. The aim of M K Gandhi was not to destroy the jail but to enforce discipline. M K Gandhi differentiated criminals from

⁴ *Navajivan*, 1st August 1920, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter CWMG), vol. 21, p. 102, accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> on 5th February 2016 at 11 A. M.

⁵ A person who engaged in passive form of political resistance as a part of Gandhian agitation.

political prisoners and he did not want ordinary criminal prisoners taking part in the national movement.⁶

The *satyagrahi* prisoners were given instructions not to shout slogans like *bandemadaram*, *mahatma gandhiki jai* or any other slogans inside the prison. He discouraged nationalist slogans and urged political prisoners to stop uttering *sarkar salam*⁷ in prison as he thought that it was necessary to criminal prisoners and not to political prisoners. He directed them to resist such degrading such practices even at the risk of their lives.⁸ Thus, Gandhi urged political prisoners not to commit stealthy breach of jail regulations.

However, Gandhi had given permission to political prisoners for openly disobeying prison regulations or to start hunger strike on certain occasions. These circumstances were; when the food given to them was unfit for human consumption, wardens themselves break prison rules, attempts to humiliate political prisoner, insanitation, and when officials interfere with any obligatory religious practice of the prisoners.⁹ Gandhi himself stated that the food given to prisoners was unclean and indigestible containing stones and worms and water supplied was contaminated for drinking. In such cases political prisoners were instructed to reject that food.

The Indian National Congress in Malabar

These new developments had much significance in colonial Malabar and the region witnessed staunch national movement after the First World

⁶ *Young India*, 29th December 1921, CWMG, vol. 25, p. 434. Accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> on 5th February 2016 at 11 A.M.

⁷ Slogan praising the government

⁸ M K Gandhi, *Stonewalls Do Not a Prison Make*, Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad, 1964, p. 30.

⁹ *Young India*, 29th January 1921, CWMG vol. 22, p. 434. Accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> on 5th February 2016 at 11 A.M.

War. The Indian National Congress had begun its activity in the region immediately after its inception in 1885. Though limited to a minority group of educated urban middle class, the movement began to become popular among the educated with the First World War and the Home Rule Movement since 1916.

The Non co-operation Movement of 1920 was active in Malabar and the *khilafat* movement increased the participation of people in the national movement. M K Gandhi and Maulana Shaukat Ali visited Malabar on 18th August 1920 as part of all India visit to propagate the objectives of Non Cooperation and *khilafat* movements. Gandhi and Shaukat Ali addressed a huge gathering of around twenty thousand people at the Kozhikode beach in Malabar. Gandhi in his speech urged the people to give back all titles like *sir*, *diwan bahadur*, *khan bahadur* etc., given by the government, and told lawyers to give up their court practice, employees to resign government jobs, students to boycott schools controlled by the government, and the ordinary people to use swadeshi cloth by boycotting foreign dress. Gandhi's visit didn't create much impact in Malabar as he had not become that much popular in the region. K Madhavan Nair, a staunch Gandhian, has pointed out that the advocates didn't give up their practice, students didn't boycott schools, not even a council member resigned from their post.¹⁰

During the *NCM*, lawyers were the main backbone of the Congress in Malabar. As Mithi Mukherji states, lawyers emerged as the main political voice in the Indian National Congress from early period onwards.¹¹ K Madhavan Nair, K P Keshava Menon, U Gopala Menon, M P Narayana Menon were all lawyers and they were the chief faces of the Congress

¹⁰ K Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalaapam*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 71.

¹¹ Mithi Mukherjee, *India in the Shadows of Empire*, OUP, New Delhi, 2010, p. 105.

movement in Malabar. Even these lawyers who were the backbone of the movement in Malabar also didn't give up their practice after Gandhi's speech at Kozhikode.¹²

The annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Nagpur in December 1920, decided to form regional committees of the Congress based upon the regional language. Thus, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee, *KPCC* was formed in 1921 representing the geographical terrain of the Malayalam language which included the princely states of Thiruvithamcore and Kochi along with the Malabar District. Kozhikode was selected as the headquarters of the *KPCC* and K Madhavan Nair was elected as its first secretary. The Nagpur session's decision that the lawyers to give up their practice was ignored by K Madhavan Nair and his associates in *KPCC*.¹³ The government didn't give much significance to the Non Cooperation Movement, but its attitude towards the *khilafat* movement and the participation Mappila people was found as a serious anti-government activity.¹⁴ E F Thomas, the Collector of the Malabar District and R H Hitchcock, superintendent of the district police, took action to ban Congress and *khilafat* programs in different parts of Malabar especially in Valluvanad and Ernad.¹⁵ Ernad and Valluvanad *taluk* divisions in South Malabar were mainly populated by the Mappila people.

The leaders of the *KPCC* in Malabar resolved to invite Yacoob Hassan, member of the Madras Legislative Council and prominent leader of the *khilafat* movement in Madras to Malabar for addressing the public especially

¹² K Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam*, p. 71.

¹³ A K Pilla, *Congressum Keraluvum*, Prabath Book House, Thiruvananthapuram, 1986(1935), p. 318.

¹⁴ Public Department G O No 103, 25th February 1921, Tamilnadu State Archives (Hereafter *TSA*), Chennai.

¹⁵ Two *taluk* divisions of the Malabar District.

the *mappilamar*. The frequent prohibition of meetings in Malabar by the district authorities had frustrated the Mappila community. The Indian National Congress was not ready to follow violent methods to break government orders.¹⁶ Thus, the Indian National Congress invited Yacoob Hassan to propagate the idea of non-violence among the Mappila people.

Yacoob Hassan along with his wife reached Kozhikode on 15th February 1921. Soon after the arrival, he was given a notice under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code which prohibited him and other leaders of the Congress from addressing the people and the public meetings at Tanur and Kozhikode were prohibited.¹⁷ The leaders decided to cancel the Tanur meeting and telegraphed the decision to Tanur leaders. Soon a meeting was held to decide whether to conduct or cancel the public meeting at Kozhikode. Yacoob Hassan stated that the order of the District Magistrate was an interference in the right of a citizen for freedom of speech hence he would address the people at Kozhikode.¹⁸

K Madhavan Nair soon wired a telegram to the Associate Press in Madras stating that Yacoob Hassan would address the public in defiance of the prohibition order. The telegraph department officials soon redirected it to the District Magistrate of Malabar.¹⁹ The District Magistrate ordered the arrest of Yacoob Hassan, U Gopala Menon, K Madhavan Nair and P Moideen Koya for their decision to violate the prohibition order.²⁰

They were arrested and presented before the District Magistrate for trial. The arrested leaders declined to give bonds for good behaviour and the

¹⁶ K Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam*, p. 77.

¹⁷ Public Department G O No 103, 25th February 1921, TSA, Chennai

¹⁸ K Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam*, p. 77.

¹⁹ Public Department G O No 103, 25th February 1921, TSA, Chennai.

²⁰ A K Pillai, *Congressum Keraluvam*, p .278.

District Magistrate sent them to the prison.²¹ All of them were sentenced to six months simple imprisonment. The arrest, trial and punishment of the leaders took place on 16th February 1921 itself. They are considered as the first political prisoners in Malabar arrested in connection with the Gandhian movement. M K Gandhi appreciated Yacoob Hassan and others and urged the people to follow the path of Yacoob Hassan and others as *swaraj* was attainable only by going to the jail.²²

The arrest of political activists in connection with Non co-operation movement at Malabar was not limited to Yacoob Hassan and three others. R H Hitchcock has stated that, around thirty two people were imprisoned in connection with the Non Cooperation and *khilafat* movements in Malabar.²³ Other leaders arrested were K Kelappan and K Balakrishna Menon who were imprisoned for conducting a meeting in Mathur Mosque by violating section 144 CPC, on 20th May 1921. Their refusal to pay fine resulted in one month long rigorous imprisonment starting with 28th May 1921.²⁴ They were also imprisoned at the Kannur Central Jail and where they met K Madhavan Nair and other political prisoners.²⁵ The list provided by R H Hitchcock seem to be incomplete.²⁶

These arrests were unfamiliar police action to the people in Malabar. The newly emerged nationalist print media gave wide publicity to the arrests as true violation of the rights of Indian people by the police. The news of

²¹ Fort Nightly Report (Hereafter *FNR*), For the Second Half of February 1921, *TSA*, Chennai.

²² *The Tribune*, 22nd February 1921, *CWMG*, vol. 22, pp. 354-356. Accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi>, on 5th February at 11 A.M.

²³ R H Hitchcock, *History of Malabar Rebellion*, Government Press, Madras, 1925, p. 24.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24

²⁵ K Kelappan, Oral History Transcript (Hereafter-*OHT*), no. 73, Nehru Memorial Museum Library (hereafter *NMML*), New Delhi.

²⁶ Vide A K Pilla, *Congressum Keraluvum*.

British cruelty towards the Indian people at Amritsar and the new awakening of the people out of the Home Rule movement had made the reading public more conscious about the need of mass movement against the colonial rule. The release from jail and reception given to K Madhavan Nair, U Gopala Menon and P Moideen Koya on 17th August 1921 at Kozhikode witnessed a big assemblage of people belonging to different castes and religions. This had antagonised the colonial government in a strong manner because of its collective anti-colonial sentiment based upon Hindu-Muslim unity. The Non Cooperation Movement in Malabar ultimately resulted in the commencement of a strong non Gandhian Malabar Struggle on 20th August 1921 against the government and landlordism. Thus, the Non Cooperation Movement inaugurated a new form of political struggle and the formation of new class of law breakers called the political prisoners.

The Civil Disobedience Movement and Jails

The involvement of prison life in Malabar during the national movement became more important with the Civil Disobedience Movement. The arrests followed with the new mass movement was different because of its increased number and nature of police cruelty. Women also began to get arrested because of their participation in the national movement. The most significant difference during this movement was the arrival of educated youth from Kochi and Thiruvithamcore states to take part in the movement and getting arrested.

M K Gandhi withdrew the Non Cooperation Movement due to its violent character. The second mass movement launched by Gandhi was the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930. It was started by violating the salt law in April 1930. The salt *satyagraha* took place in Malabar also. The Indian

National Congress planned the *CDM* in a well-planned manner in Malabar but it was decided not to have the movement in Ernad, Valluvanad *taluk* divisions and some other zones.²⁷ K Kelappan, Muhammad Abdu Rahiman Sahib and T R Krishnaswami Ayyar were the chief leaders of the *salt satyagraha* movement. In Malabar, the Civil Disobedience Movement became active with the *salt satyagraha* with programmes like picketing of toddy and liquor shops, picketing of shops selling foreign cloths etc. The chief sites of the *salt satyagraha* Malabar were Payannur, Vadakara, Kozhikode. The movement achieved national attention with the participation of women in large numbers along with men. There was no active participation of women during the Non Cooperation Movement in Malabar.

Men and women from the princely states of Thiruvithamcore and Kochi also came to Malabar and actively participated in the *CDM* at Malabar. A government report stated that it was very difficult to stop the flow of middle class youth of the Kochi State for participation in the *CDM* in Malabar.²⁸ Thiruvithamcore also contributed large number of volunteers and they became the backbone of the freedom movement in Malabar.

The chief feature of the *CDM* was the 'dictator'. The Indian National Congress decided to dissolve the *KPCC* on 11th December 1930 and decided to appoint a 'dictator' who would be the chief of the *satyagraha* in Kerala.²⁹ The 'dictator' was able to nominate his successor when he was arrested. Potheri Madhavan was nominated as the first dictator. Women also became dictators in Malabar. Quite against the earlier practices, women were imprisoned by the police during the movement. The first woman imprisoned

²⁷ G-107, Year 1930, *AICC papers*, NMML, New Delhi.

²⁸ *Fort Nightly Report* (hereafter *FNR*), for the first half of February 1932, TSA, Chennai.

²⁹ P K K Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2001, p. 259.

in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement in Malabar was M. Karthiayani Amma belonged to the Kochi State.³⁰

The *CDM* was temporarily suspended as a result of the Gandhi Irwin Pact in March 1931 and it also resulted in the release of political prisoners who were convicted for non-violent offences.³¹ However the failure of Second Round Table Conference forced the Congress to continue the *CDM*.³² The second phase of the *CDM* began in Malabar on 5th January 1932 by observing a *harthal*³³ Which was observed because of the arrest of M K Gandhi.³⁴ The second *CDM* also had active participation in Malabar as many people courted arrest and went to prison. During this period also the arrest of women in large number took place. It is interesting to see that, a new form of non-violent movement took place along with the *CDM* in Malabar. It was the 'forest satyagraha' which was conducted by the volunteers of the Indian National Congress at the Kasargod *taluk* in 1932.³⁵ The *CDM* actively took place in Malabar till the suspension of the movement by M K Gandhi on 7th April 1934.³⁶

The withdrawal of the mass movement, mass arrest and miserable experiences of the political prisoners in the jail, compromise with the colonial government etc., had disappointed the young people. Many young people choose Socialism as an alternative ideology to Gandhism and later

³⁰ *History of Freedom Movement File* (hereafter *HFM*), vol. 103, TSA, Chennai.

³¹ Gandhi Irwin Pact is the agreement between M K Gandhi Viceroy Irwin in March 1931 by which the *CDM* was called off, release of political prisoners convicted with non violent offences and decision to attend Second Round Table Conference.

³² Round Table Conference was conducted at London in 1930, 1931 and 1932 by colonial government to passify the public protests in India.

³³ *Harthal* is became a method of political protest by closing down shops, offices and other institutions which had good connection with the public space.

³⁴ P 14 of 1932, *AICC papers*, NMML, New Delhi.

³⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 12th November 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

³⁶ A K Pilla, *Congressum Keraluvum*, p. 422.

joined the Congress Socialist Party.³⁷ A scrutiny of the members who showed dissatisfaction with the Indian National Congress will show that they were subjected to cruel punishments in the prison during the *CDM*. Majority of them were C class political prisoners during the *CDM*. The class character of the Gandhian movement and the anti- peasant and anti- worker attitude of the leadership of the Indian National Congress also prompted the youth to become members of the *CSP*.

The Indian National Congress in Power, 1937

The prison became site of contest between nationalism and the power of the colonial state by 1920. Since then, the expectation that the nationalist forces becoming the power to govern the country reflected in the gradual strengthening of the mass movement against colonialism. The Indian National Congress got a chance to govern some departments of the country through the elections held in 1937. Large number of political prisoners were kept in the jail when the Congress governments came into power. This caused for serious demand for releasing the political prisoners from jail. The inner contradiction within the national movement and the class character of the Indian National Congress came open in this critical time. This was also a serious issue connected with the political prisoners.

In the elections held to the Madras Legislative Council in 1937, the Indian National Congress could win majority of seats. In July 1937, the Congress formed the ministry in the Madras Presidency under the leadership of C Rajagopalachari. It was seen that majority of the ministers including Rajagopalachari were ex-political prisoners. Kongatil Raman Menon elected

³⁷ Congress Socialist Party was formed in 1934 aiming to organize the peasants and working class towards Indian National Movement.

from Malabar handled the portfolio of courts and prisons in the Rajaji ministry. As expected, one of the earliest decisions of the Rajaji ministry was the release of political prisoners. The Congress ministry and K Raman Menon found difficulty in defining the 'political prisoner'.³⁸ They had to see among the political prisoners, Congress-Socialists and the Mappila people imprisoned under the *MOA* of 1859.³⁹ As an outcome of the decision of the Ministry, thirty eight political prisoners were released which included Yusuf Mehar Ali, K A Keraleeyan *alias* Kunhappa Nambiar, ChandrothKunhi Raman Nair, A K Gopalan, P Sundarayya.⁴⁰

The government removed restrictions on three Mappila state prisoners and allowed them to come back to Malabar.⁴¹ The Rajaji ministry not only released the Mappila prisoners who were confined under *MOA* of 1859 but also took initiative to cancel the 'Moplah Outrages Act'. It was chiefly due to the efforts taken by M Abdurrahman for many years. Finally, the Madras government decided to cancel *MOA* on 14th September 1937.⁴² There were certain changes in the management of prisoners in jails since the inception of the new ministry. An important decision of the Rajaji government in connection with the jail was to supply buttermilk to the prisoners.⁴³ Buttermilk was demanded by the C class political prisoners from 1930 onwards. It was decided to distribute buttermilk to all political prisoners and the same was implemented in all jails located in the Madras Presidency.

³⁸ *The Madras Legislative Council Proceedings* (hereafter *MLCP*), 31st August 1937, *RAK*, p. 28.

³⁹ *Mathrubhumi weekly*, 28th August 1937, p. 16.

⁴⁰ *MLCP*, 1937 August 31st, *RAK*, pp. 28-29.

⁴¹ There were several restrictions imposed upon the prisoners arrested in connection with the Malabar Struggle of 1921. Those released were not permitted to come back to their village or the Malabar District.

⁴² *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Kozhikode, 20th September 1937, p. 17.

⁴³ *MLCP*, 1st September 1937, p. 92. *RAK*.

The Second World War

The Second World War started in 1939 changed the political structure of the World. The provincial governments in India resigned in October 1939 alleging that, Britain declared the stand of India in the War without consulting the provincial governments. The Indian National Congress also welcomed the resignation of provincial governments as they were not impressed with the working of congress ministries.⁴⁴ The Second World War period witnessed the arrest of congress and communist volunteers as detinue prisoners.

The first political movement launched by the Indian National Congress during the Second World War was the individual *satyagraha*. The Congress decided to start the movement under the leadership of Gandhi in 1940. To M K Gandhi, individual *satyagraha* was an ideal form of resistance and volunteers were trained accordingly. These selected volunteers courted arrest by delivering anti-war speeches in the public places. The place, date and time of these speeches communicated to the *DM* enabling him to arresting them.⁴⁵ The main content of the anti-war speech was the freedom of speech, Gandhi wanted public presence in the speeches by congress leaders and stated that they can either listen or keep away.⁴⁶ For completing the speech before the arrest, volunteers of the movement covered the *satyagrahi* for protection. The volunteers urged the public not to support or participate in the war efforts of the government. The government was collecting huge quantity of resources in the form of men and money from

⁴⁴ Bipin Candra (et. al), *India's Struggle for Independence*, Penguin Books , New Delhi, 2000, pp. 339-340.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

⁴⁶ *Harijan*, 20th October 1940, CWMG, vol. 79, p. 306. Accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> on 5th February at 11 A.M.

the Indian villages. If not arrested, the *satyagrahi* had to march towards Delhi by addressing the people causing arrest on the way. Gandhi chose Vinobha Bhave as the first *satyagrahi* and he observed *satyagraha* on 17th October 1940.⁴⁷ K Kelappan was the first person from selected in Malabar to observe *individual satyagraha* at Koyilandy on 21st November 1940.⁴⁸ A V Kuttimalu Amma, N P Damodaran and many others observed *satyagraha* and courted arrest.

The Indian National Congress launched the Quit India Movement in August 1942 after the failure of Cripps Mission.⁴⁹ The colonial state defended the situation by declaring the Indian National Congress as an unlawful organisation. The state began to arrest the leaders of the Congress movement throughout the country. This caused for *harthals* at Kozhikode and Kannur in Malabar which were successful events because of the support of the people.⁵⁰ K Kelappan, leader of the Indian National Congress in Malabar was also arrested on 9th august 1942. Other leaders arrested included Raghava Menon, K A Damodara Menon E Moidu Moulavi, M P Govinda Menon, A V Kuttimalu Amma and L S Prabhu. The Quit India Movement did not come out to be a great success because of the opposition to the movement from the Communists who enjoyed significant influence in the region.

During the Quit India Movement, *harthal* and *jatha* were observed in different parts of Malabar. These were accompanied with public meetings

⁴⁷ Bipin Chandra (et. al), *India's Struggle for Independence*, p. 453.

⁴⁸ S Raimon (et. al), *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala* vol III, Kerala State Archives (Hereafter KSA), Thiruvananthapuram, 2006, p. 343.

⁴⁹ The aim of Cripps mission of 1942 was to get support of Indian national congress in Second World War efforts of Britain. The mission attempts to secure Congress support ended in a failure. For more details see Bipin Chandra (et. al) , *India's Struggle for Independence*.

⁵⁰ K Gopalankutty, *Malabar Patanangal*, The State Institute of Languages, Thiruvananthapuram, 2007, p. 124.

and protest processions in rural and urban spaces. Moreover, the volunteers of these movements courted arrest by travelling in trains without valid tickets.⁵¹ The distribution of secret literature increased the support of the people to the movement. The *Swatanthra Bharatam*, a paper which strongly criticised imperialism was distributed all over Malabar.⁵² The supporters of the national movement were engaged in secret underground work to cause heavy loss to the government. By the end of World War in 1945, the imprisoned political prisoners especially detinues were released. However, some political prisoners had to remain in prisons. This was due to the instruction of the state to differentiae political prisoners according to the severity of their work against the government. This resulted in the ill treatment of Communists, revolutionaries and those who disobeyed the principles of M K Gandhi in the national movement.

The Government of T Prakasham, 1946-1947

By the end of the World War, elections were held to form provincial governments in India in 1946. The Indian National Congress again won majority in the Madras Presidency. The Congress formed ministry with T Prakasham as the Chief Minister. K Bhasyam was chosen as the minister for jails. The first step taken by Bhasyam was the release of political prisoners including Communists and withdrawal of warrants issued against Communists and volunteers of the Indian National Congress.⁵³ A total of fifty three political prisoners who had been imprisoned for various crimes during the *QIM* and other movements were released in the Madras Presidency.⁵⁴ A total of twenty one warrants of political absconders were also cancelled.

⁵¹ S Raimon (et. al), *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, vol. III, p. 347.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 348.

⁵³ *Desabhimani*, 5th May 1946 accessed from Kelu Ettan Padana Gaveshana Kendram, Kozhikode.

⁵⁴ *FNR* for the first half of May 1946, TSA, Chennai.

Many people especially the Communists who were in underground due to warrants were the beneficiaries of the decision. K Madhava Menon took charge as the Jail minister after a short period. By this time, most of the prisons in the Presidency were filled with Communists for challenging the colonial state.

Arrest of Offenders as Political Prisoners

With the end of First World War, Malabar began to witness arrest of political workers who protested against the policies of the colonial government in a peaceful way. This did not happen in Malabar during the World War when there were annual district political conferences since 1916. The political situation was changing in the Malabar District with the *Home Rule* movement and the commencement of the *khilafath* propaganda. The appearance of full time political activists and their work among the people gave an alarm of anti-government political work among the people. This was countered by the commencement of arrests of some of these activists who were found most dangerous to the existence of the colonial government in India. These leaders were given due respect by the government unlike those arrested with the charge of criminal activities against the government. The support increasing with the movement of M K Gandhi through his Non Cooperation Movement also necessitated a distinct consideration to the agitators who followed non violent resistance in the prison.

The first political arrest in connection with the *NCM* was of Yacoob Hassan and others for their decision to address the people in a meeting by violating government order on 15th February 1921. Other major arrests in connection with the *NCM* were of K Kelappan and K Balakrishna Menon from Ponnani. The reasons for arrests were conducting a meeting which was

prohibited by government. R H Hitchcock has recorded a total of thirty two arrests took place in Malabar during the *NCM*.⁵⁵ The *Home Rule* movement, *khilafath* agitation and the *NCM* resulted in the Malabar Struggle of 1921. More than ten thousand people including volunteers of the Indian National Congress were imprisoned in various jails of the Madras Presidency.

Arrests during the Civil Disobedience Movement

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1932 was very vigorous in Malabar and it witnessed arrest of large number of volunteers included men and women. Young activists from princely states of Thiruvithamcore like Vaikom Muhammed Basheer, Puthupally Raghavan, Ponnara Sreedhar, N C Shekar etc., came to Malabar for participating in the movement and to suffer imprisonment. The first arrest took place at Kozhikode beach on 12th May 1930 for violating the salt law.⁵⁶ K Kelappan, M. Abdu Rahiman Sahib, P Krishna Pilla, V R Krishnaswami Ayyar and two others were arrested. The main reason for the arrest was violation of the salt law in different parts of Malabar. The major venues of *salt satyagraha* in Malabar were Payyanur, Kanjangad, Kannur, Thalassery, Vadakara, Koyilandy and Kozhikode. Majority of these political prisoners were educated young people and belonged to middle class families. The colonial authorities and the Indian National Congress prepared detailed list of these arrested people with information about their caste and religious background. This was done by the colonial state to discourage others from joining the movement. The Indian National Congress did it to attract more people from similar communities to strengthen the movement further.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion-1921*, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 13th May 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, M M Press, Kozhikode.

⁵⁷ GO. 107 of 1930, AICC papers, NMML, New Delhi.

As per the report of the All India Congress Committee, three hundred and thirty persons were convicted in connection with the *CDM* in Malabar in 1930 itself.⁵⁸ In between January and July of 1932, total 1697 men and thirty three women *satyagrahi* volunteers were arrested for picketing toddy shops, shops selling foreign cloths, for breaking forest law and other reasons in Malabar.⁵⁹ Out of the total 1730 arrests took place in 1932, four hundred and seven men and twenty two women were imprisoned in Malabar.⁶⁰

The arrests of *satyagrahi* volunteers created mass support to the national movement. The action of the government was increasing the mass base of the anti-colonial struggle. The colonial state had to form new strategies to suppress the mass movement, reaching agreement with the less harmful national groups, supporting contradictions in the movement by backing communal and caste based forces etc. The police and rowdies continuously attacked *satyagraha* volunteers at various places including the beach at Kozhikode. The *satyagrahi volunteers* who always stuck on to non-violence never resisted it. The ideal of ahimsa and non-violence had attracted the youth and the educated and sincere attempt to resist colonialism in a peaceful way began to develop in Malabar.

The enlargement of the mass base and increase in the number of volunteers created violation of Gandhian principles in certain occasions. There were attacks against police stations and officials by the participating mob and volunteers. One such incident was of Seldna the Division Officer at Kozhikode who was attacked by a person from the public on the third day of salt *satyagraha* at Kozhikode in May 1930.⁶¹ He was captured by the police

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ P-14 of 1932, *AICC Papers*, NMML, New Delhi.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ GO 107 of 1930, *AICC Papers*, NMML, New Delhi.

and was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. The Indian National Congress in Malabar stated officially that the arrested person had no connection with the *satyagraha* movement. The character of the political prisoners in the eye of the government and the Indian National Congress was changing. The Congress began to see only the strict observers of Gandhian principles as true *satyagraha* volunteer and he had to follow non-violence and *ahimsa* even in the prison at the time of imprisonment. These volunteers were political prisoners in the eye of the Indian National Congress. The stand became more strict with the emergence of Socialists and Communists among the *satyagrahis* by the end of Civil Disobedience Movement. The colonial government was also following the same dogma and the arrested who resisted the rules and principles in the jail unlike the *satyagraha* volunteers had to suffer severe punishments.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Malabar witnessed political movements and arrests. In this phase, many Socialists turned Communists became more active in Malabar. They began to have support of the people and they enjoyed strong influence even in the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. Many volunteers, belonging to the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party were arrested as detainees. However, by the entry of Soviet Union in the World War, the Communists changed their anti-war policy with the 'Peoples War Policy' and supported Britain against fascism. During the period also, the individual *satyagraha* was observed at different places in Malabar under the Indian National Congress in 1940 and 1941.⁶² One hundred and forty nine volunteers of the Congress movement in Malabar were selected as *satyagraha* volunteers out of which eighty nine

⁶² S Raimon (et.al), *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala Volume III*, p. 343.

courted arrested at different places in Malabar.⁶³ Leading women volunteers like A V Kuttimalu Amma, E Ammukuty Amma, and K P Ammu Nethyramma were arrested and convicted.⁶⁴ The participants of individual *satyagraha* who were not arrested were instructed to march to Delhi. On the way to Delhi, they sung anti-war songs and uttered anti-war slogans.⁶⁵ Among the marching, sixty volunteers from Malabar were arrested on their way to Delhi. Among them, thirty five were arrested in the Madras Presidency itself, eight from the Bombay Presidency, two from the Central Province and five were called back on the way.⁶⁶ Some of them gave up their march on the way. Eight of the released individual *satyagraha* prisoners again observed *satyagraha* and two of them were arrested again. The movement ended 15th January 1942, when the AICC passed resolution to withdraw the individual *satyagraha*.⁶⁷ The number of political prisoners was increasing day by day. They were imprisoned in various jails and were considered as political prisoners. The jail became a hotbed of the national struggle and people from various parts of the country belonging to various ideologies and backgrounds lived together in the prison space. The contradictions in the national movement came open in these jails where caste, untouchability, *ahimsa*, non-violence, revolutionary terrorism, landlordism, Communism etc., began to get debated.

⁶³ KPCC 1940-1942 Administration Report, *Mathrubhumi*, 15th May 1942, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th January 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 9th March 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁶ KPCC 1940-1942 Administration Report, *Mathrubhumi*, 15th May 1942, *Mathrubhumi* Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

The Quit India Movement

The Quit India Movement was very popular in Malabar. The leaders of the Indian National Congress were arrested on 9th August 1942 itself. Unlike the earlier movements, the Congress could not prevent revolutionary activities taking place in the underground. Different groups began to plan activities to sabotage the colonial government. As a result, revolutionary terrorism began to get routed in Malabar. Telegraph and telephone wires were found to be cut in different places of Malabar to disrupt the activities of the government. Along with this, explosions occurred in different parts in Malabar.⁶⁸ Dr. K B Menon and his Socialist group took the leadership of underground work in Malabar. As a result, the Registrar's office and the railway station of Chemenchery were set on fire. Attempts were done for collapsing bridges. The famous Kizhariyur Bomb Case⁶⁹ was associated with the *QIM*. The police charged case against twenty seven persons including Dr. K. B. Menon. K. B. Menon and others went on their underground and they were arrested.⁷⁰

Trial and Punishment of the Imprisoned

It is very important to see the method in which the volunteers were arrested and trailed. The trial of the arrested in Malabar started with the arrest of Yakoob Hassan. Soon after arrest, volunteers were presented before the magistrate for trial. In the case of the arrest of Yacoob Hassan and his associates, the trial and judgement was completed on in same day on

⁶⁸ *District Calendar of Events (1942)*, Government of Madras, Madras, 1943, p. 85. TSA, Chennai.

⁶⁹ For details see V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikulil*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 1954.

⁷⁰ Dr. Indira Devi has studied the Quit India Movement in Kerala and has recorded the anti-government activities and arrests of the involved. See Indira Devi, *Kerala and the Quit India Movement*, Mullasseril Publishers, Mundancavu, 2005.

16th February 1921.⁷¹ The trial and imprisonment of Yacoob Hassan and his associates clearly showed that political offences were treated with exactly the same humiliation and severity as the cases involving moral turpitude.⁷² The trial of K Kelappan, M Abdu Rahiman Sahib, T R Krishnaswami Ayyer, Madhavanar, Sharma and P KrishnaPilla, during the *CDM* was completed on the same day and they received nine months rigorous imprisonment with B Class status since 12th May 1930.⁷³ The magistrates who chaired these trials were Europeans and they behaved in a subjective way to the prisoners to support the government. The volunteers said to have given fake names like 'India' and 'Kerala' during these trials. Some of them gave 'Mahatma Gandhi' and 'Bharath Matha' as the names of their father and mother.⁷⁴ Vishnu Nambeesan stated his name as Bharatheeyan to the magistrate during his trial in 1932. This name became his official name in jail records since then.⁷⁵ K A Keraleeyan became a popular figure connected with a similar incident.

Trials of political prisoners was taking place in a subjective way. Judges not only punished the volunteers by imprisonment but also charged fines even for minor violation of rules. If they had failed to pay fine it resulted in the imprisonment for more months. Samuel Aron was arrested and fined with rupees 1000 in 1930.⁷⁶ Normally, the volunteers of the Indian National Congress were not willing to pay fine. However, relatives of prisoners coming from rich families paid the fine. Kamalabai Prabhu, wife of L S Prabhu refused to pay the fine imposed by the *SDM* of Thalassery.⁷⁷ The

⁷¹ Public Department Go No 103, 25th February 1921, TSA, Chennai.

⁷² *The Hindu*, 17th February 1921, TSA, Chennai.

⁷³ *Mathrubhumi*, 13th May 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁷⁴ N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*, Prabath Book House, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 85.

⁷⁵ Vishnu Bharateeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, Prabath Book House, Thiruvananthapuram, 1980, p. 61.

⁷⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 15th July 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁷⁷ *HFM*, vol. 103B, TSA, Chennai.

European magistrate ordered to seize her ornaments. She gave all her ornaments except her *tali* which Indian women considered as sacred. When the magistrate ordered the police to take her *tali* also she gave it. The *tali* incident created nationwide protest and the magistrate's action was severely criticised by the print media. Thus, the government decided to give back her *tali*. She refused to take it back stating that she would accept it only after getting consent of the youth of Kerala.⁷⁸

Arrests, Trial and Public Response

The public support to the arrested and imprisoned increased day by day. People protested against the imprisonment of political prisoners. They began to observe *harthal* as a united protest against police action. Moreover, public meetings and protest processions were held in different parts of Malabar. In order to support the sacrifice of the prisoners for national cause, certain days were observed in the name of leading people who got arrested by the police.

The arrest of political prisoners was becoming a new tool of nationalist propaganda in towns and villages. Following the arrest of Yacoob Hassan and his associates, *harthal* was observed on 17th February 1921.⁷⁹ It was on the very next day of the arrest. Protest processions were conducted in the Kozhikode town, where the crowd marched by shouting the slogan *mahatma gandhiki jai*.⁸⁰ The *harthal* was not limited to Malabar. A complete *harthal* was observed in the town of Madras and a public meeting was also conducted after the protest demonstration in which about fifty

⁷⁸ P-14 of 1932, AICC Papers, NMML, New Delhi.

⁷⁹ The term *harthal* means closing down of shops, offices etc came from Gujarathi language. It was M K Gandhi who belongs to Gujarath who used it as a tool of anti colonial resistance. Thus in Malabar *harthal* was started during *NCM* onwards.

⁸⁰ *MLCP*, 18th February 1921, RAK, p. 398.

thousand people took part.⁸¹ The *Navasakthi* published from Madras observed that the imprisonment of a single person raised the emotion of thousands of people.⁸² This analysis was true regarding the impact of imprisonment of Yacoob Hassan and three others. Lawyers gave up their practice and students left schools and colleges in support of the mass movement against the government. C V Narayana Menon, the Municipal Chairman of Kozhikode, resigned from the post as a protest against this imprisonment.⁸³

Usually, a large crowd was always present in the railway station and jail premises to see and congratulate the political prisoners while they were shifted to different jails. People gathered and raised slogan, *mahatma Gandhi ki jai* in support of the imprisoned. The government began to see that the public support to the political prisoners was increasing with their arrests. The government opted transportation of Yacoob Hassan, K. Madhavan Nair and others from the prison at Kozhikode to the Central Jail at Kannur in February 1921. They opted bus to keep away the public from these leaders.⁸⁴ When K Kelappan, M Abdurrahman and others were transferred on 13th May 1930 from Kozhikode to the central Jail at Kannur, a large crowd assembled at the Railway Station in Kozhikode and started uttering *mahatma gandhiki jai, kelappanki jai, abdu rahiman ki jai* and attempted to offer garlands to honour them.⁸⁵

The supporters of the Congress movement conducted protest processions and meetings in different parts of Malabar against the

⁸¹ *HFM*, vol. 57, TSA, Chennai.

⁸² *Navasakthi*, Madras, 8th February 1921, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

⁸³ *HFM*, vol. 103B, TSA, Chennai.

⁸⁴ Public Department Go No 103, , 25th February 1921, TSA, Chennai.

⁸⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 14th May 1930, *Mathrubhumi Archives*, MM Press, Kozhikode.

imprisonment of *satyagraha* volunteers. Arrests of volunteers continued during these events. V. C Kannan Nair was arrested on 15th May 1930, for organising a protest meeting at Kannur against the arrest of K Kelappan, M. Abdur Rahiman Sahib and others. Unlike the past, the police began to offer brutal lathi charge against protest meetings and marches in the third decade of the twentieth century. Similarly, the political prisoners were severely manhandled in cells and prison rooms for challenging the British rule in India. Thus, *harthal* became a weapon of the nationalist and the police countered it with increased arrests and lathi charges.

Imprisonment in Prisons

The Gandhian political prisoners from Malabar were not only confined in the prisons of Malabar but also in different prisons including central and district jails and sub jails of Madras Presidency. The central jails and district jails of the Madras Presidency were under the control of Inspector General of Prisons who was always been a European. In 1920, there were nine central jails in the Madras Presidency. The Kannur Central jail established in 1869 was the only Central Jail in Malabar.⁸⁶ The Kozhikode Jail was the only District Jail in Malabar. Besides, convicts of the Madras Presidency who were sentenced to transportation for life were sending to Andaman Islands.⁸⁷

Outside Malabar, the Alipuram Camp Jail was opened as a Central Jail in 1921 for confining Mappila prisoners of the Malabar Struggle and it was closed in 1931 after completing the mission on the Mappila prisoners.⁸⁸ The jail was again reopened during the Second World War on 5th February

⁸⁶ A Sreedhara Menon, *Cannanore*, Government Press, Thiruvananthapuram, 1972, p. 555.

⁸⁷ *Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-1920*, London, 1921, p. 311, TSA, Chennai.

⁸⁸ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency 1932*, Madras, 1933, RAK.

1941.⁸⁹ The Alipuram Jail was kept open only when the national movement was active. The political prisoners in the Alipuram Jail were subjected to frequent lathi charges and flogging. The jail was closely connected with British cruelty on nationalists and it was known 'hell of the Madras Presidency' among the freedom fighters.⁹⁰

Large number of women prisoners began to appear with the participation of the educated middle class in the national movement. The arrested women political prisoners were initially confined at special blocks in central jails and district jails. In 1930, the Presidency Jail for Women at Vellore was the only jail for women in the Madras Presidency which was inaugurated with 'special jail status'.⁹¹ The juveniles were also confined at central jails as well as in special jails.

The prison buildings included multiple blocks for confining prisoners. Blocks with multiple cells, office section, workshops, kitchen, hospital, toilets and so on were comprised in the jail building. The solitary confinement was not strictly followed in Indian jails.⁹² The cells were usually constructed for accommodating more than one prisoner. The political prisoners were made naked while entering the prison for searching whether they were smuggling anything. This was considered as a great humiliation for the political prisoners. Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Mohammad Ali were even made naked for the name sake of search.⁹³ Women political prisoners were

⁸⁹ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency 1941*, Madras, 1942, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Samaranakal*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2010, pp. 130-135. Also see S K Pottekad (et.al)., *Muhammad Abdurahman- A Political Biography*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 1978.

⁹¹ *Report of the Administration of Madras Presidency(1930-1931)*, Madras, 1932, p. 42. RAK.

⁹² For details see, E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakadha*, SPCS, Kottayam, 1981. Also see C Rajagopalachari, *Jail Dairy*, Swarajya, Madras, 1922.

⁹³ *CWVG*, vol. 26, p. 116, Accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> on 5th February at 11 A.M.

also subjected to this search. They also got humiliated by this not only by making them naked but also due to the search during menstrual periods. The lower caste people were appointed for searching which made them more insulted. The prisoners were initially lodged at quarantine for ten or more days aiming isolation from other prisoners. Its purpose was to check whether they were infected by any epidemics.⁹⁴ The political prisoners were given vaccination during their imprisonment. This shows that, the British administration was improving jail administration in a detailed way due to the empowerment of the national movement.

Classification of Prisoners

The colonial government deliberately tried to avoid the use of the term 'political prisoner' and instead they termed it as offence dealing with political movements.⁹⁵ They were reluctant to identify them as privileged prisoners and called them prisoners like other inmates. The nationalist literature was increasingly using the term 'political prisoner' to distinct them from other criminal prisoners. Juveniles and women were considered as another category. European practiced discrimination between European and Indian prisoners in jails. The Europeans got better food, room, and accommodation.⁹⁶ During the *NCM* of 1920-22, the political prisoners were confined along with ordinary criminals and were treated with criminal laws. However, we see M K Gandhi and others receiving many privileges in the prison. The demand for better treatment for political prisoners raised from 1920 onwards with the entry of Gandhian prisoners in jails. One reason for this special consideration of prisoners arrested on the ground of political

⁹⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 16th September 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁹⁵ File No 99, 1931, *Home Jails*, NAI, New Delhi.

⁹⁶ *Manual of Administration of Madras Presidency*, vol. II, p. 180.

protests was the movement lead by revolutionaries. The social status of the arrested leaders also compelled the British to treat them in a distinct way. The hunger strike by revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh Rajguru, Jatin Das for better treatment of political prisoners created partial success by which the colonial officials introduced classification for political prisoners into A. B and C groups in 1929.⁹⁷ The Indian National Congress criticised A B C classification of prisoners and demanded equal treatment of all political prisoners.⁹⁸ The colonial authorities were trying to utilise 'divide and rule' policy to create internal contradiction among the prisoners.

Inspite of the stand of the Indian National Congress, it did not interfere in the classification when they became the authority to manage jail administration during the interim ministry of 1937. Thus, the A B C classification continued even after independence. During the course of Second World War many members of the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party were arrested and confined as detainee prisoners.⁹⁹ The classification was becoming more complex by 1941 with the arrest of more people during the World War and detainee prisoners were grouped into two classes first and second classes. Moreover, the Prakasham Ministry in the

⁹⁷ The reason for starting A B C classification was the hunger strike of prisoners connected with the Lahore Conspiracy Case. Among them, Bhagat Singh and Jatin Das demanded treatment as political prisoners through the hunger strike. The immediate reason was the martyrdom of Jatin Das one of the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoner on 13th September 1929. Bhagat Singh and his co-prisoners stated that their hunger strike was not for themselves alone but for the better treatment of entire political prisoners. See *Mathrubhumi*, 18th July 1929, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode. Also see Home Department, Government of India dated 12th August 1929 in Undersecretaries Secret Safe File (hereafter *USSF*), no. 650, 1st September 1929, TSA.

⁹⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 5th May 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁹⁹ For details see, S Raimon (et. al.), *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala* vol. III.

Madras Presidency added one more class in 1946 to the A B C with a 'special class' for political prisoners .¹⁰⁰

The arrest of Yacoob Hassan, K Madhavan Nair, U Gopala Menon and P Moideen Koya in February 1921 at Kozhikode was a turning point in the history of the freedom struggle in Kerala. They became heroes among the people and people rallied in large number to salute them. These prisoners were not ready to get treated like ordinary criminals in the jail. This new group of political prisoners were well educated and belonged to aristocratic families. They themselves claimed some privileges in prisons as they were not like the ordinary criminals. Thus, Yacoob Hassan and three others were sentenced for simple imprisonment and they were exempted from jail labour. They demanded certain concessions like wearing their own dress and using food brought from outside. The District Magistrate forwarded their petition to the government and the Madras Government allowed them to have outside food and to wear their own dress.¹⁰¹ Their demand itself shows that they tried to see themselves as a special class of prisoners who were much higher than the ordinary prisoner. This was a turning point in the history of jail life in Malabar. It created a new class of prisoners in jails called 'the political prisoner'.

Leaders who went to the prison in 1920 began to speak about the new privileged position they enjoyed after release. They were disciples of M K Gandhi and were arrested for peaceful protests during the Non Cooperation Movement. K. Kelappan was imprisoned at the Kannur Jail and he got opportunity to meet K. Madhavan Nair, P. Moideen Koya and U.

¹⁰⁰ G O No. 3752, Home Department, 28th November 1946, RAK.

¹⁰¹ Public Department G O No. 103, 25th February 1921, TSA, Chennai.

Gopala Menon in the jail¹⁰² They were leading a happy life in the prison and got opportunity to cross jail rules often. P. Moideen Koya and K. Kelappan hugged each other when they met in the prison.¹⁰³ They were imprisoned in two blocks and were not permitted to meet. This was violated by the new class of prisoners. These political prisoners spent most part of their prison life in reading and studying. They were supplied books and writing materials by the by relatives and co-workers. There was a library in the prison which was open to the political prisoners. It is important to see that majority of the political prisoners were treated like criminal prisoners and were given worst food and accommodation while a new privileged class enjoyed consideration due to various reasons in the jail.¹⁰⁴

The colonial government understood that the hunger strike of prisoners of the Lahore Conspiracy Case had resulted in growing public sympathy towards the prisoners and the national movement. Hence, the colonial state soon after the death of Jatin Das appointed a committee in 1929 for prison reform which gave attention to consider privileges to political prisoners. This clearly shows that the hunger strike of the prisoners of the Lahore Conspiracy Case created fear in the government. Thus, the revolutionaries who were not considered as political prisoners neither by Gandhi nor by the colonial state were the real political prisoners who succeeded in realising a committee for prison reform. The committee recommended introducing A B C classification of the political prisoners. The colonial state dreamt of division among political prisoners due to the A B C classification. Thus, the political prisoners who worked collectively and

¹⁰² K. Kelappan, *OHT No. 73, NMML*, New Delhi.

¹⁰³ C. K. Moosath, *K Madhavan Nair*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 1987, p. 260.

¹⁰⁴ Shumais U, 'Karagrihathile Vishapanubhavangal' in Sivadasan P (ed.), *Vishakunnavante Rashtriyam: Prethirodhathinte Samskarikacharithram*, SPCS, Kottayam, 2017, pp. 61-77.

imprisoned for the same offence were treated distinctly on the basis of education, job, social status, family background, caste etc. The first two classes A and B got certain privileges while the C class prisoners were treated as ordinary criminals.¹⁰⁵ The experiences of A and B class prisoners clearly show that they got better food in prison. While the autobiographies, memoirs and statements in newspapers of the C Class political prisoners shows that the worst thing they experienced in the prison was the bad food.¹⁰⁶ The C Class prisoners were not given oil or soap for bathing in the prison. Besides, they were not given buttermilk like the upper categories and provided improper and unhygienic sanitary arrangements.¹⁰⁷

The top A class prisoners were the privileged class of prisoners in the jail. They were given separate accommodation with bed, table, cot, bed sheet, blanket, chair, reading facilities etc. They could use their own dress in the prison and if not, B class prisoner's uniform was allotted to them.¹⁰⁸ They had separate kitchen with facility to supply special food. The kitchen was managed by the A class prisoners themselves and they could enjoy food brought from outside.¹⁰⁹ The provision for outside food was a great privilege unavailable to the B and C class prisoners. It is seen that the A class prisoners were provided better bathing and toilet facilities in the prison.¹¹⁰ The B Class prisoners also had separate kitchen with special food. The menu of A and B Class included tea, milk, coffee, curd, buttermilk, rice, ghee, dhal, fresh

¹⁰⁵ Also see Home Department, Government of India dated 12th August 1929 in Under Secretaries Secret Safe File (hereafter *USSF*), no. 650, dated 1st September 1929, TSA.

¹⁰⁶ Shumais U, 'Karagrihathile Vishapanubhavgal' in Sivadasan P (ed.), *Vishakunnnavante Rashtriyam: Prethirodhathinte Samskarikacharithram*, pp. 61-77.

¹⁰⁷ File No: P-14 of 1932, AICC Papers, NMML, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁸ GO No 1199, Law Department, 19th March 1930, RAK.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Law Department GO No 2881,, 11th July 1930, RAK.

vegetables, bread, butter etc.¹¹¹ The B class prisoners were given modified clothing which was better than the ordinary uniform.¹¹² Most important privilege they enjoyed was better bathing and sanitation facility in the prison.

The condition of the lower class prisoners was pathetic. The C class received ordinary prison food which often came with foul smell, worms, stones etc. They got ordinary prison uniform supplied to criminal convicts. The difference was not limited in dress, food and accommodation but even in punishment. When A and B class slept on coats the C class prisoner slept on the floor. The Jail Superintendent was powerful to order for whipping C class prisoners. This was misused to punish political prisoners belonged to lower classes and poor families. It was necessary to get orders from the Madras Government to implement whipping of A class political prisoners. For the B Class prisoners, the authority to decide whipping was the Inspector General of the Jails. As a result, the C class prisoner was often subjected to whipping punishment and the privileged A and B class prisoners escaped from such cruel treatments.¹¹³ The privileges of A and B classes included writing letters, sit for interviews, reading newspapers, access to the jail library and permission to have light in the night at the cell.¹¹⁴ The authority to decide the class of the political prisoner was the District Magistrate and the Presidency government was the authority to review the decision.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Law Department GO No 1199, 19th March 1930, RAK.

¹¹³ File No. 99, Home Jails, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹⁴ Home Jails; File No 99 of 1931, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹⁵ Law General Go no 1133, 15th March 1930, Madras, RAK. Also see G O No 2069, Law General, 25th May 1932 in *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency 1931*, Madras, 1932, RAK.

The government disliked the inclusion of many in the privileged categories since the effecting of the A B C classification in the Madras Presidency by 1930.¹¹⁶ Majority of A class prisoners with rigorous imprisonment were confined in the central jails located at Kannur and Vellore. The B and C class prisoners were confined in most of the jails of Madras Presidency due to overcrowding with political prisoners. The colonial government took care in limiting the number of A and B class members and it resulted in the remaining of many privileged prisoners in the C class for longer periods.¹¹⁷ Those arrested during the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 in Malabar were kept in Kannur, Gudallore and Vellore jails. It is seen that there were only seventy four A class prisoners among them while the number of B class was fifty and the remaining C class came around thousand.¹¹⁸ In 1933, fifty two persons were imprisoned in the A class and one hundred and forty-eight persons were allotted B class category.¹¹⁹ These evidences are capable to prove that the government was purposefully limiting the number in A and B class categories.

The satyagrahi prisoners of Madras presidency protested against the A B C classification right from the beginning mainly by resorting hunger strike.¹²⁰ However the A B C classification continued throughout the colonial regime. Even during Second World War, the condition of C class political prisoners were pathetic.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency 1930*, Madras, 1931, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ *The Hindu*, Madras, 11th December 1930. *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

¹¹⁸ *Report of the Administration of Madras Presidency (1930-1931)*, Madras, 1932, pp. 43-44.

¹¹⁹ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency 1933*, Madras, 1934, p. 3, RAK.

¹²⁰ *Report of the Administration of Madras Presidency (1930-1931)*, Madras, 1932, p. 41.

¹²¹ K Kunjiramakurup, *Oru Socialistinte Ormakal*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2016, p. 74.

The leaders of the Indian National Congress criticised the classification due to the wrong intention of the state to divide prisoners. M K Gandhi criticised the A B C classification as the C class prisoners suffered a miserable life in the prison.¹²² Jawaharlal Nehru also had the same view and stated that only five percentage of political prisoners were in the A and B classes. According to him, around ninety five percentage of political prisoners were in the C class and were treated like criminals.¹²³ Rajendra Prasad was also against the ABC classification and he argued that persons who worked as a team in the public were treated separately in prisons.¹²⁴ The Indian National Congress demanded the withdrawal of A B C classification and leaders like Mahadev Desai requested the government to withdraw the classification of political prisoners.¹²⁵ Many newspapers also joined them. The *Andhra Patrika* criticised the A B C classification and demanded to see all political prisoners in one class.¹²⁶ In spite of this political position, the Indian National Congress did not attempt to withdraw it when they got opportunity in 1937.

The criteria adopted by the officials for classifying political prisoners were unknown. As A K Gopalan himself got A,B and C classes in his three imprisonments during the *CDM*.¹²⁷ His experience as A class and C class prisoner were completely different. He compared his A class prison life with better hostel life and he didn't experience any hardship in prison and utilised those facilities for study during his A class imprisonment. While in the lower

¹²² CWMG, vol. 51, p. 76, Accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> on 5th February at 11 A.M.

¹²³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2004, p. 234.

¹²⁴ Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 285-286.

¹²⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 16th January 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹²⁶ *Andhra Patrika*, Madras, May 1930, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

¹²⁷ *Selected Records* 21& 22, RAK.

class prisons, he suffered severe torture and received only bad food during his C class prison life.¹²⁸

E M S Namboodiripad has recorded that only a few political prisoners in the Madras Presidency were included in the A Class category.¹²⁹ In practice, the judges used their discriminatory power while classifying prisoners. This helped many prisoners belonging to wealthy families and upper castes to get included in the A class. As a result, many sincere political activists and opponents of the conventional groups were sentenced imprisonment in the C class category. The problem became very clear with the birth of Socialist movement in Malabar. Those included in the A and B class were mainly doctors, lawyers, capitalists, landlords, educated unemployed and some resigned their government jobs to join the national movement.¹³⁰ They didn't experience any hardship in the prison like the ordinary C class member.

The *Mathrubhumi* has stated that Kurur Neelakandan Namboodiripad, member of a rich and respectable family, Hassan Koya Mulla, a leading merchant of Kozhikode town were eligible for A class but was placed in the C class.¹³¹ Many landlords and businessmen who were members of the Indian National Congress got C class imprisonment due to lack of influence in the government.¹³² Kurur Neelakandan Namboodiripad, a member of a aristocratic family was given C class status as he belonged to the princely state of Kochi. However he got facilities of a B class prisoner in the jail because of this status. It is said that there was an order during the Civil

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ E M S Namboodiripad, *Aathmakatha*, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, pp. 143-144.

¹³⁰ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, Madras, Orient Longman, 1973, p. 18.

¹³¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 20th November 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³² *Andhra Pathrika*, 2nd and 3rd June 1930, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

Disobedience Movement issued by the Jail Department to keep political prisoners belonging to the princely states were to be kept in C class category.¹³³ Thus, nationalists from the princely states of Thiruvithamcore and Kochi were arrested in the 'C' class during the CDM. It is seen that caste was also considered in the AB C classification. N C Shekar has argued that upper castes belonging to Menon prisoners among the Nairs were classified in A and B class category because of their higher caste status.¹³⁴ With the entry of increased number of political activists in the jails, the authorities began to violate the orders of the Magistrate and downgraded many prisoners to the lower categories.¹³⁵ T S Thirumunb was degraded from A to C class during his imprisonment connected with the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1932.¹³⁶

K Kelappan, Muhammad Abdurrahman, K Madhavan Nair, T R Kishnaswami Ayyar, E Moidu Moulavi, L S Prabhu, P K Kunhisankara Menon E MS Namboodiripad, Samuel Aron, Kongatil Raman Menon etc., were eligible for A class imprisonment. They were imprisoned at the Vellore and Kannur jails. Samuel Aron has stated that he received privileges as A class prisoner at the Vellore Jail and thus, prison life was not much painful to him.¹³⁷ M P Narayana Menon was sentenced for long term jail life because of his involvement in the Mappila resistance to British rule in Malabar. He belonged to a rich feudal family and it was due to the intervention of many influential leaders, he was given A class imprisonment.¹³⁸ Another

¹³³ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th December 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³⁴ N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*, p. 89.

¹³⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th December 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 9th January 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³⁷ C Samuel Aron, *Jeevithasmaranakal*, Kannur, 1974, p. 157.

¹³⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 24th May 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

nationalist, N C Shekar opposed the A B C classification and criticised leaders for accepting A and B classes in the prison.¹³⁹

The Indian National Congress didn't take a stand regarding this classification and they were aware of the miserable life of the C class prisoners. Majority of the A and B class political prisoners were top leaders of the Indian National Congress and they did not give up their higher class in the prison.¹⁴⁰ However, some exceptional leaders demanded C class instead of higher classes. L S Prabhu urged the volunteers of the Indian National Congress like Moyyarath Shankaran, C H Govindan Nambiar, Lakshmana Shenoy, M Sankaran Nambiar, A K Varrier, Vishnu Bharatheeyan, Subramanian Thirumunb and Krishnan Adiyodi etc., who were sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment, to reject A and B classes and to demand C class. According to him the classification of prisoners was part of the divide and rule policy of the colonial state.¹⁴¹ As a result, Moyyarath and his associates rejected their B Class allotted by the Magistrate and demanded C class. Thus, they got C class status and was imprisoned at the Kannur Central Jail. Two days after their imprisonment, they saw L S Prabhu convicted in the Central Jail at Kannur with B Class status. Moyyarath Sankaran has pointed out the emerging opposition of the younger nationalists belonging to the middle class families to the leaders of the Indian National Congress.¹⁴² A K Gopalan has also endorsed this opinion in his autobiography.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Puthupally Raghavan, *Viplava Samranakal*, part 1, D C Books, Kottayam, 1998, p. 134.

¹⁴⁰ Shumais U, 'Swatantrasamrakaalathe Jail Ratrikal' in Sivadasan P (ed.), *Malabarinte Ravukal: Irulitangalute Charihtra Vayanakal*, SPCS, Kottayam, 2016, p. 41.

¹⁴¹ Moyyarath Sankaran, *Aatmakatha*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2014, p. 166.

¹⁴² Moyyarath Sankaran, *Aatmakatha*, p. 166.

¹⁴³ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 24.

Detinue Prisoners

A new class of prisoners under the name detinues emerged with the outbreak of the Second World War. The British officials arrested majority of political leaders and volunteers under the Defence of India Act and confined them as detinues. These detinues were confined in the jails located at Vellore, Rajamundry and Tanjavur. The detinues included members of the Rajaji Ministry of 1937-1939 and members of the Madras Legislative Council.¹⁴⁴ Most of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party were arrested and confined as detinues. Kozhipurath Madhava Menon has stated that in the initial period of the Second World War, majority of the detinues were members of the Communist Party.¹⁴⁵ Muhammed Abdur Rahiman Sahib, President of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee was arrested on 3rd July 1940 soon after the arrest of Subash Chandra Bose under the Defence of India Act.¹⁴⁶ He was a staunch supporter of Subash Chandra Bose in Malabar. These actions of the British government proves that the government was taking special care in handling Communists unlike the members of the Congress movement.

The life of the detinue prisoner was much better than the convicted prisoners. The detinue life was entirely different in food as well as in other facilities.¹⁴⁷ They could sleep in the *veranda* outside the cell during the night. Moreover, cigarettes, *beedi*, tobacco and betel-nut were allowed to them.¹⁴⁸ Permission to interviews and writing letters were given but it was limited to the members of families.

¹⁴⁴ Jail IG to Kannur jail superintendent, 1st March 1941, Correspondence File. 170, RAK.

¹⁴⁵ Kozhipurath Madhava Menon, OHT No. 83, *NMML*, New Delhi.

¹⁴⁶ S K Pottekad (et.al), *Muhammad Abdurahman- A Political Biography*, p. 567.

¹⁴⁷ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, p. 209.

¹⁴⁸ V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikullil*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 1954, p. 70.

When the number of detainees increased by 1941, the jail officials decided to classify detainees into first and second classes.¹⁴⁹ The second class detainees got C class uniform and food. The detainees of Vellore Central Jail submitted a memorandum to the Superintendent of the Jail and later went on hunger strike for cancelling the classification.¹⁵⁰ However the government was not ready to cancel the division but certain relaxations were given to the second class detainee prisoners.

V A Keshavan Nair who was imprisoned as a convict at the Alipuram Camp Jail in connection with Quit India Movement and as a detainee at the Tanjavur Jail during the Second World War has mentioned that the jail officials treated ordinary political prisoners as their enemies. He has recorded that the jail officials began to view the leaders of the Indian National Congress as their masters and expressed respect to them.¹⁵¹ The contradiction in the treatment of ordinary convicts with the leaders of the Congress movement increased day by day as the authorities began to view that the Indian National Congress was going to be the administrators of the land in the near future.¹⁵² Though many members of the Communist movement were released due to the change in their attitude to Britain during the World War, the Indian government was expressing reservations in handling the Communists in India. Though the detainees were released after 1945, the rules were used to keep Communists in the prison by the colonial and Congress governments.

Special Class of Political Prisoners

The Interim Ministry in the Madras Presidency formed under the Indian National Congress decided to form a special class of prisoners with

¹⁴⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th January 1941, *Mathrubhumi* Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁵⁰ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 163.

¹⁵¹ V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikulil*, p. 70.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

increased privileges distinct from the A B C categories.¹⁵³ It is interesting to see that the term 'political prisoner' began to appear in official records with the appearance of the Interim Ministry managed by Indian officials. This special class was created for the prisoners belonging to the A and B classes. They could wear their own clothes, enjoy B class food, allowed books and newspapers, oil and soap for bathing as enjoyed by the A class members, right to write letter once in a week, sit for interviews in one fortnight, entertainment walking, playing football, tennis and badminton etc. These facilities were provided by the government.¹⁵⁴ The Communists imprisoned under trails were also included in the special class status by 1947.¹⁵⁵ This shows that the concept of political prisoner began to get strengthened by the coming up of the Indian share in administration.

With the formation of the Interim ministries in India, we see the appearance of a category of political prisoners in the prisons. They began to be noted in the officials as this category which was not done by the colonial authorities till that date. This class achieved this status due to the prolonged struggle of the prisoners who went to the prison by challenging the colonial government. Along with the formation of this category, the class became a respectable group in the public mind. Their sacrifice was accepted by the civil society. The category was not a unique group which witnessed clashes between class interests. This problem became acute in course of time and the privilege began to be enjoyed by the activists of the Indian National Congress. The Communists and Socialists began to miss these privileges and the interim ministries also attempted to limit these privileges to the Communist prisoners.

¹⁵³ Home Department, G O No. 3752, 28th November 1946, RAK.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Home Department G O No 822, 1st March 1947, RAK.

Chapter 4

Women Political Prisoners

Women have played a significant role in the national movement in Malabar since its inception. Similarly, they have suffered a lot due to the suppression of the movement by the colonial authorities. The women folk began to take part in the movement in various forms since the arrival of the Portuguese in the western coast. They were assisting the anti-colonial struggles launched by the Kunjali Marakkar, Pazhassi Raja and other feudatories in Malabar. They were the direct victims of the colonial rule and plunder of Indian resources. The women in the family were the direct victims of the colonial intervention in all walks of life in India. They did not come to the front as political fighters in the earlier movements. They were managing the society and family when the male counterpart was involving in the struggle. Women were arrested by the police for inspiring the anti-colonial struggles in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They inspired children to become participants of the struggle against colonialism. Large number of women became prisoners and convicts in the British jails in Malabar and only few of them have become subjects of debate in the history of the freedom struggle. With the advent of education and involvement of the ordinary people in the struggle, increased number of women began to become members of the national movement.

This compels us to see two categories of women convicts in the colonial prisons connected with Malabar. Thus we have one category of women prisoners in the period 1792 to 1922 and new category from 1922 to 1947. In the earlier phase we see the arrest of women in Malabar due to their connection with male counterparts who were arrested for various

charges like challenging the British rule. The family members of Pazhassi Raja and his associates and the relatives of Mappila rebels were the chief women victims kept in prisons during this phase. Two women imprisoned in this period were Mamburam Beevi and Chethali Beyumma. Both were deported and imprisoned as state prisoners under the *MOA*.¹

The first case of political arrest of a woman in charge of challenging the British state was the arrest of Mamburam Beevi along with thirteen.² Mamburam Beevi, the custodian of Mamburam Tomb and the daughter of Kunhi Koya Tangal. These fourteen women were arrested in connection with the death of Connolly in 1855. Beevi was arrested on the charge that she assisted the assassins when they visited Mamburam Tomb on 30th August 1855. She blessed their weapon, fed them and received money from them. However, Mamburam Beevi stated that she was not aware of the intention of the Mappila men who murdered Connolly.³

The District Magistrate of Malabar included Beevi in the list of state prisoners to be imprisoned for seven years in any jail outside Malabar.⁴ The recommendation to deport Mamburam Beevi was rejected by the Madras Government stating that she was a person of violent and fanatical character but was a woman.⁵ However, in a petition submitted for release by six prisoners in September 1859, one is a Mamburam Beevi.⁶ She is recorded as

¹ For details see Madras Correspondence File, *MCF 7351*, 24th September 1859, *RAK*. Also see R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion-1921*.

² Case No 9, No 2, *CMO*, vol. 2, *RAK*.

³ Petition for release as State prisoner submitted by Six Moplah State prisoners including Mamburam Beebe the only woman in the list to Governor in council, Fort St. George, Madras, 24th September 1859, in *MCF 7351*, *RAK*.

⁴ T Clark, Magistrate, Kozhikode, February 1856, *CMO*, vol. 2, *RAK*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ Petition for release as state prisoner submitted by six Mappila state prisoners including Mamburam Beevi the only woman in the list to Governor in Council, Fort St. George, Madras, 24th September 1859, in *MCF 7351*, *RAK*.

'Mamrata Beevi' in the petition. Thus, it is clear that Beevi was in the prison for four years during the time of the petition. She was confined at Nellore Jail in Andhra along with other Mappila prisoners. In the petition submitted by them, they have mentioned that they were ignorant of the plan to murder Connolly and were unconnected with their family members. It clearly shows that these state prisoners were never allowed to return to Malabar or to contact their families.

The participation of women increased during the Mappila struggle against colonialism in twentieth century. R H Hitchcock mentioned that one hundred and fifty seven Mappila women took part in the Malabar Struggle of 1921 and committed various crimes. Cases was charged against only one woman.⁷ The old woman named Chettali Beyumma of Tirurangadi was imprisoned at Kannur Central Jail and later deported as state prisoner in connection with the struggle. She was about seventy years old during the struggle. She was arrested after the struggle was suppressed in July 1922 and was imprisoned in Palakkad Sub Jail and Kannur Central Jail.⁸ She was detained without trial for ten months and after release deported from Malabar as state prisoner. She was deported as a state prisoner on 18th June 1924 and kept under police surveillance. But the male state prisoners arrested in connection with the Malabar struggle were imprisoned in various jails until 1925. The charge accused against her was taking part in an incident of forced conversion. She in her petition to the Governor General of Madras stated that she was arrested as a part of revenge taken by *Mussakuty Adhikari* and police on her complaint against them for burning her house

⁷ RH Hitchcock was the Superintend of Police in the Malabar District. He prepared a book on the Malabar Rebellion. See R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion-1921*, p. 151.

⁸ Public Miscellaneous G O No 799, 16th October 1923, TSA, Chennai

during the struggle.⁹ Initially, she was not aware of the charges against her and it was during her eighth month of her imprisonment, the collector during his visit to Kannur jail stated that she was imprisoned by the instance of Musakutty *Adhikari*.¹⁰ The *DM* in his report to Madras said that she took a prominent part in forced conversion and hence she was to be transported to Kolar Gold Fields where her son was also transported.¹¹ He also mentioned that she was to be forbidden from returning to Malabar forever. She pointed out in her petition that the State Prisoner Act was imposed upon her under the pressure of Mussakutty *adhikari* who had an eye on her property at Tirurangadi.¹²

She submitted a detailed petition to the Governor General of Madras stating her innocence. She also requested an impartial enquiry of the case against her without the interference of Moosakutty *Adhikari* and the police at Tirurangadi.¹³ The rejection of her application by the Governor clearly proves that the Moosakutty *Adhikari* was an influential person in colonial Malabar.¹⁴ As She was not allowed to enter Malabar, a request to allow her to leave India to Mecca was submitted.¹⁵ This petition was rejected by the government in 1923.¹⁶ Beyumma was detained under police surveillance at Mangalore in south Canara from June 1924 as a state prisoner. Her conduct and health was reported as good and medical facilities were provided to

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Public Miscellaneous G O No 487, 20th June 1923, TSA, Chennai.

¹² The *Adhikari* was an influential agent of the colonial state in villages and he used his official capacity to impose fake charges upon individuals and thereby plunder his property and wealth.

¹³ Public Miscellaneous G O No 799, 16th October 1923, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁴ This Moosakutty *adhikari* was later dismissed from service in 1922 due to complaints of corruption and misconduct. See *MSP Files*, Sub list 2, Sl. No 98, RAK.

¹⁵ *Public Miscellaneous* G O No 487, 20th June 1923, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁶ *Public* G O No 925, 7th December 1923, TSA, Chennai.

her.¹⁷ Her right eye was operated due to cataract in 1924 and lens glass was provided at the government expense.¹⁸ Beyumma requested the authorities to allow her to join her daughter and the Madras Government sanctioned money for purchasing glasses and in addition the Government of India sanctioned clothing allowance to her in 1926.¹⁹ She was not permitted to leave Mangalore and evidences to speak about the last days of her life are not discovered. According to records of the British, she had a property worth of one thousand rupees in Tirurangadi which was taken over by the state as she was arrested as a state prisoner. The District Magistrate had reported that her daughter was a healthy woman and son was working in a plantation.²⁰ As a state prisoner in Mangalore, Beeyumma was receiving twelve rupees per month.²¹ Request of other influential persons like Muhammad Shamnad the *MLC* to allow her to return to Malabar was also rejected.²²

These are the available record to speak about the handling of women political prisoners in the first phase identified. There is no doubt that there were many women arrested in Malabar for challenging the colonial rule and archival records available are very limited. The case of the second phase is different and where we come across many evidences of women prisoners and their life in the prison

The commencement of people's involvement in nationalism under M K Gandhi inaugurated the second phase. The number of women participation in the Non Cooperation Movement in Malabar was very low. Women began

¹⁷ *MSP List 1*, SI 59, p 9. Or Public G O No 211, 27th February 1925, RAK.

¹⁸ Public Miscellaneous G O No 843, 1st September 1925, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁹ Public G O No 702, 19th July 1926, TSA, Chennai.

²⁰ Public G O No 331, 11th April 1927, TSA, Chennai.

²¹ Public Miscellaneous G O No 331, 11th April 1927, TSA, Chennai.

²² *Ibid.*

to take interest in the constructive programme of M K Gandhi like spinning and wearing *charka* and popularisation of the *khadi*.²³ Many women began to wear *khadi* by boycotting foreign clothes during the days of the spread of *swadeshi* movement in this period. A V Kuttymalu Amma has stated that she used to wear *khadi* during her school days.²⁴ She was the first woman in Malabar to wear *khadi* dress during her marriage ceremony.²⁵ Slowly, but very surely, women began to take part in direct anti-colonial programmes of the national movement.

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1934 witnessed the active participation of women in the public space of Malabar. It was during the Civil Disobedience Movement, the educated women began to shift their space of social activity from the kitchen to the public space.²⁶ Nationalists from the princely states of Thiruvithamcore and Kochi also came to Malabar to take part in the CDM. M Karthiayani Amma was most important among them.²⁷ K Kunjulakshmi from Kochi resigned her job as teacher in the government service and joined the Civil Disobedience Movement in Malabar.²⁸

Like the male migrants from the princely of Kochi and Thiruvithamcore, women migrants played a pertinent role in strengthening the popular base of the national movement in Malabar. The *Mahila Sangham* of Kozhikode was formed in 1930 under the leadership of M

²³ In 1918 as a part of his constructive program Gandhi started Khadi which means hand-woven cloth as a relief for poor masses in India.

²⁴ Kuttymalu Amma belonged to Annakara Vadakath family. Later married to Kozhipurath Madhava Menon, both were imprisoned in connection with various moments during Indian National Movement.

²⁵ A V Kuttymalu Amma, *OHT* No.86, NMML, New Delhi.

²⁶ K Gopalakutty, *Malabar Padanangal*, p. 50.

²⁷ She belonged to the princely state of Cochin. She resigned her teacher job at Thrissur Government High School to join the CDM.

²⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 1st March 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

Karthiayani Amma of Kochi. It played an important role in attracting educated girls and women to the Civil Disobedience Movement begun in Kozhikode. Within a short period. Large number of women joined the organisation. Gracy Aron took the leadership of organising women at Kannur under the *Mahila Sangham*.²⁹ A V Kuttymalu Amma, Kamala Bhai Prabhu, Margret Pavmani etc., did similar work in the town and rural spaces to spread the message of swadeshi and national spirit. Samuel Aron has stated that the members of *Mahila Sangham* belonged to upper-class and middle class families in Kerala.³⁰ Many of the *Sangham* came to social and political activity under the influence of their educated parents or family members. The initial activities of the organisation were limited in collecting funds for the national movement by house visit and other activities. They also conducted processions.

The first political arrest of women in connection with the Gandhian movement in Malabar occurred during a protest procession organised by the *Mahila Sangham* at Kozhikode in November 1930.³¹ The protest procession was conducted on 16th November 1930 against police atrocities against women in Bombay. The District officials in Malabar issued a prohibiting order against the protest and women leaders like wives of K. Madhavan Nair, Sundara Iyer, A V Kuttimalu Amma, E Narayani Kutty, Gracy Aron, G T Narayani Amma and P G Narayani Amma.³² Challenging the order, these women came forward by wearing *khadi* dress and the procession started

²⁹ Gracy Aron was the wife of Samuel Aron who was leader of the Indian National Congress in Kannur. Aron was a wealthy landlord and industrialist. Samuel Aron in his autobiography has stated that they were the only Christian couples imprisoned in connection with the Gandhian movement. For details see C Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*.

³⁰ C Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, p. 161.

³¹ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 499.

³² *Mathrubhumi*, 17th November 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

from the *Tali* temple in Kozhikode. Many volunteers including girls participated in the procession with national and black flags. On the way of the procession, the authorities had displayed a big police force to make fear among the women.³³ A huge crowd had also assembled to see the procession on the roadside. The police tried to capture the national flag from Jayalakshmi and the volunteers protested against it. Six persons were arrested by the police including a girl named Jayalakshmi, a student of the Chalapuram Girls' School in the town. The other women arrested were Gracy Aron, M Karthiyayini Amma, Kunhikavu Amma, T Ammukutty Amma and Narayani Kutty Amma. The police released Jayalakshmi and the remaining five women were remanded at the Kozhikode Jail till 18th November 1930.³⁴

M Karthiyayini Amma, A V Kuttymalu Amma, Gracy Aron, Kamalabai Prabhu, V Ammukutty Amma, and Margret Pavamani were arrested and imprisoned in connection with the *CDM* at Kozhikode. These women were the chief workers of the *Mahila Sangham* in the town. Besides them, women from different sections of the society also participated in the *CDM* and went to prison. However majority of women among them belonged to upper classes in the society. Majority of the imprisoned women were wives of leaders of the Indian National Congress. There were exceptions like M Karthiyayini Amma who was an unmarried woman and her father was a government servant in Kochi. In the initial period of the colonial rule, we see the imprisonment of Mappila women and this class began to disappear among the imprisoned during the Gandhian movement in Malabar. Women from the Christian community participated in the *CDM* in Malabar and they

³³ M Karthiyayini Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal' in *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Kozhikode, 6-12th November 1983.

³⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 17th November 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

went to the prison. Gracy Aron wife of Samuel Aron, Margret Pavmani and Mettilda Kallan were among them.³⁵

The chief venue of women protests in Malabar was the Kozhikode town. However, women participation and arrests connected with the national movement took place at Vadakara, Koyilandi, Thalassery and Kannur. Women from who went to other cities like Madras also took part in various movements linked with the national movement. Some were soon released or in couple of days after confining in prison. Majority of women arrested belonged to upper class or middle class families and majority of them were educated. These women were mentioned along with the names their husbands like Mrs. Madhavan Nair, Mrs L S Prabhu, Mrs Ganesh Pai, Mrs Krishnaswami Ayyar etc. Under the inspiration of the national struggle, many women abandoned their government jobs to join the CDM. K Kunjilakshmi Amma and Sanjivani Bhai resigned their teacher posts to join the movement.³⁶

In addition to these arrests, women were arrested for various offences like breaking salt law, picketing toddy shops and shops selling foreign cloths, participating in prohibited processions etc. During the Salt Satyagraha movement in the beach at Kozhikode, Iswari Ammal was arrested for breaking the Salt Law on 2nd February 1931. Iswari Ammal was the first woman arrested for breaking salt law in Malabar.³⁷ A K Pilla in his *Congressum Keralavum* has recorded that Iswari Ammal was a 'dictator' during the CDM.³⁸ Iswari Ammal was the first Brahmin women from Malabar

³⁵ For details see A K Pilla, *Congressum Keralavum*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1986.

³⁶ Vasanthi V, 'Women in Public Life in Malabar 1900-1957', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009, p. 146.

³⁷ Iswari Ammal was the wife of T R Krishnaswami Ayyar, a leader of the Indian National Congress. See *Mathrubhumi*, 20 February 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

³⁸ A K Pilla, *Congressum Keralavum*, p. 349.

who went to the prison in connection with the *CDM*. When young men of the Brahmin community were afraid of participating in the *CDM*, Iswari Ammal showed the way to inspire others of her community to strengthen the national movement in Malabar.

Women were also arrested for picketing shops selling foreign cloth and liquor. They usually focused on picketing shops selling foreign clothes in Malabar. A team under N Sanjeevani Bhai and K Kunjulakshmi Amma picketed the foreign cloth shop owned by S M Mohammed Koya at the Big Bazaar in Kozhikode by singing national songs.³⁹ N Sanjeevani Bhai and K Kunjulakshmi Amma were arrested for picketing foreign cloth shops in February 1931.⁴⁰ Similarly, Kamalabai Prabhu, Sambhavi Amma and wife of Govindan Nair were arrested at Thalassery while picketing on 27th January 1932. Kunjiruthy Amma, wife of Hareeswaran Tirumunb with her four months old baby, PA Swarnamma and A V Lakshmi Amma picketed the liquor shop of K S Settu at Kannur in May 1932.⁴¹ Settu closed the shop until the picketing women were arrested. The arrested women were taken in a lorry to the police station. Even after the Gandhi Irwin Pact, these women continued picketing shops selling foreign clothes. Kamaladevi Chathopadhyay, the national leader of the Indian National Congress visited Kannur and urged women in Malabar to picket foreign cloth shops.⁴² This shows that there were pressures from the national side to increase the participation of women in the movement against the British government.

Large scale arrest of women took place for taking part in processions in Malabar by the third decade of the twentieth century. The display of

³⁹ *HFM*, vol. 103B, *TSA*, Chennai.

⁴⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 1st March 1931, MM Press, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode.

⁴¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 3rd May 1932, MM Press, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode.

⁴² *Mathrubhumi*, 20th March 1931, MM Press, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode.

women voice in the public space, inspired more women to join the national movement. The national movement was becoming popular with the participation of women from all walks of life. The first arrest of women arrested for conducting a procession in Malabar was on M Karthiyayini Amma and it took place on 16th November 1930. Kunhikav Amma, Similarly, Margret Pavmani and Padmavathy Amma were arrested for conducting a procession in connection with the Gandhi Day on 4th February 1932 at Kozhikode.⁴³ Devaki Amma along with P Janaki Amma and Padmavathi Kutty Amma were arrested at Palakkad on 9th February 1932 for conducting similar processions.⁴⁴ Matilda Kallan and Devaki Amma were also arrested for conduction a protest march at Koyilandy on 10th February 1932.⁴⁵ A V Kuttimalu Amma, the ninth 'dictator' was arrested along with Ammukutty Nethyamma and Suguna Bhai for participating in the procession on 22nd February 1932.⁴⁶ When arrested, A V Kuttimalu Amma, C Kunjikavamma and Mettilda Kallan were the 'dictators' during the *CDM* in Malabar.⁴⁷ While Meera Velayudhan stated Iswari Ammal was also a 'dictator' during the *CDM*.⁴⁸ After the *CDM*, women continued their public activity by attending constructive programmes in the town and rural spaces. This created the space of women activity in the public sphere of villages and towns in Malabar.

In Malabar, women participation was not limited to the *CDM*. Women in large number attended the 'Individual Satyagraha' of 1940 and the Quit

⁴³ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th February 1932, MM Press, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode.

⁴⁴ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 503.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 24th February 1932, MM Press, Mathrubhumi Kozhikode.

⁴⁷ A K Pilla, *Congressum Keralavum*, p. 395.

⁴⁸ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 500.

India Movement of 1942. A V Kuttimalu Amma was the first woman to get arrested for delivering anti-war speech in connection with the 'Individual Satyagraha'. Kuttimalu Amma was arrested along with her husband and other volunteers at Kozhikode on 24th November 1940.⁴⁹ Ammu Nethyamma and E Ammukutty Amma were the other two women arrested in Malabar in connection with the 'Individual Satyagraha' at Palakkad and Vadakkara in January 1941.⁵⁰

The AICC met at Bombay passed the Quit India Resolution on 8 August 1942.⁵¹ Soon after, the leaders of the Congress movement including women were arrested in large scale throughout India. The women leaders of the Indian National Congress in Malabar were also arrested. Kuttimalu Amma was arrested at Kozhikode in August 1942 itself. Mettilda B Kallan also participated in the Quit India Movement and courted arrest and went to the prison.⁵² E Ammukutty Amma and Lakshmykutty Amma were the other two women who were arrested and confined in connection with the QIM.⁵³ E Ammukutty Amma was also imprisoned in connection with 'Individual Sathyagraha'. Ammu Swaminathan who was residing in Madras courted arrest at Madras in 1943 for supporting the QIM.⁵⁴

The commencement of Socialist and Communist movements in Malabar attracted more young women to the national movement. Amon, a primary school teacher at Chombala in north Malabar was arrested for giving

⁴⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, 25th November 1940, MM Press, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode.

⁵⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th January 1941, MM Press, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode.

⁵¹ Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, Pearson, New Delhi, 2017, p. 332.

⁵² Vasanthi V, 'Women in Public Life in Malabar 1900-1957', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009, p. 115.

⁵³ A K Pilla, *Congressum Keralavum*, p. 410.

⁵⁴ *List of Freedom Fighters-The Regional Records Survey Committee*, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1971, p. 12.

shelter to K P R Gopalan in connection with the Morazha Case.⁵⁵ She got four months imprisonment and was dismissed from service.⁵⁶ P K Kunhakka Amma another woman connected with the Communist movement and the *karsha kasangam* in north Malabar was also arrested.⁵⁷ The *karsha kasangam* raised voice against the corrupt *Adhikari* of Kandakki village. The *MSP* helped the *adhikari* to deal the Communists. During the house raids, the *MSP* destroyed the pots and vessels and other house hold items in houses. On 22nd February 1947, thirteen women under P K Kunhakkamma protested against the raid and conducted a march towards the house of the landlord by carrying broken vessels.⁵⁸ These women dumped broken items in the house of the landlord and this incident later came to be called *kalam kettusamaram*.⁵⁹ Kunhakkamma was soon arrested and was brutally tortured in the police camp.⁶⁰ She was not even permitted to take an additional dress to change her dress while arrested.⁶¹ P K Kunhakkamma was confined at the Kannur Central Jail from 22nd February 1947 to 5th April 1947.⁶²

Trial and Punishment of Women Prisoners

The arrest of women and their imprisonment was a new development in the history of British rule in India. Like men, the state found that women also had become a headache to the government. They began to appear in

⁵⁵ A V Anilkumar, *K P R Gopalan*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2001, p. 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ P K Kunhakkamma, She got married to K Keppu Nambiar of Kandakkai in north Malabar, she had four sons and after her husband died in 1930. She initially joined congress and later became a member of communist party in 1942-1943. Active member of Communist party and *karshaka sangam*.

⁵⁸ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 297.

⁵⁹ Vasanthi V, 'Women in Public Life in Malabar 1900-1957', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009, pp. 146-147.

⁶⁰ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 297.

⁶¹ Vasanthi V, 'Women in Public Life in Malabar 1900-1957', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009, p. 147.

⁶² *Ibid.*

the public space with protests against the British raj. This compelled the government to start punishment of these women.

The trial was conducted immediately after the arrest of women. In the first batch of women arrested at Kozhikode on 16th November 1930, charges were taken under Section 145 of the *IPC*.⁶³ The trial was conducted at Kozhikode under the Additional District Magistrate C J Paul.⁶⁴ Like other members of the Congress movement, they did not take part in court proceedings. The Magistrate noticed that it was for the first time that women in Malabar joined the political movement and he hoped that they would not repeat it in the future.⁶⁵ The Magistrate stated that M Karthiyayini Amma was not a resident of Malabar as she belonged to the state of Kochi. She was released under the surety of hundred rupees and security of two persons with agreement to live with good behaviour for two months.⁶⁶ Karthiyayini Amma refused to give security for good behaviour. She was thus sentenced to six months imprisonment by the Magistrate and it was reduced to two months later.⁶⁷ While the remaining four women Gracy Aaron, Kunhikavu Amma, T Ammukutty Amma and Narayanikutty were punished for confinement until the completion of the court proceedings of the day and was left free.⁶⁸ Gracy Aaron was not punished with imprisonment during this time.⁶⁹ M Karthiyayini Amma has stated Gracy Aron and herself were extremely sad on their separation due to imprisonment of the one.⁷⁰ During the judgement, the Magistrate said that it was the first time women in

⁶³ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th November 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁴ *HFM*, vol. 103B, TSA, Chennai.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th November 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁷ M Karthiyayini Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

⁶⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th November 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁹ C Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, p. 161.

⁷⁰ M Karthiyayini Amma 'Reminiscences', in C Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, p. 218.

Malabar taking part in the political movement and he reduced the punishment awarded to Karthiyayini Amma from six months to two months in expectation of good behaviour from them in future.⁷¹ This was violated by the arrested women and they continued their work in the public space like men.

The major punishments awarded to women were imprisonment, fines or both. Majority of political prisoners didn't pay their fines and preferred prison life for non-payment of the fine. Women got lighter punishments than men for similar offences.⁷² Some women in Malabar received more than two years *RI* during the *CDM*. Kunjikav Amma and Margret Pavmani got two and a half years *RI* and K Padmavathy Amma got two years *RI* during the *CDM* in 1932 for participating in a procession.⁷³ Matilda Kallan and Devaki Amma arrested at Koyilandy on February 1932 also got two years rigorous imprisonment.⁷⁴ These shows very clearly that women didn't receive long terms of punishment in Malabar.

Devaki Amma got eighteen months imprisonment and was imposed hundred rupees fine while the other two women, Janaki Amma and PadmavathyKuttyamma got six months imprisonment and a fine of twenty five rupees. Janaki Amma and Padmavathikutty Amma rejected the Magistrate's offer that they would be left free if they asked pardon stating that they would not participate in political movements.⁷⁵ Kunjichirutha Amma was seventy years old when she was arrested in 1932

⁷¹ *HFM* vol. 103 B, TSA, Chennai.

⁷² Suruchi Thapar, *Women in the Indian National Movement*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2006, p. 148.

⁷³ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th February 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁷⁴ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 503.

⁷⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 18th February 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

during the CDM.⁷⁶ She was arrested on 17th July 1932 for presiding a conference at Peralliseri and got one year's rigorous imprisonment.⁷⁷

Kuttimalu Amma was arrested along with Ammukutty Nietyamma and Suguna Bai during a procession on February 1932. They were sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment.⁷⁸ Kuttimalu Amma requested the Magistrate to carry her fifty eight days old baby girl child along with her to the prison. The magistrate stated that he cannot allow it as the infant was not with her when she was arrested.⁷⁹ Kuttimalu Amma argued that, as per jail rules, children below six years were allowed to stay with their mother which was rejected by the Magistrate. However, the Jail Superintendent allowed her to take her child into the prison.

The trial of Kamalabai Prabhu, Sambhavi Amma and Lady Govindan Nair who were arrested at Thalassery on 27th January 1932 was conducted at Thalassery by a European Magistrate named Dodwell.⁸⁰ They refused to declare loyalty to the colonial government. Kamalabai Prabhu was punished with six months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of one thousand rupees. The other two women were imprisoned till the end of the court proceedings in the evening. Like other women political prisoners, Kamalabai also stated that she was not ready to pay the fine and would stay in prison for non-payment of fine. The Magistrate did not allow her to skip the fine and he ordered to take off her ornaments.⁸¹ She had given all her

⁷⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th September 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁷⁷ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 504.

⁷⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 24 February 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁷⁹ A V Kuttimalu Amma, *OHT* no.86, NMML, New Delhi.

⁸⁰ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 503.

⁸¹ V R Menon, *Mathrubhumi Charitram* vol. I, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 1998, p. 349.

ornaments expect the *thali*.⁸² She was compelled to surrender her *thali* by the Magistrate.⁸³ She refused to give her *thali* stating that her husband was alive. D Cruz who was at the court as the advocate supported Kamala Bhai and pointed out that removing of the *thali* was an injustice and illegal act.⁸⁴ The Magistrate ignored all these arguments and ordered the policemen to take off her *thali*. In this context, Kamala Bhai removed the *thali* with the help of her co-prisoners.

The forcible removal of *thali* was an insult to Indian womanhood and it resulted widespread protests. It was not limited in newspapers or few places, the protest emerged in the Madras Legislative Council, Central Legislative Council and at the House of Commons in Britain. The Madras Government in their telegram to the Malabar District Magistrate stated that it was the Magistrate's fault of confiscating the *thali* by force and ordered to give back the *thali* to Kamala Bhai.⁸⁵ Kamala Bhai refused to take her *thali* back stating that she would accept it only after obtaining the consent of the young people of Kerala.⁸⁶ Even though the government continuously requested her to take back her *thali* she rejected it. The *thali* incident created sympathy of general public even among people who were not associated with Congress and national movement.⁸⁷ A K Pilla has recorded the names of twenty women political prisoners arrested during the CDM.⁸⁸

⁸² *Thali* was a chain wear after marriage by Hindu women until the death of their husbands.

⁸³ Mathrubhumi, 31st January 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁸⁴ V R Menon, *Mathrubhumi Charitram* vol. I, p. 351.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ KPCC report, P 14 of 1932. AICC papers, NMML, New Delhi.

⁸⁷ K Gopalakutty, p. 53.

⁸⁸ Secondary sources have listed the following women in the list of persons arrested for taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement during 1930-32. They along with the years of imprisonment are M Karthiyayini Amma- 1930 and 1932, K KunjiLakshmi Amma- 1930 one and a half months, Kamalabai Prabhu, Margret Pavmani 1932 Two and a half years, C Kunjikavamma 1932, A V Kuttimalu Amma 1932, C R Devakiaamma 1930 and 1932, K KPadmavathy 1932, K

During the Second World War, women in Malabar actively participated in the movements organised by the Indian National Congress. A V Kuttimalu Amma was imprisoned for one year in connection with the 'Individual Satyagraha'.⁸⁹ The Sub Divisional Magistrate of Palakkad punished AmmuNethyarammawith a fine of hundred rupees for participating in the 'Individual Satyagraha'. She was not ready to pay the fine and was awarded with one month imprisonment.⁹⁰ While Ammukutty Amma who was arrested at Koyilandy on 18th January 1941 was brought to Kozhikode for trial in the same day. The Magistrate punished her also with six months rigorous imprisonment.⁹¹

The women volunteers arrested in connection withthe *QIM* were also imprisoned as detinues as well as convicted prisoners. A V Kuttimalu Amma was imprisoned as detinue prisoner for two years from 1942 to 1944.⁹² Other women who were imprisoned included MettildaKallan, Ammu Swaminathan and A Susheela. E Ammukutty Amma got two yearsimprisonmentduring the *QIM*.⁹³ The imprisonment of women was increasing the sympathy of the public.

Response of the Public

The message of the freedom struggle and the Indian National Congress was reaching every houses in the villages with these arrests and

Devi 1932, Sundaribai 1932, Sanjivani Bai 1932, Gracy Aron 1930 and 1932, MettildaKallan 1932, P M Kamalavathy 1932, P M Sukanabai 1932, N Narayaniaama 1932, K P Ammunethyar 1932, P Padmavathy1932, P Janaki Amma 1932, P M KunjiChiruthamma 1932, C P Madhaviamma 1932, Sambaviamma 1932, Janakiamma 1930, Lakshi Amma 193, IswariAmmal 1930. See for details A K Pilla, *Congressum Keralavum*, p. 395

⁸⁹ File no 58 of 1940, AICC papers, NMML, New Delhi.

⁹⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th January 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² A V Kuttymalu Amma, *OHT* no.86, NMML, New Delhi.

⁹³ *List of freedom fighters-The Regional Records Survey Committee*, pp. 11-12.

trials. The press and the public reacted against the arrests and imprisonment of women. The press published every atrocity committed against women by the colonial state in and outside the prison. Two of the major newspapers in Malabar *Al Ameen* and *Mathrubhumi* took the lead in publishing news connected with the sufferings of prisoners and jails in India.

Even after the first arrest and remand of five women in Malabar on 16th November 1931, protest processions and *harthal* were conducted in Malabar on the following day. The students of Chalapuram Girls High School under Jayalakshmi and the students of colleges and schools in Kozhikode town boycotted their classes in protest against the arrests.⁹⁴ The students also conducted a protest procession carrying flags in Kozhikode with slogans like 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai'. They went around the jail where these five women were remanded. These processions were not limited in the Kozhikode town. The committee of the Indian National Congress in Kannur conducted a procession for appreciating the arrested women on 18th November 1930.⁹⁵ The procession was attended by large number of people and it was addressed by K P Gopalan.

Suruchi Thapar argues that by courting arrest and imprisonment, women not only proved their courage, determination and strong commitment against colonial rule but also dispelled the colonial notion of Indian women as subordinate, weak and docile.⁹⁶ The vernacular press gave wide propaganda to the sacrifice of the women in Malabar for the cause of national freedom.

⁹⁴ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 500.

⁹⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th November 1930, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁹⁶ Suruchi Thapar, *Women In The Indian National Movement*, p. 165.

Life of Women in the Prison

The life of women political prisoners in the prison was not different from men. They had to suffer more in the colonial prison. Many of the arrested were from the upper and middle class families and they had to suffer a lot in the prison.⁹⁷ The prison became the temporary residence for women political prisoners replacing their home.⁹⁸ Women political prisoners were confined in jails inside and outside of Malabar. In Malabar, women were mainly confined in the District jail at Kozhikode, Central Jail at Kannur and in the Sub Jail at Thalassery. Outside Malabar, the only prison where women political prisoners from Malabar were confined was the Presidency Jail for Women at Vellore. However women continued to be confined at other jails also.⁹⁹

The Presidency Jail for Women at Vellore was opened in 1929. The chief problem that the women faced in the jail at Vellore was the hot weather. Kamala Devi imprisoned at Vellore during the *CDM* stated that the newly constructed buildings were surrounded by rocks and the surroundings lacked vegetation.¹⁰⁰ Majority of A and B class women political prisoners were confined at the Presidency Jail from the *CDM* onwards.

The colonial officials practiced gender discrimination against women in the jail. The most serious issue was the train journey from Malabar to Vellore. Usually the police who accompanied with these women political prisoners were male people. Kamalabai Prabhu was troubled a lot due to the absence of female police staff as she was assisted by two male policemen

⁹⁷ Suruchi Thapar, *Women in the Indian National Movement*, p. 141.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁹⁹ *HFM*, vol. 103B, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁰⁰ Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, *Inner Recesses Outer Spaces*, Niyogi, New Delhi, 2014, p. 183.

from Thalassery to the Vellore Jail in train.¹⁰¹ The same system repeated in the prison and where they suffered untold experiences.

Classification of Women Prisoners

The women arrested in Malabar during various movements belonged to various age groups, castes and religion. Their age varied from 18 to above 70. Women political prisoners faced different problems in prison as they were a minority group in the prison. The majority were ordinary women prisoners who were convicted for non-political offences such as prostitution, murder, theft etc. These political prisoners considered ordinary women prisoners as a bad sign. A Susheela imprisoned in the Presidency Jail for women at Vellore during the *QIM* has stated that political prisoners saw the ordinary prisoner as a bad sign and the political prisoner wanted to move away from them.¹⁰²

The women political prisoners in Malabar were also subjected to ABC classification in jails. Even though majority of these women belonged to wealthy families, upper castes and the educated class, only few of them were included in the A and B classes. Prison life was like home or hostel life to the A and B class political prisoners while to the majority women political prisoners who were placed in C class, the jail was a hell. M Karthiayani Amma, the first women political prisoner in Malabar was awarded 'A' class status in her first and second imprisonments. Many women political prisoners were included in A and B Class categories during the *CDM*. Among them Gracy Aron got A class status during the Civil Disobedience Movement. Padmavathi Asher also got A class status during the *CDM* and was confined

¹⁰¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 31st January 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁰² Swamini Sreedharan, *Swatantratile Penperumma*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2013, p. 97.

at the Presidency Jail at Vellore.¹⁰³ The life of B class women was also not bad as they received better food and accommodation. The restriction they faced was that they did not get the right to outside food and had to wear the prison uniform. K Kunjulakshmi Amma and Sanjivani Bhai were awarded B class status in the prison.¹⁰⁴ Iswari Ammal and Janaki Amma got B class status during their one year prison life in connection with the *CDM*.¹⁰⁵

During the Second World War, women in Malabar were imprisoned in connection with the 'Individual satyagraha; and the *QIM*. E Ammukutty Amma was arrested in connection with the 'Individual Satyagraha' and received 'B class status imprisonment during her six month prison life in the Presidency Jail at Vellore.¹⁰⁶ A Susheelagot three months simple imprisonment and was placed in the B Class status at the Presidency Jail.¹⁰⁷ She has stated that her jail life was one of the good moments in her life.¹⁰⁸ Thus, it is seen that the A and B class women political prisoners had no sincere worries about food, labour and complaint regarding the attitude of prison staff.

The condition of C class women prisoners was entirely different. The C class women political prisoners were treated like ordinary prisoners with worst food, dress and without proper medical, bathing and other facilities. The criteria for classification and its practice were entirely different as majority of women political prisoners were eligible for A and B class were

¹⁰³ M Karthiyayini Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹⁰⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 1st March 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁰⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 20th February 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁰⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th January 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁰⁷ A Susheela belonged to the Anakkara family of A V Kuttimalu Amma and Ammu Swaminathan. During the *QIM*, she was at Madras under the guardianship of Ammu Swaminathan. She joined the movement by picketing the Secretariat at Madras and courted arrest in February 1943. For details see Swamini Sreedharan, *Swantrasamarathile Penperumma*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

awarded with C Class status. The C class women political prisoners were highly educated and they were from reputed families and had to suffer treatment like ordinary criminals.¹⁰⁹ During the second imprisonment connected with the Civil Disobedience Movement, Kamala Bhai Prabhu got C class instead of the A class she availed during the first imprisonment.¹¹⁰ The class awarded to a prisoner by the trailing authority was according to his whims and fancies.

P M Kunjichirutha Amma, a seventy years old volunteer of the Indian National Congress was given C class status and was put in solitary confinement at the Thalassery Sub Jail. She was arrested along with her granddaughter and was confined at the Presidency Jail in Vellore. The demand transfer to Vellore Jail was rejected by jail authorities. A public meeting of the Indian National Congress was conducted at Kannur on 24th August 1932 to demand the transfer of P M Kunjichirutha Amma from Thalassery Sub Jail to any other jail for women.¹¹¹ Ammunethy Amma who belonged to the royal family of Palakkad was awarded C Class status during her imprisonment in connection with the 'individual sathyagraha'.¹¹² The colonial officials deliberately awarded C class status to insult women who took active role in the national movement.

The C class inmates received cruel treatment from officials, and were supplied bad food and bad dress. The attitude towards C Class women political prisoners was very humiliating as they were treated like ordinary

¹⁰⁹ Padmavathi Ashar, wife of P D Asher, got A class during her ten month imprisonment in 1932-33 at women's jail Vellore. For details see *Mathrubhumi*, 30th November 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹¹⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 31st January 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹¹¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 26th August 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹¹² *Mathrubhumi*, 19th January 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

criminals.¹¹³ The women political prisoners confined in A and B classes have stated that the same prison staffs was humane and kind. This was the discrimination faced by C class prisoners.

A chief issue was the lack of enough women staff in the Kannur Central Jail and other jails where women political prisoners were confined. Majority of women matrons were sympathetic towards political prisoners and they even smuggled newspapers for them.¹¹⁴ Even in the Presidency Jail for Women, the jail matron allowed A and B class political prisoner to give better food to C Class without the knowledge of jail superintendent during the *CDM*.

The first woman political prisoner from Malabar, M Karthiyani Amma was put in solitary confinement in her first imprisonment for two months at Kozhikode jail in November 1931.¹¹⁵ Women in A and B class at Presidency at Vellore were usually put in solitary confinement even in the night. A Susheela was in solitary confinement at the Vellore Jail. Young girls who were in prison in connection with the *QIM* feared a lot for sleeping alone in the night.¹¹⁶ The demand of the political prisoners to cancel solitary confinement in night was rejected by officials stating that the prison rules had not allowed it.

Meeting Family and Friends

Separation from family was the major tension suffered by the women prisoners. Some were mothers who left their children with family and relatives. However the jail rules permitted women to carry their child below

¹¹³ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th November 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹¹⁴ Suruchi Thapar, *Women in the Indian National Movement*, p. 157.

¹¹⁵ M Karthiyayini Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹¹⁶ Swamini Sreedharan, *Swatantratile Penperumma*, p. 96.

six years with them to the prison. When the Magistrate did not allow A V Kuttimalu Amma to carry her child with her, the jail superintendent allowed her. The jail superintendent stated that the Magistrate did not have any role in that and it was his right to decide the internal matters of the prison. The small baby girl thus spent two years with Kuttimalu Amma in the Vellore Jail. The *Madras Mail* which published a news regarding this has reported that the baby was the 'joy of the jail'.¹¹⁷ The government official visited Kamala Bhai during her remand life at the sub jail and warned confinement in Vellore Jail if she had not expressed repentance for taking part in the protest movement. She was expecting transfer to the Kannur Central Jail where her husband L S Prabhu was confined.¹¹⁸ After trial, she was transported to the Presidency Jail at Vellore.

Family members and relatives of women prisoners were permitted to visit them in jails. On the very next day of M Karthiyani Amma's imprisonment, Gracy Aron visited her in Kozhikode Jail and said that she would join her soon in the prison.¹¹⁹ As Karthiyani Amma was in A class and her friends at Kozhikode regularly sent fruits to her in the prison.¹²⁰ Besides, her mother regularly visited her in the jail by carrying items for daily use. P Krishna Pilla who went to interview Kunjichiruta Amma at Thalassery sub jail stated. She was put in a dark foul smelling cell in solitary confinement even he struggled to complete the interview due to the foul smell.¹²¹

The women confined at the Jail in Vellore contacted friends and family through letters. As Vellore was far away from Malabar, the family members

¹¹⁷ Vasanthi V, 'Women in Public Life in Malabar 1900-1957', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009, p. 58.

¹¹⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 31st January 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹¹⁹ M Kartyayani Amma, 'Reminiscences' in C Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, p. 218.

¹²⁰ M Karthiyayini Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹²¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th September 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

struggled for visiting them in Prison. M Karthiyayini Amma had contact with Gracy Aaron through letters during prison life at Vellore Presidency Jail for women.¹²² When M Karthiyayini Amma came to know about the death of her sister she really came to know the pain of confinement as she was not able to visit home.¹²³

Dress in the Prison

The dress of the female political prisoner was *saari*. The *saari* a long cloth eight yards in length and forty two inches in width, besides the *saari* and *pavada*(petticoat), *dhawani*(upper-cloth) was also given to Indian prisoners.¹²⁴ This *saari* given to the political prisoners was rough, very thick and heavy. The Congress volunteers who were accustomed with the khadi *saari* did not find difficulty in wearing the jail uniform. The women prisoners who used thin Bombay Mill *saari* previously felt uncomfortable with the prison dress.¹²⁵ The Indian women prisoners were not provided any under wear and sanitary napkins. While the European women in Indian jails were provided with jackets, petticoats, chemise and nightgown of cotton, banian, garters, stockings, boot, handkerchiefs and even sanitary napkin.¹²⁶ This clearly shows that discrimination was practiced towards Indian prisoners on racial grounds in the prison.

The women political prisoners have not mention prison dress or issues related with menstruation are not explained in the memorial notes or auto biographies. Kamala Devi Chathopadhyaya in her autobiography has stated that during her prison life, she and her co-prisoners revolted for under

¹²² M Kartyayani Amma, 'Reminiscences' in C Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, p. 219.

¹²³ M Karthiyayini Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹²⁴ *The Madras Jail Manual*, Government Press, Madras, 1915, p. 106. RAK.

¹²⁵ Kamaladevi Chathopadhyay, *Inner Recesses Outer Spaces*, p. 171.

¹²⁶ *The Madras Jail Manual*, Government Press, Madras, 1915, p. 106. RAK.

wears.¹²⁷ The A class women political prisoners were able to wear their own dress including inner wears, while the 'B' class women political prisoners were provided the dress given similar to European women convicts.¹²⁸ The chief group which troubled in the dress issue were the C class women political prisoners. As mentioned in the case of male prisoners, the C class women also did not get oil or soap for bathing in the prison.¹²⁹ The women in the C class prison did not get any facility for washing their clothes.¹³⁰ Thus, the C class women struggled hard to survive the prison life.

Similarly, food also became an important issue in the prison for women convicts. The A and B classes women convicts were getting special food and the C class got the worst. A class also had been allowed to bring outside food at their own expense or by their family members and relatives under a special provision. The A and B Class prisoners cooked food by themselves in the special kitchen arranged for them. It is noted that the A and B class women political prisoners at the Vellore Jail were cooking food by themselves during the *CDM*.¹³¹ M Karthiyani Amma reminds us that there were around one hundred women political prisoners in A and B class kitchen of the Presidency Jail at Vellore and they were belonging to Andhra, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu in 1932.¹³²

Besides the prison food, A class women prisoners had the freedom to enjoy food from brought from outside by their family members, committees of the local Congress organisation and their friends. M Karthiyani Amma has recorded that during her first imprisonment at the Kozhikode Jail had the

¹²⁷ Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, *Inner Recesses Outer Spaces*, p. 171.

¹²⁸ Home Department, Bn 13, Sl no 1, RAK.

¹²⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th September 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 27th August 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³¹ M Karthiyani Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹³² *Ibid*.

freedom to enjoy food items brought by her mother and friends. Her friends at Kozhikode always fetched fruits to her using the freedom in the A class and her mother bought other items required for daily life.¹³³ The A class women prisoners belonging to Malabar did not get food items from their family member at the Vellore Jail as they were far away from the jail. However, the local Congress committees and family members of Tamil prisoners distributed food to the women political prisoners in such jails. During the CDM Srinivasa Ayyangar's daughter imprisoned at the Vellore Jail and in every week the women political prisoners got sufficient food which was distributed from her house.¹³⁴

Though the political prisoners were united against colonialism, the regional differences and other issues like caste reflected in the A and B class kitchens. Inmates belonging to Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra and Karnataka were different in culture and food habits. This difference reflected in the common kitchen set apart for them. Karthiayani Amma from Kerala had the duty to prepare *avial* in the kitchen and majority of the women political prisoners liked it very much.¹³⁵ It was seen that major portion of the *avial* was found missing.¹³⁶ When the theft continued, it was identified that the Tamil and Andhra women political prisoners who liked *avial* very much were taking it. Soon after the incident, the ten Malayali women political prisoners in A and B Class decided to start a special kitchen for the Keralites. The matron allowed them to start a new kitchen. M. Karthiayani Amma was refused to join the Kerala kitchen stating that she was against regionalism.¹³⁷ The *avial* issue resulted in the opening of separate kitchens for A and B Class

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Avial* was one of the common vegetarian food prepared by different vegetables in Kerala.

¹³⁶ M Karthiayini Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Malayali women political prisoners. These are evidences for the contradictory issues emerging among the political prisoners when they had to live together in the prison.

When the A and B class prisoners did not raise complaints regarding food, the C class people were having the same food given to ordinary prisoners. Like the C class male political prisoners, the C class women political prisoners were given the same bad food which often had a foul smell containing stones and worms.¹³⁸ Durgabhai Deshmukh,¹³⁹ a C class women prisoner at the Vellore Jail reminded us that the food given to C class prisoners was much worse than the food prescribed for C class prisoners prescribed in the *Jail Manual*.¹⁴⁰ Majority of women prisoners disliked this food and tried to avoid it. As a result, hunger and diseases disturbed the health of them.¹⁴¹ The C class prisoners had to eat the same food as no remedy was received by the jail authorities regarding their objection. The bad food given to the C class women prisoners resulted in many diseases especially the stomach. There was demand for buttermilk to solve the stomach diseases of the prisoners which was also not listened by the authorities.¹⁴²

The Prison Hospital

The health of women prisoners was subjected to gradual decay after their entry in the prison. This was a major issue of the C class political prisoners. As a result, the A and B class women prisoners could not get any

¹³⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th November 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³⁹ Durgabai Deshmukh was a Congress volunteer from Andhra and she had rejected A class facility and demanded C class during the *CDM*. She was imprisoned at the Presidency Jail for at Vellore. See Durgabai Deshmukh, *Chinthaman and I*, Allied publishers, New Delhi, 1980

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th November 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

serious chance to meet the hospitals in the jails. Thus, for some inmates, it was a blessing while to the others it was a curse. The main problem that the women political prisoners suffered in the jail was the lack of lady doctors to share their health issues. There was increased demand for a lady doctor in the Kannur Central Jail during the *CDM*.¹⁴³ It was ignored by the authorities and on the opposite side the number of women political prisoners was increasing day by day. The hospital authorities usually scolded women political prisoners and disturbed them. Padmavathi Asher told to the press during her release from the Vellore Jail that the authorities were giving least consideration to the health of women political prisoners and demanded immediate attention to it in the sick jail hospital at Vellore.¹⁴⁴ This was an important issue connected with the inmates of the C class. The prominent leaders of the national movement were giving propaganda to the miseries of the political prisoners in the prisons which created popular protests throughout the country.

Women Prisoners and Labour

The political prisoners who got rigorous imprisonment in all classes including A, Band C t need to do jail labour. Women in A and B class were usually exempted from hard tasks. Karthiyani Amma who was lodged in the A class did gardening, coir and doormat making, embroidery work etc., during her first imprisonment at the Kozhikode Jail.¹⁴⁵ During her second imprisonment at the Vellore Jail connected with the *CDM*, itself her work was to audit accounts and distribute letters to the women prisoners.¹⁴⁶ By 1930, *charkka* also become a part of the jail labour. It is seen that women

¹⁴³ *Mathrubhumi*, 13th August 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁴⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th November 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁴⁵ M Karthiyani Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

prisoners were given the work of spinning *charkkaat* the Presidency Jail in Vellore.¹⁴⁷ On 2nd October 1941, during the birthday of M K Gandhi all women political prisoners did spinning of *charka* in the Vellore Jail.¹⁴⁸

Resistances of Women Political Prisoners

The women political prisoners were subjected to physical and mental humiliation. The women political prisoners had been undergone body search by prison matron or other prisoners while entering the prison. The two problems that the women faced in the prison were hey inspection by lower caste prisoners and the shame they felt during menstrual periods.¹⁴⁹ This reveals the caste consciousness of the upper caste women political prisoners. These inspections were aimed at the creation of torture of the body and the mind of women political prisoners. Thus, the position received by scholars regarding mental and body torture in prisons become unfit in the Indian case. In India, the prison practiced ways to torture both the mind and body under the colonial rule.¹⁵⁰

The question of discipline also became a question of contestation in the prison related to the political prisoners. M K Gandhi had told his disciples to become obedient to the rules and regulations in the prison as true disciples of Gandhism. The A and B class prisoners did not create much problems as they enjoyed many privileges in the prison. M Karthiyani Amma recalls her experience that the superintendent, jailor and wardens of the Jail at Kozhikode were affectionate to her.¹⁵¹ A V Kuttimalu Amma who

¹⁴⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, 8th October 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Suruchi Thapar, *Women in the Indian National Movement*, p. 157.

¹⁵⁰ Anand A Yang, 'Disciplining Natives: Prisons and Prisoners in Nineteenth Century India', pp. 29-45.

¹⁵¹ M Karthiyani Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'in *Mathrubhumi* weekly, Kozhikode, 6-12 November 1983.

was imprisoned in the Presidency Jail at Vellore also stated that she got better treatment and the wardens and staff were sympathetic towards other political prisoners.¹⁵² This is a sufficient evidence to argue that the A and B class prisoners could follow Gandhian ideals in the prison and the C class had to revolt and oppose the jail rules and there by they became revolutionaries and opponents of Gandhian strategies.

Interaction between the A, B and C class prisoners often ended in class differences in the prison. On humanitarian grounds, the upper class prisoners attempted to help the C class prisoners during the distribution of food. The C class prisoners often did not get sufficient food in the prison. Insufficient food always resulted in extreme hunger to the C class prisoners. During the Civil Disobedience Movement, women political prisoners of the A and B classes at Vellore Jail attempted to help the C class women political prisoners.¹⁵³ They supplied food to the C class women political prisoners without the knowledge of the jail superintendent. The work was operated by M Karthiyani Amma of the A class. As A class was permitted to have outside food they brought food with the help of local Congress committees and distributed it to the C class political prisoners. A portion of the food prepared in A and B class kitchen was also given to them. The superintendent came to know about the illegal activity and scolded Karthiyani Amma and matron which put an end to the assistance.¹⁵⁴ Kongat Madhava Menon visited Karthiyani Amma in the Vellore Jail and she explained the food issue of C class prisoners and the service done by the A and B class inmates. Madhava Menon told the jail superintendent to ignore such practices between

¹⁵² A V Kuttymalu Amma, *OHT* no 86, NMML, New Delhi.

¹⁵³ M Karthiyani Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

political prisoners in the prison.¹⁵⁵ There were protests among the male prisoners against the upper class assistance in the prison. The discrimination of prisoners between different classes resulted in the clash between Gandhism and opponents to it. The net result was the transformation of lower class political prisoners into anti Gandhians during their prison life.

The refusal to accept food was the first major aspect of resistance. Even women political prisoners raised voice for providing buttermilk to C class political prisoners. Durgabai Deshmukh had agitated against the bad food given to C class political prisoners in the Vellore Jail.¹⁵⁶ The resistance against injustice in prison was not always limited inside the prison walls as protests also took place outside the prison. Kunjichirutha Amma did not get enough medical attention during her prison life at Thalassery during the CDM. She was suffering severe heart disease and urination problem.¹⁵⁷ The authorities were not ready to transfer her to the Kannur Jail Hospital. The reason was that she was unable to walk to the railway station. The authorities forced sick prisoners to walk to the railway station stating that there were no vehicles to carry C class prisoners.¹⁵⁸ It is seen that car was arranged to transport A and B class prisoners to provide medical attention. Kunji Chirutha Amma was in the C class and she was denied daily milk allowance available to sick prisoners.¹⁵⁹ The members of the Congress committees in Malabar launched an agitation for her release and demanded better medical care. Finally the authorities admitted her in the Kannur Jail

¹⁵⁵ K. Madhava Menon was the District Medical Officer at Vellore. See M Karthiayani Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal', *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Kozhikode, 6-12 November 1983.

¹⁵⁶ Durgabai Deshmukh, *Chintaman and I*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th September 1932, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Hospital on 8th September 1932.¹⁶⁰ Thus, the agitation that took place outside the prison created certain changes in the internal affairs of the jail administration. These were applicable to the political prisoners in the prison.

Cultural exchanges

The life in the prison for political activists was a time to learn and also to give training to the fellow prisoners. This was taking place in all prisons after the Swadeshi Movement in India. Imprisoned leaders used the special privileges they received as political prisoners to read, write and speak in the prison. These debates often resulted in examining the issues from a critical point of view. The result was the empowerment of revolutionary ideology and attraction to Communism and Socialist ideology. Women political prisoners also used prison as a school to study new languages and learn different problems. Women mainly used Presidency jail at Vellore as their school. In prison, Kamala Devi Chathopadhyaya spoke about the history of Indian National Congress and its movements for the women political prisoners during the *QIM*.¹⁶¹

Women political prisoners like their male counterparts also became multi linguists. They utilised prison to study various languages. Chief languages they studied in the prison were Hindi, English, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. Some studied one language while majority tried to study more than one. M Karthiyani Amma studied Tamil from the political prisoners of Tamilnadu and in return she taught them English during her Jail life at Vellore during the *CDM*.¹⁶² A V Kuttimalu Amma was also a multi linguist. She

¹⁶⁰ Meera Velayudhan, Growth of Political Consciousness Among Women in Modern Kerala, P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 504.

¹⁶¹ Swamini Sreedharan, *Swatantratile Penperumma*, p. 97.

¹⁶² M Karthiyani Amma, 'Niram Theliyunna Nalukal'.

had enough knowledge in Malayalam, English, Tamil and Telugu languages besides practical knowledge in the Kannada language.¹⁶³ This knowledge became useful to women in their post-prison life.

Release from the Prison and Post Prison Life

Release from the prison was a turning point in the life of political prisoners. The life in the prison was sufficient to change the life style of an individual. The upper class families looked at the jail life of a member among them as a serious insult to dignity. They treated members of the family who got arrested in the prison with humiliation and insult. Wife, children, father and mother of the arrested persons had to undergo severe insult from the other members of the family. It was only with the achievement of freedom that the family circles began to demand prestige for remembering the prison life for the cause of national independence by a member. Contrary to this, the public society began to see arrests for taking part in anti-colonial movements began to be viewed as a sacred activity. This reflected as public reception to released political prisoners and holding of special conferences to greet them 1921.

The Gandhi Irwin Pact of 5th March 1931 resulted in the release of women political prisoners of Malabar from various jails in the Madras Presidency. Among the women released from the Presidency Jail at Vellore included Iswari Ammal, K Kunju Lakshmi Amma, Vedhavathi Amma, C Devaki Amma, N Sanjeevani Bhai, A Janaki Amma and Lady Ganesh Pai.¹⁶⁴ Gracy Aron and Kamala Bhai Prabhu were also later released from the same jail. The *Mathrubhumi* newspaper published news of released women and

¹⁶³ Vasanthi V, 'Women in Public Life in Malabar 1900-1957', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009, p. 52.

¹⁶⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 11th March 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

occasionally published their photos.¹⁶⁵ The public society in Malabar considered women political prisoners not as ordinary criminals and they got warm welcome during their release.¹⁶⁶ M Karthyayani Amma was released after completing her two month long imprisonment from the Kozhikode Jail on 17th January 1931. A large crowd including hundreds of women assembled outside the jail gate to welcome her. Armed police were also present there. She came out by 8 A M and as soon as she was seen, shouts of 'Jai' slogans from the crowd went on the air'.¹⁶⁷

The political prisoners of Malabar released from various jails outside Malabar got warm reception at various railway stations in Malabar when they reached Malabar. The public also observed certain days to respect the arrested people for the cause of national freedom. Majority of women political prisoners were released from the Presidency Jail at Vellore and they reached Kozhikode Railway Station. The leaders of the Indian National Congress arrived at the Station along with volunteers to welcome these brave women with garlands. The reception was followed by a procession which passed through the Kozhikode town. This was a routine activity during the last decades of the freedom movement. The public was taking part in such programmes in large numbers which strengthened the anti-colonial spirit of the people. Songs were sang using harmonium during such processions by girls.¹⁶⁸ Besides men, women representing *mahila sangham* and girls representing *balika bharatha sangham* participated in such receptions and processions at Kozhikode.¹⁶⁹ Iswari Ammal and six other women prisoners were released after Gandhi Irwin Pact got warm welcome

¹⁶⁵ For details see *Mathrubhumi* from 1930 onwards.

¹⁶⁶ *HFM*, vol. 103B, *TSA*, Chennai.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 14th March 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

at the Kozhikode Railway Station with garlands and the procession ended at the residence of K Madhavan Nair who had died in 1931.¹⁷⁰

These processions were followed by public meeting. In Kozhikode, such meetings took place at the beach for appreciating released prisoners. Such a meeting was held on 13th March 1931 to congratulate Gracy Aaron, Kamalabai Prabhu, Samuel Aron and others under the presidentship of Muhammed Abdur Rahman Sahib.¹⁷¹ Susheela reminds us that a huge reception was given to AV Kuttimalu Amma with her baby after her release during the *CDM* in the school of her hometown by the public.¹⁷²

During the 'Individual Satyagraha', A V Kuttimalu Amma was released from the prison on 4th October 1941. To welcome her at the Kozhikode Railway Station, a huge crowd was assembled.¹⁷³ After the reception, a public meeting was held and A V Kuttymalu Amma addressed the people. She urged the people to propagate *khadi* to end the rule of foreign powers. M K Gandhi instructed the released political prisoners of the 'Individual Satyagraha' to court arrest again. The police was reluctant to arrest such individuals and the nationalists marched to Delhi as a form of protest. Kuttimalu Amma walked from village to village by delivering anti-war speeches.¹⁷⁴ When Madhava Menon was released from jail on 1st November 1941, he soon joined Kuttimalu Amma his wife. The *AICC* papers have reported that A V Kuttimalu and her husband Madhava Menon were

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Swamini Sreedharan, *Swatantratile Penperumma*, p. 97.

¹⁷³ Mathrubhumi, 8th October 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁷⁴ P-11, vol. 1, 1940, *AICC* papers, NMML, New Delhi.

roaming around and it was difficult to locate them during their village work.¹⁷⁵

During the Fifth Provisional Political Conference held at Vadakara on 4th to 6th May 1931, district conferences were held for women and released political prisoners.¹⁷⁶ The women conference was 'Keraliya Mahila Conference' was arranged to greet women activists in the Badagara Conference. This meeting was presided over by Padmavathi Asher and was attended by women including ex-prisoners.¹⁷⁷ The meeting congratulated women who went to the prison in connection with the CDM. The meeting greeted women prisoners especially Karthiayani Amma, Narayanikutty Amma and Gracy Aron as perfect model of mothers in Kerala.¹⁷⁸ One important message displayed by the women conference in 1931 was that the women in Malabar had begun to take lead in public activity for the cause of national independence.¹⁷⁹ The CDM was thus a turning point in the history of the national movement in Kerala. The meeting was attended by women from rural and urban spaces and it passed many resolutions urging the government and the public society to change its attitude and policies.¹⁸⁰ This was an advancement in the progressive development of the freedom movement. Women also took part in the conference of Released Political Prisoners at Vadakara and it was presided by T Prakasham.¹⁸¹ In this meeting, women criticised the ABC classification of political prisoners and demanded single class for entire political prisoner community in the jail.

¹⁷⁵ P-11, vol. I, 1940, *AICC Papers*, NMML, New Delhi.

¹⁷⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 5th May 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁷⁷ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, pp. 501-502.

¹⁷⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 5th May 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 12th May 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁸¹ V R Menon, *Mathrubhumi yude Charitram*, p. 307.

Life of the Prisoner after Release

Normally women utilised their post-prison life in three ways. Few put end to their political life and focused on family and career after release. Those who continued their public activity and either continued to act in the political movements or focused in Gandhian constructive programs and followed saintly life.

The prime attention of the released women prisoners regaining their good health. Gracy Aron became a patient during her imprisonment at the Presidency Jail in Vellore during the *CDM*. The health of all political prisoners deteriorated during their prison life. Among them, Samuel Aron tried his best to keep away his wife Gracy Aron from political movements due to her ill health.¹⁸² A few women in Malabar gave up their political career after their first imprisonment.

Many women went to prison again after their first imprisonment and actively involved in political activities. After the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931, the released women continued their activities of constructive programmes. Kamala Devi Chathopadhyaya came to Kannur and urged women to boycott foreign cloth and continued picketing of foreign cloth selling shops. The picketing of shops selling foreign clothes was not limited to Malabar. The released women volunteers in Malabar went to the princely states of Thiruvithamcore and Kochi to do the similar political work.¹⁸³ A V Kuttimalu Amma and Pavamani gave leadership to picketing of shops in Thrissur town.¹⁸⁴ M Karthiyayani Amma did the same work at the Alappuzha town.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² C. Samuel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, p. 45.

¹⁸³ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 501.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

¹⁸⁵ Puthupally Raghavan, *Viplava Samranakal*, pp. 160-161.

M Karthiyayini Amma after completing second term in prison went to Princely state of Thiruvitamkoor and Kochi for propagating the constructive programme of M K Gandhi.¹⁸⁶ It was this continued political activity of the leading women activists that kept the flames of freedom struggle burned throughout the period.

Women began to move to the leadership of the national movement because of their devoted service in the struggle like men. As a result, Kunjikavu Amma was selected as the president of the KPCC president on 9th September 1934.¹⁸⁷ K P Kunjikavamma was giving attention to constructive programmes during the Second World War. She gave importance to constructive activities as per the advice of M K Gandhi.¹⁸⁸ Majority of women and girls attracted to the spinning work and constructive programme were upper class women. The programme could not attract women belonging to the poor and marginal classes in the society.

The life of women political prisoners in the prison was thus changing the character of the national movement in Malabar. On the one side it generated contradiction regarding the class character of the movement and in the other side it created non confidence in the power of the constructive programmes. Though the number of women in the leadership of the Gandhian movement was very limited, they enjoyed good influence in the public society. Though the leftist movement was getting strengthened with the help of ordinary women in the society, the appearance of women leaders in the Socialist and Communist movements was very limited. Though

¹⁸⁶ M Kartyayani Amma, 'Reminiscences' in C Samuvel Aaron, *Jeevitha Smaranakal*, p. 218.

¹⁸⁷ Meera Velayudhan, 'Growth of Political Consciousness among Women in Modern Kerala' in P J Cherian(ed.), *Perspectives on Kerala History*, p. 504.

¹⁸⁸ KPCC Administration Report 1940-1942, *Mathrubhumi*, 15th May 1942, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM press, Kozhikode.

they are invisible in the records, it is believed that the number of women participants in the Socialist and Communist movement was increasing day by day at the local and rural levels. The end result of the women participation even in the jail was that they could disprove the colonial notion that they were unequal to men in public activity.

Chapter 5

Malabar Struggle and Prison Life

The history of prison experiences of the Malayali people under colonialism cannot be explained without telling the agony of felt by the victims of the Malabar Struggle of 1921.¹ The history of the experiences of prisoners arrested in connection with the early revolts of the Mappila peasants in the nineteenth and early twentieth century are explained in the early chapters. In the backdrop of the Non Cooperation and *khilafath* movements, the struggle of the Mappila peasantry became an organised one with strong ideological basis in 1921 and it prompted the colonial authorities to deal the resistance in a brutal way. This caused for mass arrest and murder of Mappila people in Malabar.

The District officials of Malabar decided to take revenge on the Indian National Congress and Khilafat volunteers who welcomed the three political prisoners K Madhavan Nair, P Moideen Koya and U Gopala Menon while they were released from the prison.² These political prisoners were imprisoned by the *DM* six months ago. The officials targeted the Khilafat leaders and volunteers of Ernad-Valluvanad region of Malabar accusing them as fanatics. Thus, E F Thomas prepared a list of twenty four persons³ to be

¹ The word 'Malabar Struggle' is used in the thesis to denote the 'Mappila Revolt' of 1921 explained by the imperial and nationalist historians. This movement was an organised struggle against colonialism and nationalism and it was the last one of a series of movement started in the early part of the nineteenth century.

² These people were arrested in the early months of 1921 for decision to violating the prohibition order of the District Collector. The District Collector had banned the speech of Yakub Hassan in Kozhikode. E F Thomas was the District Magistrate and R H Hitchcock was the District Superintendent of Police. See chapter three for details.

³ The list mainly comprises 18 persons concerned with Congress- Khilafat movement and 6 persons accused with the Pookottur incident of 1st August 1921. The list includes M P Narayana Menon the only non Mappila who the state wish to imprison under the Moplah Act. The other major persons mentioned in the list were Ali Musaliar, Karadan Moideen, C Lavakutty, Kattilassery Muhammed Musaliar. For details see R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion -1921*.

arrested and imprisoned at the Coimbatore Central Jail under the Moplah Outrages Act-1859 on 18th August 1921.⁴ The Madras government approved the decision and the *DM* telegraphed to the Inspector General of Prisons for providing facility to confine them at Coimbatore Jail. The government's order was to keep them in Kozhikode Jail. Whereas, the *DM* chose Coimbatore Jail because he expected a Mappila outbreak and hence it would be dangerous to keep them in Malabar.⁵ The selection of the Coimbatore Jail clearly shows that the government was sure about the commencement of an organised struggle against colonial authorities in Malabar.

The government firmly believed that the listed suspected rebels were in Tirurangadi and it was necessary to arrest them to prevent the rebellion. The District Magistrate along with police and military went to Tirurangadi for arresting the listed persons in the night of 19th August 1921.⁶ On the next day when the troops under the District Magistrate reached Parapanangadi, they marched silently towards Tirurangadi.⁷ The government officials began to arrest the listed persons and it caused for rumours spreading to different parts of Malabar. Due to the widespread rumour that the Mamburam mosque was destroyed by the British, a large crowd arrived Tirurangadi to resist the police action. The struggle broke out when the police opened fire against the crowd. The religious *kuttabanku* and beating of *nakara*⁸ quickened mobilisation of the masses in Tirurangadi.⁹ Ali Mussaliar stated that the police action at Tirurangadi and its news which spread like wildfire were the immediate causes of the problem.¹⁰ The struggle lasted for six months. The *mappilamar* attacked the houses of landlords and government

⁴ R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion 1921*, pp. 31-32.

⁵ G R F Tottenham, *The Mappila Rebellion 1921-1922*, Government Press, Madras, 1922, p. 30.

⁶ K P Kesava Menon, *Kazhinjaalam*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2012(1957), p. 90.

⁷ Moulavi K Koyatti, *1921le Malabar Lahala*, Tirurangadi, 1953, p. 21.

⁸ A drum like instrument.

⁹ K N Panikkar, 'Peasant Revolts in Malabar' in P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives of Kerala History*, p. 423.

¹⁰ Public G O No 112, 7th February 1922, TSA, Chennai.

offices including police station, banks, post offices etc.. The railway and telegraph lines were also destroyed by them. The main area of revolt was south Malabar which included Ernad and Valluvanad taluks and also some parts of Kozhikode and Ponnani *taluk*. Martial law was declared on 29th August 1921 in Ernad, Valluvanad, Ponnani, Kozhikode, Kurumbranad and Wayanad *taluks* of Malabar.¹¹

The headquarters of the military operation which was initially established at Tirur was transferred to Malapuram on 14th October 1921. The chief leaders of the revolt were Ali Musaliar, Variankunnath Kunjahamaed Haji, Chembrasserri Tangal, Konara Tangal, Aboobaker Musaliar, Lavakutty and Kunjalavi. Even Ali Mussaliar and Variankunnath appointed guards for protecting various Hindu houses as a protection from various gangs which utilised the opportunity to plunder.¹²

State and Coercive Forces

The government soon after the starting of the struggle branded it as a communal one. This branding mainly helped them to use extreme violence and torture against the people in rebel zones. The Government of Madras approved the formation of a batch of armed police under the name Malabar Special Police (*MSP*) consisting of three hundred men on 30th September 1921 to deal with the struggle.¹³ This *MSP* was notorious for their atrocities during this struggle. Manjeri Rama Iyer has written a lot of articles criticising the police raj during the struggle.¹⁴ Rama Iyer argued that the police utilised this opportunity to oppress their enemies and for looting wealth of the

¹¹ FSG, no. 254 of 1921, *RAK*.

¹² Moulavi K Koyatti, *1921le Malabar Lahala*, p. 48.

¹³ *MSP* was not the first special armed police wing to deal with *mappilamar*. In 1884 also a special force consisting of hundred men was formed at Malapuram. This special troop was withdrawn in 1914 for their service to First World War.

¹⁴ *HFM*, vol. 71, TSA, Chennai.

people. The police and army brutally tortured innocent people both in police lock ups and jails.

With the withdrawal of martial law on 24th February 1922, the revolt also came to an end. Even after the withdrawal, the military forces stationed in south Malabar until the end of May 1922.¹⁵ A lot of studies have come out on the history and nature of this struggle. However, none of them have dealt with the prison life of thousands of *mappilamar* arrested during the struggle. The official records mentions that 2339 rebels had been killed 1665 were wounded, 5955 were captured by police and military and around 39348 surrendered.¹⁶

Arrests and Transportation of Prisoners

The government's intention in Tirurangadi raid was to arrest twenty four persons including M P Narayana Menon under the *MOA*. The most important among the arrested was Tanur Kunhi Kader, a volunteer of the Khilafat movement. Ali Mussaliar along with thirty eight persons surrendered to the troops on 30th August 1921 during the police action at the Tirurangadi mosque.¹⁷ Variankunatth and Chembrassery were informed that if they surrendered they will be let free. When they surrendered, they were arrested and extremely tortured in police lock ups shows the treacherous mentality used by colonial state. The leaders of Congress and Khilafat movement in Malabar tried their best to restore peace in the rebel zone and

¹⁵ *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the Year 1921-22*, Government Press, Madras, 1923, p. 12.

¹⁶ Robert L Hardgrave, 'The *Mappila* Rebellion, 1921; Peasant Revolt in Malabar' in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol XI, no 1, 1977, p. 91.

¹⁷ K K Muhammad Abdul Kareem, *1921le Khilafat Lahalayum Ali Musaliyarum*, Tirurangadi, 1968, p. 26.

were arrested by accusing various charges which included M P Narayana Menon, Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib and K Kelappan.

The police force and military troops arrested accused from the 'rebel zone' marked by the colonial government. Due to scarcity of handcuffs, most of their hands were tied by coir or by cloths. Parakal Ismail, one of the survived prisoners of 'wagon massacre'¹⁸ explained that instead of handcuff his hands were tied by clothes.¹⁹ Whereas Moidu Moulavi's hands were tied by coir both during his arrest and also while taking to trial from the Kozhikode Sub Jail.²⁰

The arrested persons were forced to walk and run miles to reach the camp jails and other jails in the rebel zone. The rebels when arrested were tied in bullock carts and donkey carts and forced to run a long distance to reach the jails while the military persons also attacked the rebels with bayonets if the speed was decreased which caused injuries to rebels.²¹ They were transported in Mail trains and local trains. The prisoners who were transported to Kannur Jail in mail and local trains were packed tightly resembling to sheep in a fold.²² Moidu Moulavi has recorded that there was a huge crowd at the Kannur Railway Station and nearby places to see the arrival of prisoners.²³ The prisoners were not given enough food and water during the one or two days travel. The small quantity food given was too

¹⁸ We use the term massacre instead of tragedy as the incident was not a tragedy rather a result of brutal suppression by colonial officials against *mappilamar* for details see, P Sivadasan, '*Wagon Tragedy*': *Kanalvazhiyile Koottakuruthi*, SPCS, Kottayam, 2012.

¹⁹ *FSG*, part 1, 1922, p. 930, RAK.

²⁰ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha*, pp. 51-53.

²¹ Abdu Cheruvadi (ed.), *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika*, Kozhikode, Mathrubhumi Books, 1981, p. 5.

²² Moyyarath Sankaran, *Moyyarath Sankaran: Autobiography of a Freedom Fighter*, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2016, p. 150.

²³ E Moidu Moulavi, *Ente Kootukaran*, Current Books, Kozhikode, 1964, p. 88.

bad to consume. When the prisoners were given *idly* near the Vellore Jail, most of them vomited as they were having it first time.²⁴

The use of closed goods wagons to transport prisoners started with the arrest of Ali Mussaliar and his men at Tirurangadi.²⁵ Thus, Ali Mussaliar and thirty eight persons arrested along with him were the first batch of prisoners transported by using goods wagon from Tirur to Coimbatore on 2nd September 1921.²⁶ Thus, the first batch reached successfully at Coimbatore and later wagons were widely used for transport of prisoners. Reeve, the Traffic Inspector had stated that wagon was used mainly for safe transport of prisoners with minimal escort.²⁷ Eleven different luggage vans belonging to South Indian Railway and some of the Madras South Maratha Railway were used for prisoners transportation in Malabar. As per the official sources in between September and November, 2549 prisoners were transported by using wagon, 1411 to Coimbatore, 456 to Kannur, 151 to Madras, 100 to Vellore, 104 to Trichinopoly and 327 to Bellary Central Jail.²⁸ This also reveals that most of the prisoners were earlier confined at Coimbatore Central Jail.

'Wagon Massacre'

On 19th November 1921 two hundred prisoners arrived at Tirur Sub Jail from different parts of South Malabar. Reeve and Sergeant Andrews who were in charge of the prisoners' transport decided to transport one hundred prisoners to the Jail at Bellary.²⁹ Even though two wagons were available. Thus, one hundred prisoners were forcefully put into Wagon LV

²⁴ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, p. 62.

²⁵ *FSG 1922 part 1*, p. 904, RAK

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ P Sivadasan, *'Wagon Tragedy': Kanalvazhiyile Koottakuruthi*, p. 43.

1711 by 7. 15 P M. The doors were closed and locked by the police. The prisoners were escorted by Sergeant Andrews and seven policemen. The prisoners due to overcrowding and other problems fell thirsty and shouted for water. One of the survived prisoner in his statement recalls it as when they shouted for water someone said them that they would get water at Podanur station and if they continued shouting they would be shot.³⁰ When the door was opened at Podanur, the officials were frightened by the scene. Fifty six persons were found dead and all the prisoners were dragged into railway platform. Of the remaining forty four prisoners, six died from platform itself. Thirteen were taken to hospital and twenty five people were transferred to the Coimbatore Jail in a lorry. Later eight more prisoners died and the total casualty of the event became seventy.³¹

Most of the newspapers as well as the questions in House Of Commons stated that sixty four prisoners died in the massacre.³² The total prisoner died in connection with the 'wagon massacre' was seventy.³³ The Sub Assistant Surgeon of Tirur, who did the post mortem examination of three dead bodies on 20th November morning certified that the death was due to suffocation.³⁴ Two enquiries were conducted on the massacre. First one was a joint enquiry by railway officials on 24th and 25th November 1921.³⁵ Secondly, the Madras Government appointed a separate investigation committee under A R Knapp, the Special Commissioner for Malabar, and three other non-official members for investigating the event.

³⁰ Resolution of government of India on 'wagon tragedy', Home political, Shimla, 30th August 1922, *FSG*, part1, July December 1922, p. 930, RAK.

³¹ *FSG*, part 1, July December 1922, p. 933, RAK.

³² *Bengali*, 27th November 1921, Bengal Native Newspaper Report- July –December 1921, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

³³ P Sivadasan, '*Wagon Tragedy*': *Kanalvazhiyile Koottakuruthi*, p. 53.

³⁴ *Bombay Chronicle*, 28th November 1921, Microfilm, NMML, New Delhi.

³⁵ *FSG*, part 1, July December 1922, p. 933, RAK.

They were Krishna Varma of Mankada, Manjeri Rama Iyer and Kalladi Moidutty. Appointment of A R Knapp as the committee head rose severe criticism. *Nyaya Dipika* questioned why Knapp, who was answerable for the tragic incident, was appointed to enquire about the incident.³⁶ The committee started its enquiry from 28th November 1921.³⁷ R H Andrews reported to the committee that prisoners had been given food and plenty of water at 5 P M from the sub jail and when he heard prisoners shout for water, he replied that, they will be given it from Podanur.³⁸ A R Knapp examined sixty two witnesses including survived prisoners and stated that the cause of death was asphyxia.³⁹ The newspapers demanded that the people responsible for the tragedy have to be brought to trial without delay and to be hanged.⁴⁰ None of them, F B Evan, E F Thomas, R H Hitchcock were included in the list of responsible persons. Only one sergeant and seven constables who escorted the prisoners were stated as guilty. The *New India* from Madras severely criticised government's action by omitting R H Hitchcock and Evans who were mainly responsible for the massacre.⁴¹ Thus, eight persons including Sergeant Andres and seven police constables who escorted the prisoners were brought to trial.⁴² They were only charged with small crimes like bad behaviour towards prisoners from Tirur to Podanur and the trial took place at Coimbatore Court under sessions 304A of *IPC* and section 128 of Indian railways act. Sergeant Andrews was discharged from

³⁶ *HFM*, vol. 39, TSA, Chennai.

³⁷ *HFM*, vol. 94, TSA, Chennai.

³⁸ *Bombay Chronicle*, 1st December 1921, Microfilm, *NMML*, New Delhi.

³⁹ G O No 390, 20th January 1923, Under-secretaries secret safe Files (hereafter *USSF*), TSA, Chennai.

⁴⁰ *Bengali*, 27th November 1921, Bengal Native Newspaper report- July –December 1921, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

⁴¹ *New India*, 31st August 1922, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

⁴² Public G O No 378, 2nd October 1922, *USSF*, TSA, Chennai.

service by the Magistrate of Coimbatore. He was later restored to service and also allowed to draw salary arrears from the date of suspension.⁴³

The Government of Madras sanctioned a sum of twenty one thousand rupees as compensation. Thus 300 rupees each for the families of seventy prisoners died in the incident was given.⁴⁴ This amount was very less as most of the prisoners' families were fined much more than this amount and the compensation was not enough to pay even the fines to the government.⁴⁵

The Massacre resulted in continues debates at *MLC* and other council including House of Commons in Britain. The English parliament expressed their regret and indignation towards the incident.⁴⁶ The members of House of Commons demanded to arrest the responsible persons for trail. When the enquiry report of A R Knapp was submitted, Col Wedgewood protested against it stating that the main responsible ones Col Humphreys, Malabar District Collector and Police Superintendent R H Hitchcock were left free.⁴⁷ However, no action was taken against these officials who were responsible for the massacre. Joshi, one of the members of Indian Legislative Assembly asked the question in the assembly on May 1922 whether the practice of using goods wagon for carrying Malabar struggle prisoners was stopped completely. The reply he got was that, the practice had been stopped by the Madras government. However, even they were not sure about it and enquired about it to the Madras government.⁴⁸ The daily *Tamilnadu* of 27th November referred the incident as 'Malabar Massacre' and criticised the use

⁴³ G O No 159, 4th April 1923, *USSF*, TSA, Chennai.

⁴⁴ C Gopalan Nair, *Moplah Rebellion of 1921*, Norman Printing Bureau, Kozhikode, 1923, p. 93.

⁴⁵ P Sivadasan, '*Wagon Tragedy*': *Kanalvazhiyile Koottakuruthi*, p. 82.

⁴⁶ *HFM*, Volume 39, TSA, Chennai.

⁴⁷ House of Common Debates, 15th February 1922, vol. 150 c 1037, <http://hansard.milbanksystems.com/written-answers/1922/feb/15/train-disaster-malabar>, accessed on 21st February 2017.

⁴⁸ Public G O No 467, 26th May 1922, TSA, Chennai.

of wagon for human transportation.⁴⁹ The *Swarat* from Kollam stated that instead of *mappilamar* if some Europeans were met with such death a worldwide storm of agitation would have taken place.⁵⁰

The 'wagon massacre' was called as real black hole by Indian newspapers. The tragic news was even published by newspapers in England. Soon after the massacre, the Bengal newspapers compared it with 'Black Hole Tragedy'⁵¹ of Kolkata and raised question targeting lord Curzon whether the authorities were ready to erect a monument in between Tirur and Bellary like Black Hole monument in Kolkatta.⁵² *Yogakshemam* stated that even police guard were kept over the black hole monument of Kolkata which was said to be a myth.⁵³ The *Al Ameen* of 1930 also described 'wagon massacre' as 'The Black Hole of Malabar' and pointed out that the black hole of Kolkata was a myth introduced by the British into Indian history.⁵⁴

The Political Prisoners'Conference held at Vadakara in May 1931 attached to the Kerala State Political Conference passed a resolution for erecting a 'wagon massacre' memorial to depict the cruelty of government and formed a committee with K. Kelappan as Chairman and Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib as Convenor.⁵⁵ The Committee failed to erect a monument for commemorating the event. The train transport of under trail prisoners as well as punished prisoners continued in the following years. T S Tiruvenkatachami, a first grade pleader in Salem happened to travel in a

⁴⁹ *HFM*, vol. 39, TSA, Chennai.

⁵⁰ *Swarat*, Kollam, 26th September 1922, Madras Native Newspaper Reports Hereafter *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

⁵¹ For details on Black Hole Tragedy of Kolkatta see, Partha Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power*, Princeton University Press, New Delhi, 2012.

⁵² *Bengali*, 27th November 1921, Bengal native newspaper report- July –December 1921, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

⁵³ *Yogakshemam*, 30th June 1923, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

⁵⁴ *Al Ameen*, 26th November 1930, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

⁵⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th May 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

train carrying Malabar struggle prisoners stated that even after 'wagon massacre' there was no feeding facility to prisoners who were transported in miserable condition.⁵⁶ He also pointed out that the prisoners were suffering from insufficient clothes.⁵⁷ This clearly shows that the 'wagon massacre' only resulted in the end of using closed wagons but the sufferings of prisoners continued.

'KAMAN'

The prisoners were transferred frequently from one jail to another and it was called *kaman*. The mode of transport was train and after the 'wagon massacre' use of closed wagons was ended. However it could not end the sufferings of prisoners. The prisoners associated with the Malabar Struggle were transferred in batches comprising around hundred prisoners. Moidu Moulavi had to complete his two years' punishment in Kozhikode Sub Jail, Kannur, Vellore, Alipuram and Rajahmundry Central Jails. Majority of the Mappila prisoners completed their sentences after being confined in more than two jails. The train journey from Kannur to Alipuram took three days' time. The food served during *kaman* was bad and not enough to curb the hunger. As Moidu Moulavi remembers that there were committees at different railway stations to give food and water to prisoners on the way to Alipuram Jail as they would get good food from Ramapuram station only.⁵⁸ The Indian National Congress had formed committees to help the transporting prisoners after the 'wagon massacre'. However, all the prisoners did not get the benefit of these committees.

⁵⁶ Public G O No 218, 8th March 1922, TSA, Chennai.

⁵⁷ *The Hindu*, 24th January 1922, TSA, Chennai.

⁵⁸ E. Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha*, p. 69.

Trial of Prisoners

The main charge put on rebels were waging war against the king. R H Hitchcock stated that the courts generally accepted the crime charges prepared by police against prisoners of the Malabar Struggle.⁵⁹ They also stated that Mappila prisoners didn't enjoy any provision for defence in the court. This clearly shows that the police possessed power to revenge or frame case against innocent people. Majority of the arrested belonged to the Mappila community and there was a purposeful move to prevent any further growth of the anti-colonial spirit in Malabar. The newspapers and Mappila prisoners pointed out that the judges could declare any person as criminal if he was a Mappila.⁶⁰ Thus, a lot of innocent *mappilamar* were imprisoned as well as sentenced to death by charging various offences.

The poor *mappilamar* didn't have enough money for appointing a lawyer to prove their innocence and file appeals. Some of the Congress and Khilafat volunteers who appointed advocates could escape from punishment in the first attempt or by filing appeal at the high court. Mannarkat Kocchuni Elaya Nair, a volunteer of the Congress movement arrested from Palakkad was able to prove his innocence by appointing a lawyer.⁶¹ Elaya Nair soon after his release helped Mozhikunath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad by providing a lawyer for proving his innocence. Unlike Elaya Nair, the court punished Mozhikunath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad however he filed a suit at high court and the court ordered cancellation of his punishment and ordered his release.⁶²

⁵⁹ R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion 1921*, p. 141.

⁶⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 20th March 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶¹ *The Indian Law Reports*, vol. XLV, RRL, Thalassery, p. 16.

⁶² Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, p. 139.

Punishments to the Tried Prisoners

The government punished the rebels with the all types of punishments existed at that time. Not only the rebels but the entire people mainly *mappilamar* of the area including members of the Congress and Khilafat committees from Muslim and Hindu communities were also punished. These punishments included death sentence by hanging, execution by shooting in public place, life term transportation, imprisonment, fines and confiscation of property. Most of the prisoners were fined with big amounts. Collective fines were also imposed for *amsom* under *MOA* and other acts. Official sources state that cases were registered against sixty thousand *mappilamar*, out of which thirty eight were sentenced to be shot dead, three hundred and to be hanged, transportation of one thousand two hundred and seventy seven prisoners to Andaman Island with in 22nd March 1922.⁶³ Many arrested people were transported under the 'Andaman Colonisation Scheme' and eleven thousand were sentenced to imprisonment.

Capital Punishments

During the Malabar Struggle, a total of three hundred and forty six people were sentenced to death.⁶⁴ The Martial Law Court sentenced thirty eight persons to be executed by shooting which included Varian Kunnath Kunjahamed Haji, Chembrasser Tangal, and Sithikoya Tangal. The main venue of shooting was at Kotakkunu in Malapuram town. Varian Kunnath was shot dead on 20th January 1922. They were subjected to inhuman torture by the authorities before they were shot dead.⁶⁵ The dead bodies of

⁶³ Public G O No 742, 25th May 1932, TSA, Chennai.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ M Eshad on 1921, 1921/153E, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

leaders who were shot dead including V K Haji were burned using petrol and even his ashes was taken away by the British.⁶⁶ Burning of dead bodies was completely against the Islamic law. David Arnold argues that the British colonial state in India resorted the pre-colonial 'barbaric form of punishment which included mutilation, torture and long-term imprisonment without trial during the periods of crisis and struggle'.⁶⁷ This was the same pattern of punishment followed against the poor Mappila prisoners in the earlier period.

Hanging to death of prisoners was done at the early morning at five' o clock inside the prison. Leaders of the struggle, who were sentenced to hanging included Tanur Kunji Kadar, Ali Mussaliar, Konara Tangal, Aboobaker Mussaliar etc. The Special Tribunal sentenced death by hanging on Ali Mussaliar in September 1921.⁶⁸ Tanur Kunji Kadar's property was confiscated by the government.⁶⁹ Tanur Kunji Kadar submitted his mercy petition for the remission of death sentence passed on him.⁷⁰ Ali Mussaliar also submitted mercy petition which were rejected by the government. Aboobaker Mussaliar also submitted mercy petitions. Ali Mussaliar, Aboobaker Mussaliar and Konara Tangal were hanged to death at the Coimbatore Jail.⁷¹

The corpses of hanged persons were usually handed over to Muslims near the jail. The corpse of Ali Mussaliar was collected by Coimbatore Muslims. They buried Ali Mussaliar's corpse after completing all religious

⁶⁶ A K Kodur, *Anglo- Mappilayudham 1921*, Mehabub, Manjeri, 1999, p. 232.

⁶⁷ David Arnold, 'Touching The Body' in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V*, OUP, New Delhi, 1999, p. 5.

⁶⁸ M Gangadaran, *The Malabar Rebellion*, DC Books, Kottayam, 2008, pp. 205-206.

⁶⁹ Public G O No 784, 11th November 1921, TSA, Chennai.

⁷⁰ Home Judicial G O No 706, 1922, NAI, New Delhi.

⁷¹ A K Kodur, *Anglo- Mappilayudham 1921*, pp. 205-220.

customs at Coimbatore mosque.⁷² Aboobaker Mussaliar in his letter to his home stated that the Muslims of Coimbatore spent twenty five rupees for the cremation of hanged Mappila prisoners.⁷³ While Arekkadam Moideen in his letter written in 1925 from Salem Jail stated that twenty prisoners were hanged there and the Muslims of Salem in early morning came to jail for collecting hanged prisoners' corpse in horse cart.⁷⁴

Punishment of Deportation

The transportation for life was another major punishment used against *mappilamar*. Seven hundred and sixty one persons were punished with transportation for life in connection with the struggle.⁷⁵ In the beginning of twentieth century Andaman was the main site for transporting Indian convicts. The Indian Jail Committee of 1920 recommended to abolish transportation as a form of punishment and abandoning Andaman as a site of penal settlement.⁷⁶ It was at the same time Col Wedgewood's article entitled 'Hell in the Andaman's' was published in *Daily Herald* on 29th December 1920 which clearly depicted the real situation of Andaman penal settlement.⁷⁷

The Indian Jail Committee of 1920 recommended to stop sending life convicts to Andaman's. The Government of India accepted the recommendation of the Indian jail Committee and William Vincent announced in March 1921 at the Legislative Assembly that Andaman's would

⁷² K K Muhammad Abdul Kareem, *1921le Khilafat Lahalayum Ali Musaliyarum*, p. 64.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Letter from Areekadan Moideen prisoner Salem Jail, 22nd May 1925, Kept at Edathola House. Visited on 5th November 2018.

⁷⁵ *MLCP*, 7th February 1924, vol. XVI, TSA, Chennai, p. 250.

⁷⁶ *Report of the Indian Jail Committee 1919-1920*, London, 1921, p. 311, TSA, Chennai.

⁷⁷ Home political, G O No 4-65, 3rd March 1921, NAI, New Delhi.

not be used as a penal settlement in future.⁷⁸ The Secretary of State of India approved the decision and the plan was forwarded to Britain for further approval but it was not accepted by the authorities stating that it would not be possible to abandon Andaman until an alternate accommodation facility had been constructed to the prisoners.⁷⁹

Andaman Colonisation Scheme

During the struggle in December 1921, A R Knapp came forward with the Andaman Colonisation Scheme. Knapp in his letter pointed out that majority of the *mappilamar* were not criminals rather they joined struggle with excitement. The government wanted to keep a large number of *mappilamar* away from Malabar for years. Hence, he came forward with deportation of *mappilamar* along with their families to Andamans under the MOA.⁸⁰ Knapp stated that they were good workers and they will be a source of free labour. A Malayalam speaking staff from Malabar was proposed to be send to Andaman as a local staff to look after the *mappilamar*.⁸¹

The government of India came forward with the Andaman Scheme in which convicts with 'Self Supporters Ticket' would be allowed to bring their families instead of using MOA. The two major tasks assigned to *mappilamar* were forest clearing and converting forest land to paddy field. The payment for work was out of question. Instead, they would receive rations, materials

⁷⁸ *Swarajya*, Madras, 1st March 1926, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

⁷⁹ British house of Common debates, 26 March 1923., volume 162 c9:Andaman islands(penal settlement, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1923/mar/26/Andaman-islands-penal-settlement>, accessed on 21st February 2017, 11 55 PM.

⁸⁰ Letter from A R Knapp to *IG* of forests in Shimla, 21st December 1921, Home political, File no- 612, 1922, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

for constructing huts, cloths and agricultural instruments.⁸² If the *mappilamar* refused to work they would be punished like ordinary criminals. The Chief Commissioner of Andaman Island's, stated that initially he needed one thousand convicts for road construction and other works.

The government framed the Andaman Scheme in a well-planned manner and the Malabar struggle convicts punished by transportation for life, and those sentenced to long-term imprisonment were transported to Andaman.⁸³ The first batch of Malabar struggle convicts reached Port Blair on 22nd April 1922 which included P. Achuthankutty Menon and Aripa Unnikrishnan.⁸⁴ Initially a total of 1277 Malabar struggle convicts were transported to the Andamans. While only seven hundred and sixty one prisoners were sentenced to transportation in connection with the Malabar Struggle the transportation of 1277 prisoners to Andamans clearly shows that intention of government was none other than keeping away maximum *mappilamar* from Malabar. In 1923 March there were 1277 Mappila convicts in Andaman among them are 232 punished by court martial, 1044 by Special Courts and one sentenced to death after completing life term imprisonment.⁸⁵ The main task of this first batch was for making necessary arrangements for accommodating Mappila families. The *Andrapatrika* published from Madras severely criticised the government's decision to reopen Andaman which was recommended to be closed as a penal settlement by the Indian Jail Committee.⁸⁶

⁸² H C Beadon, the Chief Commissioner of Andaman to Secretary Government of India, 14th February 1922, Home Political, File no- 612, 1922, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸³ Home Jails, No 66, 28th March 1923, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸⁴ R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion-1921*, p. 305.

⁸⁵ Telegram from Indian Viceroy to London, Home Jails, no 66, 1923, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸⁶ *Andrapatrika*, Madras, 1st September 1923, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

The Mappila convicts were initially confined at the Cellular Jail in solitary confinement and in later groups. Wedgewood, Member of Parliament raised question in the British Parliament in favour of Mappila prisoners at Andaman. The question was about the decision of abandonment of Andaman overturned by the government.⁸⁷ However, the government was not ready to explain the actual reason behind the Scheme. His main demand was to separate Mappila convicts from habitual prisoners.⁸⁸ The convict life of convicts at Cellular Jail was shortened and they were taken into adolescent gangs, convict barracks and also in agricultural and other works.

In September 1922, the Chief Commissioner of Andamans in his letter to the secretary of Indian government requested for a subordinate staff from Malabar to the Andamans. The main problem was the difficulty in dealing with the *mappilamar* due to the language barrier.⁸⁹ The jail officials could not understand Malayalam while *mappilamar* did not know English, Hindi or Urdu. The government's attempt to depute a Mappila officer from Malabar to Andaman ended in failure. Finally P P Govindan accepted to settle at Andaman for three years as Deputy Commissioner with a wage of one hundred and twenty five rupees per month and a second class travel allowance.⁹⁰ From 1923, the government started to grant self-supporters ticket more liberally to convicts after a short term of confinement in jails.

It was in 1922 the district authorities of Malabar prepared the nature and offers of the scheme. In October 1922, the government of India gave green signal to the scheme and Government of Madras was entrusted with

⁸⁷ Home Jails, No 66 of 1923, NAI, New Delhi.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Letter dated 13th September 1922, Home No 1-9, 1922, NAI, New Delhi.

⁹⁰ Home No 1-9, 1922, NAI, New Delhi.

its responsibility.⁹¹ The government decided to issue Self Supporters Tickets to Mappila convicts whose families had decided to join with them. The Self Supporters were employed in various jobs including forest clearing and farming in middle and north Andamans.⁹² Thoron, the District Magistrate and Collector of Malabar, officially announced the Andaman Colonisation Scheme on 6th September 1924 stating that its aim was the welfare of *mappilamar*. In practice, the convict families were transported even before the official announcement of the scheme.

The Andaman Scheme aimed to settle the *mappilamar* at the Island with their wives and children. All the travel expenses of convict's families were taken care by the government.⁹³ The convict was transferred directly to the settlement when his family arrived. The main labour given to them at the settlement was forest clearing of the middle and northern Andaman under the supervision of authorities.⁹⁴ The major benefit to the authorities was that the settlers were given prisoners' ration rather than wage.⁹⁵

Abraham, a *tahsildar* from Malabar was given the task to visit Cellular Jail in Andaman for convincing the convicts about the benefits of the Scheme. He visited Andaman in December 1922 and he returned in January 1923.⁹⁶ One hundred and twenty three convicts accepted the offer and he enquired the details of their wives. Abraham himself visited the Mappila women in their respective *amsam* and explained the benefits of the Scheme.⁹⁷ Abraham in his report to the government pointed out the reasons by

⁹¹ Home Jails, no F 44-1, dated 30th October 1922, R R Dis Bn no 260 Sl. 22, RAK.

⁹² Home Jails, file no 527/1922, NAI, New Delhi.

⁹³ Home Jails, No 66 of 1923, NAI, New Delhi.

⁹⁴ Home Jails, No 527 of 1922, NAI, New Delhi.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 24th March 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

which majority of convicts, more than one thousand, rejected the offer. Majority of *mappilamar* rejected the offer stating that they were innocent and government punished them by charging fake cases, they believed that if they accepted the government offer they would be forced to settle in Andaman even after the completion of their term of sentence and finally they hoped that they would be released before the completion of their sentence.⁹⁸

The government's plan was that if the women after joining with their husbands at Andamans send back favourable report of the Scheme, a large number of others would follow.⁹⁹ The *Mathrubhumi* criticised the Scheme stating that sending women there was a disrespect and it would be unsafe. The reasons stated by them against the scheme were that the project was secret and speedy, women were recruited by misunderstanding them or by fearing and women would not be able to survive in the convict settlement.¹⁰⁰ The government claimed that the Malapuram Khasi, Kundotty Tangal and Khan Bahadur Kallady Moidutty know about the scheme and supported it.¹⁰¹ The convicts and their families were not confined and they were allowed to settle in the free settlement. The government sent many families of Mappila convicts by miss convincing them with fake offers.

The offer to Mappila prisoners at various jails at Madras Presidency was given as either they have to complete their term at jails or to settle at Andaman along with their family with Self Supporter's Ticket. The Government of India, in 1925 allowed the entire prisoners of Indian Jails for opting Andaman Scheme. For escaping the torture in jails of the Madras

⁹⁸ Report of Tahsildar, Andaman Colonisation Files, vol. 1, RAK.

⁹⁹ Revenue R Dis B 260, S 22, RAK.

¹⁰⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 24th March 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Presidency especially in Alipuram and at Bellary Jails many Mappila prisoners decided to accept the Scheme.¹⁰² The government tried to prevent the contact between Mappila prisoners at Andamans with Mappila prisoners from various jails in the Madras Presidency. For this purpose, the officials proposed to shift the steamer location carrying prisoners and their family from Port Blair to south or middle Andamans.¹⁰³

The convict families were transported to Andaman from 1923 onwards. The government stated that at first only one woman and four children arrived under the Scheme and three more families were expected shortly.¹⁰⁴ Later some more families arrived. Thus seven families initially settled at the islands. However four families returned to Malabar. Four women and ten or thirteen children also returned from Port Blair by steamer SS Maharaja.¹⁰⁵ They reached Madras on 11th June and on the very next day sent to Feroke in Malabar by train under the surveillance of railway police. They reached Feroke and proceeded to their native villages in 1923.¹⁰⁶ The return of these families raised the question on why they chose to return rather than staying in Andaman Islands.

Wide range of protests was conducted in different parts of Malabar against the Scheme. The main issue was the male-female ratio of Andamans. There was only one female for 10 men. The main criticism against the Scheme was that the government tried to solve the sex-ratio problem of Andamans by using poor Mappila women.¹⁰⁷ *Al Ameen* published an interview with Kunjammad Koya a retired deputy superintendent of

¹⁰² For details see *MNNPR, 1923-1927*, TSA, Chennai

¹⁰³ Andaman Colonisation Files, vol. I, RAK.

¹⁰⁴ Home Jail, No 66 of 1923, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁵ Home, 527 of 1923, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁰⁶ D Dis No 213/1923, *MSP Files*, Sub List 2, Sl No 18, RAK.

¹⁰⁷ S K Pottokad (et. al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman: A Political Biography*, p. 170.

Andaman. In the interview he has no single word to say in favour of sending the *mappilamar* there.¹⁰⁸ The Fort Nightly Report of the *Madras* Government for July 1925 reported that the Andaman Colonisation Scheme was turned out to be a success. About three hundred persons including convicts and their families left Malabar on 4th July 1925. Some of the convicts belonging to reputed families failed to convince their wives for accompanying them. However, majority left to Andaman with their families.¹⁰⁹ The death rate was double in Andaman Islands compared to India and due to lower sex ratio, most men were homo sexual which created a lot of problems among the prisoners.¹¹⁰

The newspapers of Madras were against the Andaman Scheme. In 1926, a meeting was conducted at the Gokhale Hall in Madras as a protest against the Andaman Colonisation Scheme. The meeting concluded that the British attitude towards Mappila women and children were inhuman and violent.¹¹¹ *The Quami* published from Madras in 1926 stated that the transportation of innocent women to Andamans as monstrously cruel as there was only one women to ten men which would cause moral problems and thus urged the government to give up the scheme.¹¹² In 1926, the Malabar District Magistrate didn't allow Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib to interview the Mappila prisoners who accepted to join the scheme with their families. *Mathrubhumi* pointed out that the refusal of District Magistrate unsatisfactory arguments creates a suspicion regarding the scheme.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ *Al Ameen*, 10th February 1925, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁰⁹ *FNR* for the First Half of July 1925, TSA, Chennai.

¹¹⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 21st April 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹¹¹ *Azad Hind*, 18th December 1926, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

¹¹² *Quami Report*, 14th December 1926, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

¹¹³ *Mathrubhumi*, 9th December 1926, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

The lack of women created a lot of sexual problems in Andamans. As due to less women a lot of immoral activities mainly prostitution was active in the Andamans. Even the officials who were aware of this remained silent on it. To solve this problem, the authorities introduced a scheme. The wives' of Andaman convicts were allowed to join their husbands at the settlement until the expiry of the sentence. The scheme was a failure as mainly the communication between husband and wife was possible only through letters and majority of the prisoners received letters rarely. Another major reason was that even the hardened criminals feared to bring their wives mainly raising the question how could they protect their wife's from the hands of gang masters and other brutes in the shape of men.¹¹⁴

As a result of public protests the Madras Legislative Council appointed a four member committee for investigating on Andaman Colonisation Scheme. The committee from Madras consisted Muhammad Shamnad, Sayyed Murtaza, Abbas Ali, and Dr. K C Mugaseth. The three members excluding Mugaseth in their report suggested to cancel the scheme and to bring the entire Mappila prisoners back to jails in Madras Presidency and their families to Malabar at government's expense.¹¹⁵ The majority view was rejected by government. The government accepted Mugaseth's report with some amendments. The government even after that recruited another batch of Mappila convicts, women and children to Andaman.¹¹⁶

At a conference in Tamilnadu Syed Mortaza described that when he went to Andaman for an inquiry. The Mappila women and children begged him with tears to see that they were taken back to Malabar.¹¹⁷ The tears by

¹¹⁴ Home Go No 66, 26th March 1923, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹⁵ S K Pottekad (et. al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman: A Political Biography*, p. 169.

¹¹⁶ *Al Ameen*, 28th November and 2nd December 1926, MNNPR, TSA, Chennai.

¹¹⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, 9th December 1926, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

Mappila women and children indicate that the Andaman was not a heaven rather it was a hell. A strong public opinion was created against the Colonisation Scheme in the Madras Presidency. The Tamilnadu Conference of 1926 criticised the Andaman Scheme and requested the people of the Madras Presidency to begin a strong agitation in order to force the government to abandon the scheme.¹¹⁸

A lot of *MLC* members criticised the scheme and requested for the cancellation of it. A Number of resolutions was passed in *MLC* for cancelling the scheme.¹¹⁹ The resolutions mainly demanded cancelation of Andaman Colonisation Scheme and to bring back all men, women and children under the scheme and also to bring Malabar struggle convicts to Indian jails.¹²⁰ The government did not accept the passed resolutions which remained in files itself.

In 1927 another major criticism came against *ACS* as the objective of British raj was to get the uninhabitable islands converted into a suitable space for a British colony at the cost of Mappila lives and Indian money.¹²¹ The *Madras State Prisoners Aid Society* in 1927 stated that they had provided food, shelter and assistance to 1068 persons including Mappila prisoners, their wives and children who were going to Andaman in connection with *ACS*.¹²² The Fourth Kerala Provincial Conference was held at Payyanur from 25th to 27th May 1928 which was presided by Jawaharlal Nehru. A resolution was passed protesting in the government's action in sending Mappila women and children to subsist with their husbands.¹²³ Even after the

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Fort Nightly Report for the Second Half of January 1927, TSA, Chennai.

¹²⁰ Resolution at *MLC*, 27th January 1927, Revenue R Dis B 313, SI 3, RAK.

¹²¹ Fort Nightly Report for the First Half of August 1927, TSA, Chennai.

¹²² Report of the Administration of the Jails of Madras Presidency-1927, Madras, 1928, p. 20.

¹²³ *HFM*, Volume 103 B, TSA, Chennai.

Committee's report, public protests and resolutions at *MLC* against the scheme, Mappila deportation to Andaman continued.

Clare Anderson argues that the Andaman colonisation scheme failed to achieve the target aimed by the colonial officials.¹²⁴ The government after passing Mugaseths report put forward the provision that prisoners were allowed to decide either settle at Andaman or to return to Malabar. The Diary of Ferrar, mentions that only eighty convicts of Andaman utilised the provision and returned to malabar while four hundred and forty eight convicts from various jails of Madras presidency opted Andaman scheme.¹²⁵ The government file of 1927 shows that a total of five hundred prisoners at Andaman intended to return to Madras jails in March 1927 while two hundred and seventy Mappila prisoners at various jails in Madras Presidency opted Andaman Colonisation Scheme.¹²⁶ The district officials of Malabar tried their best for preventing the return of five hundred prisoners from Andamans. The Madras government informed the prisoners that if they returned to jails in Madras Presidency they will not be released until the actual completion of their sentence.¹²⁷ This attempt was a success and that was the reason why only eighty as mentioned by Ferrar opted to return to the Madras Presidency.

The total number of women and children taken to Andaman until March 1927 was 338 and 510 respectively.¹²⁸ Even after the debates in 1927,

¹²⁴ Clare Anderson, 'The British Indian Empire, 1789-1939' in Clare Anderson(ed.), *A Global History Of Convicts And Penal Colonies*, Bloomsbury, London, 2018, p.230.

¹²⁵ Madhumitha Mazumdar, 'Improving Visions, Troubled Landscapes: The legacies of Colonial Ferrargunj' in Clare Anderson (et. al.), *New Histories of the Andaman Islands*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2016, p. 49.

¹²⁶ Law General, Memo No 2459, 5th May 1927, RAK.

¹²⁷ Letter from Malabar District Magistrate to Secretary Law Department, Madras, 16th May 1925, Revenue R Dis, Bn 313, SI No 2, RAK.

¹²⁸ *MLCP*, 16th March 1927, vol. XXXV, p. 113. RAK.

the government tried to convince Mappila prisoners at Alipuram Jail for opting the Andaman Colonisation Scheme. At the same time the government also tried to convince wives of *mappilamar* who were transported to Andamans.¹²⁹ The women in some occasions demanded that, if their husbands came to take them, they would be ready for going to Andamans.

The prisoners awaiting transportation to Andaman's was confined at Madras Penitentiary. The prisoners were given new cloths and sheets. The prisoner's legs were chained from Madras penitentiary for preventing escape during ship journey and it was removed only after reaching the Cellular Jail.¹³⁰ The convicts were transported to Andaman by using the steamer ship SS Maharaja from Madras Port to Port Blair. The ship had the capacity to accommodate maximum five hundred persons at a time. The time chart of steamer was always forwarded to Malabar by Madras authorities during and after the struggle. It took six days journey from Madras port to Andaman.

The Mappila families were transported to Andaman from Madras port in separate room at TSS Maharaja.¹³¹ *The Azad Hind* from Madras stated that the authorities treated Mappila prisoners inhumanly in the ship during their transportation to the Andamans.¹³² The prisoners and their families brought from Madras were put in quarantine at Bamboo Flat for vaccination to prevent from diseases.¹³³

The main task at Cellular Jail was coir making and coconut oil making. The jail officials including convict wardens attacked and tortured poor Mappila prisoners.¹³⁴ The tasks given for prisoners at barracks and for self-

¹²⁹ For details see, Andaman Colonisation Files, RAK

¹³⁰ 'Dairy of A Saidali' in *Madhyamam weekly*, Kozhikode, 5th November 2018, p. 31.

¹³¹ For details see F A M Dass, *The Andaman Islands*, Bangalore, 1937.

¹³² *Azad Hind*, 27th May 1925, MNNPR, TSA, Chennai.

¹³³ 'Dairy of A Saidali' in *Madhyamam weekly*, Kozhikode, 5th November 2018, p. 37.

¹³⁴ 'Dairy of A Saidali' in *Madhyamam weekly*, Kozhikode, 5th October 2018, p. 32.

settlers were forest clearing, agriculture, fishing and work at Chatam Saw Mills. In the Mappila settlements the post of *chaudri* and *chaukidar* were usually given to *mappilamar* themselves.

The Mappila convicts were not ready to give up their resistance as they even resisted against the ill-treatment and torture of the authorities in Andaman also. The Andaman officials punished the convicts more severely than Indian jail authorities for resistances in prison. The Mappila prisoners protested by beating up the officials. When the police failed to control them, the military arrived and led them to isolated barracks.¹³⁵ The Gymkhana Maidan or ground was mainly developed using Mappila labour.¹³⁶ The torture from authorities continued and the *mappilamar* were used for extreme hard labour. The main sites at which the *mappilamar* were employed are Chatam, Haddo, Phoenix Bay, Aberden Ross, etc mainly doing agricultural works, forest clearing and various other tasks.¹³⁷ The prisoners number was in use rather than his name.¹³⁸ These shows the *mappillamar* were not free as they need to report before *chaukidar* in every evening and worked as convicts with convict number and convict ration.

The families of Mappila convicts had to live in small huts on a damp floor. The families struggled to survive in Andamans due to lack of necessary commodities.¹³⁹ The high tax rate also increased their hardships. Water and other house hold articles. The Andaman was notorious for various epidemics. One of the greatest threats was malaria. The malaria decease in Malabar was entirely different from the Andamans. In Malabar, Wayanad

¹³⁵ Chinmohon Schanavis , 'Moplah Rebels in the Andamans' in *Mukthi Tirta-Andaman*, souvenir, Ex Andaman political prisoners fraternity circle, p. 39, NMML.

¹³⁶ A K P Nambiar, *Nakavaram*, DC Books, Kottayam, 2013, p. 21.

¹³⁷ F A M, Dass, *The Andaman Islands*, Bangalore, 1937, pp. 107-108.

¹³⁸ Kakkapara Mohammed, interview in *Prabathonam*, Kozhikode, 19th February 2016. p. 16.

¹³⁹ *Kanthirava*, Mangalore, 26th January 1926, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

located 1000 meters above sea level was the main area of malaria while in Andaman malaria was on the sea shore itself.¹⁴⁰ The *mappilamar* transported to Andamans mainly belonged to Ernad, Valluvanad and Calicut taluks.¹⁴¹ None of them belonged to Wayanad.

The *mappilamar* named the places in Andaman with the place names existed in Malabar. The major place names were Calicut, Mannarkad, Wandur, Manjeri, Tirur, Nilambur etc. Besides that they gave new place names like Govindapuram. Govindapuram was named for honouring *tahsildar* P P Govindan by *mappilamar* themselves.¹⁴² Large scale Mappila deportation secured women's life. The government in 1923 had withdrawn the restrictions on constructing mosques and temples in Andaman Islands.¹⁴³ This was done mainly by the recommendation of E H Abraham for making ACS a success.

According to 1931 census report the Mappila population at Andamans was 1885 out of which 1171 were males and the remaining 714 were females in which 365 women were married.¹⁴⁴ Majority of the remaining 349 unmarried women were little girls below ten years. The total Malayalam speaking people in Andaman comprised 10.78 percentage of total population in 1931.¹⁴⁵ In September 1931, the Andaman Colonisation Scheme was cancelled. The Scheme was not actually cancelled due to fear of continuing protests. Rather it was a success as the aim of starting ACS was to keep *mappilamar* for some years from Malabar. Which was made possible also,

¹⁴⁰ Madhumitha Mazumdar, *Improving Visions, Troubled Landscapes: The Legacies of Colonial Ferrargunj*, in Clare Anderson (et. al.), *New Histories of the Andaman Islands*, p. 48.

¹⁴¹ See Andaman Colonisation Files, RAK

¹⁴² C K Vijayan, *Kalavum Kalapaniyum Kadanu*, Poorna, Kozhikode, 2010, p. 76.

¹⁴³ M C Bonington, *Census of India 1931*, vol. II, *The Andaman And Nicobar Islands*, Calcutta, 1932, p. 25.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Andaman got developed a lot due to Mappila labour and finally a lot of *mappilamar* settled in Andaman rather than returning to Malabar.

In 1930s, when a lot of Malabar struggle convicts were released prematurely large number of convicts were also released from Andamans. In 1934-35, a lot of prisoners released from Andaman came to Malabar in the middle of 1930's however majority of them returned to Andaman individually or with their family. P Kunhimmu, A Moosa, Moideen and P Abdulakutty returned to Andamans.¹⁴⁶ P Abdulla and K S Koyakutty Tangal who were released from Andaman did not return to Malabar.¹⁴⁷ This raises a question why they decided to return and why some of them choose to stay back. The *mappilamar* who came back to Malabar was disturbed with the landlordism in villages. Under the *janmi* system, they had to give two thirds of the produce to the *janmi*.¹⁴⁸ There was no surplus in agriculture and thus so many went back to Andamans with their family.

Imprisonment

The actual number of prisoners imprisoned in connection with Malabar struggle of 1921-22 unknown. More than ten thousand persons were imprisoned in connection with Malabar Struggle. The total prisoners were 8553 including one hundred and forty under trials in June 1923.¹⁴⁹ while at the end of the year it became 8796, the increase in number is because in this list 1219 at Andamans were also included.¹⁵⁰ The total number of Malabar struggle prisoners in various jails of Madras Presidency in

¹⁴⁶ Letter from Malabar Police Superintendent to District Magistrate Malabar, 12th April 1935, R Dis 372, SI 12, RAK.

¹⁴⁷ Public G O No 609, Madras, 15th April 1935, R RDIS, Bn No 372, SI no 12, RAK.

¹⁴⁸ For details see, P J Cherian (ed.), *Perspectives of Kerala History*, 1999.

¹⁴⁹ For details see Revenue R Dis, RAK.

¹⁵⁰ *MLCP*, vol. XVI, February 1924, p. 28, RAK

the beginning of 1924 was 7075 including 280 adolescents and 196 juveniles at Palamcotah and Tanjaore Borstal Institutions.¹⁵¹ Among them 5169 prisoners were confined at Alipuram and 1223 at Kannur Central Jails. On October 1st M P Narayana Menon was released and even after his release there were one hundred and five Malabar struggle prisoners in various jails.¹⁵²

Many were awarded with transportation for life. Many persons were punished for more than 20 years imprisonment. The last Mappila convict in the Madras Presidency was to be released in 1962.¹⁵³ The prisoners were mostly *mappilamar* but many Hindus were also imprisoned and transported. The prisoners included people from the age group of 11 or 12 to too old who were awaiting death. Many of the old prisoners died in jail itself.

Majority of Malabar struggle convicts belonged to agricultural background either as peasants or as agricultural labours.¹⁵⁴ The *Muslim Sahakari* from Kozhikode wrote that most of the Mappila prisoners were coolies and agricultural labourers.¹⁵⁵ The 1921-22 Madras Administration Report states that about 58% of prisoners belonged to agricultural classes.¹⁵⁶ Even the newspapers pointed out that most of the *mappilamar* confined were innocent.¹⁵⁷ The large scale imprisonment of *mappilamar* in connection with Malabar Struggle resulted in overcrowding of prisons of Madras Presidency and opening of new jails.

¹⁵¹ Revenue R Dis, Bn 301, Sl no 21, RAK.

¹⁵² Revenue R Dis, B No. 372, Sl. no. 11, RAK.

¹⁵³ *HFM*, vol. 94, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁵⁴ For details see Revenue R Dis file from 1921-1932, RAK

¹⁵⁵ *Muslim Sahakari*, Kozhikode, 5th October 1922, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁵⁶ *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the Year 1921-22*, Government Press, Madras, 1923, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Kerala Patrika*, 17th June 1922, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

Prison and Prisoners of Malabar Struggle

At the time of Malabar struggle there were nine central jails and more than three hundred sub jails at Madras Presidency. The central jails were Kannur, Coimbatore, Salem, Vellore, Madras penitentiary, Rajamundry, Vizhakupatanam, Trichinopoly and Bellary. In addition to existing jails, four sub jails were opened in Malabar ,the Huzur Sub Jail at Kozhikode, The Cantonment and Fort Sub Jail at Kannur and the Malappuram Sub Jail, additional temporary accommodation at five central jails were also established.¹⁵⁸ The special sub jail opened at St Angelo Fort in Kannur was better than Kannur Central Jail in food and sleeping facility.¹⁵⁹ The Alipuram Camp Jail used for confining Turkish prisoners of First World War was upgraded into camp jail in 1921 October with central jail status for confining Malabar struggle prisoners.¹⁶⁰ The prisoners punished for transportation for life were transported. The Palakkad, Tirur and Ottapalam sub jails were famous for their extreme torture at that time.¹⁶¹ The four temporary sub jails opened in Malabar was closed in 1923.¹⁶²

Besides these sub jails barbed wire cages were also used in rebel zone. The cages were constructed enclosed to buildings. They were located at Kozhikode, Tirur, Malappuram, Angadippuram, Manjeri, Pandikkad,

¹⁵⁸ *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the Year 1921-22*, Government Press, Madras, 1923, p. 16.

¹⁵⁹ Arakaparambil Saidali, *Madhyamam weekly*, 29th October 2018, p. 27.

¹⁶⁰ The Alipuram Camp Jail was not like the other central jails in the presidency. The jail wall and buildings, cells, hospital, kitchen, workshop etc were different in construction and in a pathetic condition. Instead of stone wall, wired fencing was used. Armed police was deployed as security. Initially, during the martial law period military was used as guards and it was only later the jail authorities got the charge of guarding. There were no proper buildings or blocks. Rather, tarpaulin tents and thatched roofs were present. Both sides of the sheds were covered . One block comprised of five or six sheds. Instead of confining prisoners in cells at night they were chained in open space. The sanitary arrangements at Alipuram were also a failure. The workshop was not a building; rather it was a plain ground.

¹⁶¹ M. Brahmattattam Namboodiripad. *Khilafat Smaranakal*, p. 104.

¹⁶² *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency-1923*, Madras, 1924, p. 1.

Nilambur and Areacode. The prisoners in the cages were victims of heavy monsoons in day and night. Besides that they were also affected with various epidemics. R H Hitchcock justified this cruelty stating that it was economical in escorts and saving long journeys.¹⁶³

Hitchcock justified the continuation of cage by stating many of the prisoners led a wild form of life for weeks, and did other activities in forest.¹⁶⁴ Konala Ahmed Haji who was at Malapuram cage during this time remembers that most of the injured prisoners had miserable life in the jail due to the worst food given only once in a day a, lack of medical facility.¹⁶⁵ Also no water was given for sanitation and bathing for one week resulted in foul smell from prisoners body and this smell resulted in vomiting of many prisoners. Arakaparambil Saidali another prisoner imprisoned at Malapuram camp for two months from April 1922 stated that there were around 1500 prisoners at the jail.¹⁶⁶ The jail was actually constructed by using iron fencing and sheds inside were used to confine prisoners. This shows the overcrowding resulted in following cage system for dealing the prisoners and they were treated inhumanely.

The prisoners were classified as under trials, punished with rigorous imprisonment or simple imprisonment, women, juveniles, state prisoners etc. A lot of juveniles were imprisoned in connection with Malabar struggle. Mappila boys were also subjected to other cruel punishments too. R H Hitchcock submitted a proposal for a separate school for Mappila juveniles supported by the relief committee. However, the proposal was rejected by R

¹⁶³ R H Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion -1921*, p. 149.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ 'Wagon Massacre' survivor Konala Ahmed Haji's Statement' in Abdu Cheruvadi (ed.), *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁶⁶ Dairy of A Saidali in *Madhyamam Weekly*, Kozhikode, 29th October 2018, p. 27.

H Ellis, the District Magistrate of Malabar.¹⁶⁷ The *DM* considered the confinement of Mappila juveniles at Borstal Institute, Tanjavoor and Reformatory School at Chingelpet as proposed by Inspector General of Prisons. Thus on the basis of this proposal boys below twelve years were confined at reformatory school at Chingelpet while boys above twelve were confined at borstal institute at Tanjore.¹⁶⁸ The authorities stated that any dangerous boys who were not charged with any case can be dealt with *MOA* and can be sent to any of the two institutions.¹⁶⁹ In 1924, there were 280 adolescents and 196 juveniles in Palamcottah and Tanjaore Borstal institutions respectively imprisoned in connection with the Malabar struggle.¹⁷⁰

State Prisoners

The district officials of Malabar submitted a big list containing the name of many *mappilamar* to be deported under *MOA* of 1859 and *MSPR* of 1819. The Chief Secretary of Madras Government in his letter to *DM* of Malabar stated that this act was certainly not intended for wholesale deportation of *mappilamar*.¹⁷¹ It's clear that the officials at Madras also suspected the activities of *DM* and his subordinates. This was done because the authorities included a lot of innocent people including Congress volunteers in their proposals.¹⁷² Majority of state prisoners were imprisoned accusing as participants in forced conversion. Even the innocent Khilafat volunteers who did not enter the martial law or rebel area rather

¹⁶⁷ From R H Ellis to the Secretary, Judicial Department, Ooty, G O No 815, dated 12th October 1922. Kozhikode, G-47, Kerala History Archives, Department of History, University of Calicut.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Public G O No 366, 27th April 1927, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁷¹ Public G O No 1076, 23rd December 1922, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁷² Public Miscellaneous, G O No 1076, 23rd December 1922, TSA, Chennai.

went to Kannur itself. After the commencement of struggle the authorities imprisoned even these three as state prisoners.¹⁷³ Mathrubhumi severely criticised the use of *MOA* against these volunteers stating their relatives are criminals.¹⁷⁴ Another one was brother of Konara Tangal, Konara Imbichi Koya Tangal who didn't even participate in the struggle due to his leprosy. He was imprisoned at leper annexure in Salem Jail for years.¹⁷⁵

According to the *Madras Jail Report* of 1923 out of the total 203 state prisoners in the Presidency 201 were *mappilamar*. While towards the end of 1924, there were 224 *mappilamar* as state prisoners.¹⁷⁶ This increase occurred when the Mappila convicts convicted by the court were released the state arrested some of them again under *MOA* stating danger to public peace of Malabar and deported as state prisoners. In 1927, the total number of Mappila state prisoners increased to two hundred and twenty nine.¹⁷⁷

The prisoners were deported from Malabar and confined in prisons or outside prison under police surveillance far away from Malabar. It was only in 1925, the government decided to release state prisoners from jail and put under police surveillance outside Malabar.¹⁷⁸ The prisoners were released by batches of twenty. The major districts where state prisoners were confined included Guntur, South Canara, Coimbatore and Nilgiris. The families were allowed to visit or join after so many years of confinement in and outside prison.

¹⁷³ Revenue R-Dis, Bn No 273, Sl no 16, RAK.

¹⁷⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 28th March 1925, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁷⁵ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency-1929*, Madras, 1930, p. 13.

¹⁷⁶ Public G O No 211, 27th February 1925, MSP files, Sl no 59, RAK.

¹⁷⁷ Public G O No 919, 27th September 1927, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁷⁸ Memo No. 3561a, 6th August 1925, Revenue R Dis, Bundle no 287, Sl no. 2, RAK.

The state prisoners confined in prison as well as outside prison under police surveillance were given monthly allowance for food clothing and other purposes. All the prisoners were not equally paid. The reason stated was that their social status and family backgrounds were considered. The monthly allowance given to the state prisoners under police surveillance was inadequate to most of them. A lot of petitions were submitted to increase the allowance as their families were also with them. The government increased the allowance of some of the state prisoners while rejected the petitions of others.¹⁷⁹ . Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib in 1930 stated that a lot of persons were still detained under this Act and state prisoners act in eastern districts of the Madras Presidency.¹⁸⁰ The *MOA-1859* was against Mappila community morally and materially as it resulted in police raj and the repression of poor *mappilamar*.¹⁸¹ The inhuman practice of burning of Mappila body and other provisions made the act like a sword hanging over the head of *mappilamar* and that was the main reason why most of the *Mappilamar* did not take part in any political movements.¹⁸² Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib urged the government to repeal the act for the interest of Mappila community as well as the benefit of the country. The *AICC* in reply to Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib letter a five member working committee comprising Dr. Sayed Mahmud, C Rajagopalachari, Samuel Aron, Raghava Menon and M Abdu Rahman was appointed to enquire about the *MOA- 1859*.¹⁸³ Even when the Congress ministry Took charge in 1937 there were three Mappila prisoners. They were released and soon the Congress

¹⁷⁹ Public G O No 331, 11th April 1927, TSA, Chennai.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from, M Abdurrahman to Gen. Secretary *AICC*, 9th June 1931, in *AICC* papers, No: G 118 of 1931, NMML, New Delhi.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ No G-118 of 1931, *AICC* papers, NMML, New Delhi.

ministry repealed the *MOA*.¹⁸⁴ It was made possible mainly due to the efforts taken by Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib and C Rajagopalacari

Dangerous and Non Dangerous Classification

The Malabar Struggle prisoners convicted for various offence were also categorised as 'Dangerous and 'Non Dangerous' Category. Even M P Narayana Menon was included in the dangerous category.¹⁸⁵ There were no specific criteria for this classification. The prisoners included in dangerous category were not considered for premature release by authorities.

The prisoners imprisoned in connection with Malabar struggle were not included in the both the lists of colonial state and Congress. Here we include them as political prisoners as majority were imprisoned in connection with offences against the state, mainly waging war against the king and those who were convicted for theft, rape and other petty crimes were not included in this category. The government punished not only *mappilamar* but also Hindus from Congress or those people who supported the Mappila. The Indian National Congress soon after the outbreak of Malabar struggle declared that it was not a part of Congress movement and they had no relation with the rebels. The Congress leaders in rebel zone mainly M P Narayana Menon and K Kelappan advised *mappilamar* to stick on to non violence. The officials also arrested Congress leaders including K Kelappan, M P Narayana Menon, Mannarkad Elaya Nair, Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad etc.

¹⁸⁴ *Mathrubhumi weekly*, 28th August 1937, p. 16. Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Special Superintendent of Police, Malabar to *DM*, Malabar, 20th June 1933, Revenue R Dis 1933, RAK.

Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad mentioned that the attitude like that of a Congress was of step-mother.¹⁸⁶ Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, also mentioned that imprisonment was a dual punishment for a *nambudirias* his main punishment starts only after his release from the jail.¹⁸⁷ He stated that the rules of Namboodiri caste was a great burden to released prisoners as they were not allowed to speak or contact their relatives after release as they were considered as impure. This was actually much severe pain than imprisonment. M B Namboodiripad, and most of the Namboodiri expect EMS and a countable one didn't participate the *CDM*. However they mainly concentrated on reforming Namboodiri, and thus, prison life of Namboodiri also played a role in fighting against the evils in caste system. The *Unninamboodiri* mentioned and praised the contribution of Mozhikunnath towards reforming the Namboodiri while reporting his marriage.¹⁸⁸

M P Narayana Menon

MP Narayana Menon was imprisoned at the Coimbatore Jail under section three and seven of the *MOA* of 1859. He wrote a letter to the Chief Secretary of Madras Presidency through the Coimbatore Central Jail superintendent Clements questioning his confinement without trial. It was C P Ramaswamy Iyer, the Advocate General to Government of Madras gave legal advice for framing the case of on 24th April 1922.¹⁸⁹ Ramaswamy Iyer stated that the government reports are authentic and accurate but it was difficult to believe that Narayana Menon who was an advocate been guilty of

¹⁸⁶ Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, pp. 100-102.

¹⁸⁷ *Unninamboodiri*, 20th October 1931, NMML, New Delhi.

¹⁸⁸ *Unninamboodiri*, 10th June 1932. NMML, New Delhi.

¹⁸⁹ Public G O No: 4191, 15th April 1922, Kerala History Archives, Department of History, University of Calicut.

such things.¹⁹⁰ This also indicates that C P Ramaswami indirectly questioned the authenticity of police reports.

On 25th September 1922, the Special Judge, Palkan Walsh issued the verdict that M P Narayana Menon should be punished by transportation for life. The appeal filed by M P Narayana Menon to Madras High Court was rejected on 5th October 1923. *Mathrubhumi* described the verdict of the high court as an opportunity for the public to understand the failure of judiciary.¹⁹¹ M P Narayana Menon's mother passed away in May 1924, *Mathrubhumi* stated that those who are responsible for not releasing him from prison are responsible for his mother's death in god's court.¹⁹²

A lot of resolutions were passed in the Madras Legislative Council for the release of Narayana Menon. The *Swarajya* newspaper pointed out that the resolutions passed by Madras Legislative Council for the release of M P Narayana Menon was always flouted by the Madras Government and it shows the official attitude of Madras government and *MLC* had no role.¹⁹³ The argument of *swarajya* later proved to be true as a lot of resolutions and questions were raised in *MLC* until his release and none was accepted by the government.

The continuous questions and resolutions passed in *MLC* made a small impact. The government came with conditional release of MP if he agreed three conditions. The first condition is that M P should not take part in any political activities, secondly not enter or reside in Malabar district and finally to report his movements and residence to such authority as the

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 11th October 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁹² *Mathrubhumi*, 10th May 1924, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁹³ Public G O No 182, 20th February 1925, TSA, Chennai.

government may direct.¹⁹⁴ But this conditional release offer was rejected by him. When the ABC classification of prisoners came into effect in the presidency he was included in A class. On 10th February 1931 M P Narayana Menon was attacked and injured by a prisoner named Perumal. On the same day the attacker was punished by 25 stripes and later no action was taken on him and this was a matter of suspicion.¹⁹⁵ A prisoner called Perumal stated that he was forced to attack M P by a Jail official.¹⁹⁶ The Law Member of the *MLC*, M Krishnan Nair visited M P. He was soon transferred to Vellore Central Jail on 21st February 1931. The Law Member stated that the attack and transfer had no relations and M P was transferred to Vellore in the interests of jail discipline.¹⁹⁷ The attack and transfer can be considered as the colonial state's strategy because in the *MLC* proceedings we can see that various questions regarding treatment, health, release etc of M P Narayana Menon was asked frequently in the legislature, as most of the members of *MLC* visited him at Madras Penitentiary since it was nearby to them. After he was transferred to Vellore the questions regarding various issues of M P Narayana Menon was highly decreased in *MLC* as the members had difficult in visiting or getting details on M P Narayana Menon.

When the political prisoners were released as per Gandhi-Irwin pact of March 1931 also M P Narayana Menon and Mappila prisoners were not released and majority of newspapers urged for their release along with Bhagat sing and his colleagues.¹⁹⁸ Even in 1933 when thousands of Mappila prisoners were released prematurely M P Narayana Menon was still in prison itself. When the question regarding M P arises the Law Member stated that

¹⁹⁴ *MLCP* vol. 35, 31st March 1927, RAK.

¹⁹⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 22th February 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁹⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 17th February 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁹⁷ *MLCP*, vol. LVI, 1931, pp. 225-226, RAK.

¹⁹⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 8th March 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

his release was not considered safe considering the peace and tranquillity of the district.¹⁹⁹

M P was finally released on 1st October 1934 from Vellore Central Jail.²⁰⁰ Twelve major newspapers of the Madras Presidency including the *Malayala Manorama* expressed their joy in his release and praised his patriotism, courage and self-sacrifice.²⁰¹ The press also congratulated the government for his release before the expiry of the term of his sentence. He was not released by mercy shown by the government but after the successful completion of his punishment term. M P Govinda Menon, the brother of M P Narayana Menon had submitted a petition to a law member in August 1934 stating that M P Narayana Menon's punishment of transportation of life will end in September 1934 as he successfully earned all remissions under jail code. He requested the Law Member to verify all papers of M P Narayana Menon's punishment and to allow his release at least in usual way because the punishment awarded by court will complete on September 1934.²⁰² This actually forced the government to release M P. The Governor in Council of Madras stated that 'he unconditionally remit the unexpired portion of the sentence to transportation for life passed on M P Narayana Menon and he should not be released earlier than 1st October 1934'.²⁰³

'NADAYADI'

The welcoming or the entry of Malabar struggle prisoners was in a most inhumane way in prison. It was called *nadayadi*. Just after entering to

¹⁹⁹ *MLCP*, vol. LXVIII, 10th November 1933, p. 850, RAK.

²⁰⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 2nd October 1934, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

²⁰¹ *Mathrubhumi*, *Al Ameen*, *Manorama* etc, 2nd to 5th October 1934, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai, p. 550.

²⁰² Petition by M P Govinda Menon dated 3rd August 1934 in Public Confidential G O No. 1020, 1st October 1934, TSA, Chennai.

²⁰³ Law General G O No 2763, 27th September 1934, TSA, Chennai.

prison the prisoners dresses are removed and the wardens start beating prisoners by using battons, hands and legs. Mozhikunnath Brahmadattan Namboodiripad mentioned his *nadayadi* experience at Coimbatore Jail as the most horrible experience.²⁰⁴ Moidu Moulavi remembers that when the warden approached to beat him the prisoners warned the warden that entire prison will revolt if Moulavi was attacked.²⁰⁵ The Kannur, Vellore, Alipuram Jails and Madras Penitentiary were not different from this. When Moidu Moulavi and his co-prisoners complained about the *nadayadi* to the Superintendent of Kannur Central Jail, he neither considered it nor took any action.²⁰⁶ This clearly shows that the *nadayadi* was continuing under the knowledge of higher officials.

The Alipuram Jail was the main venues where prisoners were subjected to extreme level of *nadayadi*. However it came to an end later when Mappila prisoners warned counter attack against this inhuman practice. Even though most prisoners were given beaten while putting into cell as K V Raman Menon states he got a blow from warden while being put to cells.²⁰⁷ Not the entire jails were similar as Moidu Moulavi and his co-prisoners did not get *nadayadi* from Rajahmundry Jail and the wardens and other officials behaved humanely to them.²⁰⁸

The prisoners were not only subjected to *nadayadi*, they were also scolded and many abusing words were used against them. The police received Moidu Moulavi to Kozhikode Jail with a shower of abusive words.²⁰⁹ The British documents are not talking about this inhuman practice in jails

²⁰⁴ Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, p. 97.

²⁰⁵ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, p. 52.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁰⁷ Public Confidential G O No 506, 14th June 1922, TSA, Chennai.

²⁰⁸ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, pp. 81-82.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

and it is only the autobiographies, memoirs and newspaper reports of that period talk about this cruel treatment of prisoners.

Prison Uniform

When thousands of Malabar struggle prisoners were imprisoned in various jails of the Madras Presidency, dress became a chief issue. The government was not ready to provide prison uniform to Mappila prisoners as prescribed in the *Jail Manual*. Most of them either wore their own cloths or got torn prison clothes. Most of the prisoners were given torn clothes which was not enough even to cover their nudity. Moulavi states that he cried due to shame and sorrow mainly because his dress did not reach the knee.²¹⁰ Majority of *mappilamar* felt humiliated to wear short and torn trousers when the *Jail Manual* clearly mentioned to allow lengthy trousers to *mappilamar*.

Ali Mussaliar in his interview to *The Hindu* newspaper correspondent on 7th December 1921 described that most of the prisoners who were awaiting their trial for the last three months practically did not have any clothing. So he urged the Khilafat and Congress volunteers to make arrangement for their clothing if possible.²¹¹ The Madras government in 1922 issued an order stating that the supply of trousers extending below the knees to Muslim prisoners for their prayers.²¹² It is not sure whether this order was implemented practically or just remained in papers.

In 1923, Muhammad Abdurrahman went on 22 days hunger strike for issuing full trousers demanding for Muslim prisoners for performing their

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Public G O No 102, 7th February 1922, TSA, Chennai.

²¹² Law general, G O No 1159, 4th May 1922, RAK, Also in *Swadesamitram*, Madras, 12th May 1922 MNNPR, TSA, Chennai.

prayers.²¹³ The *Mathrubhumi* praised Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib for his hunger strike protest. The struggle for better dress covering knees was not limited to Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib's hunger strike but the Mappila prisoners at various jails including Andamans also revolted asking for better dress and ended in success.²¹⁴ In Andaman, the method was not hunger strike rather, a warning of revolt. This clearly shows the lengthy dress for *mappilamar* remained in papers in most of the jails.

Food in the Prison

The food in the prison represented the socio economic and cultural aspects of colonialism and the Indian society. The food was dis-tasteful and was filled with worms, stones, wools etc. In Coimbatore Jail, *kora* was given in morning and afternoon. Mozhikunnath Namboodiripad remembers that whatever be *kora* or rice both were dissatisfying.²¹⁵ One cannot call the food at Coimbatore as rice or curry as it spread foul smell and while having it was un-palatable and causing vomiting tendency.²¹⁶ The food was consumed just for staying alive. Even enough water was not allowed to the prisoners. Due to the bad food supplied for prisoners especially to Mappila prisoners, epidemics like cholera and dysentery were spread. Instead of normal dhal they had given pasted un-husked dhal along with rice which resulted in death of many at Alipuram Camp Jail. There was scarcity of water for drinking and cooking at Alipuram Jail. The presence of chlorine and other chemicals in drinking water resulted in diseases and death of many prisoners. The authority was forced to supply pure water after the entire

²¹³ S K Pottokad (et. al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman: A Political Biography*, p. 130.

²¹⁴ A Saidali, personal diary in *Madhyamam Weekly*, p. 29.

²¹⁵ Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, p. 99.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

prisoners went on hunger strike.²¹⁷ In 1924 a released prisoner from Bellary Jail wrote in *Mathrubhumi* that the use of bad water in jail resulted in many diseases like bowel complaints, fever, piles, skin diseases etc which ultimately lead to high mortality rate.²¹⁸

The *Congress* newspaper from Rajahmundry state that the subordinate officials mainly, the wardens did not allow the *mappilamar* or any prisoners to file complaint to jail superintendent on their grievances.²¹⁹ It was actually the wardens or subordinate officials who ruled the prisons. Whatever reform or allowance introduced in prisons by the government it neither changed the attitude of jail officials nor improved the life of prisoners. The authorities just kept the reforms in paper and continued their dictatorial rule.

Prison labour

Majority of the prisoners were punished with rigorous imprisonment, hence they had to do various works in prison. *mappilamar* were tortured in labour by giving hard tasks. The major task at Kannur Central Jail was coir making from coconut husks. Whereas the prisoners at Vellore Central Jail were mainly used for stone breaking. The warden and convict wardens supervised the work. Most of the convict wardens were much cruel than wardens. If the prisoners failed to complete their quota of stones to be broken the wardens beat prisoners using the battens. Majority of the prisoners worked really hard to fill their baskets. Moidu Moulavi states that his co-prisoners contributed stones to his baskets as a helping hand.²²⁰ C

²¹⁷ S K Pottekad (et. al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman: A Political Biography*, pp. 126-127.

²¹⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th September 1924, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

²¹⁹ *Congress*, 19th June 1924, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

²²⁰ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha*, pp. 64-65.

Rajagopalachari who was at Vellore Jail from December 1921 to March 1922 in his *Jail Dairy* mentioned that Mappila prisoners were forced to work hard in prison that it fills ones heart with sorrow on witnessing it.²²¹

The government also planned and got proposals from 1922 for using Mappila prisoners for various jobs inside and outside Madras Presidency. One of the proposals was to send Mappila prisoners to work on Bengal railway. The government of Madras rejected the proposal pointing out that the cost of clothing, guarding and transport of Mappila prisoners would be very costly and the proposal was impracticable.²²² The planters association also asked for Mappila convict labour. The conservator of forests in Bombay also enquired for Mappila convict labour and both were rejected by the government stating the same reasons.

The question of outdoor convict labour was prevalent at that time. The Mappila prisoners at Alipuram Jail from 1922 onwards were used for outdoor labour and it continued until the closure of jail in 1931. One of the aims of the transportation of Mappila to Andaman was none other than developing Andaman as a better town using Mappila labour. In 1924, a proposal was put forward by the government that Mappila prisoners can be sent to work in Assam plantations. *Mathrubhumi* criticised the proposal and stated that large number of agricultural men are needed for Ernad itself if they are to be used for labour.²²³ The *Mathrubhumi* also criticised government's action as they were considered *Mappila* prisoners as cattle's which was an atrocious attitude.²²⁴

²²¹ C Rajagolachari, *Jail Dairy*, p. 12.

²²² A R Knapp, Public G O No: 681, 21st August 1922, in G-47, Kerala History Archives, Department of History, University of Calicut.

²²³ *Mathrubhumi*, 18th March 1924, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

The prisoners at Alipuram Jail from the beginning were used for indoor as well as outdoor labour. The main jobs included wool making, gardening and stone breaking. The jail also had a workshop for coir making. Moidu Moulavi remembers that the workshop was actually a plain ground where prisoners were engaged in coir making under direct sunlight.²²⁵ In 1923, about 5935 prisoners from Alipuram Jail was hired out to military department for grass farm cultivation.²²⁶ The jail department got rupees 1112 from military department for providing prisoners. This clearly shows two things first the prison was highly overpopulated in 1923 and secondly the prisoners were widely used for outside labour even when outside labour was against jail discipline. This indicates that the colonial authorities widely tortured Mappila prisoners for extracting money. A. Saithali who was at Alipuram Jail as a prisoner in 1923, mentions that two thousand prisoners were brought for outdoor work by chaining their legs to prevent escape.²²⁷ Moyyath Sankaran states that Mappila prisoners at Alipuram Jail even in 1930's were taken to Gundakal railway station for work.²²⁸ The term discipline was far away in the case of treating Mappila prisoners. The Alipuram Jail was used as a concentration camp by exploiting Mappila prisoners rather than treating them as per *Jail Manual*. Simply, the treatment given to *mappilamar* were similar to inhumane punishments prevailed in eighteenth century prisons in Britain. Even corporal punishment as an internal punishment was awarded to Mappila prisoners using stripes.²²⁹

²²⁵ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, p. 73.

²²⁶ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency-1923*, Madras, 1924, p. 13.

²²⁷ Dairy of A Saidali, *Madhyamam Weekly*, p. 29.

²²⁸ Moyyath Sankaran, *Atmakatha*, p. 174.

²²⁹ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency-1923*, Madras, 1924, p. 8.

Treatment and Medicines

The Mappila prisoners were also put in quarantine for the first few days of imprisonment to check epidemics. A Saidali in his autobiography mentioned that some kind of lotion was sprayed on prisoners body at Kannur Central Jail.²³⁰ At least four persons died at Coimbatore Jail a day and this forced the prisoners to go on hunger strike.²³¹ The government report also mentions on the outbreak of cholera at Coimbatore Jail.²³² Records says that fifty nine prisoners died in Manjeri Sub Jail due to the outbreak of pneumonia in 1922 and 41 prisoners recovered from it.²³³

Some hospital and doctors were a blessing to the tortured prisoners while some worsened the condition of prison life. Moidu Moulavi was admitted to Rajahmundry Jail hospital for so many days. The internal injury occurred to him due to the attack from jail officials of Kannur, Vellore and Alipuram was cured by an English doctor at Rajahmundry.²³⁴ But the approach of doctors to the prisoners varied from jail to jail.

When Moidu Moulavi and his co prisoners were severely wounded by *nadayadi* in Kannur central jail, the jail doctor did not bother about the wounds and marked the prisoners as healthy.²³⁵ Some doctors asked why the Khilafat and Congress prisons were seeking western medicine. This clearly shows that only a few doctors behaved humanly while most ignored the health of the prisoners.

²³⁰ Dairy of A Saidali, *Madhyamam Weekly*, Kozhikode, 29th October 2018, p. 27.

²³¹ *Naveena Keralam*, Madras, 3rd July 1922, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

²³² *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year 1921-22*, Government Press, Madras, 1923, p. 16. RAK.

²³³ Public G O No 960, 20th November 1922, TSA, Chennai.

²³⁴ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakadha*, pp. 82-83.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p 59.

The Congress and Khilafat leaders who died in prisons include Kunji Tangal, K V Balakrishna Menon etc. Kunji Tangal one of the Khilafat volunteers aged above seventy who stick on the idea of non violence during the struggle was arrested and confined at Kannur Central Jail. E Moidu Moulavi stated that he passed away on 9th September 1921 during confinement at Kannur Jail while he was on hunger strike.²³⁶ The dead body was handed over to the *mappilamar* of Kannur. The body was taken to cremation after a great procession at Kannur town. This feared the government officials and after that for a long time the dead bodies of *mappilamar* were buried inside Kannur Central Jail itself.

K V Balakrishna Menon who was a fourth year medical student at Madras Medical College left his study to join *NCM* was also imprisoned. He was arrested from Ponnani along with K Kelappan and K V Raman Menon on 9th September 1921. The *khaddar* dress that they wore was considered as ‘ Khilafat cloth’ by British soldiers and police.²³⁷ Initially he was confined for more than ten days at Tirur Jail and later transferred to Kannur Central Jail. He was imprisoned as an under trial prisoner along with K Kelappan and K V Raman Menon. No charges were put against them nor any trial was done. The jail medical officer in his reports explained that Balakrishna Menon was hospitalised at the jail hospital on 22nd February 1922 due to continuous fever.²³⁸ His condition turned worst on 2nd March 1922. Even K Kelppan’s request to care him at the jail hospital was denied by officials.²³⁹ The jail authorities stated that his relatives took him out of bail on 4th March 1922.²⁴⁰ As per the jail report he did not died in jail hospital and the authorities were

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

²³⁷ K V Raman Menon, article in *Swarajaya*, 3rd April 1922, TSA, Chennai.

²³⁸ Public Confidential G O No 506, 14th June 1922, TSA, Chennai.

²³⁹ C K Moosath, *Kelappan Enna Mahamanushyan*, SPCS, Kottayam, 1982, p. 66.

²⁴⁰ Public Confidential G O No 506, 14th June 1922, TSA, Chennai.

not responsible for his death. This was actually an imperial strategy. They widely released prisoners who were seriously ill just before his death. It was not due to mercy. It was not needed to be entered in the death register in jail. This implies that the mortality in jail was absolutely low. This was widely practised towards Mappila prisoners too.

In real terms, K V Balakrishna Menon's death was due to lack of medical attention. The officials and doctors ignored when he got fever and dysentery. He was not transferred to any outside hospital for better treatment. His blood sample was sent to King Institute of Medicine at Gundy for confirmation of diagnosis. But the report was received only after his death. He was imprisoned for five or six months without a special warrant and anything being done by the officials to establish his guilty or to pass a sentence on him.²⁴¹ The Palakkad conference in 1923 passed resolution expressing sorrow at his untimely death.²⁴²

The major cause of deaths in prisons were cholera, dysentery, tuberculosis, malaria, pneumonia, gastro enteritis, cerebro spinal fever, small pox, influenza and so on. In 1922 about 1230 prisoners died from the jails of Madras Presidency. The death ratio was fifty per thousand. The government justified the high mortality rate in prisons saying that out of the total 1230 deaths 1011 were *Mappila* prisoners.²⁴³ The law member in Madras legislative assembly stated that the total deaths up to December 1923 was 1169 in which corpses of three hundred and twenty five *mappilamar* were handed over to Muslims while remaining were buried inside the prison premises. The total death stated in *MLC* and Madras Jail

²⁴¹ *Swarat*, Kollam, 9th March 1923, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

²⁴² *HFM*, vol. 103 B, TSA, Chennai.

²⁴³ *Andhrapatrika*, 1st September 1923, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

Reports were not same.²⁴⁴ This clearly shows that actual death was much more than that in the official records. In 1927, the total death toll registered from the jails of Madras Presidency was 282 and the authorities justified the high mortality rate by stating that majority or around 108 were Mappila prisoners and most of them actually reached the term of their natural lives and were not dead as a result of any epidemics or diseases.²⁴⁵ The reason for old Mappila prisoners mortality was explained as they were old men between 55 and 86 years of age and many of them were affected by infections and diseases during the struggle itself and were in bad health condition. Authorities expected a fairly high mortality in future also as so many aged *mappilamar* were still in the prisons of the presidency.²⁴⁶ This shows the negligence towards Mappila prisoners and the state's negligent attitude towards old prisoners.

The colonial state had its own justifications on the high mortality rate of Mappila prisoners in the jails of Madras Presidency.. The authorities stated that many of the *mappilamar* were in a deplorable condition at the time of their arrest itself. They were affected by dysentery and influenza resulted from their nomadic life in jungles during the struggle period which finally lead to their death. The *Andhrapatrika* alleged that the jail I G's explanation on high death rate of Mappila prisoners was not satisfactory and the jail authorities did not take even the least care of *mappilamar*.²⁴⁷ The jailor of Coimbatore Jail stated that many batches of Mappila prisoners had been brought to the jail but none were in bad condition and also they never

²⁴⁴ *MLCP*, 5th February 1924, vol 16, p. 33. *RAK*.

²⁴⁵ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency-1927*, Madras, 1928, p. 19.

²⁴⁶ Revenue R dis , B N 321, SI No 1, 1927, *RAK*.

²⁴⁷ *Andhrapatrika*, 1st September 1923, *MNNPR, TSA*, Chennai.

had to report the I G of prisons or police of such incidents.²⁴⁸ This contradiction clearly reveals that the extreme torture, bad food and water, unhygienic sanitation and lack of medical care in the prison were mainly responsible for this high mortality. The official reports states that more than one thousand *mappilamar* died in various jails of Madras Presidency in the initial years.

Mortality Chart

SI No	Malabar struggle prisoners	Alipuram MRC	Notes On the basis of Madras Annual Jail Administration Reports
1921	62	52	
1922	NA	448	1230 total death in Madras Presidency
1923	169	76	
1924	107	71	
1925	110	95	
1926	NA	NA	
1927	108	96	
1928	45	37	
1929	32	26	
1930	21	22 including CDM prisoners	
1931	13	8	
1932	3	2	
1933			

As per official sources the total Mappila prisoners died in 1921 was fifty two in which the prisoners died in connection with ‘wagon massacre’ and Kannur Jail riot were excluded. This clearly indicates that the actual death rate was much higher than the official one. The whole list was unreal

²⁴⁸ FSG, 1922, part 1, p. 934, RAK.

and the total *mappilamar* died in various jails was much higher than that mentioned in official sources. It was in the year 1932 the separate graphs showing death of prisoners including and excluding *mappilamar* was stopped in jail manual.²⁴⁹ This graph was a clear sign of discrimination as the state did not have any value to the life of Mappila convicts.

Prisoners while admitting at Alipuram in January 1923 were put in quarantine for initial ten days. The high rate of mortality did not alarm the officials and the jail hospital was also in pathetic condition. It can be called a hospital just for name sake as most of the prisoners admitted with dysentery and other illness died there without proper treatment and caring.²⁵⁰ In the initial years, the first task of prisoners in the morning was enquiring how many prisoners had died.

Visitors and Letters in the Prison

The prisoners were placed in various jails and the relatives and friends had no idea where they were, hence the possibility of meeting them and interviewing them was very rare. The interview with Ali Mussaliar by *The Hindu* correspondent C K Mohammed Yakoob and its publication in the *Hindu* became a controversy. The government asked explanation to jail IG. The I G had given memo to Coimbatore Jail Superintendent. The SP explained that the interview and conversation between them did not infringe the jail rules and also the statements in the *Hindu* was a well written up account of the conversation.²⁵¹ The family members of Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib was permitted to visit him for ending his hunger strike.

²⁴⁹ For Details see *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency 1921-1932*, RAK.

²⁵⁰ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, p. 76.

²⁵¹ Public G O No 112, 7th February 1922, TSA, Chennai.

The prisoners convicted in connection with Malabar struggle wrote many letters in Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam. M P Narayana Menon and Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib wrote letters in English. We cannot call the entire Mappila prisoners as illiterate because they knew to read and write in Arabi Malayalam. Even the jail wardens forced prisoners to send letters to their relatives asking them to send money. Majority of the money received thus went into the hands of jail officials. The letters includes details of prison life, appeal, death and even family matters. Even some women send divorce petition as letter. These letters were sent only after censoring by jail officials.

Aboobaker Mussaliar wrote two letters before his death sentence in Arabi- Malayalam from Coimbatore Jail. He mentions about the appeal filed to cancel his death sentence. The letter gives a lot of information on the corpse of hanged Mappila men. Another letter was written by Arikadan Moideen to Edathola Kunjali a landlord and resigned *adhikari* from Salem Jail, in this letter also there is reference about the corpse of Mappila prisoners.

Resistance and Revolts in the Jail

The 1921-22 jail offences or resistance was more in the jails of Madras Presidency and the authorities claimed that it was mainly due to increased population mainly of Mappila and Non co-operation Movement prisoners.²⁵² There existed two kind of resistance in prison, violent as well as non-violent method. Both types of resistance were used by Mappila prisoners as against the torture and ill-treatment of jail officials. However the hunger strike was one of the non-violent method of resistance which was widely practised by

²⁵² *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year 1921-22*, Government Press, Madras, 1923, p. 16.

Mappila prisoners. Hunger strike as a tool of resistance was undertaken individually as well as jointly and was the most successful one to an extent.

A revolt took place at Kannur Central Jail by Mappila prisoners which was an important resistance against British at prison. It took place on 4th December 1921 when the prisoners were being taken out for food: the prisoners had broken the jail carpenters shop and armed themselves.²⁵³ They attacked the jail officials and wardens and liberated prisoners from jail hospital and cells. The authorities considered it as a well-planned conspiracy in which even the wardens, mostly *mappilamar*, were involved.²⁵⁴ But prisoners could not escape. Ten prisoners lost their life in firing and beating while twenty one were wounded. C Sankaran Nair considered it as a part of Non Cooperation Movement.²⁵⁵ Even the jail reports mentions the revolt as revolutionary in origin which aimed the liberation of prisoners.²⁵⁶ Even the government suspected that the wardens mainly belonging to Muslim community also took part in the conspiracy.²⁵⁷ The west coast reformer, one of the newspapers in the madras presidency stated that the jail revolt clearly indicates the spirit of the struggle was not a fanatical emotion rather it was a direct result of political power that has produced a rancorous hatred against the colonial government and its officials.²⁵⁸ Thus, the resistance was a political one rather than religious.

The Malabar Struggle Juveniles who were at Palamcottah Jail also revolted. The government accused that there were three 'outbreaks' in

²⁵³ *History of Madras Police Centenary 1859-1959*, Madras, 1959, pp. 348-349, TSA, Chennai.

²⁵⁴ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency- 1921*, Government Press, Madras, 1922, p. 6.

²⁵⁵ C Sankaran Nair, *Gandhi and Anarchy*, Madras, 1922, p. 241.

²⁵⁶ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency- 1921*, Government Press, Madras, 1922, p. 6.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *West Coast Reformer*, 9th December 1921, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

1925. The rebels, for a certain time, were in command of the jail. To restore peace reserve police from outside were called.²⁵⁹ The IG of prison in his report on outbreak stated the reason for resistance was due to restiveness of Mappila prisoners against the tightening up of discipline.²⁶⁰ The aim of revolt was to re assert the old system and not to break the jail. Though the *mappilamar* aimed humane treatment from the authorities they were punished severely. To check future resistance authorities established a tight disciplinary regime in jail towards *mappilamar*.²⁶¹ Fifteen Mappila state prisoners at Palamcottah Jail who took active part in the resistance had been excluded from the list of prisoners who were to be released under general scheme to struggle prisoners.²⁶²

The Mappila convicts at Cuddalore Jail caused a disturbance and a confrontation took place between the wardens and other convicts in December 1925. Injuries were reported from both sides and the disturbance does not have a particular significance.²⁶³ The sub divisional magistrate was appointed for inquiry by *DM*.

When AR Knapp visited struggle prisoners at Alipuram Jail, Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib and Moidu Moulavi countered his arguments and as a result the authorities transferred Moidu Moulavi to Rajahmundry and Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib to Madras Penitentiary.²⁶⁴ The government documents also indicate that M P Narayana Menon also countered and stated his dissatisfaction about his confinement

²⁵⁹ *FNR* for the First Half of August 1925, TSA, Chennai.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Public Misc. G O No 812, 22nd August 1925, Revenue R Dis, B N 287, Sl. 2, RAK.

²⁶³ *FNR* for the Second Half of December 1925, TSA, Chennai.

²⁶⁴ S K Pottokad (et. al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman: A Political Biography*, pp. 127-128

to A R Knapp.²⁶⁵ The Malabar struggle prisoners even used hunger strike as a tool of resistance against the oppressive mechanism. The prisoners including Mappila prisoners, after receiving the news about Gandhi's arrest, went on a hunger strike as a protest on 18th March 1922.

The north Indian revolutionaries who were imprisoned as detainees in various jails of Madras Presidency advised Mappila prisoners to go on hunger strike. Even the revolutionary prisoners encouraged struggle prisoners for hunger strike. As Moidu Moulavi states that when the authorities of Rajahmundry jail stopped so many concessions on prisoners it was revolutionary prisoners from Punjab who encouraged them to resort to hunger strike.²⁶⁶ The Strike was a successful one as the authorities restored so many concessions back. The struggle prisoners went on three day hunger strike at Rajahmundry Jail on the issue of food. Their major demand to use coconut oil instead of mustard oil for cooking was accepted along with other demands.²⁶⁷

Hunger strike was practiced when the Colonial state and officials interfered in the religious matters of prisoners. Not only Mappila Prisoners, but Hindu prisoners like Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad used hunger strike as a tool of resistance. The Mappila prisoners at Alipuram Jail got permission to perform daily *namaz* after the protest conducted under Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib.²⁶⁸

A Saithali along with two other prisoners went on hunger strike at Vellore CJdemanding facilities to daily *namaz*, better bathing and sanitation

²⁶⁵ Letter from Special Superintendent of Police, Malabar to DM, Malabar, 20th June 1933, Revenue R Dis 1933, RAK.

²⁶⁶ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, p. 84.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 91-92.

²⁶⁸ Moulavi K Koyatti, *1921le Malabar Lahala*, pp. 111-112.

as there was no scavengers, and length dress for performing prayer. On the third day ten more prisoners joined the hunger strike, the prisoners were hospitalised on 8th day for resorting forced feeding. Even after resorting hunger strike the prisoners didn't give up that. Hence on the thirteenth day the officials agreed the demands of prisoners which included permission for daily prayers, lengthy trousers, joint prayer in Friday afternoon, better sanitation , bathing facility twice a week, food at early morning and night during *ramzan* fasting.²⁶⁹ The allotting of lengthy dress in various hunger strikes clearly shows that prisoners of all jail didn't got permission to daily prayer and lengthy dress as mentioned in *Jail Manual* for Muslim prisoners.

The government officials in their reports stated that Mappila prisoners will react only when he was insulted or tortured and if treated well they are docile and obedient.²⁷⁰ The order were issued to superintendents of all jails for advising prison staff especially wardens for better conduct and bearing towards them

Malabar Struggle and the Dream of Swaraj

M K Gandhi, Moulana Shaukat Ali and other Congress leaders during their speeches in different parts of country during *NCM* stated frequently about *swaraj*.²⁷¹ They expressed their belief that India will gain freedom from the British raj by 1st or 31st December 1921. The *swaraj* concept not only inspired Congress and Khilafat followers but also middle class and literate people in Malabar.²⁷² Thus the Mappila prisoners were mainly

²⁶⁹ Dairy of A Saidali published in *Madhyamam Weekly*, Kozhikode, 5th November 2018, p.31.

²⁷⁰ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency-1925*, Government Press, Madras, 1926, pp. 5- 7.

²⁷¹ It was M K Gandhi who inspired people to fight for home Rule or Swaraj since the out break of the First World War. For details see M K Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, 1909.

²⁷² Moyyath Sankaran, *Atmakatha*, p. 97.

awaiting swaraj or freedom. It was clear that during *NCM* the news that swaraj will come soon was very well spread throughout India by Gandhi. Rajagopalachari, E Moidu Moulavi, K Madhavan Nair all stated or hoped that *swaraj* will be achieved soon. So it arises a question on *swaraj*. The Malabar struggle prisoners at Vellore Jail frequently enquired to Rajagopalachari about *swaraj*, when it will be attained and about Gandhi.²⁷³

The rebels had different view on *swaraj*. The rebels had the view that if they succeeded in the capture of two taluks in Malabar the Congress leaders who were advocating swaraj as their ultimate goal would also support them.²⁷⁴ Their view was that, they can attain it even before the deadline by Gandhi.²⁷⁵ Moidu Moulavi on the way to Alipuram woke up by hearing ‘swaraj....swaraj’ and he was extremely happy as the country got freedom but soon he realised it was a newspaper boy selling “swaraj’ newspaper running by T Prakasam.²⁷⁶ Thus it is clear that *mappilamar* also aimed swaraj and considered Gandhi as the leader. However their mode of agitation against colonial rule was violent which was completely against Gandhian principles.

Release of the Prisoners

A large number of Malabar struggle prisoners mainly concerned in minor offence were started to release conditionally under Suspension of Sentences Scheme from 1922 onwards.²⁷⁷ The two basic features of this suspended sentences scheme were collection of fines and giving security for

²⁷³ C Rajagopalachari, *Jail Diary*, p. 17.

²⁷⁴ Moyyarath Sankaran, *Moyyarath Sankaran: Autobiography of a Freedom Fighter*, p. 147.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²⁷⁶ E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*, p. 69.

²⁷⁷ *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the Year 1921-22*, Government Press, Madras, 1923, p. 16.

good behaviour for the remaining period. The released prisoners needed to report before the *adhikari* and police station as directed by district magistrate.

The fine imposed on such conditional released prisoners was very high. They need to pay the fine in instalments. The fines were usually paid monthly to the Adhikari of respective *amsam*. This was done deliberately by the state to restore the position of *adhikari* with more powerful status than struggle period and to bring the released prisoners under colonial administrative apparatus. So many released prisoners were again imprisoned for on default to pay fine. The arrests were done not only for default of fine but for accusing bad behaviour also. The prisoners were released only after taking thumb impression in an enclosed form.²⁷⁸ This was done to trace them using their fingerprints if they escaped or committed any crime.

In the initial period, prisoners with short term sentences were released and the term fixed for good behaviour on their case was two years. They need to visit *adhikari* which was directed by the District Magistrate in every month. The power to collect tax was given to *adhikari* deliberately as it helped the officials to restore the position and power of the *adhikari* challenged during struggle. Prisoners were not only rearrested for failing in payment of fines but also for breaking bond of good behaviour. Later when the long term prisoners were released the condition for good behaviour of two years was replaced with good behaviour until actual completion date of their release.

The suspended sentences scheme was not only a disciplinary one but also an economic tool. The introduction of suspended sentences scheme had

²⁷⁸ Revenue R Dis, Bundle No 260, Sl. No.28, RAK.

dual benefits to the colonial state in economic aspect as it saved the cost of keeping prisoner in Jail secondly fine was a great bonus to the state. The released Mappila prisoners suffered too much to pay the fines. The total amount of fines inflicted up to 31st May 1923 was 243076 in which the government able to collect sixty five thousand eight hundred and sixty three rupees 65863.²⁷⁹ Two hundred and twenty four prisoners were ordered to be rearrested due to default in fine payment in June 1923. The rearrested prisoners for the default in fine payment included old prisoners. An eighty year old released prisoner M MMammadKutty was rearrested stating breach of conditions of his release.²⁸⁰ The prisoner worked hard for paying their monthly fines. Even the relatives of so many prisoners paid the fine of the released prisoners. The government also cancelled the punishment of twenty eight released prisoners who paid fine for one year and remained in good behaviour for one year in May 1924.²⁸¹ In 1924 six hundred Malabar struggle prisoners were released in the 1st half of October on the occasion of governors visit who were imprisoned for a term of seven years and fine of 829000.²⁸² This clearly shows that the convicts who were imprisoned to seven years or below and including remission were awaiting release, soon was released by state not as mercy. It was also a part of disciplinary strategy and included in governors visit for name sake.

The Muslim, a newspaper requested the government for enquiry on those in jail as most of them were innocent and to exempt such innocents from fines.²⁸³ Even the *Mitavathi* newspaper urged government to cancel fines imposed on *mappilamar* especially those released under suspended

²⁷⁹ Public G O No 860, 9th December 1924, TSA, Chennai.

²⁸⁰ Revenue R Dis, Bundle No. 461, SI No 10, RAK.

²⁸¹ Public Go No 355, 17th May 1924, TSA, Chennai.

²⁸² *FNR* for the First Half of October 1924, TSA, Chennai.

²⁸³ *Muslim*, 8th November 1923, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

sentence. The *Mitavathi* requested to cancel fines and urged to provide education and job opportunities to *mappilamar*.²⁸⁴ The main newspapers like *Malayala Manorama*, *Lokaprakasam* and *Suprabatham* criticised the release of *Mappila* prisoners concerned in minor offences and stated it as a breach of public peace.²⁸⁵ In *MLC* also a serious debate occurred on release of prisoners concerned with minor offences as Vengata Ramana Iyer welcomed it while M Krishnan Nair opposed it by stating that the people in Malabar were feared of their release.²⁸⁶ The government continued to release prisoners before the completion of their sentence.

Malabar was passing through extreme difficulties due to flood in 1924. A resolution forwarded by T M Moidu and Uppi stating two things by the situation created by flood was passed in *MLC* in August 1924 itself. The first resolution was that all the fines imposed on Mappilla prisoners who were released under suspended sentence scheme was to be excluded from paying fines and secondly to release all persons who were imprisoned again for default of paying such fines under suspended sentence scheme.²⁸⁷ The government as a result decided to release Malabar struggle prisoners who were imprisoned for non-payment of fines. However they collected fines from *mappilamar* even after flood, which created a lot of criticism against the state.²⁸⁸ A R Knapp stated that the first batch of prisoners released under suspended sentences scheme before the expiry of their sentence was released in March 1922 itself for fines and security for two years.²⁸⁹ Later,

²⁸⁴ Mitavadi, 16th June 1924, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

²⁸⁵ *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai, Year 1922, pp. 392-393.

²⁸⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 20th March 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

²⁸⁷ Public G O No 764, 24th October 1924, TSA, Chennai.

²⁸⁸ *Muslim*, 21st October 1924, *MNNPR*, TSA, Chennai.

²⁸⁹ Public G O No 764, 24th October 1924, TSA, Chennai.

many prisoners were released and it included 637, 457 prisoners and 15 prisoners in 1922 itself as per various government orders.²⁹⁰

The suspended sentences scheme was later continued as premature release and majority of Mappila prisoners including those confined at Andamans were released under this scheme in the end of 1920s and in the beginning 1930s before the actual date of their release. Fines were not collected from them. The government officials in 1926 ordered to divide the entire Malabar Struggle prisoners into two categories 'Dangerous' and 'Non-dangerous'.²⁹¹ The 'Dangerous' and 'Non Dangerous' classification also played an important part in premature release of prisoners. Majority of prisoners who were released earlier belonged to 'Non Dangerous' category. In most of the occasions the government rejected applications for premature release of prisoners included in 'Dangerous' category stating that they would be released in ordinary course.

The two demands for premature release were that the prisoner shall remain of good behaviour and they need to report at police stations once in a month until the actual ending date of sentence and introduced as a part of disciplinary procedure.²⁹² The police station which is to be reported by prisoner was specified by the District Magistrate of Malabar. The released prisoners were directed to go to Kozhikode and appear before the stationary sub magistrate who was assigned to give necessary instructions to prisoners on behalf of District Magistrate.²⁹³ This clearly shows the suspended sentences scheme was continued and the only difference was fine were not collected from the prisoners under the premature release scheme.

²⁹⁰ Public G O No 826 of 14th October 1922, TSA, Chennai.

²⁹¹ September 1926, Revenue R Dis, Bn 299 A, SI No. 1, RAK.

²⁹² Public G O No 309, 24th February 1932, TSA, Chennai.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

In between 1929 and 1934, more than 1000 Malabar struggle prisoners were released under the suspended sentences scheme.²⁹⁴ *The Swarajya* publishing from Madras stated that until 1931 around six thousand Malabar struggle prisoners were released before the expiry of their sentence.²⁹⁵ One thousand five hundred and sixty prisoners were awaiting release in 1933 and 1934 including M P Narayana Menon in which government ordered release of one thousand four hundred and rejected the one hundred and sixty prisoners stating they were in dangerous category for premature release.²⁹⁶ M P Narayana Menon was not released as he was also in Dangerous category. The number of total prisoners may vary however the state released the Mappila prisoners since their disciplinary mechanism was success to an extent.

The Malabar district officials tried to imprison Mappila prisoners who were released under the scheme accusing bad character were usually rejected by the Madras Government. In 1933, M Kunhamu who was released under Suspended Sentences Scheme preceded to Mecca without filing application to the Malabar District Magistrate. The district officials requested the Madras government to cancel his suspended sentence and to imprison until 27th January 1941 the actual date of his release but it was rejected by the Madras government.²⁹⁷ A police inspector of Tamarassery wrote to the higher officials that the released Mappila prisoners and Hindus were moving friendly hence he requested to exempt the released Mappila prisoners in Tamarassery limit from reporting at the police station every month.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ Revenue R Dis, Bundle No. 396, SI No 13, RAK.

²⁹⁵ *Swarajya*, 28th April 1931, *MNNPR, TSA*, Chennai.

²⁹⁶ Revenue R Dis, B 361, SI No 3, RAK.

²⁹⁷ Letter dated 20th February 1935, Revenue R Dis, Bn 406, SI. No 5, RAK.

²⁹⁸ Letter from Tamarassery Sub Inspector, 10th October 1935, Revenue R Dis, Bn 396, SI no 13, RAK.

When the Congress government came into power in Madras Presidency in 1937 the main beneficiaries in Malabar were none other than Mappila prisoners as they cancelled various restrictions and cruel acts introduced by the colonial state against them. In the aspect of temporary release the Madras government in November 1937 issued an order ending the monthly reporting at police stations by the released Mappila prisoners.²⁹⁹ This was a great blessing to prisoners and also liberation from the disciplinary mechanism introduced by the colonial authorities. The released prisoners under the scheme actually needed to report at police station for so many years as the actual release date of last prisoner was 1962.

The state sometimes released prisoners on medical grounds. In July 1928 the medical officer of Alipuram Jail recommended release of 564 prisoners on medical grounds.³⁰⁰ The government reduced the list into 506 stating that remaining fifty eight prisoners did not have any relatives to look after them and sanctioned the release of 241 prisoners who were in 'Non Dangerous' category and the remaining 265 prisoners were ordered not to be released until the completion of their sentence.³⁰¹ This shows that the government was not ready to show any humanitarian concern to sick prisoners who were branded as 'Dangerous'. They rejected extremely weak prisoners release petitions stating they were capable to create trouble even from their bed.³⁰² M P Narayana Menon was included in this 'Dangerous' category. The criteria adopted for including prisoners in 'Dangerous' category was strange and arbitrary.

²⁹⁹ Letter from H M Hood, 17th November 1937, Revenue R Dis, Bundle No 461, Sl no 10, RAK.

³⁰⁰ Letter from Superintendent of Alipuram Central Jail, 3rd July 1928, Bn 321, Sl no 1, RAK.

³⁰¹ Law General G O No 2092, 18th June 1928, TSA, Chennai.

³⁰² Revenue R Dis, Bn 321, Sl no 1, RAK.

Reception to Released Prisoners

The active workers of the Indian National Congress imprisoned in connection with Malabar struggle got warm welcome after their release from jails. This include Muhammad Abdu Rahman Sahib who got warm welcome at the Kozhikode Railway Station when he was released from various jails of the Madras Presidency.³⁰³ M P Narayana Menon got warm welcome in different parts of Madras Presidency soon after his release. M P, soon after in was unanimously elected as the president of KPC in December 1934.³⁰⁴ Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib when reached Kozhikode after two years prison life on 11th August 1923 got huge reception at the Kozhikode Railway Station. The Congress and Khilafat leaders like K P Keshava Menon, K Madhavan Nair and P Moideen Koya were also there to welcome him and after that a meeting was held.³⁰⁵

It is important to see that there were no receptions given to released prisoners associated with the Malabar Struggle of 1921. The Indian National Congress which was dominating the political sphere did not consider the prisoners of Malabar Struggle as political prisoners. It was this class of prisoners who suffered untold miseries in the prisons and jails for a long period because of their resistance to colonialism and landlordism.

Prisoners and their Post Prison Life

The life of the released prisoners especially those associated with the Malabar Struggle were pathetic., The families, relatives and even the village population were subjected to ill treatment and common fining because of

³⁰³ S K Pottekad (et. al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman: A Political Biography*, p. 138.

³⁰⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 2nd to 20th October 1934, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

³⁰⁵ S K Pottekad (et. al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman: A Political Biography*, pp. 130-131. Also See *Mathrubhumi*, 14th August 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

the crime charged upon these prisoners by the colonial government. The life of the prisoners associated with the Indian National Congress and the Gandhian struggle was much better than the prisoners of the Malabar Struggle.

The District Collector of Malabar formed a Mappila Aid Committee to help the released Mappila prisoners in 1931.³⁰⁶ The state had understood that the real reason of the Malabar Struggle was agrarian and economic discontent. When the large scale release of prisoners was started by the government in 1931, they stated that majority of *mappilamar* were neither criminals of the ordinary type nor fanatics and the only possibility of danger after their release was due to economic discontent.³⁰⁷ An aid committee was formed as they feared another struggle if the *mappilamar* were unemployed. The committee members included the District Collector, the Magistrate, local landlords and other supporters of the government.

The government tried to keep away the Indian National Congress and other parties from the committee to prevent organised activity in the village.³⁰⁸ The committee collected list of released prisoners and details of their jobs in prisons. The fund for aiding the released prisoners were not provided by the government and it was collected from the general public. It is seen that the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University had given ten rupees to the fund.³⁰⁹ A notice in Malayalam was circulated by government for raising funds to support these Mappila Prisoners.³¹⁰ The raja of Nilambur offered

³⁰⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 11th December 1931, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

³⁰⁷ Government of Madras letter on forming Mappila Aid Committee, 30th December 1931, Revenue R Dis, Bundle No. 360, Sl no 33, RAK.

³⁰⁸ Letter from Chief Secretary, Madras, G O No 1305, 23rd December 1931, Revenue R Dis, RAK.

³⁰⁹ Letter from S R Masood, Vice Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 7th March 1932, Revenue R Dis, Bn no 360, Sl no 33, RAK.

³¹⁰ Notice by E C Wood, 20th December 1931, Revenue R Dis, Bundle No. 360, Sl no 33, RAK.

rent free lands to released prisoners and was ready to treat them as ordinary tenants.³¹¹ The involvement of state in settling released Mappila prisoners clearly shows that they understood the economic discontent due to agrarian and other reasons as the main background of Malabar Struggle and tried their best to stop repeating struggle by solving the agrarian issues along with other repressive instruments like *MSP*.

The state treatment of prisoners associated with the Malabar Struggle started with their capture from the field. Those surrendered voluntarily to the police also faced severe ill treatment from the police. The autobiographies and memory notes gives us ample evidence to speak about the agony and pain suffered by the prisoners. The same ill treatment continued during trails, transportation and punishments. The jail was a hell to the prisoners of the 'Mappila Rebellion'. The experiences of deportation to Andamans and life in the island was more dangerous to the prisoners. The family and village population had to suffer the same treatment because of fines imposed upon the arrested. Thus, the impact was far reaching which was not limited to the individual. The Indian National Congress did not consider them as political prisoners and it prevented them from acquiring status as a freedom fighter in the prison and outside. They did not get reception during the time of release and the village and relatives attempted to isolate them when they came back to their village. Many prisoners returned to Andamans due to this insult and they began to prefer prison instead of a free world they dreamt many years in the dark prisons.

³¹¹ Letter from T Manavedan Tirumulpad, Raja of Nilambur to E C Wood, 18th January 1932, Revenue R Dis, Bundle No. 360, SI no 33, *RAK*.

Chapter 6 Prison as a School

The life of prisoners arrested with the charge revolting against the British king or challenging the rule of the landlord or the colonial state was not just leading a normal life in the prison. They were assimilating ideas collected from different parts of the country through the prisoners to formulate the future struggle to make the land and people free from slavery. It was this class of prisoners who transformed the face of the national movement in Kerala by the beginning of the third decade of the twentieth century. It was a turning point in the history of the freedom struggle. This chapter looks into the role of the prison life of the freedom fighters a life in the school of nationalism and social change. The prison was abode of the revolutionaries, Gandhians, participants of the Malabar Struggle, Communist and Socialists. Large number of prisoners arrested in different parts of north India belonging to similar groups were brought to different jails in South India and they joined the Keralites as members of this school education. Life in the prison was giving them opportunity to debate caste system, colonialism, limitations of the already developed national spirit, possibilities of nationalism and social transformation. Reading, writing and sitting in the study classes changed a prisoner which divided his life into pre prison and post prison worlds. Thus, the jail life definitely transformed the political prisoners and the arrested nationalists.

David Arnold argues that the prison became an institution of the middle class experiences and imaginations from 1890 onwards.¹ Thus, in the

¹ David Arnold, 'The Self in the Cell: Indian Prison Narratives and Life Histories' in David Arnold and Stuart Blackman (eds.), *Telling Lives in India*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2004, p. 29.

national level, even before the advent of M K Gandhi we can see the Congress political prisoners who utilised their prison life in a productive way. Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote *Gita Rahasya* while in the Mandalay Prison at Burma.² It was only after the advent of the Gandhian movement, the prison became an institution for learning to most of the political prisoners.

The Gandhian political prisoners from Malabar used prison as a school for studying various subjects and reading books since the days of the Non Cooperation Movement. They used their prison life to read and write. The leaders of the Indian National Congress like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, M K Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru utilised their prison days for reading books and studying various subjects and languages. Majority of the prisoners imprisoned in connection with the Malabar Struggle were not able to utilise their prison life in reading or studying.³ However the field work clearly reveals that even some *mappilamar* studied Arabic in the night and became *musaliar* in their post-prison life.⁴ At the same time, the Congress and Khilafat leaders imprisoned in connection with the Malabar Struggle were able to utilise their prison life to read and study. M P Narayana Menon, Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sahib, Muzhikunath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, Moidu Moulavi, Hassan Koya Mulla and K V Raman Menon have remembered their jail experience through autobiographies, memoirs, interviews and articles in newspapers.⁵ M P Narayana Menon utilised his

² Kurur Neelakandan Namboodiripad, *OHT* number 147, *NMML*, New Delhi.

³ The prisoners of the Malabar Struggle were not considered as political prisoners both by the colonial government and the Indian National Congress. Thus, many facilities enjoyed by the political prisoners were barred to the prisoners of the Malabar Struggle.

⁴ Interview with Alavi, aged above 70, son of Alavi *Mussaliar* at his residence in Trikalangode on 13th March 2019.

⁵ For details see, E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*. Also see S K Pottakkad (et al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman A Political Biography*.

fourteen years in the prison by learning various languages and subjects with special focus on Sanskrit and Philosophy.⁶

The *CDM* of 1930-1934 in Malabar was entirely different from *NCM*. During the *CDM*, Malabar contributed thousands of prisoners including women and witnessed the introduction of ABC classification in the prison. The ABC classification of 1930 had affected the reading facility of political prisoners. The A and B class prisoners in the jail got tables, chairs, writing materials, books and lot of time to reading besides they were also given lights in night for reading and writing.⁷ This was a major change as the leaders who were placed in A and B Class got enough time and better facilities to read books, write and conduct classes in the day and night. While the C class prisoners struggled to get books and other facilities and they hardly got time for reading. Even in the unfavourable condition, the C class tried to utilise their time to acquire knowledge and learning new languages.

The C class political prisoners in various jails of Madras Presidency adopted various methods of protest for getting books and reading facilities like light during night. One of the chief demands of these political prisoners was provision to get books and newspapers. The A Class prisoners had the privilege to get books from outside with their own expense. Even in many hunger strikes conducted at the Kannur Central Jail, individually as well as in groups one of the main issues was getting books and newspapers.⁸ N C Shekar, a participant of this hunger strike has mentioned about it in his autobiography.⁹ The Alipuram Camp Jail at Bellary and Kannur Central Jail were venues of such resistances from the *CDM* onwards. Fifteen C class

⁶ For details see M P S, Menon, *M P Narayana Menon: A Forgotten Pioneer*, New Delhi, 1992.

⁷ GO No 1199, Law Department, 19th March 1930, *RAK*.

⁸ See *Mathrubhumi-1930-34*, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁹ N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*, p. 100.

political prisoners of the Alipuram Jail in Bellary were thoroughly beaten when they refused to enter into cells demanding writing materials and lights in the night.¹⁰ During the Second World War, the venue of hunger strikes was shifted to Alipuram Jail as majority of prisoners in the jails in Malabar were shifted to them. This was mainly because, the authorities aimed to keep political prisoners from Malabar in faraway places and in extreme difficulties.

The Gandhian political prisoners belonging to various A B C classes conducted study classes during the *CDM* separately in most of the jails. Important topics debated in these study classes were history of the Indian National Congress, political ideology of M K Gandhi and other topics. These study classes were also conducted to learn different languages. The volunteers of the Indian National Congress gave much importance to learn Hindi language. These study classes were conducted by prisoners who were experts in these languages. They were convicted in connection with Individual Satyagraha, Quit India Movement etc. These classes were not limited to subjects and languages. Training was given regarding delivering speeches and other political strategies associated with the national movement.¹¹ A K Gopalan compared his first prison life as hostel life which helped him to study various subjects and attending study classes.¹² These political prisoners spent major part of their prison life in reading and writing. They could read many books and study various languages. While the C class troubled a lot and they lost opportunity to learn these skills.

The leaders who took classes in the prison includes Pattabhi Sitaramaya, C Rajagopalachari, T Prakasam, M P Narayana Menon, E M S

¹⁰ *Tamilnadu*, 18th March 1931, *MNNPR, TSA*, Chennai.

¹¹ For details see Vishnu Bharatiyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*. Also see A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*.

¹² For details see A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakatha*.

Namboodiripad, A K Gopalan, P Krishna Pilla etc. Pattabi Sitaramaya took classes about trusteeship, concept of the Indian National Congress and the national flag.¹³ It may be noted that majority of political prisoners from Malabar arrested in connection with *NCM*, *CDM* and *QIM* were literate. However, they studied new languages and learned various subjects in the prison. M P Narayana Menon became a well versed scholar in history, philosophy, Sanskrit and literature by his long term prison life starting with the Malabar struggle.¹⁴ M P Narayana Menon has recorded that his interest in western philosophy was born during the prison days.¹⁵

The revolutionaries from north India confined in various jails at the Madras Presidency tried to contact with political prisoners to convey their ideology. The prisoners of the Malabar Struggle had contact with these revolutionaries. It was these revolutionaries who advised the *mappilamar* to went on hunger strikes for solving their grievances in the prison.¹⁶ Kannur was one of the major venues where these revolutionary political prisoners were confined. The colonial officials tried their level best to keep away revolutionaries from Gandhian political prisoners during the Civil Disobedience Movement. The government attempt in that line was a total failure. The political prisoners who knew Hindi language and those who learned Hindi from the prison engaged in conversation with north Indian revolutionaries.¹⁷ These classes ultimately resulted in the spread of new ideology among the political prisoners. These classes played a prominent role in spreading Socialist and Communist ideology throughout Kerala. Many

¹³ A C Kannan Nair noted in the dairy on 26th October 1941. K K N Kurup (ed.), *A C Kannan Nair*, Thiruvananthapuram, p. 126.

¹⁴ Vide V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikkullil*.

¹⁵ K P Kesava Menon, *Samakalenaraya Chila Keraliyar*, vol. I, SPCS, Kottayam, 1974, p. 198.

¹⁶ For details see E Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Aatmakatha*.

¹⁷ For details see A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakatha*. Also in, Vishnu Bharatiyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, and N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*.

of these classes looked at the ideological foundation of the national movement and the revolutionaries could teach the weaknesses of the national movement and it caused for the birth of workers and peasant movements in different parts of Malabar. The study classes enabled the educated prisoners to understand history of the World, economics, political developments, Communism etc., through the study classes.

Leaders used the opportunity to write books and articles to strengthen the national movement from a different perspective. A K Gopalan in his eight months prison life in 1936-37, was put in solitary confinement and he utilised the most of his time in reading books and making notes.¹⁸ However, the jail officials troubled Socialists by not supplying books inspite of legal provision. The Superintendent of the Kannur Jail, denied the book, *Glimpses of World History* to Vishnu Bharatheeyan during the Congress Ministry was in power in 1939.¹⁹ During the Second World War, the Congress and Communist volunteers were imprisoned as detinues as well as convicted prisoners. They also utilised prison life to learn, read and write.

The branch of the Communist Party in Malabar was formed in 1939. Soon after that, most of the Communists were imprisoned for various offences, some as detinues and some went to underground life. Dr K B Krishna was given the charge to organise classes twice in a day to the Communist detinues in the Vellore Jail.²⁰ A K Gopalan as a detainee prisoner took classes to political prisoners in the Vellore Jail during his prison life

¹⁸ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 84.

¹⁹ Correspondence Files, 1940, RAK.

²⁰ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 146.

there. The major intention of these classes during this time was to convince the prisoners that the stand taken by the Communist party was right.²¹

Three languages were important in the jails in Madras Presidency. They were Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. The prisoners confined at Alipuram Camp Jail and Bellary Central Jail had to study either Kannada or Telugu as it was a bilingual area. The prisoners at Coimbatore and Madras had to study Tamil. The wardens as well as majority of the criminals knew only their mother tongue. The common language in all these districts of Madras Presidency was English as it was the official language. The literate wardens respected political prisoners who knew English. As they feared they will complaint about them to higher officials in jails who were mainly Englishmen.

Gandhi in his curriculum of higher education to students not only included their vernacular language and English but also included Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic.²² Same was the case of political prisoners as they were also the students in prison who learned various languages. M K Gandhi even learned Urdu and Tamil languages during his prison life at South Africa.²³ Gandhi's advice to the volunteers was to learn Hindi language.

The political prisoners from Malabar took classes in Malayalam language to the political prisoners from other parts of the Madras Presidency. A K Gopalan and Chathukutty Nambiar taught Malayalam to the

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²² M K Gandhi, *My Experiments with Truth*, Navjivan, Ahmadabad, 1959, p. 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

political prisoners from Andhra who in return taught them Hindi.²⁴ The political prisoners were able to teach Malayalam to their co prisoners.

The political prisoners from Malabar who were confined in various jails of Madras Presidency learned south Indian languages like Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. Most of them studied Tamil easily and read a lot of books in Tamil. M K Gandhi learned Tamil language during his prison life. M P Narayana Menon also studied Tamil during his prison life in connection with the Malabar Struggle and before his release read many Tamil works.²⁵ E M S Namboodiripad in his first imprisonment itself at Vellore Jail learned Tamil language and started reading Tamil newspapers and magazines in the prison.²⁶ The Tamil language was studied by a lot of political prisoners from Malabar including women.

The south Indian languages were not only learned for gaining knowledge but also as an aid to escape from the prison. Kumaran, a political prisoner imprisoned in the Alipuram Jail at Bellary learned Telugu and Kannada during the Second World War.²⁷ The reason was that Bellary was a bilingual area and it was essential for him to survive during his underground life after escape. Thus' the language was not only limited to intellectual level but also for day to day survival. The learning of these languages helped the prisoners to translate many important works into their language and spread the knowledge they acquired in the public.

One of the major aims of M K Gandhi from the beginning of his political activities in India was the propagation of Hindi and thus gaining a

²⁴ K Madhavan, *Oru Gandhian Communistinte Ormakuripukal*, Prabath Book House, Thiruvananthapuram, 2014, pp. 70-71.

²⁵ K P Kesava Menon, *Samakalenaraya Chila Keraliyar*, vol. I, p. 197.

²⁶ E M S Namboodiripad, *Aatmakatha*, p. 147.

²⁷ N P Damodaran, *Anubhavachurulukal*, Samayam, Kannur, 2007, p. 156.

national language title for it. He considered Hindi as a solution for national unity. In the eighth Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held at Allahabad in 1918, he urged that Hindi should be made the national language. M K Gandhi, in the Amritsar session of Indian National Congress in December 1919 delivered his speech in Hindi as a part of making Hindi the National language.²⁸ The propagation of Hindi as national language was one of the Gandhian tool for attaining *swaraj*. Two other tools used were Swadeshi, and Hindu Muslim unity. The reason for making Hindi the national language was because English was the official language and in 1920 only 2.2 percentage of Indian population were literate in English.²⁹

Thus, M K Gandhi wanted Hindi in the place of English as it suits to all provinces of India except the Madras Presidency. As Gandhi was aware that Hindi does not suit to the Madras Presidency, in 1918 itself, he started work the propagation of Hindi in the Madras Presidency. It was under M K Gandhi, the Dakshin Bharatheeya Hindi Prachar Sabha (DBHPS) was established in 1918 with the aim of Hindi propagation in the Madras Presidency. Devdas Gandhi, son of M K Gandhi was the first ambassador of DBHPS in the Madras Presidency. Initially, Devdas learned Tamil language for teaching Hindi in the Tamil region.³⁰

Most of the political prisoners in Malabar were educated and most of them knew English and Malayalam languages. Some leaders also knew Hindi language. The Gandhi's advice for Hindi propagation did not attain a good

²⁸ M K Gandhi, *My Experiments with Truth*, p. 356.

²⁹ M K Gandhi's letter, 21ST April 1920, *CWMG*, vol. 20, p. 232. accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> accessed on 5th February at 11 A.M.

³⁰ 13th June 1918, *CWKG*, vol. 17, p. 66. accessed online <https://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi> accessed on 5th February at 11 A.M.

result in Malabar. The scenario changed entirely during the *CDM* as majority of the political prisoners started learning Hindi during their prison life at various jails in the Madras Presidency. The classes in Hindi were taken by political prisoners who were well versed in Hindi. P Krishna Pilla was one of the main political prisoners who took class to teach Hindi language.³¹ P Krishna Pilla passed 'Sahitya Visharad' in Hindi language which was equal to B A English from the Allahabad Sahitya Samellan.³² He joined as a Hindi Pracharak of the Dakshin Bharatheya Hindi Prachar Sabha in Thiruvithamcore. He left this job to join the *CDM* in Malabar. The leaders from Andhra and Tamilnadu who learned Hindi also conducted classes to teach Hindi to the political prisoners from different parts of the Madras Presidency.

When P Krishna Pilla was imprisoned twice during the *CDM* at the Kannur Central Jail. He undertook the charge of teaching Hindi language to the political prisoners.³³ No study materials were given to him in prison during his second term as he was imprisoned in the C class. One of the friends of P KrishnaPilla sent some Hindi books to the jail. They started learning Hindi after having the morning gruel at 6 A M. The study continued up to 9 A M.³⁴ Many prisoners joined these classes. They learned Hindi alphabets by writing in vacuum by hand in prison as they were not given learning materials.³⁵ Majority of the political prisoners studied the basics of Hindi during their prison life. Not only Krishna Pilla a lot of other political prisoners belonging to the Madras Presidency undertook the task of taking classes in Hindi. A K Gopalan and Sankunni Nambiar also learned Hindi

³¹ Vishnu Bharatiyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 63.

³² T K V, *Sakhav*, p. 20.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³⁴ Vishnu Bharatiyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 63.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

during their prison life under the guidance of a political prisoner from Andhra.³⁶

It took a lot of time to teach Hindi to some prisoners due to jail transfer and other reasons. A K Gopalan along with Moyyarath Sankaran later attended the Hindi classes taken by M N Sivaram at Alipuram Jail during the *CDM*.³⁷ Hindi plays were also taught to them. Moyyarath was also not able to become well versed in Hindi during his first imprisonment. During his second imprisonment connected with the *CDM*, he made an effort to solve the issue.³⁸

K. Madhavan in his autobiography points out that it was during his prison life at Kannur Central Jail during the *CDM* he learned Hindi language.³⁹ The political prisoners who learned Hindi not only started reading Hindi books but also taught Hindi to other political prisoners. Vishnu Bharatheeyan learned Hindi with the help of P Krishna Pilla during the prison life and he soon taught Hindi to A V Kunjambu during the Civil Disobedience Movement.⁴⁰

The Hindi books sent by Vishnu Bharatheeyan's friend to the prison was not given to him until his release in May 1939.⁴¹ During the *QIM*, K Kunjirama Kurup's daily routine in Alipuram Jail was to teach Hindi classes to political prisoners from morning 7 AM to 9 AM.⁴² These classes were attended by political prisoners from various parts of the Madras Presidency.

³⁶ P Madhavan, *Oru Gandhian Communistinte Ormakuripukal*, p. 70.

³⁷ Moyyarath Sankaran, *Aatmakatha*, p. 175.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³⁹ P Madhavan, *Oru Gandhian Communistinte Ormakuripukal*, p. 70.

⁴⁰ Vishnu Bharatiyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 69.

⁴¹ *Mathrubhumi*, June 1939, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM press, Kozhikode.

⁴² K Kunjirama Kurup, *Oru Socialistinte Ormakal*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 2016, p. 73.

Muhammed Abdur Rahman Sahib strongly advocated Hindi as the national language.⁴³ The political prisoners gave much importance to Hindi language considering it as national language. They learned Hindi even after their release and read various books in their post-prison lives. Thus, Hindi played a prominent role in the making of the popular national movement in Malabar.

Sanskrit was another major language opted by political prisoners and it was mainly to read the works of Kalidasa.⁴⁴ M P Narayana Menon utilised his prison life mainly to study various subjects and languages. It helped him to gain knowledge as well as to pass the time. He studied and read various books in Sanskrit. A member of the Rama Krishna Mission helped M P to learn Sanskrit in the prison.⁴⁵ He was not only a Sanskrit student in the prison but also a teacher of Sanskrit. Thus, he was a teacher for political prisoners during the *CDM* and *QIM*. C Rajagopalachari reminded that M P Narayana Menon had helped him to learn Sanskrit during the *CDM*.⁴⁶ During his detainee life in connection with the *QIM* he took classes in Sanskrit. Majority of the political prisoners who came to contact with M P during their prison life entitled him as a master in Sanskrit language.

M P Narayana Menon was not the only person from Malabar who conducted classes to political prisoners in Sanskrit. Vishnu Bharatheeyan taught *Raghuvamsa* of Kalidasa to O Krishnan during the *CDM*.⁴⁷ E M S Namboodiripad also during his *CDM* prison life at Vellore Jail undertook classes in Sanskrit language to the political prisoners. His students included T

⁴³ V S Keraliyan, *Keralathinte Veeraputhran*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2013, p. 160.

⁴⁴ Even most of them studied Sanskrit slokas in his works.

⁴⁵ M P S Menon, *Malabar Samaram: M P Narayana Menonum Sahapravathakarum*, Kozhikode, 2005, p. 168.

⁴⁶ M P S Menon, *M P Narayana Menon: A Forgotten Pioneer*, p. 153.

⁴⁷ Vishnu Bharateeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 61.

Prakasham and Venkida Pai.⁴⁸ Somayachalu from Andhra took classes in English, Sanskrit, Telugu languages and he also took classes about political matters. Learning of Sanskrit helped prisoners to read ancient classics and efficient utilisation of time in the prison.

Learning English Language

English was the only common language in colonial India. For a political prisoner learning English was necessary to understand his privileges in the prison as well as to survive from the torture of the officials to an extent. The literacy rate in English was very low in South India. Most of the prisoners from Malabar were educated and were able to read and write in Malayalam. Only the political prisoners who did not know English utilised their prison time in learning English. K Madhavan during his *CDM* prison life at the Kannur Central Jail studied English.⁴⁹ Vishnu Bharatheeyan tried to study English from K A Keraleeyan but abandoned due to difficulty. The prisoners utilised their knowledge in English for filing complaints, reading classical books, government reports and prohibited works. The major task undertaken by the political prisoners from Malabar was teaching English to the political prisoners from other states. E M S Namboodiripad during his prison life at Vellore Jail tried to learn Urdu with the help of Pattabi Sitaramayya.⁵⁰ However he was not able to well verse in that language.

Mygurudu Language in the Prison

The colonial as well as nationalist writings have stated that the Mappillas were illiterate. We can clearly see that they got religious education and were able to read and write in Arabic language. Many studied Arabic

⁴⁸ E M S, *Aatmakatha*, p. 147.

⁴⁹ P Madhavan, *Oru Gandhian Communistinte Ormakuripukal*, p. 70.

⁵⁰ E M S, *Aatmakatha*, p. 147.

language while in prison. Besides, Arabic they developed a special language called Arabi -Malayalam.⁵¹ Even a person who understood Arabic could not understand Arabi Malayalam as it had more alphabets by modifying the Arabic letters itself.

Thousands of prisoners associated with the Malabar Struggle during their prison life at various jails of Madras Presidency used a secret language instead of Malayalam called mygurudu. This language was developed by swapping Malayalam alphabets. For example in this secret language they used 'Sa' instead of 'Aa'.⁵² There are two arguments related to the mygurudu language. First, it was developed in jail by the prisoners linked with the Malabar Struggle. Secondly, it was used by a group of *mappillamar* during the struggle and used for communication between rebels by writing it in Arabi Malayalam script.⁵³ Both these arguments point out that the main aim of this language was conveying secret messages. The Malabar Struggle might have given chance to develop this language and widely used in the prison by the Mappila convicts. We have to depend on oral sources as archival, autobiographical etc., are not available to trace the history of this secret language.⁵⁴

This language was widely used by the prisoners and it was extremely difficult to persons who knew Malayalam to understand this language. The main reason for the usage and popularisation of this language was that the prisoners used this to convey the crimes committed by the new prisoners,

⁵¹ Arabi Malayalam is a writing system developed by *mappillamar* of Malabar by using Arabic script for writing Malayalam language. In Arabic language there is 28 letters while in Arabic language while in Arabi Malayalam there is 53 letters by modifying Arabic alphabets to denote all Malayalam words.

⁵² 'Mygurudu! The Jail Lingo is Vocal Again' in *The New Indian Express*, 27th April 2017.

⁵³ Pramod Irumbuzhy, *Malpram Basha-Mygurudu*, Bodhi Books, Nilambur, 2016, pp. 2-30.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 2-5.

explain the status of struggle and future plans to co prisoners.⁵⁵ Even the wardens who knew Malayalam were not able to decipher the language. The language was used only to convey secret messages.

There was another secret language in Travancore called Moolabhadri.⁵⁶ However it was used by the state and its soldiers for conveying confidential matters. Mygurudu language was not limited to the prison alone. This language was used by the released prisoners who worked as peasants and beedi workers in their post-prison life.

Exercise and Sports

The prisoners engaged themselves by playing various games in jail. The main games were cards and chess. Comparing the prison life of convicted prisoners, the detainees got much relaxation as they were permitted to play various games inside and outside the prison during Second World War. K P R Gopalan was very interested in playing chess.⁵⁷ The detainees were allowed to play tennis football and other games. Even detainees of the Vellore Central Jail during the Second World War were even brought outside the jail to play games outside. Tennis and football were the main games played by the detainees. It was during this opportunity, A K Gopalan collected tools to escape from the Vellore Jail.⁵⁸

M P Narayana Menon conducted drill classes to the political prisoners. Yoga was practiced individually as well as in groups. The political prisoners read Patanjali's *Yogasutra* during their prison life and some of them found

⁵⁵ Interview with Hassan K, Aged above 70, Irumbuzhy, on 30th December 2018.

⁵⁶ Pramod Irumbuzhy, *Malpram Basha-Mygurudu*.

⁵⁷ For details see A V Anilkumar, *K P R Gopalan*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2001.

⁵⁸ C Bhaskaran, *Keralathile Communist Prasthanam Adyapathikar*, Deshabhimani Book House, Thiruvananthapuram, 2010, p. 66.

time to practice yoga. Kurur Neelakandan Namboodiripad started studying Rajayoga and practised yoga and *Pranayama* during his prison life.⁵⁹

The Prison Library

The political prisoners in India utilised the major portion of their time in prison for reading books. Majority of the political prisoners from Malabar were educated and they had enough knowledge in English and Malayalam languages. Besides, the learning of Hindi, Sanskrit Tamil and other languages helped them to utilise prison life in reading various books. The political prisoners also spent a part of their time for reading religious works too. Many of the political prisoners stated that they utilised their prison life in reading epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.⁶⁰

Every prison in the Madras Presidency had a library for the prisoners. The books in colonial prisons were strictly censored and the historical books in the library were sorted in favour of colonial view. In the case of Russian Revolution, rather than keeping Stalin's or Lenin's works they deliberately included Trotsky's work to mislead the political prisoners. The major portion of prison books were contributed by Christian missionaries and it dealt with Christianity.

The political prisoners carried their personal books also to the prison. While some books were sent to them by their family members or friends. Prof. Hogg of the Madras Christian College and one of the teachers of M P Narayana Menon usually visited him during his prison life at the Madras Penitentiary with a lot of books. M P Narayana Menon's only notebook from prison contains the details of books read by him. The list includes a lot of

⁵⁹ Pranayama means breath exercise. See Karur Neelakantan Nambudiripad, *OHT 147*, NMML, New Delhi.

⁶⁰ V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikulil*, p. 72.

Malayalam, English, Sanskrit and Tamil works. The *Mahabharata*, Patanjali's *Yoga sutra*, *Rigveda*, Kalidasa's works, *Holy Quran* in English, Anil Baran's *The Illusion of Charka*, Plato's *Republic*, Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of Roman Empire*, Harold Lasky's *Introduction to Socialism* etc., were some among them.⁶¹

The political prisoners of A and B classes after ABC classification were allowed to bring books and magazines from outside the prison.⁶² E M S Namboodirippad during his prison life at Vellore read a lot of books and as an 'A' Class prisoner he was able to get plenty of books from outside.⁶³ Most of the prisoners possessed their own personal collection with wide range of books. Altogether it formed a huge collection of books for them. All the political prisoners did not have the opportunity to read and write as some of them were not even allowed to read or given any writing materials in the prison.⁶⁴ The C Class prisoners did not get any books from outside the prison.

The C class political prisoners in Kannur Jail had started resistance during the Civil Disobedience Movement to get the provision of writing material books and newspapers.⁶⁵ The continuous demand for books and writing materials was rejected by jail officials as the jail officials of Madras Presidency issued a Confidential Order to all jail officials that no concessions will be given to C class political prisoners.⁶⁶ N C Shekar during his C Class prison life at Kannur got books to read from his C Class co-prisoner Batlivala. The two books which attracted N C Shekar were *The Revolt of Angels* and

⁶¹ M P S, Menon, *M P Narayana Menon: A Forgotten Pioneer*, p. 152.

⁶² GO No 1199, Law General, Madras, 19th March 1930, *Fort St. George Gazette*, 25th March 1930, p. 457, RAK.

⁶³ E M S Namboodiripad, *OHT-794, NMML*, New Delhi.

⁶⁴ David Arnold, 'The Self in the Cell: Indian Prison Narratives and Life Histories' in, David Arnold and Stuart Blackman (eds.), *Telling Lives in India*, p. 30.

⁶⁵ N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*, p. 100.

⁶⁶ *Selected Records*, SI No 184, RAK.

The Making of Fascism.⁶⁷ The books sent from outside was usually not given to C class prisoners. Even during the period of the Congress Ministry in Madras, Vishnu Baratheeyan was not given permission to get the book *Glimpses of World History* written by J. Nehru.⁶⁸ The Madras Government was forced to interfere in the matter and issued order to allow the book to Vishnu Baratheeyan.⁶⁹ A K Gopalan also utilised his prison life to read books and studying various languages. He was interested in books on the Russian Revolution and he has noted his interest in the novel *Roti ke Sawal*.⁷⁰ The work had influenced the Gandhian prisoners a lot. Socialists like P Krishna Pilla read it and carried the book along with him.⁷¹

During the Second World War, a lot of Congress and Communist volunteers were imprisoned as detainee prisoners. They spent their time in taking classes and reading books. Many Communist prisoners were released during the Second World War and the People's War Policy. However, the Congress detainees arrested in connection with the *QIM* were confined until the end of the War in 1945. Muhammed Abdur Rahman Sahib was imprisoned for five years from 1940 to 1945 as a detainee prisoner and he utilised his prison time in reading books. His collection of books included subjects like Islamic history and mystic poems.⁷² The collection of mystic poems included the English translation of *Atmarahasya* of Mohammed Iqbal, and poetic volumes of Persian poet Hafis.⁷³

⁶⁷ N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*, p. 96.

⁶⁸ See Vishnu Bharateeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*.

⁶⁹ *Selected Records*, Sl no 134, RAK.

⁷⁰ The work *Roti Ki Sawal* was actually a translation of French work entitled *Conquest of the Bread* written by Peter Kropotkin in French language for details see, A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakatha*, , p. 42.

⁷¹ T K V, *Sakhav*, p. 35.

⁷² S K Pottakad (et al.), *Muhammad Abdurrahman A Political Biography*, p. 577.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

Smuggling of Books and Newspapers in the Prison

The prison was the place where all prohibited books were available. The political prisoners from Malabar during the *CDM* got many of prohibited books as well as newspapers like the *Al Ameen* and *Mathrubhumi* in jails of the Madras Presidency. A K Gopalan has stated that during his prison life at the Central Jail in Kannur, he got a lot of smuggled books on Socialism to read.⁷⁴ The prisoners associated with revolutionary movements in North India give various books to the Gandhian political prisoners and most of them were banned books by the government. Occasional searches were conducted by the Jail Superintendent in blocks and cells of the Central Jail at Kannur during the Civil Disobedience Movement. In the search, the government seized many books containing revolutionary ideology.⁷⁵ The most important among the books was *Life of Michael Collins*. The Superintendent after enquiry found that the book, *Life of Michel Collins* was given to the prisoners associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement by Sen Gupta, a prisoner associated with the revolutionary movement.⁷⁶ The Madras government ordered an enquiry about the smuggling of books in the prison.⁷⁷ The report said that the revolutionaries were influencing the prisoners which resulted in in-disciplinary activities in the prison. Vishnu Baratheeyan recollected that the Bengal revolutionaries imprisoned in the Central Jail at Kannur handed over a hand written document which described the history of Bengal revolutionaries.⁷⁸ This book was actually banned by the government. Thus, the message of revolutionary ideology began to influence

⁷⁴ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 42.

⁷⁵ *Selected Records*, Sl no 184, RAK.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Letter from IG of Prisons, to Superintendent of Kannur Central Jail, 20th January 1933, *Selected Records*, Sl no 184, RAK.

⁷⁸ Vishnu Bharateeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 73

the political prisoners. Another prohibited book, *Swatantra Bharatham* was secretly published and distributed in Malabar during the Quit India Movement by the volunteers of the Congress Movement. K Kunjirama Kurup remembered that the copies of *Swatantra Bharatham* were available at the Alipuram jail.⁷⁹ The copies were not limited to Malayali prisoners because Kunjirama Kurup who was a prisoner in the jail translated it to Hindi for circulation among his co prisoners.⁸⁰

V A Keshvan Nair another congress volunteer imprisoned in connection with *QIM* also stated that banned books and pamphlets were available in jails of Madras presidency including Alipuram Camp Jail.⁸¹ The availability of prohibited books clearly shows that the jail was the main government institution where prohibited books were available to congress revolutionaries and communist prisoners. The colonial jail was far away from panopticon even in academic terms as the political prisoners had the access to books on various languages and subjects that were not available in any parts of Malabar including prohibited works.

The Prison Writings

The saints in ancient India went to forests and later contributed invaluable works on Indian culture and civilisation. Like that the colonial prisons in India were also a sacred place which produced the highest intellectual works.⁸² The prison writings meant works written by prisoners while they were confined in prison, gaol, jail or penitentiary. In this thesis we have included the books written by prisoners which mentions their post-

⁷⁹ K Kunjirama Kurup, *Oru Socialistinte Ormakal*, p. 75.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁸¹ V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikullil*, pp. 71-72.

⁸² Karur Neelakantan Nambudirippad. *OHT* 147, NMML, New Delhi.

prison life in the category of prison writings. The prison writings include autobiographies, memoirs, academic works, literary works etc. The world famous works *Don Quixote*, *The Pilgrim Progress*, *Mein Kampf* and *Prison Notes* of Antonio Gramsci were written in prison.

Many writings came up from the prisons in colonial India. Which shows even before the Gandhian era the leaders of the Indian National Congress utilised their prison life and post prison life in writing a lot of works. The colonial period had produced outstanding corpus of prison writings of all genre: memoirs, autobiography, letters, poems, stories etc.⁸³

From the *NCM* onwards a lot of works were written in English and other regional languages by political prisoners. Important focus is given to autobiographies and memoirs of these prisoners for analysing their life experiences in the colonial prison. The *Jail Dairy* of C Rajagopalachari written while in the Vellore prison during the *NCM* is the most important source for exploring the daily life of political prisoners in jails at the Madras Presidency. This *Jail Dairy* deals with his day to day experiences at the Vellore Central jail from December 1921 to March 1922. He was imprisoned in the jail in connection with the *NCM*.⁸⁴ The work was written in English language and published soon after his release in 1922 as *Jail Dairy*. Later in 1941, the revised edition was published as *Rajaji's 1920 Jail Life*. The jail dairy can be considered as an autobiography of C Rajagopalachari.⁸⁵ The work gives information on solitary confinement, prison food, daily routine, labour, medicine, and the attitude of prison officials. Most of the nights in the prison was giving worse experiences to Rajagopalachari due to the presence of

⁸³ C N Srikanth (ed.), *Prison Writings in India*, Kendra Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2014, p. 5.

⁸⁴ C Rajagopalachari, *Jail Dairy*.

⁸⁵ G S Balarama Gupta, 'Thus spoke Rajaji from Behind Bars' in C N Srikanth (ed.), *Prison Writings in India*, p. 31.

mosquitoes, fleas and lice, bugs in bed and recurring asthma. Rajaji was treated like ordinary criminals with bad food and he compared it like beggars being fed.⁸⁶ When he was released in March 1922, he refused to give interview and attend public meeting and wanted to understand the political situation in the country first.⁸⁷

A major portion of M K Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* is written while in prison. He started writing during his prison life at Yerwada Jail in 1922-1924. Soon after his release he focused on completing his autobiography. The work was written in Gujarati language Later Mahadev Deesai, Gandhi's co-associate who was imprisoned along with him in various occasions, translated it into English. It deals with his experiences from childhood until the year of 1921. It also discusses his prison life in South Africa.

An Autobiography, the autobiographical work of Nehru was written in English language during his prison life associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement. Its post script and some minor changes were done after his release. It was first published in 1936. J. Nehru has mentioned that his personal thoughts and moods in prison were narrated in his writings.⁸⁸ Even though Nehru was given A class facilities, his solitary confinement resulted in stress and depression to him. He spent much time in reading and writing to overcome his personal emotions and feeling in prison. These autobiographies reveals how efficiently the freedom fighters utilised their time for overcoming stress and depression.

⁸⁶ C Rajagopalachari, *Jail Dairy*, p. 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁸⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 616.

Besides autobiographical works, a lot of works in various categories like history, politics, geography, literature etc., were written in prison. C Rajagopalachari's wrote another work while in prison which is *Chat Behind the Bars*. The work contains note on various topics taught by Rajagoopalachari in the political classes taken to prisoners at the Vellore Central jail during the CDM.⁸⁹ Socialism was a topic chosen by him for his classes. The *Discovery of India* and *Glimpses of World History* written by J. Nehru are the most important prison writings in India. The Socialists and Communists were also doing intellectual activity as prisoners. Bhagat Singh wrote four books while arrested in the prison.⁹⁰

The Gandhian, Communist and Mappila political prisoners wrote autobiographies, memoirs diaries and letters during their prison life. Majority of these works are written in Malayalam. The Mappila prisoners used Arabi-Malayalam. The prison experience is a major content of these memoirs and autobiographies

The dairies of political prisoners from Malabar explained the day to day prison experiences they came across. The most important information in the Jail Dairy of C Rajagopalachari is the account of prisoners arrested in connection with the Malabar Struggle of 1921. The political prisoners in Malabar rarely wrote dairies in the prison. A C Kannan Nair wrote dairies from 1920 onwards and it continued until his death in 1963. Forty three dairies written during this period explains the history of the Indian national movement, Socialism and Communism. These dairies are kept in the Nehru Memorial Museum Library in New Delhi. These dairies have recorded his

⁸⁹ C Rajagopalachari, *Chat Behind the Bars*, Madras, 1931.

⁹⁰ These works are *Jail Notebook*, *Why I am an Atheist*, *No Hanging, Please Shoot us* and *To Young Political Workers*.

prison life during the *CDM* and Individual Satyagraha in the Mangalore Jail, Vellore Jail and the Alipuram Central Jail. During the *CDM*, he was fined with two hundred rupees and imprisoned when refused to the pay fine on 17th may 1930. He was released soon on 22nd May 1930 as his relatives paid the fine.⁹¹ He was imprisoned in connection with the individual Satyagraha of 1940-41. The dairies narrate the books read by him including *Les Miserable's* of Victor Hugo and describes various study classes attended by him. These dairies says that the leaders of the Indian National conducted classes in the jails. The autobiographies and memoirs are the most important source material to reconstruct the prison experiences of the freedom fighters.

The number of autobiographies written by political prisoners belonging to Malabar are very few. The *Bandanathil Ninnu* written by K P Keshava Menon during his prison life at Poojapura Jail in Thiruvananthapuram explains his prison life in connection with the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924.⁹² In his autobiography *Kazhinjakalam*, he explains his prison experience as *Pujapurayile Sugavasam*.⁹³ It says that he had a happy life with many facilities in the prison at Thiruvananthapuram. This was mainly due to his education and upper caste status. Simply it reveals the various privileges allotted to Kesava Menon and other elites as well as the miserable life of ordinary prisoners.

Irumbazhikulil is the most important work written in prison. It is done by V A Kesavan Nair during his prison life at Alipuram Jail in connection with the *QIM*.⁹⁴ The work was written while at the Alipuram Camp Jail in Malayalam language. The jail warden helped him by smuggling the

⁹¹ Dairy of A C Kannan Nair dated 29th May 1930 in, K K N Kurup (ed.), *A C Kannan Nair*, p. 43.

⁹² K P Kesava Menon, *Bandhanathilninnu*, Mathrubhumi, Kozhikode, 1924.

⁹³ Wide, K P Kesava Menon, *Kazhinjakalam*.

⁹⁴ V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikulil*, pp. 1-5.

handwritten papers outside the prison by hiding it inside his cap. Later it was handed over to V A Kesavan Nair after his release at the railway station.⁹⁵ As he was a, C Class pleaders of the Indian National Congress, Keshavan Nair had to face bitter experiences and untold hardships in the prison. The work not only deals with the experiences of the author but also shares crimes, punishments, history of the freedom struggle and the divide and rule policy practiced by the officials in the prison.

The letters written by prisoners to their family members and friends are another important source to read their personal feelings while in the prison. These letters are much trustworthy documents than autobiographies as it addressed only the recipient. Most of the letters written by prisoners are not available now and majority of them are lost. From the nineteenth century itself, we can see that the petitions submitted by political prisoners for their release. These letters were written either in Malayalam or in English language. Initially, political prisoners were allowed to send and receive letters once in a month. The ABC classification of prisoners resulted in special concessions to A and B to post many letters.⁹⁶ During the Second World War, the detainees were not allowed to send letters in the initial period and later they were permitted to send and receive up to four letters in a week. The political prisoners were not allowed to write about their prison experiences and about political matters in their letters. The situation in Britain was completely different as even criminal prisoners were allowed to write politics in their letter.⁹⁷ The incoming as well as outgoing letters of prisoners were strictly censored. The officials stroke off the unwanted contents in letters

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁹⁶ For details see *FSG*, Part I 1930, RAK.

⁹⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, 14th June 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

using black ink.⁹⁸ Leela Damodara Menon stated that the letters she received from prison were also censored with black ink.⁹⁹

The political prisoners belonging to the Indian National Congress, Communist Party and Mappila community smuggled letters outside the prison individually as well as with the help of jail wardens. K P R Menon one official at the Vellore Jail smuggled letters and other items for the use of political prisoners during the Civil Disobedience Movement.¹⁰⁰ The wardens also smuggled letters to the outside world. The other way of smuggling out letters was by hiding in political prisoners body when they were released.¹⁰¹ It was a risky job and was caught in various occasions. K A Damodara Menon was transferred from Coimbatore to Alipuram Jail for writing the miserable treatment in the prison in a letter.¹⁰² The prisoners convicted during the Malabar struggle wrote letters in Malayalam and in Arabi-Malayalam. The Congress leaders like M P Narayana Menon wrote letters even to M K Gandhi in English.¹⁰³ A letter written by P Aboobacker Musaliar, a Mappila leader from Kozhikode taluk shows that the prisoners welcomed gallows as they hoped a better life after death.¹⁰⁴

The detainees were allowed to write letters to their family members only. They were permitted to send and receive up to four letters in a week. Most of the letters contained only personal matters as political matters were strictly censored by the jail officials. Leela Damodara Menon mentioned that

⁹⁸ K A Damodara Menon, *Thirinjunkumbol*, SPCS, Kottayam, 1981, p. 177.

⁹⁹ Leela Damodara Menon, *Chettante Nizhalil*, SPCS, Kottayam, 1984, pp. 58-59.

¹⁰⁰ K P R Menon, 'Jail Chattangal Kanishamayi Palicha Thadavukaran' in *Kelapan Smaraka Grantham*, Mathrubhumi Books, Kozhikode, 1972, p. 197.

¹⁰¹ E M S Namboodiripad, *Aatmakadha*, p. 146.

¹⁰² K A Damodara Menon, *Thirinjunkumbol*, p. 44.

¹⁰³ M P S Menon, *Malabar Samaram: M P Narayana Menonum Sahapravartakarum*, pp. 174-175.

¹⁰⁴ Letter From Aboobaker Musaliar in Moyin Malayamma, *Malabar Samaram: Kozhikode Talukille Cheruthunilpukalam Palakkamthodika Abubacker Musaliyarum*, Grace, Malapuram, 2018.

most of the letters received dealt with prison life and personal matters.¹⁰⁵ In most occasions, major portion of the letter was censored which caused a great mental depression to her.¹⁰⁶ P Krishna Pilla got Hindi books from the prison warden given by Thankamma during his detainee life in the jail at Thiruvithamcore¹⁰⁷ This book exchange later developed into letter exchanges and their marriage soon after his release.

The political prisoners wrote historical works too. Moyyarth Sankaran decided to write the book *Indian National Congress* during his prison life associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement. He collected a lot of materials from the prison about the history of Indian National Congress. However, the work was not completed during his prison life and he completed the remaining portions after release and was published in December 1935.¹⁰⁸ The work deals with the history of Indian National Congress. E M S Namboodiripad wrote four Malayalam manuscripts on the Russian, French, Chinese and Egyptian revolutions and nationalist movements during his first prison life.¹⁰⁹ The manuscript on Russian revolution was published in 1935 entitled as *1917*. It was written on the basis of Trotsky's *History of Russian Revolution*. The book contains ten chapters which deals with the condition of Russia in the nineteenth century, the spread of Communist ideas and development of the organisation, the February Revolution and finally the October Revolution.¹¹⁰ In the preface, he

¹⁰⁵ The personal letters written by K A Damodara Menon during his detainee life was now kept at Kerala History Archives, Department of History, University of Calicut. The letters shows his personal emotions and day to day prison experiences.

¹⁰⁶ Leela Damodara Menon, *Chetante Nizhalil*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁰⁷ Chanthavila Murali, *Sakhavu P Krishna Pilla*, Chinta Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2009, pp. 896-899.

¹⁰⁸ Moyyarth Sankaran, *Indian National Congress*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ E M S, *Aatmakadha*, p. 147.

¹¹⁰ K Gopalankutty, 'The National Movement in Malabar, 1930-47' Unpublished PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1985, p. 131.

denoted Trotsky as a hero of the World. The book was actually against Stalin and his ideology. Robin Jeffrey argues that E M S Namboodirippad was not sure about his personal ideological position at that time.¹¹¹ It was later during his underground life in 1940's, he was able to read Lenin and Stalin and their views about the Russian Revolution.

K A Damodara Menon wrote *Rashtravijnanam* while he was imprisoned in the Central Jail at Kannur during the Civil Disobedience Movement. He got much inspiration and support from his co prisoners especially Sardar Chandroth for writing this book. This work was later published by Kamalalaya Book Depot of Thiruvananthapuram.¹¹² Later he wrote two more books during his detinue life at Amravati Jail in connection with the *QIM*.¹¹³ K Damodaran during his detinue life at Vellore Jail wrote books about social sciences and economics. His book entitled *Manushyan* (human being) deals with history and anthropological analysis of man from the origin to modern era. The other works written by him includes *Uruppika*, *Dhanasastrapraveshika* and *Nanayaprashnam* and all of them are discussing economic issues.¹¹⁴

Literary Works

Prisoners wrote a lot of literary works while in prison. U Gopala Menon one of the first political prisoner convicted in connection with the *NCM* in 1921 translated Bankim Chandra Chaterji's *Krishnacharita* into Malayalam.¹¹⁵ K A Damodara Menon's prison writings are not limited to

¹¹¹ Robin Jeffrey, 'Matriliny, Marxism and the Birth of Communist Party in Kerala 1930-40' in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 38, no 1, 1978, p. 87.

¹¹² K A Damodara Menon, *Thirinju Nokumbol*, p. 48.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹¹⁴ P Govinda Pilla, *K Damodaran Porum Porulum*, SPCS, Kottayam, 2012, p. 151.

¹¹⁵ K P Kesava Menon, *Samakaleenaraya Chila Keralleyar*, vol. II, p. 19.

political books alone. He also wrote novels and poems. The novel written during the prison life at Amaravati Jail is *Thoppile Nidhi*.¹¹⁶ The sole reason for writing this book was that his search for detective novels which ended in failure. Hence, he himself wrote a detective novel. Vaikom Muhammed Basheer the Malayalam novelist and writer also wrote many novels, letters and stories while in prison and outside the prison. This was mainly because of his prison experiences in various jails in the Madras Presidency. He had experiences in the Kannur Central Jail during the *CDM* and at Thiruvitamkoor in 1940 for writing a story entitled *Dharmarajyam* which criticised the policy of the Travancore government.¹¹⁷ His prison experiences produced wide genre of literature in the form of letters, memoir, stories and novels. The prison was one of the main themes of literary works written by various nationalists including political prisoners in their post-prison life.

The jails under the colonial regime produced a wide corpus of poems and songs about the national struggle against colonialism, imperialism and landlordism. The colonial state banned many Mappila war songs in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁸ The Mappila song *Mariyakutty Pattu* deals with the prison life of a Mappila prisoner at Alipuram Jail and his family. Hassan Kutty, a Mappilla from Ernad taluk was confined at Alipuram Jail in connection with the Malabar Struggle of 1921. The song deals with the letter send by him to his mother in law accusing his wife Mariyakutty had illegal intercourse with other males hence he was divorcing her. The song was sung by her for stating her innocence and states that she would like to visit him at Alipuram Camp Jail for convincing her innocence. She also enquires the distance to Bellary and possibilities of meeting him. She stated her innocence by taking

¹¹⁶ K A Damodara Menon, *Thirinju Nokumbol*, p. 178.

¹¹⁷ Vaikom Muhammed Basheer, *Dharmarajyam*, Kottayam, 1938.

¹¹⁸ For details see William Logan, *Malabar*.

oath before the Kondoty Tangal and stating god as her witness. The song concludes with her statement that she will commit suicide if she get divorced. The song clearly reveals the personal emotions of the prisoners and their families.

The political prisoners belonging to the Indian National Congress in Malabar also wrote poems during their prison life. During the *CDM*, the political prisoners at Kannur Central Jail under the leadership of A K Gopalan conducted a versification competition. The topic of the competition was 'Bhagat Singh'.¹¹⁹ This points two things, firstly the political prisoners wrote poems in Kannur Jail. Secondly Bhagat Singh had become a role model even to the Gandhian political prisoners. It also denotes Bhagat Singh's popularity in Malabar. The poem was written in Malayalam language

T S Thirumunb wrote political poems during his prison life at Kannur Jail during the imprisonment occurred with the salt *satyagraha*. He has stated that the jail authorities did not interfered in any of his matters and he was able to read and write in the prison.¹²⁰ One of the famous poems written by him during his prison life was 'Bharavi'. 'Bharavi' was later published in a Malayalam magazine entitled 'Mahila' when he was released. Another major poem written during his life in the Kannur Jail was about the jail itself. The poem was later published as 'Jayilile oru Suprabatham'(one morning in the Jail).¹²¹ It deals with the everyday life of political prisoners in the prison.

T S Thirumunb not only wrote Malayalam poems but also attempted Sanskrit poems. When he was transferred to the Kadalur District Jail in 1930,

¹¹⁹ A V Anilikumar(ed.), *K P R Gopalante Katha: Kalyaseriyudeyum*, Lipi Publications, Kozhikode, 2016, p. 38.

¹²⁰ T S Tirumunb, *Memoirs and Poems*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1988, p. 76.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

he wrote poems in Sanskrit and the political prisoners from Andhra smuggled them outside and got it published in Telugu newspapers.¹²² K A Damodara Menon also wrote poems during his detainee life at Amaravati Jail during the Quit India Movement.¹²³ The Communists also wrote poems about their prison life. T S Thirumunb wrote a poem entitled *Lalsalam* about the prisoners of the Kayyur Rebellion in 1942.¹²⁴

Unpublished Works

Works written by political prisoners during their prison life on various topics including personal experiences, history, religion and literary works etc., are remaining unpublished. Muhammed Abdur Rahman Sahib wrote an unnamed book on Islamic literature and *Patsolunin*, a translation of work on Soviet democracy during his prison life.¹²⁵ These works are remaining undiscovered. E M S Namboodirippad wrote four works during his jail life associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement and three of them remain unpublished. The three are *A Brief History of Revolutions: from French to Russian Revolution*, *The Three Democratic Principles* written by Chinese leader Sun Yat Sen and finally *A Short History of the Egyptian National Revolution*. These works were later destroyed by E M S Namboodirippad himself.¹²⁶

Writings in the Post Prison Life

This languages and subjects learned during the prison life influenced the post prison life of political prisoners. The Socialists used their knowledge

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹²³ K A Damodara Menon, p. 165.

¹²⁴ V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara Charitram*, Progress, Kozhikode, 2013, pp. 128-129.

¹²⁵ P P Mohammed Koya, *Kozhikode Muslimkalude Charitram*, Vachanam Books, Kozhikode, 2012, p. 456.

¹²⁶ E M S, Namboodirippad, *How I Became A Communist*, Chinta Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 1976, p. 131.

and books to strengthen the Granthashala Prasthanam or the library movement.¹²⁷ The autobiographies written by political prisoners in their post-prison life is a valuable source of information about the national movement in India. Among the autobiographies and memoirs an important one is the *Khilafat Smaranakal*. *Khilafat Smaranakal* is a memoir rather than an autobiography. The *Khilafat Smaranakal* is written by Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboothiripad. Mozhikunnath was sentenced to life term imprisonment in connection with the Malabar Struggle and later let free by the Madras High Court.¹²⁸ The work gives an idea about the cruelty done by soldiers in the rebel zone, the prison life and the post prison life of the author. The extreme hardships faced by the Malabar Struggle prisoners at Alipuram Jail is also discussed in the book. It was the post prison life which troubled the life of the author than the prison life.¹²⁹ The autobiographies, memoirs and other writings of political prisoners clearly reveals the post prison hardships faced by the Brahmin nationalists and political workers.

Articles in Newspapers

The political prisoners also wrote their experiences in various newspapers soon after their release. K V Raman Menon, a Congress worker wrote *My Martial Law Experiences* in newspaper *Swarajya*. Later newspapers like *Mathrubhumi* and *Al Ameen* published a lot of personal memoirs of political prisoners to tell their experiences in the prison. The *Mathrubhumi* published experiences of political prisoners belonging to Malabar which included the experiences of ordinary prisoners associated with the Malabar Struggle. The sufferings of prisoners associated with the Mappila struggle was extensively reported and discussed by these

¹²⁷ For details see K N Ganesh (et. al.), *Keralathile Communist Partiyude Charithram*, Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 2018.

¹²⁸ For details see Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Samaranakal*.

¹²⁹ Vide Mozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Samaranakal*. Also see T S Tirumunb, *Memoirs and Poems*.

newspapers. Hassan Koya Mulla, one among the released political prisoners wrote about his experience and the report of the torture of prisoners at the Alipuram Camp Jail in connection with food, drinking water, cloth, cruelty of wardens etc.¹³⁰ P Krishna Pilla wrote an article about the jails in Soviet Russia in which he explained the humane treatment of prisoners in Soviet Jails.¹³¹

The prison to the political prisoner or a convict linked with the freedom struggle was a school to learn many things. He got an opportunity to understand the situation in colonial India and the deepness of enslavement of the people through the experiences in the prison. He also got opportunity to learn different ideologies and experiences of the brave resistances of revolutionaries in other parts of India. He could understand the class character of Indian society through direct experiences in the prison. He came into touch with the writings of many scholars and intellectuals through reading and also by listening the study classes in the jails. The prison enabled him look at the national movement and the world around him in a critical manner. M K Gandhi was becoming a subject of debate in the prison and young members began to criticise him on account of the limitations of his ideology. The jail gave opportunity to the leaders to strengthen their ideology and intellectual world through reading and writing. The Socialists and Communists could train supporters and create cadres in the jail by giving them good political education. One reason for the spread of Communist ideology in Malabar and Kerala was the role of the prison experiences. Many released political prisoners turned to live as good nationalists and efficient political activists because of the experiences they felt in the prisons. Thus, the prison became a school of political education to the political prisoner.

¹³⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 8th December 1923, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 30th March 1934, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

Chapter 7

Prison Life of the Communists

Like the Indian National Congress, the arrival of Communist and Socialist ideologies was also delayed in Malabar. The Communist Party of India was formed in 1920 and it was only in 1937 a branch of the Communist Party was formed in Malabar. The majority of political prisoners during their imprisonment in various jails in the Madras Presidency in between 1930-34 got opportunity to know about these new ideologies. The ABC classification resulted in better treatment to the A and B Class prisoners and bad handling of the C class in the prison. The C Class was forced to go on hunger strikes and other resistances for better treatment and humane consideration. These political prisoners from Malabar were young, educated and from well to do families. E M S Namboodirippad considered the prison life of Gandhian political prisoners during the *CDM* as the beginning of left trend in Kerala especially in Malabar.¹ Important reasons which attracted the Gandhian political prisoners to socialism were the ABC classification of prisoners, study classes about socialism and the Russian Revolution in the prison and the role of revolutionaries. The failure of the Civil Disobedience Movement also caused for the empowerment of the left group in the national movement in Malabar.

During the *CDM* hundreds of Gandhian volunteers were imprisoned in various jails in the Madras Presidency. Unlike the earlier *NCM*, the political prisoners were convicted for offences and were classified into three classes A, B and C. The government fixed certain criteria for A class and B class

¹ E M S Namboodirippad, *Communist Party in Kerala*, National Book Centre, New Delhi, 1994, p. 13.

prisoners who were mainly confined at the Vellore Central Jail. Both B and C class prisoners were mainly confined at the Kannur Central Jail. Besides, these central jails, the Alipuram Jail were also used to imprison political prisoners. In this A B C classification, only around ten percentage prisoners were placed in the A and B classes many of them were the leaders of the Congress movement and persons belonging to higher castes and landlord families.

The Indian National Congress read the ABC classification as a strategy of the divide and rule policy of the government. In spite of this, the leaders of the Indian National Congress in Malabar were not ready to give up their privileges acquired through the A and B Class. The C class prisoners were subjected to harsh treatment from jail authorities along with bad food and dress resulted in resistances. The Kannur Central Jail was the main venue of these protests during the *CDM* and it resulted in the lathi charges by jail authorities and hunger strikes by political prisoners.² The A and B classes in most occasions didn't join the hunger strikes and protests of this C class prisoners.³ In some occasions, they not only joined with the C class prisoners in their protests but also criticised them along with jail officials stating them as undisciplined. One of such incidents occurred between K Kelappan and Moyarath Sankaran at the Kannur Central Jail. He scolded Moyarath Sankaran for creating indiscipline in the prison which resulted in serious arguments between them.⁴ The C class prisoners in their autobiographies have remembered these leaders as brave fighters than M K Gandhi. Thus, the hidden agenda behind the A B C classification was divide and rule of

² For details Puthupally Raghavan, *Viplava Samranakal*, Also in N C Shekar, *Agaveedhi*.

³ Shumais U, 'Krargrihathile Vishapanubhavangal' in P Sivadasan (ed.), *Vishakkunnavante Rastreeyam: Pradirothatinte Samskarikacharithram*, p. 70.

⁴ Moyarath Sankaran, *Aatmakatha*, pp. 167-169.

the political prisoners. Naturally it created class enmity between the prisoners.

The political prisoners spent their time to read and conduct study classes. One important topic of discussion in the prison was the success of the Soviet Union and the importance of Communism in India. K Gopalankutty argues that the Soviet Union as a model influenced the volunteers belonging to the Indian National Congress to a great extent.⁵ The history of the Russian Revolution and the success of the government in Russia influenced the Gandhians and they began to discuss the relevance of Communism in India. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and establishment of the Socialist State and successful experiment of the Five Year Plans inspired these prisoners to embrace Communism. C. Rajagopalachari also became a teacher in these study classes in the prison during the CDM. AN important topic taught in the prison to the prisoners was Socialism. Rajaji's book *Chat Behind The Bars* explains these study classes held in the prison.⁶ The leadership in handling Socialism and Communism in the prison were the revolutionaries from north India.⁷

Besides political classes and discussions, the political prisoners also got enough time to read various books in the prison. The prison libraries were not having enough books. The prisoners of the A class got the opportunity to purchase books from outside and contributed by their friends. The revolutionaries in jails from north India possessed large number of prohibited works. Thus, the prisoners got opportunity to learn Socialism and Communism before the ordinary people in Malabar.

⁵ K Gopalankutty, 'The National Movement in Malabar, 1930-47' Unpublished PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1985.

⁶ For details see C Rajagopalachari, *Chat Behind the Bars*, Madras, 1931.

⁷ *HFM*, vol. 103 B, TSA, Chennai.

During the time of Civil Disobedience Movement, many north Indian revolutionaries were undergoing their imprisonment in various jails of the Madras Presidency. The Central Jail at Kannur was important among them. The chief revolutionaries groups in colonial India at that time were the Gadar Party, Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), Anusheelan Samithi, Yugantar group etc.⁸ Among them, the two major revolutionary groups from Bengal were Anusheelan Samithi and Yuganthar which enjoyed considerable influence in north India. The *HSRA* volunteers were mainly confined in connection with the Lahore Conspiracy Case and its volunteers Kiran Das, Kamal Nath Tiwari were at the Kannur and Vellore Central jails during the *CDM*. Mota Singh, another revolutionary from Punjab was also imprisoned in the Kannur Jail. Raveendra Mohan Sen Gupta, T N Chakravarthi, Ramesh Chandra Acharya of the Anusheelan Group were also in the Kannur Central Jail. Ganguly of the Yuganthar group was at the Thrisinapalli Jail.⁹ The chief reason for confining these revolutionaries in faraway jails was to counter the spread of revolutionary ideology in India. These revolutionaries included those who were punished by the court and detainee prisoners.

The revolutionaries especially Bhagat Singh and Jatin Das connected with the Lahore Conspiracy Case got wide attention in Malabar before the commencement of the Civil Disobedience Movement.¹⁰ The hunger strike launched by Bhagat Singh and his colleagues demanding better treatment of political prisoners was the main reason for the popularity. The hunger strike

⁸ For more details on revolutionary organisations in colonial India see. Bipin Candra (et. al.), *India's Struggle for Independence*.

⁹ E M S Namboodiripad, *Aatmakatha*, pp. 149-150. and also in N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁰ Shumais U, 'Kragrihathile Vishappanubhavangal' in P Sivadasan(ed.), *Vishakkunnavante Rahstreyam: Pradirothathinte Samskarikacharithram*, p. 70.

and the martyrdom of Jatin Das had resulted in the introduction of ABC classification. The government took precautionary measures to prevent contact between the prisoners and revolutionaries during the Civil Disobedience Movement. However, the government attempt ended in failure. These revolutionaries came into contact with the Gandhian political prisoners and debates took place between them regarding the national movement in India. E M S Namboodirippad during his prison life at the Kannur and Vellore Central Jails in 1932, got opportunity to contact with these revolutionaries. It was these revolutionaries who taught the primary lessons of revolutionary ideology to E M S Namboodirippad.¹¹ He has reminded us that the C class political prisoners got opportunity to interact with them while their stay in the Kannur Central Jail.¹²

Not only revolutionaries but also the wardens appreciated the heroism of these revolutionaries imprisoned in the Kannur Jail during the Civil Disobedience Movement. P During his imprisonment connected with the Gandhian Movement in 1930-33, P Krishna Pilla, was able to meet these revolutionaries. The jail officials were aware of the close association of P Krishna Pilla with these revolutionaries.¹³ Some revolutionaries deeply scribbled their names on the prison walls of their cells at the Kannur Central Jail during their imprisonment. The names of Mota Singh and Karthar Singh were scribbled in the cell where Puthupally Raghavan was accommodated later. The jail warden explained about the heroism of Punjab revolutionaries to him during the *CDM* at the Kannur Central Jail.¹⁴ Thus, the jail wardens

¹¹ E M S Namboodirippad, *Oru Indian Communistinte Ormakuripukal*, p. 51.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹³ Malabar police's report on P Krishna Pilla to Travancore police for detaining him. 13th October 1940, No D Dis 1528/44, 29th June 1944, Kerala State Archives (hereafter *KSA*), Thiruvananthapuram.

¹⁴ Puthupally Raghavan, *Viplava Samranakal*, pp. 130-131.

also popularised the heroic deeds of the revolutionaries to the Gandhian prisoners coming arriving the jail. N C Shekar was imprisoned in this jail in a block along with Puthuppally Raghavan and he has stated that the ordinary prisoners in Kannur Central Jail explained the heroism of the great revolutionaries imprisoned in the same jail.¹⁵

The revolutionaries from Bengal took care in handling two important duties. One was the murder of British officials through regular revolutionary activity. The second duty undertaken was the organisation of the oppressed peasants and labourers with the aim of the destroying the colonial rule.¹⁶ The Bengali revolutionaries informed the Gandhian political prisoners that armed rebellion was unavoidable to end the colonial rule. They explained that weapons were available in Bengal and armed practice was available in Coorg.¹⁷ The revolutionaries in the jails taught the principles of revolutionary activity and Socialist ideology to the newly arriving political prisoners in the jails. Similarly, the revolutionaries made available books and literature about revolution and associated work in India.

The result of these study classes was the commencement of revolutionary activities in Malabar under the leadership of released political prisoners. A new branch of the Anusheelan Samithi was formed in Malabar. K P Gopalan, P Krishna Pilla, Vishnu Bharatheeyan, A V Kunjambu, K A Keraleeyan, P Kunjappa Master, P Madhavanetc., took membership in the Anusheelan Samithi. K P Gopalan and P Krishna Pilla escaped from the clutches of police while doing propaganda work after their release from the prison.¹⁸ A V Kunjambu formed a branch of the Abinava Bharat Yuva

¹⁵ N C Shekar, *Agniveedhi*, p. 88.

¹⁶ Vishnu Bharatheeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 70.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁸ T K V, *Sakhavu*, p. 35.

Sangham at Karivellur in 1934 under the inspiration of the revolutionaries from Bengal. E K Nayanar, E N Nainar, P Kumaran Master and K V Narayanan Nambiar were the earliest members of the organisation at Kalyasseri.¹⁹ Two decisions were taken by these new revolutionaries soon after the formation of the organisation. First one was the plan to assassinate higher British officials of bad character after taking weapon practice. Secondly, the circulation of banned book entitled *History of Revolutionary Movement in Bengal* among the educated people. The Gandhian political prisoners were familiar with these books which were discussed before them under the leadership of Bengali revolutionaries during their prison life associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement.²⁰ The prisoners successfully managed to smuggle that book to outside the prison. For circulation, they had decided to prepare one thousand hand written copies. This clearly shows that the political prisoners in colonial Malabar were far away from the panopticon concept suggested by Michael Foucault.²¹ Vishnu Bharatheeyan and his associates wrote the book by staying in one house and slept in another house to escape from the attention of the police. The news of armed training was leaked to the police conducted a quick search at house where Bharatheeyan and his associates slept.²² The police failed to trace any books or materials from them. The young generation began to stop secret activities and began to abandon the revolutionary spirit. Instead of continuing revolutionary work, the new youth began to pay attention for organising peasants and labourers in Malabar.

¹⁹ A V Anilkumar, *K P R Gopalan*, p. 30.

²⁰ Vishnu Bharatheeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 73.

²¹ For details on Panopticon concept see Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

²² Vishnu Bharatheeyan, *Adimakal Engane Udamakalaye*, p. 74.

Failure of the Civil Disobedience Movement

When the *CDM* came to an end, the political prisoners contributed by Malabar came around eight hundred and one thousand in number.²³ Finally in 1934, when the *CDM* was withdrawn by M K Gandhi, the Gandhian political prisoners rather than moving towards revolutionary groups, joined the Socialist party. When the political prisoners were released most of them felt Gandhian ideology as a failure. The experiences of Gandhian political prisoners in various jails, the study classes, contact with revolutionaries and failure of the *CDM* drove majority of Gandhians towards the socialist ideology.

The Congress Socialist Party

Thus Congress Socialist Party was formed at Kozhikode on 2nd May 1934. Members attended the meeting were Gandhian political prisoners confined in various jails connection with the *CDM*. Majority of these socialists were C Class prisoners during the *CDM*. C K Govindan Nair became the president and P Krishna Pilla, the first secretary of the Congress Socialist Party in Malabar. The socialist group continued their work within the platform of Indian National Congress but with an independent identity. In October 1934, the *CSP* of Malabar broadened its organisation with a ten member committee. All these members were political prisoners during the *CDM* with E M S Namboodirippad as president and P Krishna Pilla as secretary.²⁴ E M S and P Krishna Pilla attended the first conference of the *CSP* at Bombay on 21-24 October 1934 which took place under the leadership of Samboornananda.

²³ Robin Jeffrey , 'Matriliney, Marxism and the Birth of Communist Party in Kerala 1930-40', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1978, pp. 77-98.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

The Socialists were called 'left wing Congressmen' and their main difference with the Gandhian rightwing was their opposition to the Gandhian ideology and practices of parliamentarianism.²⁵ The Socialists strongly criticised capitalism and landlordism and stood for the reorganization of the society. C K Govindan Nair and other staunch Gandhians soon resigned from the membership of the party. The work of *CSP* attracted ordinary people towards the Indian National Congress. These socialists were attracted towards Soviet Union as they considered it as a model state. Their five year plan, view on land reforms, labour and development of the society attracted the Socialists. They never missed any news and articles on the Soviet Union in the newspapers and periodicals. A major shift in the character of the freedom struggle during this period was the presence of ordinary people and debate of the life of the ordinary masses in connection with the question of nationalism and social transformation.

The Socialists understood the scarcity of Socialist and Marxist literature in Malayalam which according to them was necessary to attract the middle class and the ordinary literate people. They translated a lot of works on Socialism into the Malayalam language. E M S Namboodirippad translated Jayaprakash Narayanan's work *What is Socialism?* Into Malayalam in 1935. The *Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx and Fredric Angels was also translated into Malayalam during this period.²⁶ The library movement initiated by the Socialists resulted in the birth of libraries the urban and rural spaces in Malabar. The *CSP* initiated the work of collecting funds and other activities for these libraries. Sri Harshan Library at Kalyasseri was founded in memory of Sri Harshan, a political prisoner from Thalassery who s died in the

²⁵ E M S Namboodirippad, *The Communist Party in Kerala*, p. 14.

²⁶ CID report on *CSP* of Malabar, *HFM*, vol. 101, TSA, Chennai.

Central Jail at Kannur during the CDM.²⁷ Thus, public spaces began to emerge in the form of libraries as memorial for political prisoners.

The major attempt in literature was K Damodaran's plays like *Pattabhaki* (arrears of rent), *The Strike* and *Drink of the Blood*. The *Pattabhakki* was the first political play in Malayalam and it was staged in hundreds of villages in Malabar in between 1937 and 1938.²⁸ A V Kunhambu, K Damodran, K P R Gopalan, AK Gopalan acted in this play and they were ex-political prisoners too. A V Kunhambu played the role of the hero in the drama when it was first staged.

The chief activity of the CSP was the organisation of workers and peasant organisations, teachers' unions, and forming organisations of different labour groups in the Malabar society. They succeeded in organising the peasants and the rural poor in Malabar. The Socialists succeeded in organising peasants in the form of *karshaka sangham* in various places. The stronghold of this peasant movement was North Malabar especially the Malayalam speaking Kasaragod taluk of the South Canara district. The Kasaragod taluk was attached to the Malayalam speaking Kerala by the political workers as it was the land of Malayalam speaking people. There were differences in the socio-economic system in Malabar and Kasargod regions. However, the oppressive instruments of *janmi* system and colonialism were the same in these places. The *karshaka sangham* began to touch the life of Mappila peasants in south Malabar. The oppressed peasantry got special support from the Socialists the *karshaka sangham* organised the peasants and workers against the colonial state and landlords. The chief leaders of the *karshasangam* were socialists like P Krishna Pilla, K A

²⁷ A V Anilkumar (ed.), *K P R inte Katha, Kalyaseiyudayam*, p. 56.

²⁸ S Raimon (ed.), *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala 1938-1948*, vol. III, p. 314.

Keraleeyan, Vishnu Bharatheeyan, T S Thirumunb, K Madhavan, K T Kunhiraman Nambiar etc. The end of poverty was one of the most important goal of the movement. K K N Kurup argues that the struggle advocated by the *karshaka sangham* against the colonial state and its collaborating landlords in the 1930's and 1940's is an integral part of the renaissance movement in Kerala history.²⁹ When the Socialist Party of Malabar was transformed into the Communist Party, the *karsha sangam* also got transformed as organ of the Communist Party.

The Kerala branch of the CSP started a new weekly named *Prabhatham* which meant 'the dawn' in January 1935.³⁰ The main aim of the weekly was the propagation of Socialist ideas. The *Prabhatham* debated poverty, trade union, *karshaka sangam*, Soviet Union, Capitalism, Imperialism etc., in various forms. However, it was not the first journal to discuss these issues. Articles written by the socialist leaders got published in various Malayalam publications and it included write ups on issues like debt, land tax, party organisation, Karl Marx etc. The *Mathrubhumi* newspaper and weekly gave importance to the writings of these leaders.³¹

In 1936, A K Gopalan organised a *pattini jatha*³² with unemployed youth of Malabar to Madras. The march was started on 1st July 1936 with twenty eight volunteers including Chandroth Kunjiraman Nair and K P R

²⁹ K K N Kurup, *Adhunika Keralam*, p. 65.

³⁰ The *Prabhatham* had to cease its publication in August 1935 as the government imposed a fine of rupees two thousand stating a song entitled 'Atma Sandesham' published in it appealed for a revolution to end imperialist domination and to secure complete independence. When the C Rajagopalachari led the Congress ministry came into power in Madras in 1937, they cancelled the fine and lifted ban of *Prabhatham*. The publication again ceased in 1939 when the Second World War broke out.

³¹ K Gopalankutty, *Malabar Padanangal*, p. 115.

³² Hunger march

Gopalan.³³ They sang songs on hunger and addressed the public at various places. The *CID* secretly watched the *jatha* and they recorded the speeches conducted by leaders like A K Gopalan. The *jatha* reached Madras on 28th August 1936. A K Gopalan was later arrested as 'the government considered the speeches delivered by A K Gopalan during the hunger march as offensive especially the speech at Salem on 30th July 1936'. The main reason was his speeches which argued that the main reason for extreme poverty and hunger in India was the British rule. The government asked him to give security for good behaviour.

In 1937, the election to the Madras Legislative Assembly took place and the Socialists considered election as a platform to strengthen their mass base.³⁴ The Socialists were against the ministry formation of Congress in Madras under C Rajagopalachari. One of the immediate decisions of Rajagopalachari ministry was the release of political prisoners. The list included A K Gopalan, Yusuf Meharali and other socialists.

The Socialists annually conducted their conferences in Malabar. The first Conference Kozhikode Town Hall on 13th October 1934 under the presidentship of H D Raja. The Conference congratulated those who resisted colonialism and attacked the exploitative nature of the state and requested the colonial government to release all political prisoners as soon as possible.³⁵ The fourth Kerala Socialist Conference was held at Kannur on 20th June 1937. The chief speakers of this Conference were Jayaprakash Narayanan and Yusuf Meherali. After the Conference, Meherali visited so many places in Malabar to address the people and urged them to join the

³³ *Mathrubhumi*, 2nd July 1936, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

³⁴ S Raimon (ed.), *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala, 1938-1948*, vol. III, p. 316.

³⁵ P K K Menon, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, p. 483.

Indian National Congress.³⁶ Yusuf Meharali's decision to address the Mappila community frustrated the government. Meharali was soon served with an order under section 144 prohibiting him from addressing public meetings at Kozhikode, Ernad and the Ponnani taluk. He disobeyed the order at Kozhikode and was arrested and convicted for six months. The fifth *KCSP* conference was held at Kozhikode in 1938. The sixth *KCSP* Conference was held at Thalassery on 16th June 1939. This was the last *KCSP* Conference as by the end of 1939, the *KCSP* was completely transformed into the Communist Party.

The Communist Party

The leaders of Socialist movement in Malabar were attracted towards Communism in the very beginning itself. The four Socialists, P Krishna Pilla, E M S, N C Shekar and K Damodaran joined the Communist Party under S V Ghate at Kozhikode in 1937.³⁷ They remained within the Congress and worked secretly to propagate Communist ideology among the people. However, the outbreak of Second World War in September 1939, resulted in many changes in the political scenario in Malabar. The Kerala *CSP* was disappointed with the stand taken by the *INC* and *CSP*. It was argued that the Indian National Congress and Socialist leadership were not at all serious in opposing imperialism.

The secret meeting of around one hundred Socialists was held at a place called Parappuram in Pinarayi in December 1939. Parappuram was eight kilometres away from Thalassery. The Kerala *CSP* was completely transformed into the Communist Party. One of the major decisions taken in

³⁶ C I D Report on the Formation of Kerala Congress Socialist Party, *HFM*, vol 101, TSA, Chennai.

³⁷ E M S, *Aatmakatha*, pp. 220-225.

the meeting was that all Communists were not needed to work publicly as some were assigned to work secretly by going underground for strengthening the Party.³⁸ The underground life of Communists strengthened the mass base of the Party. The main reason was the efficiency of the organisation under the leadership of P Krishna Pilla. The contact with Anusheelan Samithi during his life in the prison helped Krishna Pilla in framing secret propaganda during underground activities³⁹

The left wing in the Indian National Congress in Malabar dominated the KPCC under K T Kunjiiraman Nambiar and K Damodaran, They decided to observe 15th September 1940 as 'Protest Day'. The protests meetings were planned at Kozhikode, Thalassery, Morazha, Vadakara, Kannur, Payyanur, Mattanur and many other towns and villages in Malabar. The district authorities in Malabar issued prohibition order under 144 against this work. The right wing leaders of KPCC influenced the national leadership of the Indian National Congress to instruct the Malabar leadership to abandon the protest day. The leadership of the National Congress ordered to give up the program under the KPCC in Malabar. The KPCC leaders decided to conduct the program against the instruction. The 'Protest Day' celebration in Malabar on 15th September 1940 ended in widespread protest. The police brutally attacked the volunteers. The protest resulted in police raj and arrests in Vadakkara, Pattambi, Ottapalam, Kozhikode, Kannur and Thalassery. Public meetings and processions were prohibited at Kozhikode and similar towns for one month by the Sub Divisional Magistrate on 17th September 1940. By

³⁸ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 136.

³⁹ K N Ganesh (et. al.), *Keralathile Communist Partiyude Charithram*, , p. 364.

ten days, one hundred and eight persons were arrested in different parts of Malabar in connection with the 'protest day' observation.⁴⁰

The protest day observation and *karsha kasangam* meeting were initially decided to be held at Yatindra Nagar at Keecheri in Papinisseri village. Before the commencement of the meeting, the Kuttikrishna Menon, Sub Inspector of police along with Sub Magistrate of Kannur came to the venue. He handed over the prohibition order under section 144 to K P R Gopalan. K P R was not ready to give up the protest. He discussed the matter with his colleagues and decided to shift the venue. The other organisers of the programme were Vishnu Bharatheeyan, Subramania Shenai, E K Nayanar and Ibrahim Kutty.⁴¹ The venue was shifted to Anchampeedika in Morazha which was not included in the prohibition order. Kuttikrishna Menon soon went to Police station at Taliparambu and instructed the Sub Inspector, Beeran Moideen to prevent the meeting as Morazha belonged to his jurisdiction.

Thus, the police along with the Magistrate of Taliparamb went to Morazha to prevent the meeting. When the volunteers were again supplied with notice, the Communists replied that they will disperse only after the meeting. This resulted police action and lathy charge against the protesting mob. Unlike the volunteers of the Indian National Congress, the Communists started counter attack. Some captured the *lathi* from police. S I Beeran Moideen started firing with his revolver and K T Kunjiraman and many other volunteers got injured in the firing. Shouting 'Inquilab sindabad' K P R Gopalan and other volunteers began to disobey the police. Kuttikrishna Menon, Sub Inspector of police died at the spot itself while Gopalan Nair,

⁴⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 26th September 1940, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁴¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 19th September 1940, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

policeconstable died in the evening. Many persons got injured and Veeran Moideen, Sub Inspector of Police and Magistrate escaped by running away. The police force later came to the spot in the night and found the dead body of Kutykrishna Menon.⁴² On 27th October 1940, the police captured thirty persons and the remaining eight persons, K P R Gopalan, V Vishnu Bharatheeyan, Subramanian Shenai, T Damodaran Nambiar, A Kunjiraman Nambiar, Pola Kumaran, A V Kunjambuand, C. Kunjambu Panikkar went underground.⁴³

The authorities used the entire repressive measure in Morazha and the nearby areas. Police force including the Malabar Special Police was camped in the place to suppress the protest. The protest day events also witnessed the end of Communists in Congress. Meanwhile, the *KPCC* was dissolved by the High Command of the Indian National Congress. On 28th March 1941, a protest march of the was decided against the police and landlords at Kayyur. During the procession, members clashed with the police force. The police forceswas attacked by the people and a police man jumped into river which ultimately resulted in his death.⁴⁴ The police charged cases against the Communists including peasants at Kayyur in March 1941.

The changed policy of Soviet Union in the Second World War transformed the attitude of the Communist Party from an imperialist war to People's War. As a result, in July 1942, the Government of Madras lifted the ban on Communist Party in India. Even before lifting the ban, the Communists leaders who were in underground were able to strengthen the mass base of the Communist Party in Malabar by working with the people in

⁴² *Mathrubhumi*, 19th September 1940, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁴³ *Mathrubhumi*, 29th October 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁴⁴ For details see V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara Charitram*, Progress, Kozhikode, 2013.

challenging the threat of food and other problems. Thus, the committees and branches of the Communist Party became lawful.⁴⁵ Moreover many prisoners and detainees who were Communists in the prison were released.⁴⁶ Majority of the Communists were released later. It doesn't mean that the entire Communists were released many leaders like K Damadoran, C. Kannan and many others were in prison for years. The Communists were able to strengthen its mass base even after lifting the ban on the Party. The police followed observed the activities of Communist leaders which caused for the arrest of Communists again. P Narayanan Nair was arrested in connection with passing of a resolution in the *Karshaka Sangam* Conference at Manjeri in February 1943.⁴⁷

The detainees were released in 1945 after the end of the War. The Communists stood with the people to find solution to their grievances which caused for many protests and marches in Malabar. It was in the middle of these the silver jubilee of the Malabar Struggle of 1921 reached. The *Prabatham* weekly in various issues had inaugurated debate on the agrarian nature of the *Malabar Struggle*.⁴⁸ The Mappila peasantry were not taking interest in the anti-colonial protests after the brutal suppression of the Malabar Struggle in 1921-22. The Communist leaders including A K Gopalan and K P R Gopalan addressed the people in connection with the meetings on Malabar Struggle organised by the Communist Party in various places in South Malabar.⁴⁹ Both of them were arrested by the police. E M S Namboodirippad was also arrested in connection for writing an article in *Deshabmani* newspaper about the Malabar Struggle of 1921 entitled

⁴⁵ Public Go No 2152, 23th July 1942, R Dis Revenue , Bundle No 557 A, Sl. No 13, RAK.

⁴⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 6th August 1942, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁴⁷ K K N Kurup, *Keralathile Karshaka Samarangal 1946-1952*, SPCS, Kottayam, 2010, p. 17.

⁴⁸ *Prabatham*, 1938, Accessed from Appan Thamburan Library, Thrissur.

⁴⁹ Selected Record-71, RAK

'Ahvaanavum Thakeethum'.⁵⁰ The Communists highlighted the agrarian character of Malabar Struggle and they could attract the Mappila peasants of South Malabar against landlordism and imperialism. This alarmed the colonial government and they began to restart the suppression of the Communists.

The Karivellur Incident

There was a famine like situation in Malabar in 1946 which resulted in scarcity of rice and other food items. The *janmi* and their associates focused on hoarding and black marketing. A lot of strikes were organised by Communist party in various places of north Malabar against this *janmimar* who hoarded food items with the support of government officials. The Karivellur event was took placed on 20th December 1946. The *Chirakal Raja* was the biggest landlord in Karivellur at that time. The *karsha sangam* under A V Kunjambu requested raja for distributing the rice to people of Karivellur itself as per price fixed by government. The raja rejected the request as he got higher price by black marketing. The raja requested police assistance for moving the rice from Karivellur. Thus police troops including *MSP* camped at Karivellur.

The imperialist war had affected the economy of Malabar and the agrarian population began to suffer extreme poverty and famine in the closing years of the Second World War. The difficult situation was utilised the landlords and the small capitalist class to exploit the people inspite the mounting danger of poverty and famines. Understanding this, the people of Karivellur organised a protest march against the black marketing and hoarding of food items in the store houses of the rich and the landlords. The

⁵⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 29th August 1946, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

colonial state joined with the landlord class to arrest the leaders and when the people demanded the release of leaders police replied by open firing and brutal lathi charges. Two Communists shot dead in the firing and 10 were injured at Kayyur in addition to the cases charged against 197 Communists. K P R Gopalan met T. Prakasham, the Prime Minister of Madras Presidency and demanded enquiry about the police action at Karivellur. K P R Gopalan demanded cancellation of the prohibition order under section 144 and the withdrawal of the Malabar Special Police from north Malabar.⁵¹ This was not accepted by the Indian National Congress in the initial stage and they also stood with the police forces in suppressing the peasants and workers.

The camping of the Malabar Special Police in various parts of north Malabar resulted in the police raj and cruelties upon the people. The main target of the police force was suppressing the *kisan sangam*, organisation of peasant workers. As a result, police firing against Communists took place at Kavumbai in Chirakal *taluk* on 29th December 1946. The police charged cases against 105 participants of the movement. The court released nineteen accused and remaining got rigorous imprisonment from two to seven years.⁵² The Communists filed appeal in higher court and got reduction in punishment imposed. In August 1947, on grounds of the expectation of freedom from colonial domination, the question of release of political prisoners came into public discussion.

Underground Life, Trial and Punishment

The police especially CID's soon after the formation of *CSP* followed its members and watched their activities. As mentioned earlier it was police

⁵¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 31st December 1946, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁵² K K N Kurup, *Keralathile Karshaka Samarangal, 1946-1952*, p. 44.

search which changed the mind of Vishnu Bharatheeyan and other socialists towards socialism. The CID's not only followed the socialist leaders but also recorded their activities including speeches delivered by them at various places. Even the speech of A K Gopalan during *pattini jatha* was recorded by CID's. The arrests of Socialists from 1934 to 1939 can be divided into two phases and the first was from 1934 to 1937. It was in 1937 the Congress Ministry under C Rajagopalachari took charge in Madras Presidency. From 1937 to 1939 was the second phase and it was in 1939 the *CSP* of Malabar was completely transformed into Communist party, the arrested persons in the first phase includes A K Gopalan, Yusuf Meharali, K P Gopalan, K A Keraleeyan, Sardar Chandroth Kunji Raman Nair etc. A K Gopalan was arrested after his *Pattini Jatha* for the speeches delivered by him during the march. A K Gopalan refused to give security for good behaviour under section 108 and the Magistrate of Thalassery sentenced him for nine months imprisonment on December 1936.⁵³ When the Magistrate asked about his classification he replied that he was imprisoned thrice during *CDM* and got A class in first time and B class in the next two terms.⁵⁴ Thus he was again given B class. He was sent to Thrichinopoly Jail and asked to give security for good behaviour. Socialist leaders K P Gopalan, K A Keraleeyan and Sardar Chandroth Kunjiraman Nair were also arrested with him. They were also asked to give security for good behaviour and they also refused to give it. They were also punished with one year simple imprisonment by the Joint Magistrate of Thalassery.

C Rajagopalachari ordered to release majority of the political prisoners and Mappila State Prisoners when he became the head of the

⁵³ *HFM Vol. 103B, TSA, Chennai.*

⁵⁴ *Mathrubhumi, 18th December 1936, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.*

Ministry at Madras. It included members of the Congress Socialist Party too. These Socialists had addressed the grievances of peasants and labourers through movements of the people and it continued during the time of the Congress Ministry in Madras. . This resulted in arrests and imprisonment of some Socialists. They included P KrishnaPilla and Vishnu Bharatheeyan. P Krishna Pilla was arrested in January 1938 in connection with the strike at the Puthiyara Tile Factory in Kozhikode.⁵⁵ Krishna Pilla was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. Vishnu Bharatheeyan also got six months imprisonment and released on 31st May 1939 from the Kannur Central Jail.

In 1939, during the course of Second World War, the Congress Socialist Party was completely transformed into the Communist party of Malabar. Soon after, the government started arresting the Communists as detainees under the Defence of India Act. Besides, many others were convicted in connection with various agitations. In between 1938 and 1941, out of the nineteen cases registered against Socialists and peasants in which one hundred and thirty seven persons were convicted.⁵⁶ The list included Socialists as well as Communists. T S Tirumunb who was the President of the *karshaka sangam* of the Kasaragod Taluk was arrested for speeches against the World War at Thiruti and Kayyur villages in September 1940. He was remanded for two months and later punished for two years' rigorous imprisonment with C class status.⁵⁷

The trial of the Kayyur case mentioned earlier was conducted at the Sessions' Court in Thalassery. Barrister A K Pilla, V V Rama Iyyer, T Narayanan

⁵⁵ The Malabar Police directed the Travancore Police to detain P Krishna Pilla because of his anti-government activity in Malabar on 13th October 1940. See D Dis 1528/44, 29th June 1944, KSA, Thiruvananthapuram.

⁵⁶ Madras Home GO No. 3903, 18th July 1939 and Public Go. No. 2135, 29th October 1940, TSA, Chennai.

⁵⁷ T S Tirumunb, *Memoirs and Poems*, p. 88.

Nambiar, T V Sundara Iyer and Chandu Nambiar attended at the court for the accused. On 16th August 1941, M Ranganatha Acharya, the Sessions' Judge on his judgement left twenty persons free and the remaining fourteen including K P R Gopalan and Vishnu Bharatheeyan got imprisonment ranging from two to seven years.⁵⁸ The government filed an appeal at the Madras High Court against the judgement. The court declared the verdict on 24th February 1942 and K P R Gopalan was sentenced to death and eight persons got life term imprisonment. Vishnu Baratheeyan was left free. This judgement was shocking to the Communists.

The peasants who participated in the resistance at Kayyur were charged for stoning and drowning to death of a policeman. The District and Sessions Court at Mangalore charged four persons to be hanged until death for this incident. Krishnan Nair, an accused who was a minor was sent to the juvenile home. Later, the Madras High Court endorsed the lower court's judgement. K Damodaran, leader of the Communist Party and who was also the secretary of the Indian National Congress went underground to escape from arrest. K P R Gopalan, soon after the Morazha case went underground. A reward of five hundred rupees was declared for capturing K P R Gopalan by the police⁵⁹ He was arrested only after nine months from Kadamberi. The other four accused were not captured by the police. K A Keraleeyan, Mohan and Sharma were arrested from Madras in 1942 during their underground life. K A Keraleeyan was imprisoned at Alipuram Jail as detainee prisoner in connection with the incident.

On 2nd February 1942, the judge freed thirty eight persons accused and eighteen were punished for rigorous imprisonment for various

⁵⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, 17th August 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁵⁹ P Krishna Pilla, 'Kalturangile Viplavakari' in A V Anilkumar (ed.), *K P R Gopalan*, p. 11.

terms. The court did not declare punishment regarding the remaining five Communists on that day.⁶⁰ The remaining five persons were Madathil Appu, Koyithatil Chirukandan, Podara Kunjanbu Nair, Pallikal Aboobaker and Churikadan Krishnan Nair. The remaining four were sentenced to hang until their death by the Mangalore Court. They filed appeal at the Madras High Court. However it was rejected. Later a lot of letters and memorandums were submitted to the Governor of Madras and the Viceroy for commuting their death sentence. Unlike the case of K P R Gopalan, majority of the Congress leaders were in prison and they didn't interfere in the case of Kayyur martyrs. The last appeal was filed at the Privy Council and it was also rejected.

The Communists were subjected to torture and brutal attack when they were captured from underground. This was mainly done at police lock ups. The Communists were also gone on underground in connection with Karivellur revolt of 1946. The Congress Government at Madras, even after independence, didn't cancel the warrant issued against Communists. The warrant on K Vijayan issued in connection with Karivellur revolt was cancelled by the Communist Ministry of Kerala in 1957.⁶¹ This clearly shows that the Congress were not even sympathetic towards Communists who resisted imperialism, landlordism and its close associates.

The Communists as well as the Congress volunteers in Malabar including K Kelappan and Samuel Aron jointly worked together to commute the death sentence declared upon K P R Gopalan. The voice of appeal was not limited in Malabar and it spread all over the country and in the British Parliament. This movement became similar to that of the Bhagat Singh and

⁶⁰ V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara* p. 82.

⁶¹ K K N Kurup, *Keralathile Karshaka Samarangal 1946-1952*, p. 38.

his colleagues from hanging. The slogan of the movement was 'save the life of K P R'. A K Pillai stated that the two possibilities for escaping KP R Gopalan from the death sentence were one the mercy petition accepted by the government and the second was appeal in the Privy Council.⁶² They had done both steps at the same time for saving the life of K P R. K B Menon who was at Sevagram informed M K Gandhi about the death sentence of K P R. Gandhi assured his full support and stated he will do his best for saving K P R Gopalan.⁶³ It is important to state that M K Gandhi was silent when the people in Indian was fighting to save the life of Bhagat Singh.⁶⁴

The people of Malabar observed 1st March 1942 as K P R day. The Indian National Congress and the Communists worked together and also collected fund for an appeal to the Privy Council in Britain.⁶⁵ Rhys Davies in the House of Commons in Britain raised the issue of K P R Gopalan and urged the Secretary of State of India to support the peoples' movement in connection with the case of K P R.⁶⁶ The people of Kozhikode submitted a petition to cancel the death sentence of K P R which was signed by 15658 persons including Manjeri Rama Iyyer.⁶⁷ The death sentence was later commuted to life term imprisonment on 24th March 1942 by the Governor of Madras Presidency. It must be noted that the attempt to save the life of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues had ended in failure. The movement to save K PR achieved its aim within forty five days mainly because of the joint effort of the Indian National Congress and the Communists in India and at London.

⁶² *Mathrubhumi*, 10th March 1942, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶³ *Mathrubhumi*, 8th March 1942, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁶⁴ Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, pp. 310-311.

⁶⁵ Fort Nightly Report- *FNR*, First half of March 1942, TSA, Chennai.

⁶⁶ Question raised in House of Commons, on 19th March 1942, volume 378, c 1638, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1942/mar/19/arrest-representations>, accessed on 17th December 2017 11 A M.

⁶⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, 10th March 1942, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

V A Kesavan Nair stated that it was the efforts taken by M K Gandhi which saved the life of K P R Gopalan.⁶⁸ The cancelation of death sentence was a great achievement and this was a result of the joint effort launched by the Communists and Congress workers against imperialism.

When the ban on Communist Party was lifted in July 1942, the Communists observed 2nd August 1942 as the 'Kayyur Prisoners Day'. The main aim was to cancel the death sentence imposed upon the prisoners arrested connected with the Kayyur incident. However, the entire attempt done by the Communists to let free Communist prisoners ended in failure. An appeal was submitted at the Privy Council was also rejected.⁶⁹ The question of Kayyur Case and the capital punishment of four persons came into the House of Commons in London.⁷⁰ The question was raised in the House of Commons and it is interesting to note that the prisoners were addressed as peasants in these debates.⁷¹

Only a few volunteers of the Congress Socialist Party were imprisoned in connection with various incidents in Malabar. The chief volunteer arrested was A K Gopalan. Yusuf Meharally from Bombay was also imprisoned. However, Socialists including Yusuf Meharally and A K Gopalan were released immediately after swearing in ceremony of the Congress Ministry under C Rajagopalachari in Madras.

⁶⁸ V A Keshavan Nair, *Irumbazhikulil*, p. 153.

⁶⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, 21st March 1943, Mathrubhumi archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁷⁰ HC debates on 18th March 1943, volume 387, CC1131-1132. And HC Debates on 15th April 1943, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1943/mar/18/convicted-prisoners-kayyur>, accessed on 4th January 2018 at 12 P M.

⁷¹ House of Common debates, 15th April 1943, volume 388, cc 1366-1367, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1943/apr/15/death-sentence-kayyur-peasants>, accessed on 4th January 2018.

A K Gopalan was given B Class status during his prison life in 1936 after the 'hunger march'. Even though he was given B Class status, the authorities put him in trouble by giving solitary confinement. The only person with whom he could talk speak in the jail was the warden. But he was not fed up with this restriction as he used the time effectively to read various books and writing down notes about them.⁷² Vishnu Bharatheeyan also got six months imprisonment and was released on 31st May 1939 from the Kannur Central Jail. The major change in jails he noted was in the matter of food. The buttermilk became a part of prison diet and it decreased stomach diseases to a great extent.⁷³ He has given credit for this change in the prison food to the Congress Ministry. But the attitude of jail authorities did not change as Bharatheeyan was put in solitary confinement and was not allowed to speak with anybody. The prison authorities cancelled the permission to write letters on prison atrocities to EMS Namboodirippad.⁷⁴ The Hindi book sent by his friend to prison was not given to him until his release.⁷⁵ The prison life of A K Gopalan and Bharatheeyan clearly indicates that the colonial state was not ready to give A class facility to Socialists rather they created difficulties to them in increased spirit during the last years of the colonial rule in India. Even Bharatheeyan was denied with interviews and books which were allowed as prison rights even during the period of the Congress Ministry. It indicates that the Indian National Congress was only able to introduce buttermilk to prisoners and not able to end discrimination on the basis of ABC classification and other inhuman practices in the prison.

⁷² A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 84.

⁷³ *Mathrubhumi*, June 1939, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

The Communist party soon after its formation instructed most of its leaders to go on underground for evading arrests. However most of them were arrested as detainees within a short period. But some of the leaders managed to escape from the police. The prison became the home of Communists for a long period under the colonial rule as they usually convicted for various charges. They were initially imprisoned as detainee prisoners and the number increased day by day during the Second World War.

Detinue Prisoners

The Communists were also imprisoned as detainee prisoners during and after the Second World War. Soon after the formation of Communist Party, its leaders and volunteers were arrested as detainees during the initial phase of the Second World War. Besides, Communists convicted in connection with various offences during the Second World War were not released even after the completion of the punishments. They remained in prisons as detainees. C Kannan imprisoned in connection with the *beedi* workers' strike had to remain in prison at the Vellore Jail inspite of the completion of his sentence as detainee prisoner.⁷⁶ Besides, Communists who were caught during their underground life from the Princely State of Thiruvithamcore and Kochi were also imprisoned as detainees under the Defence of India Act. P Krishna Pilla was arrested at Vaikom in the Princely State of Thiruvithamcore and was imprisoned at Thiruvithamcore itself.⁷⁷

The Communists detained as detainees included K Damodaran, A K Gopalan and about hundred volunteers. A K Gopalan soon after his arrest in

⁷⁶ C Bhaskaran, *Keralathile Communist Prasthanam Adyapathikar*, p. 66.

⁷⁷ C Bhaskaran (ed.), *Sakhakkaludeyum Sakhavu*, p. 17.

March 1941, was sent to Vellore Central Jail as a detainee. K P Gopalan and K Damodaran were also present at Vellore as detainees during this time. The Communist detainees formed an efficient group inside the jail with various committees to discuss political matters, conduct study classes, preparation of food etc.⁷⁸ A K Gopalan has explained that a detainee cell had a chair, an easy chair, table, a shelf, a mattress, a pillow and four sheets. A bath twice daily, weekly laundering, reading room, facility to play tennis and volleyball, radio(could be used individually), occasional dramatic performances, feast on festive occasions and music concerts etc., made up every day routine of a detainee.⁷⁹

The detainees in the initial phase of the Second World War were not classified and later in March 1941 the government decided to classify detainees into first and second classes. Thus, majority of detainees from the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party were degraded to the second class with c class food and uniform. Thus the Communist detainees decided to start hunger strike as a protest.

The Communist detainees from Malabar started hunger strikes were divided into two categories, the first class and the second class. The first class prisoners got better food, accommodation and other facilities. Only leaders were included in this category. Majority were included in the second class category and they were subjected to serious discrimination with the C Class, their food and dress. The Communists initially submitted memorandum for withdrawing the order for detainee classification. The Communist prisoners of Vellore Jail decided to resist this discrimination by observing hunger strike. The hunger strike was started on 5th April 1941 and

⁷⁸ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 162.

⁷⁹ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 146.

its participants came around one hundred detainees belonging to both the first and second classes.⁸⁰ The detainees belonging to the Congress did not join it. The Gandhian prisoners didn't join the hunger strike as Gandhi had advised them not to demand higher class in prison.⁸¹ However, when the hunger strike by the Communist detainees crossed one week, the *Mathrubhumi* took it seriously and demanded the government to interfere in the matter.⁸² The hunger strike was withdrawn on the eighteenth day when the government agreed to give certain concessions in the food supplied to the second class prisoners.⁸³

A K Gopalan was put under strict surveillance of wardens with first class detainee status. From the initial period onwards, he decided to escape from the prison. He stated that the Communist detainees worked united and systematically. The harassment of the police at Kayyur and the sufferings of the people as a result of the Second World War inspired A K Gopalan to escape from the prison. Another reason was the decision of the authorities to transfer him from the Vellore Jail. On 25th September 1941, he was informed that he and Dr. K B Krishnan were going to be transferred to another jail on the very next day. The other detainees in the Vellore Jail including Congressmen conducted a farewell feast to A K Gopalan.⁸⁴ A K Gopalan was able to escape from the prison before the transfer.

The Kayyur prisoners at the Mangalore Jail insisted V V Kunjambu to demand special class status to get newspaper, *beedi* and other facilities. V V Kunjambu could get special class status and he purchased *Indian Express*

⁸⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 8th April 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

⁸¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 12th April 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode. Autobiographical statement

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 163.

⁸⁴ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 84.

newspaper at his own expense.⁸⁵ He explained the news to his co prisoners as special class prisoners were not put in lockup during the day time.

After the Second World War, the Communists were imprisoned as detainees and during the period of Congress Ministry in Madras. They were imprisoned earlier under the Defence of India Act and later under the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance of 1947. Moyyarth Sankaran was arrested and detained at Vellore Central Jail in January 1947 as a detainee prisoner under this order.⁸⁶

Prison Life and the Growth of the Communist Party

The Communist Party in colonial India got strengthened as a result of the imprisonment of its supporters.⁸⁷ The prisoners were also made naked and need to sit, jump and walk to show that they were hiding nothing while entering into the prison.⁸⁸ Even political prisoners including Communists were also the victims of this search in prison. The colonial state continued this practice throughout its regime. Most of the prisoners felt humiliated at this search. The practice of solitary confinement was also not widely practiced towards the Communists. Two or three persons were forced to stay in a cell which had space to accommodate only one person. The detainees of the Kayyur incident in their initial days of confinement were not able to sleep due to the foul smell of urine in the cell.⁸⁹ While the Communist leaders like A K Gopalan and all were put in solitary confinement in various occasions to separate them from other Communists.

⁸⁵ V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara Charitram*, p. 72.

⁸⁶ Moyyarth Sankaran, *Aatmakatha*, p. 211.

⁸⁷ Frank Dikkoter & Ian Brown (eds.), *Cultures of Confinement*, p. 10.

⁸⁸ V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara Charitram*, p. 68.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

The police as well as wardens were well versed in using abusive words. While in the Central Jail at Kannur, V V Kunjambu heard such abusive words which were not seen in the Malayalam dictionary.⁹⁰ Soon after entering to prison the convicts were supplied with their plate, glass and dress. The detainees were initially allowed to wear their own dress. Later, when detainees were divided into classes, the first class got earlier privileges while the second class were forced to wear C class uniform. The Communists from Malabar were not given A class status. Hence, the Communists and Socialists convicted by the Court were forced to wear prison uniform of the B and C class prisoners. In 1947, the Communist detainees arrested in January and February was forced to wear B class uniform by the interim Congress Ministry.⁹¹

The detainees were given special food which included *rotti* and coffee in the morning, special meals with curd and ghee in the afternoon, evening tea and snacks, meals with meat in dinner and a glass of milk before sleep.⁹² A monthly allowance of ten rupees was given to detainees for purchasing cigarettes, *beedis* or any other items. Thus, it is clear that *beedi* and cigarettes prohibited to convicted prisoners was legal to detainees. This also indicates that the colonial state always used divide and rule policy by pleasing a group of political prisoners. When the detainees were classified into first and second classes in 1941, the detainee menu was allotted to the first class while the second classes were given un-tasty C class food. The hunger strike by Communists for better food to detainees resulted in certain special rations for entire detainees including the Congress volunteers in 1941.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁹¹ P C Joshi's memorandum to the Congress Working Committee, Mumbai, 13th March 1947, File Number- CPI 109 Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

⁹² A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 163.

In 1947, during the regime of Congress Ministry, the Communists were arrested and confined as detainees. During this time, special food, dress and other privileges allowed during the Second World War by the colonial state were cancelled by the Congress Ministry. The Congress Ministry was not ready to recognise the Communists as political prisoners.⁹³

The food given to majority of convicted political prisoners who were placed in C class remained unchanged with worst taste and foul smell. V V Kunjambu described that the food was distaste and most of the prisoners felt vomiting tendency while having it and the result of this food was extreme hunger to prisoners.⁹⁴ The main ingredient of prison curry was spinach with worms which was grown at the urine of prisoners. The buttermilk introduced by C Rajagopalachari Ministry in 1937 was continued in prisons even during the Second World War. However, the major portion of buttermilk in prison was water.⁹⁵ The officials of Alipuram Jail in most occasions put good food items in front of K P R Gopalan's cell for smelling and taken it soon without giving to him.⁹⁶ This clearly exhibited the officials policy of humiliating the Communists against the rules prescribed in the Jail Manual and practiced every form of cruelties even in the matter of food.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress prisoners used *beedi* which resulted in arguments between staunch Gandhians and *beedi* smokers.⁹⁷ Unlike Congressmen, the Communists even organised *beedi* workers outside the prison and they were not against using *beedi* inside the prison. The *beedi* was a prohibited item in the prison and it was smuggled

⁹³ P C Joshi's Memorandum to the Congress Working Committee, Mumbai, 13th March 1947, File Number- CPI 109, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, new Delhi.

⁹⁴ V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara Charithram*, p. 70.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁹⁶ A V Anilkumar, *K P R Gopalan*, p. 85.

⁹⁷ Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad, *OHT 147*, NMML, New Delhi.

inside the prison. The smoking of *beedi* was a punishable offence in prison. While the detainee prisoners were allowed to use *beedi*, cigarettes and tobacco in the prison. The chain smokers troubled to live without *beedi*. N G Kammath one of the accused of the Kayyur case was able to get *beedi* from wardens during his trial life at the Mangalore Jail.⁹⁸ This shows that the jail wardens who were responsible for ensuring discipline in prison were corrupt and smuggled *beedi* inside the prison even for the Communists. The medical facility available to Kayyur convicts was far better when comparing it with the medical facility in prisons offered in independent India under the Indian National Congress.⁹⁹ This clearly indicates that the Congress Ministry does not give much attention to the health of political prisoners.

Study Classes

The Communists were well organised in prison by conducting study classes on various topics. A K Gopalan during his prison life in Vellore Jail as detainee prisoner took classes to the political prisoners individually as well as in small groups.¹⁰⁰ The main topic of those classes was to convince the prisoners the stand taken by the Communist Party during the Second World War was right.¹⁰¹ The person who took the leadership to organise these classes twice in a day to the Communist detainees in Vellore Jail was Dr K B Krishna.¹⁰² The Communists convicted for various offences were also lodged at Alipuram Jail and also took classes in their extreme hardships.

⁹⁸ V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara Charitram*, p. 69.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁰ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 163.

¹⁰¹ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 146.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Visitors in the Prison

The friends and family members of the prisoners visited the convicted prisoners. The Communist leaders including P C Joshi and Sundarayya visited Kayyur prisoners before their death sentence at the Kannur Central Jail. The visits usually resulted in the pleasure of prisoners. Even though there was a central jail at Kannur, Communists as well as Congress prisoners from Malabar were mainly confined in faraway places. Majority of the Communist prisoners were lodged at Alipuram, Bellary and the Vellore Central Jail. The main reason for opting Alipuram was the climate, bad facilities, scarcity of water and its staff as it was known as the hell of the Madras Presidency among the prisoners. The distance and lack of sufficient travel facilities to Bellary from Malabar decreased the visitors to these prisoners. K A Keraleeyan stated that the aged parents of political prisoners were notable to visit Alipuram Jail due to travelling issues.¹⁰³ Not only the travel difficulties but also the hot weather troubled the prisoners with various health issues. In 1945, the prisoners including those convicted in connection with the Morazha, Chombal and Kizhariyur incidents also were at Alipuram. In 1945, the Communists decided to launch a movement against this far away confinements. K A Keraliyan urged for a peoples' movement in September 1945 for the transfer of political prisoners from the Alipuram Jail to various jails in Malabar or to the Coimbatore Central Jail.¹⁰⁴ In November 1945, P Krishna Pilla of the Communist Party of Kerala demanded the government to transfer K P R Gopalan and other political prisoners confined at Bellary, Alipuram and Rajamundry Jails to Kannur Central jail.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Mathrubhumi*, 22th September 1945, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, 8th December 1945, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

Condemned cell

The condemned cell was an integral part of the prison and it was the place where prisoners awaiting death punishment were lodged. These cells became prime spaces in the prison with the police actions against Communists after the Malabar Struggle of 1921. The Communists received death sentences in connection with many resistances like the Kayyur and Morazha incidents during the Second World War. Another group of persons who were punished with death sentence during the course of the Second World War were the volunteers associated with the Indian National Army. Vakkam Abdul Kader along with other INA volunteers were hanged at the Madras Penitentiary on 10th August 1943.¹⁰⁶

A total of five Communists, K P R Gopalan in connection with Morazha case and another four Communists Madathil Appu, P Kunhambu, Chirukandan and Aboobacker in connection with the Kayyur incident were sentenced to death. All of them had submitted mercy petitions and various popular movements were exerted to pressurise the government to review the death sentence. K P R Gopalan escaped from death sentence when it was reduced to life term imprisonment while the mercy petitions of Kayyur prisoners were rejected.

K P R was initially punished for seven Years and confined at the Alipuram Jail. It was in the appeal filed by the government the Madras High Court judged death sentence to him on 24th February 1942.¹⁰⁷ K P R was at the Bellary Central Jail during the time of this punishment. K P R Gopalan was shifted to the condemned cell and he explained he explained his experience

¹⁰⁶ K K N Kurup, *Quit India Movement*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1993, p. 50.

¹⁰⁷ A V Anilikumar (ed.), *K P R Gopalan Katha: Kalyaseriyudeyum*, p. 117.

in the condemned cell to his colleagues. K P R narrated to E K Nayanar that his fear during the condemned cell life was relieved to a great extent when Jawaharlal Nehru stated that the Indian National Congress will not allow the government to hang K P R.¹⁰⁸ This statement reveals that even political prisoners at the condemned cell were also aware of the political matters taking place of outside the prison. He even sang songs during his condemned cell life. Later his punishment was commuted to life term imprisonment and thereby he was shifted from the condemned cell. During his 28 days prison life at the condemned cell, K P R Gopalan's weight increased by four pounds.¹⁰⁹

The Kayyur prisoners who were sentenced to death were put in solitary confinement at the condemned cell in the Central jail at Kannur. They were frequently visited by V V Kunjambu another accused of the case. He visited them to discuss possibilities of appeal. Kunjambu has stated that while approaching the date of sentence they seemed confident. The Communist leaders including P C Joshi, P KrishnaPilla and P Sundarayya visited Kayyur prisoners before their death sentence. The officials denied the request of P C Joshi to take photographs of the prisoners. One of the visitors among them was an artist whose aim was to prepare the portrait of the four prisoners. Thus, he listed some features to his book. He later drew the picture of Madathil Appu, Chirukandan and Kunjambu Nair. V V Kunjambu stated that the pictures did not resemble them perfectly.¹¹⁰ When the visitors met the prisoners, all of them including P C Joshi started crying and the four prisoners bravely consoled them. M.Appu, P Kunhambu,

¹⁰⁸ E K Nayanar, *Aparamaya Ichashakthi* in A V Anilikumar(ed.), *K P R Gopalante Katha: Kalyaseriyudeyum*, . 21.

¹⁰⁹ A V Anilkumar, *K P R Gopalan*, p. 25.

¹¹⁰ V V Kunjambu, *Kayyur Samara Charithram*, p. 90.

Chirukandan and Aboobacker were hanged on the early morning of 29th march 1943 from the Central Jail at Kannur.¹¹¹ The last slogan raised by them before death was 'inquilab zindabad'.¹¹² Like that of Bhagat Singh, dead bodies of the prisoners were not handed over to the families or friends. These were buried in unknown place within the prison walls of the prison at Kannur. The weight gain of K P R at condemned cell and the courage shown by the Kayyur martyrs before death clearly showed that even the gallows were not able to oppress the courage and revolutionary spirit of the Communist

Resistances in the Prison

The Communists resisted injustice in prison in various ways. The major tool of resistance was hunger strike. The greatest blow to the colonial state was prison breaks and the Communists managed to escape from prison many times. The Communists widely used hunger strike as a major tool of resistance against oppression in the prison. The Communist detainees as well as convicted political prisoners were forced to go on hunger strike during the Second World War, the post war period and even after obtaining freedom for redressing various grievances in the prison.

The detainees of Vellore Jail offered hunger strike in 1941. The hunger strike was started by Communists and the Congress political prisoners didn't join in it. The main reason for it was the government's decision to classify detainees into first and second classes. The second class prisoners were given C class food. These hunger strikes got national level attention. The news of one hundred and fifteen prisoner's hunger strike was published by the

¹¹¹ *Death Register*, Kannur Central Jail. The scholar visited Central Jail at Kannur on 29th September 2015.

¹¹² *Deshabimani*, 1943, Keluettan Padana Gaveshana Kendraam, Kozhikode.

Hindustan Times.¹¹³ As a result, the authorities were forced to give certain concessions. The beneficiaries of hunger strikes were Communists as well as Congress detainees.

The Alipuram Jail was used for troubling Communists with various problems which witnessed the recurring of hunger strikes of Communists in 1940's. On 13th April 1941, seventy political prisoners went on hunger strike at the Alipuram Jail. The prisoners formed into pairs and given huge task to the pair which can do by six workers. The prisoner does not need to do any work on Sunday, hence they refused to do work. Lathi charge was conducted to force the prisoners to do the work.¹¹⁴ When the newspapers published the matter the Government of Madras in their press release argued that there were no such problems in the Alipuram Jail. K R Kalyana Rama Iyer, who was released from Alipuram Jail stated that lathi charge occurred and he demanded judicial enquiry to reveal the truth.¹¹⁵ Moyyarth Sankaran was seriously injured in the brutal lathi charge in the Alipuram Jail.¹¹⁶

During the time of interim Congress Ministry in 1946, the Communists actively took part in the movement to fight famines related problems in Malabar. By March 1947, around one hundred and twenty Communists were at the Vellore Central Jail as detainees under the Madras Public Maintenance Order Ordinance of 1947.¹¹⁷ One among the Communist detainee was Kamala Ramaswamy, the only women detainee and she was five months pregnant. The struggle at here was not between the Communists and the colonial

¹¹³ *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, in file number 43/37- 1941, Home-Political, NAI, New Delhi.

¹¹⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 1st June 1941, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Moyyarth Sankaran *Aatmakatha*, p. 207.

¹¹⁷ P C Joshi's memorandum to Congress Working Committee, Mumbai, 13th March 1947, File Number- CPI 109 Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi.

state. Rather it was between the Communists and the Congress party in power. A Bashyam, the jail minister who visited Vellore Jail on 20th February 1947 was not ready to provide them facilities allowed to the Congress and Communist detainees during the Second World War in various jails.¹¹⁸ The request for special diet and clothing to Kamala Ramaswamy was rejected by the Congress Government. This clearly shows that the Indian National Congress was not ready to recognise a pregnant woman as a political prisoner and even rejected the food given by the colonial state to detainees during the World War. This shows the continuation of oppressive policy of the colonial state by the Congress government towards its political opponents. A K Gopalan was a detainee prisoner and the spokesman of the Communists during this time.

E K Imbichi Bava from Ponnani in Malabar was also detained in the Vellore Jail for his speeches in which he criticised the Congress Ministry for helping black marketing and hoarding during the famine.¹¹⁹ Majority of the Communists were detained without any offences. The allowance of food and clothing was not only cancelled and even the provision of sleeping outside the cell was denied and they were detained in cell during the night. The entire detainees were allowed to sleep outside during the Second World War and never locked up in the night. The Congress cancelled every concession given to the political prisoners by the colonial state. Even Bashyam was not ready to consider Communists as political prisoners stating that most of them were convicted as well as detained in connection with charges of

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Charge sheet against E K Imbichi Bava, File Number- CPI-109, Archives of Contemporary History, JNU, New Delhi

violence.¹²⁰ The voice of jail minister towards the Communist prisoners was like a colonial master rather than an elected minister.

Escape

The Communists always tried to escape from the prison and police lock ups. The ideal time opted by prisoners was the night. When A K Gopalan was arrested from Trichinopoly during in 1941, he was lockup with tight security. However, an old policeman came towards him started crying by stating that he had three daughters and if A K G escape from the prison he will lose his job.¹²¹ Hence, A K Gopalan gave up his escape plan.¹²²

The incidents in which Communists managed to escape from the jail occurred during the Second World War at Alipuram, Bellary and at the Vellore Central Jail. The Alipuram Jail had no compound walls separating prisoners from outside as there was only wired fencing with electric supply. When a goat came inside to prison, the prisoners by using this goat checked the supply of electric in the wires and identified safe spots to break the fencing. Thus, four prisoners O J Joseph, P Shekaran, P V Shivaya and Subramanian escaped from the prison.¹²³

A K Gopalan was unhappy in his detainee life at the Vellore Central Jail. The news about police atrocities in Malabar and suffering of the people disturbed him. A K Gopalan was the master brain behind the escape as he secretly collected tools for breaking walls while detainees were taken to

¹²⁰ P C Joshi's memorandum to Congress Working Committee, Mumbai, 13th March 1947, File Number- CPI 109, Contemporary Archives, JNU, New Delhi.

¹²¹ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 161.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ A V Anilkumar, *K P R Gopalan*, p. 86.

outside jail for playing tennis and football.¹²⁴ A K G and his friends decided to escape from the prison in that night itself. They were blessed with heavy rain in the night. He had already collected a chisel, iron pole and other major tools. A K G compared the wall breaking as merciless attack on wall which separated the Congressmen, Communists, Socialists and other nationalists from the people.¹²⁵ They broke the wall and by 2 A M, a big hole capable to pass one person was made.¹²⁶ The date of escape from the prison was 26th September 1941. Prisoners escaped along with A K Gopalan were C Kannan, K Pattabi Ramayya, B Suryanarayana Raju and C P Krishna Rao.¹²⁷ The prisoners escaped got food very rarely and in most of the occasions they had to suffer hunger, diseases and the threat of the police.¹²⁸ A K Gopalan reached Malabar.¹²⁹ C Kannan one of the detainee prisoner escaped from Vellore Jail was caught and brought to trial in February 1943. He argued that he escaped from the prison to support the government in War efforts and stated example of Vincent Churchill's action during the First World War. Churchill was a prisoner of war at South Africa who escaped from the jail. However, the magistrate was not convinced by his statement and he was punished with six months imprisonment.¹³⁰ He was confined at the Alipuram Jail for six months for escaping from the prison. After completing his term, he was again confined as detainee prisoner at Tanjavur and Rajamundry jails

¹²⁴ C Kannan one of the detainee escaped along with A K Gopalan in C Bhaskaran, *Keralathile Communist Prasthanam Adyapathikar*, p. 66.

¹²⁵ A K Gopalan, *In the Cause of People*, p. 148.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹²⁷ Dairy of A C Kannan Nair, Vellore Jail, 26th September 1941, K K N Kurup (ed.), *A C Kannan Nair*, p. 125.

¹²⁸ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 167.

¹²⁹ K Madhavan, *Oru Gandhian Communistinte Ormakuripikal*, pp. 171-172.

¹³⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th February 1943 or 1947, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

until the end of 1944.¹³¹ The escape was also a great blow to the jail officials which indicated the Communist prisoners were far away from panopticon.

Release from the Prison

The first step taken by the Congress Ministry of 1937 under C Rajagopalachari was the release of political prisoners. The Congress Socialist Party volunteers were also included in the batch of released prisoners. During the time of Second World War Communists and Congress volunteers were imprisoned as detainees. K Madhava Menon has stated that majority of detainees in jail were Communists.¹³² The Communists were sentenced by the Court for various terms of imprisonments and they were not released but confined in prison as detainees.

The release from prison was also viewed in fear. When the jail officials informed Vishnu Bharatheeyan that he was released. He was not ready to believe it and he feared it as a time to torture him.

Many Communists were released with the turning of the imperial war into people's war with the entry of the Soviet Union in the British side. E M S Namboodiripad in his statement in *Mathrubhumi* highlighted that even after the second week of lifting ban of Communist party the government did not release thirty detainees and around one hundred Communist political prisoners. The detained persons included K Damodaran, C Kannan etc. K Damodaran was detained from 1940 December and was released only in October 1945. This shows that the colonial state released prisoners only after analysing one by one rather than releasing the entire Communists.

¹³¹ C Bhaskaran, *Keralathile Communist Prasthanam Adyapathikar*, p. 66.

¹³² K Madhava Menon, *OHT 83*, NMML, New Delhi.

T Prakasam led Congress ministry came to power in Madras in 1946. One major step taken by them was the release of political prisoners. This time, decision was not limited in releasing political prisoners but included withdrawing arrest warrants on Communists and Congress volunteers. K P R Gopalan whose death sentence was reduced to life term was also released by the Congress Ministry. He received sentimental receptions in the railway stations at Kozhikode, Kannur and Payyanur. In the public meeting held to congratulate K P R, he spoke around two and a half hours about the sacrifice of people like him.

The Congress government started to suppress protests taking place in the public space against black marketing and hoarding of food grains by the landlords. The police did this by the *MOA 1859*, a special act introduced in 1947 to handle Communists. It was the Madras Public Maintenance Order Ordinance of 1947. More than one hundred Communists from various parts of Madras presidency were arrested and confined at the Vellore Jail. K Bashyam was the jail minister and soon it was handed over to K Madhava Menon. The Communists were forced to start hunger strike as they curtailed even the allowances given to detainees during the Second World War. The jail minister, K Madhava Menon along with food minister Rajan visited one hundred and fifty Communist detainees in the Vellore Central Jail on 3rd April 1947.¹³³ Madhava Menon was also not ready to recognise Communists as political prisoners and was not ready to give them facilities provided by the colonial state to detainee prisoners. The Congress ministry also followed the same repressive measures of the colonial state upon the Communist prisoners. To an extent the police in Madras Presidency was reintroducing

¹³³ *Mathrubhumi*, 4th April 1947, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

the same policy they used against the prisoners of the Malabar Struggle of 1921.

Towards Freedom

The meeting of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee held at Kozhikode on 31st July 1947 was attended by K Kelappan, K Madhava Menon and K A Damodara Menon and it passed many resolutions. An important one among them was requesting the Madras Government to release all political prisoner including all detinues without any discrimination.¹³⁴ The cabinet meeting of the Madras Government decision was taken to release all political prisoners on or before 15th August 1947. There were no political prisoners belonging to the Indian National Congress at that time in the jails of Madras Presidency. All remaining were Communists. The criteria for releasing political prisoners were the same which was followed by the colonial state. It had stated that those who have been convicted for the acts of violence were not to be released. Thus, many persons were deliberately included in this category. The concerned District Magistrate was entrusted to submit report of the cases related to Communists with their remarks. The special detainee cases which the Madras cabinet specially mentioned were of A K Gopalan, V P Chindan and K Ananthan Nambiar.¹³⁵ The authorities included A K Gopalan and other leaders in cases involving violence. The use of violence was a colonial strategy to oppress its political opponents and the Congress government rather than trying to introduce new reforms followed the same strategy. Thus, the Congress regime was actually a continuation of the earlier one. They deliberately included A K Gopalan and other Communists in the list of prisoners not to be released.

¹³⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, 1st August 1947, *Mathrubhumi* Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹³⁵ G O No 46/47, 15th August 1947, *USSF*, TSA, Chennai.

Besides, Communist detainees, many Communists who were undergoing trials in connection with Karivellur and Kavumbai struggles, were also in various jails of the Madras Presidency even after 15th August 1947. Out of the seventy seven accused in the Karivellur case, sixty six were punished for various terms of punishment in September 1947. The state was not interested in releasing them as most of them were released after the completion of their sentences. A V Kunjambu who was convicted in connection with the Karivellur case was released only in 1950.

Letters were submitted to Madhava Menonto withdraw the cases against A K Gopalan and E M S Namboodirippad. E M S was released before 15th August 1947 while A K Gopalan was not released as he was at the KannurJai with A class status. A K G was the only A class prisoner and the hidden agenda behind was the A class was status was segregation from other Communists.¹³⁶ A K Gopalan raised national flag in the jail and worn the attire of political prisoners on 15th August 1947. The confinement of A K Gopalan raises a question that why the Indian National Congress was not ready to release a political prisoner who extremely struggled for the freedom of the country. He was an enemy of the colonial state. A K Gopalan was forced to go on hunger strike for his release. At the same time, public protests and meetings took place outside the prison for the release of A K G in different parts of Madras Presidency.

A K Gopalan who was not released even after one month of the freedom was forced to move start hunger strike for recognising eight hundred prisoners including Communists as political prisoners. This struggle started on 20th September 1947 in the Kannur Jail.¹³⁷ On 24th September, A K

¹³⁶ A K Gopalan, *Ente Jeevithakadha*, p. 188.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

G was became sick because of fever and other political prisoners also joined the hunger strike. A K Gopalan gave up his hunger strike on 12th October 1947. Only then he was released by the free government of India. The free government was not ready to create a class called political prisoners or to give any relaxation to the Communists in the prison. A K Gopalan and other Communist detainees were forced for recurring hunger strikes for obtaining basic facilities at various jails in the Madras presidency¹³⁸

Moyyarth Sankaran was brutally attacked by the police and *goondas* on 11th May 1948 and was taken to police custody. He was taken to the Central Jail at Kannur and died as a result of police brutality on the very next day.¹³⁹ The dead body of Moyyarth was not handed over to his family and it was cremated inside the jail. This was completely a human rights violation inflicted upon a man who fought for the liberation of the country from the clutches of colonialism. The blood stricken dress of Moyyarth was handed over to his family.¹⁴⁰ Moyyarth had an important role in the popularisation of the Indian National Congress in Malabar. He suffered jail punishment for taking part in the Gandhian Movement and became a Communist in 1941. He stood with the people and criticised the Indian National Congress for not siding with the issues of the common masses. The *Mathrubhumi* newspaper criticised the government that they were responsible for the murder of a sincere nationalist who really worked for freedom of the motherland.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹³⁹ Moyyarth Sankaran, *Aatmakatha*, p. 211.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Janardhanan Moyyarth, son of Moyyarth Sankaran at Thiruvananthapuram, 29th December 2016.

¹⁴¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 18th May 1948, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

The prison in colonial India was a new institution of the state and it was distinct from the *karagriham* of the pre-colonial period. The establishment of colonial power by *EEIC* in 1792 resulted in major shifts in punitive mechanisms of Malabar. The main shift was in punitive mechanisms as the punishment by mutilation was replaced by punishments like transportation, imprisonment, corporal punishment and fines. Imprisonment as a form of punishment was a colonial innovation in Malabar.

In the initial phase of the Company's rule, there were no proper buildings for confining prisoners as existing buildings constructed for various purposes and forts at Palakkad, Kannur and Thalassery were used as prisons. This practice continued until the second half of nineteenth century. This clearly shows that the colonial state in the early phase approached prison as an economic tool rather than a disciplinary mechanism. In addition to this, the prison was also used as an oppressive tool against Company's political opponents.

The Indian resistance of 1857-58 put an end to the Company's reign and the power was transferred to the British Crown. The resistance alarmed the need of better prisons in India which resulted in the birth of prisons like the Kannur Central Jail. The old jail system was replaced with fresh ones in various parts of Malabar.

The establishment of the Company's rule created plenty of restorative resistances throughout Malabar. The colonial state reacted with imprisonment of these resisting local rulers, landlords, *mappilamar*, tribal groups etc., as political prisoners. Many among them, including local rulers like Palakkad Achan and Raja of Padinjare Kovilakam died in prison as ordinary criminals. Paloor Emman also died as a convict at Prince of Wales Island in 1819.

The *mappilamar* of south Malabar resisted against the *EEIC* from the initial stage of the colonial rule itself. The state branded them as 'Jungle Mappila' who were bandits by occupation. The state used various punishments against these *mappilamar* which included capital punishment, transportation, imprisonment, flogging etc.

These political prisoners resisted in the prison by various ways, some tried to escape and some entered in open revolts. In 1803, as a result of internal revolt in Kozhikode Jail, many prisoners managed to escape by breaking the jail wall. Jail revolts also occurred at Thalassery too. This shows that, the political prisoners were not ready to be disciplined in the prison which exhibited the failure in enforcing discipline and improper maintenance of the panopticon system.

The Mappila people revolted in throughout nineteenth century from 1836 which were 'fanatic riots' to the colonial officials. A big number of these revolting *mappilamar* were imprisoned and majority of them belonged to the agricultural community. The religious leaders like Veliyakode Omar Khazi, Sayid Fazal and Mamburam Beevi were punished by the colonial state for supporting the resistance. The recurring revolts resulted in framing of new laws by district officials which included deportation.

The introduction of black acts like the Malabar War Knives Act, 1854 and the Mappila Outrages Act, 1859 were aimed at the imprisonment of *mappilamar* without any reasons. These acts simply meant a person by birth belonged to the *mappila* community was eligible for confinement until the wish of the state without any proper reason. Andaitha Mukhopadhyay mentions that labelling these people as 'fanaticgang' was a mask to oppress its political opponents.

Prison rules in colonial Malabar began to change with the emergence of the debate over prison life of the people in the print world. The First World War had opened a new world of information to the public through the print media. The *Malabar Struggle* of 1921 and the Non Cooperation Movement had resulted in the opening of more jails in the Madras Presidency. This was a changed face of prison administration and punishments of political prisoners in colonial India.

Unlike the earlier period, these prisoners were educated and belonged to the middle and upper strata of the society. The imprisonment of this educated class produced nationwide attention of the prison and miserable life of political prisoners. The number went on increasing during the later resistance movements especially during the socialist face of the national movement.

The imprisonment of Yacoob Hassan, K Madhavan Nair and others got wider attention as it was the first sort in Malabar. The public protest against the arrest of Yacoob Hassan and three others witnessed *harthal* at Kozhikode which became integral part of political life in Kerala even after independence.

The prisoners during the *NCM* were treated like ordinary criminals with bad food. The colonial state never used the term 'political prisoner' in its rule in India. However the congress leaders like M K Gandhi K Madhavan Nair, P Moideen Koya, U Gopala Menon etc., received privileges in jails. The Indian National Congress from the *NCM* onwards urged for creating a special consideration for political prisoners with humane treatment and the demand was published in various newspapers. It is interesting to see that the Indian National Congress was not ready to see the arrested Communists, *mappilamar*, Socialists and the revolutionaries as political prisoners.

The prisons witnessed discriminatory treatment of the arrested based upon class consideration. The life prisoners arrested during the *CDM* was entirely different due to the introduction of the 'ABC Classification'. Even though the colonial state introduced 'ABC Classification' for political prisoners, there was a hidden agenda behind it and that was the policy of 'divide and rule'. The A and B class prisoners got better food and other facilities in the prison. Many prisoners who were eligible for A and B class were deliberately placed in C class. Majority of the political prisoners were kept in the C class and the classification was an economic gain to the colonial state.

There was opposition from the Indian National Congress towards this classification in the prison and the leaders confined in A and B was not ready to reject their higher status and accept the C class. In the same time, the C class prisoners suffered a miserable life in the prison in terms of food, labour, dress and inhuman attitude of the jail officials. This forced them to start hunger strikes and other resistances. The leaders of the Indian National Congress placed in A and B classes criticised the c class prisoners for their

resistance in prison in the name of non-violence and adherence to the principles of M K Gandhi. As they stick on Gandhi's advice on to be disciplined in prison. All these saved the higher classes in prison to continue their privileges. This was a contradiction in the jail experiences of the freedom fighters.

The interim ministry headed by the Indian National Congress which came to power in Madras in 1937-1939 failed to introduce any changes in the 'ABC Classification'. This resulted in the continuation of the miseries of the C class prisoners belonging to the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party during the Second World War. During the term of the interim Government Indian National Congress headed by T Prakasham at Madras, a new class for political prisoners termed the 'Special Class' along with the ABC. The *INC* was not ready to recognise the Communists as political prisoners who were confined in various jails of the Madras Presidency as detainees and convicted prisoners.

The mentality of the jail staff began to change with the intensification of the national movement. The last decades of the national movement witnessed the changed attitude of the prison staff with the political prisoners due to the possibility of these prisoners becoming the rulers of independent India. This was highly beneficial to the leaders kept in the A and B classes and it was less useful to the C class prisoners. The loyal staff in the prisons helped the arrested leaders to hand over letters, newspapers and other requirements in the jail.

Gender, caste and religious considerations reflected in the colonial prison. The imprisonment of women in connection with political offences can be divided into two phases. After the consolidation of colonial power in

Malabar women were convicted not for their crimes but for the crimes of male relatives. In the second phase, the Gandhian movement attracted women to take part in political activities. It was during *CDM* the middleclass educated women of Malabar actively took part in protest processions, salt satyagraha, picketing and other activities. These women unlike Mappila women were imprisoned for their own political activity. The prison life was not unique as they were also subjected for 'ABC Classification'. The A and B class women were mainly lodged in the Presidency Jail for women with better food, dress and solitary confinement. These women were also treated according to class considerations and political affiliations. They were chiefly managed by the male police and male staff which was an insult to them. The women prisoners kept in the privileged classes were known after their husbands and this was not so in the lower class where the inmates were subjected to severe ill treatment.

The caste system prevailed in the society was also reflected in the prison. In the earlier period, women and Brahmins were exempted from capital punishments. Ordinarily, the Brahmins as higher castes were given certain privileges in cooking and labour. The caste was a factor in defining prison work as the higher castes were exempted from certain tasks like scavenger job and shoe making and the lower castes were used for menial works in prison. The scavenger task in prison was mainly allotted to lower castes in colonial India. The *parayar* and *pulayar* communities were assigned with this task. If a prisoner belonged to this caste was in prison, he was entitled to do that. Thus, to an extent, the colonial state recognised outside caste practices.

The jail manual and other official correspondences explain the existence of separate kitchens in prison based upon caste and religion. The Brahmins demanded separate kitchen for them and only in rare occasions they dined with other classes. The *Mappila* prisoners did not demand separate kitchen and they were subjected to severe ill treatment in the colonial prison.

There are common features in the handling of Mappila and Communist prisoners in the colonial prison. The handling of Mappila prisoners came to an end in the 1930s with the commencement of the same treatment to the prisoners belonging to the Socialist and Communist movements.

The Malabar Struggle resulted in the opening of cages in different parts of Malabar, four special jails and the Alipuram Camp Jail in the Bellary District. The police ignored food and health of the prisoners and made life miserable to them. Closed wagons were used to transfer prisoners to far away jails. The so-called 'Wagon Tragedy' was actually a massacre as the officials never gave any value to the life of prisoners.

The trials were also conducted for name sake as official records clearly reveals the courts accepted the charge sheet prepared by the police. The coercive police force created by the colonial state called the *MSP* in 1921 was intended for torturing the prisoners. They were shot dead and even their bodies were burned and the ash taken to jail.

The Government of India had ordered to end penal transportation to Andaman as a punishment in 1920. This was reversed in the case of *mappilamar* and they were transported to Andamans in large scale.

The prison was entirely a torture camp rather than a disciplinary institution. There were no cells, better uniforms, food or disciplined staffs. The prisoners were beaten thoroughly and chained in the night and slept in open space without any bed or blankets. This chaining continued for year's shows rather than panopticon or discipline it acted as a torture camp with high death rate.

The prisoners suffered much in this overcrowding. The scarcity of water and worst food resulted many diseases and triggered the death rate. The night time was the most dreadful experience to prisoners. They were chained together in open space and were forced to sleep on floor in stones and mud without any blankets. The Alipuram Jail was known 'hell of the Madras Presidency' where prisoners were fried alive. The prisoners died in various jails due to recurring epidemics, bad food, lack of medical care and official torture.

The colonial state failed to control *mappilamar* inside prisons but succeeded in controlling them to an extent by using various techniques. The presence of special cohesive force like MSP and its wide presence at south Malabar acted as a panopticon.

Majority of prisoners were conditionally released before the actual completion of their sentences. This was a strategy of the colonial state as it was not only an economic gain but a disciplinary tool for incorporation of the released prisoners into the existing law and order. The prisoners released in the earlier stage were forced to pay fines monthly to the *adhikari* of their respective *amsom* and to report at nearby police station in every month until the actual completion of their sentences. Any default in this resulted in the imprisonment of the released *mappila*. Majority of *mappilamar* were

peasants and labourers failed to pay the fine and were imprisoned for default in paying fines. The fines were cancelled soon due wide protests against it in *MLC* and newspapers. However the monthly reporting at the police stations continued till it was cancelled by the Congress Ministry headed by C Rajagopalachari in 1937.

The strategy of the treatment of Mappila prisoners continued with regard to the Communists by the 1930s. The Communist Party of India was came into being in Malabar by 1937. The ideas of socialism and communism mainly came to Malabar through the prison life of Gandhian prisoners during *CDM*. During the prison life the prisoners were able to read a lot of books including prohibited works, learned Hindi and other languages which helped them to interact with north Indian revolutionaries, come into touch with various subjects including the Soviet union, Socialism and Communism. The Congress Socialist Party of Malabar had already established in 1934. It succeeded in organising peasants, beedi workers, factory workers, weavers, scavengers and so on especially in Malabar. The colonial state besides existing police system used a coercive force as well as surveillance mechanism towards the communists which were earlier used against the Mappila peasants. The MSP was camped in different parts of Malabar and its chief aim was dealing the influence of the Communists. Thus, the same oppressive mechanism used against Mappila peasants was used by the colonial state against the Communists. The interim Congress government formed before independence called the *MMPOM* in 1947 was meant to confine the Communists as detinues.

The Alipuram Jail was reopened in 1941 for confining Communists and other political prisoners. The agenda was to move political prisoners far

away from the jails in Malabar. Even this torture was not ready to suppress the communists.

The interim Congress ministry of 1946 came into open clash with the Communists as they became their prime opponents. The Communists were not only given special class status in the prison but also curtailed many privileges allotted to the prisoners belonging to Indian National Congress. The Communists were forced to start hunger strikes for restoring the privileges they enjoyed previously under the colonial government. The interim Congress government ordered to release all prisoners convicted in connection with political cases marked as non-violent with achievement of independence. The officials showed discriminatory attitude towards the Communists under the orders of the Interim Government and majority of the Communists including A K Gopalan was in prison for charging with violent offence. A K Gopalan was released only after one month when he and his co-prisoners went on hunger strike for so many days. He was arrested by the colonial state for challenging the Crown. This exhibited the attitude of the government lead by the Indian National Congress towards the Communists after independence. Moyyath Sankaran, a Communist in Malabar who started his political career as a volunteer of the Indian National Congress died in the days following independence because of brutal manhandling of the police and hooligans. Even his corpse was not handed over to the family which also presented the attitude of the British State towards the Mappila prisoners in Malabar. The Indian National Congress imitated the oppressive policy of the colonial state towards the political prisoners in independent India instead of reforming the prisons regarding the life of political prisoners. The prison remained as a tool of political

oppression in independent India especially in the initial years of Indian independence.

Discipline was the most debated subject among the prisoners after 1930. Gandhian political prisoners like K Kelappan criticised prisoners for violating prison laws by sending secret letters with the help of jail officials. The term discipline was unknown to the prisoners in Malabar as they had to resist police many times for basic requirements in the prison. The hunger strike remained as the most powerful weapon in jail which forced the colonial officials to agree with the demands of political prisoners. These demands were short lived and prisoners were forced to recurring hunger strikes for their survival in the prison.

The political prisoners were far away from the Foucaultian concept of 'docile bodies'. The colonial prison targeted the body of the prisoner and they used their body as a tool of resistance as they resisted the domination in prison and hunger strike was the major mode of agitation. This sort of resistance in the prison had started with the beginning of colonial rule in Malabar and was practiced by the arrested local rulers, and *mappilamar*.

During the *CDM*, the political prisoner success in the fingerprint *satyagraha* shows that they were not ready to recognise domination over the body. The C Class prisoners carried out severe hunger strike and other forms of resistances against the injustice in prison. The C class prisoners in Malabar were actually the heroes of this fight against these injustices in the prison. The hunger strikes of political prisoners arrested from Malabar was a declaration that the prisoners had absolute control over their body as well as their mind. This proved that the colonial officials failed to control or

dominate the political prisoners even by targeting their mind as well as their body.

The political prisoners in jails studied different languages from due to the presence of educated people coming from different parts of India. The propagation of Hindi was started in 1920 itself in Malabar by *DBHPS* however it was mainly during the arrests connected with the *CDM* the study of Hindi language became more popular. Majority of prisoners studied Hindi language and read books during their prison life. Knowledge in Hindi helped the Gandhians to interact with north Indian revolutionaries and Socialist literature. The Kamalnath Tiwari's letter clearly shows that the jail and district officials were unfamiliar with the Hindi language and thus the language became medium for secret communication among the convicts and political prisoners. The A and B class prisoners had all facilities to read and write while the C class had less chance to read books. The members of the *CSP* studied Hindi during their prison life connected with the *CDM* and they came into contact with the Communist Party. Thus Hindi continued as their favourite language to continue their political work.

The learning of new languages was not limited to Hindi, it extended to Tamil, English, Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit etc. Long term prisoners studied Sanskrit and English mainly for reading classical and big works for better utilisation of prison life and time. It helped in understanding the history and culture of the country. Thus political prisoners belonging to various groups became multi-linguists. Intellectual debates regarding the everyday life in India and remedies to solve its riddles took place in the prison. In most cases, the ideology of M K Gandhi began to lose its dominance with Communism in

these debates. These experiences changed the life of a political prisoner and he became more conscious of his political duties through this education.

Besides these debates, the prison library gave opportunity to the prisoners to learn the world better. All sorts of books including the banned one reached the jail. A new genre of literature called prison writings appeared in Indian literature due to the intellectual character of prison life of the political activists.

The released political prisoner in colonial India and independent India was greeted with reverence by the society. The sacrifice was well appreciated by the society around. The national movement had respected them by holding the conference of released political prisoners during the days of freedom struggle. It was M K Gandhi and his movement that sanctified the embracement of prison life as a sanctified act and sacrifice to the nation during the *NCM* and *CDM*. To them the jail was a sacred place equal to the temple. Those who went to jail and were released as political prisoners were able to encourage others to embrace prison life for the freedom of the motherland. The autobiographies of these activists explain the way in which they were affected by the jail life in their personal and public lives. The number of people who lost their lives in the prison for the sake of the freedom of the land is uncountable. Only the memories of the released prisoners are available to us to understand the bitter side of this miserable life. Many ex-prisoners lost their families, households, kith and kin during their life in the prison, many lost their health and could not get released when they were weak and unhealthy. Many nationalists belonging to higher castes were subjected to excommunication from the caste and family for getting arrested by the police and imprisoned in the prison. To the wealthy and the

elite, the national activity of the individual was criminal deed before 1947. Such people had to lead an isolated life in their post released period. All these did not teach anything to the people who governed India after independence. Regarding the political prisoner, the state continued to act as an oppressor and the prison continued to work as an oppressing instrument after 1947.

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2. **P Vasu**, aged 95, residing at Cheruvannur, Kozhikode, Kerala State on 21st January 2017
3. **Janardhanan Moyyath** son of Moyyath Shankaran, Thiruvananthapuram, on 29th December 2016.
4. **Kanjirappali Alavi Musaliar** aged 56, residing at Karakkunnu, Thrikkalangode, Manjeri, Kerala on 13th March 2019
5. **Cheruvayal Raman**, aged 58, residing at Manathavady, Wayanad, Kerala State on 6th January 2016

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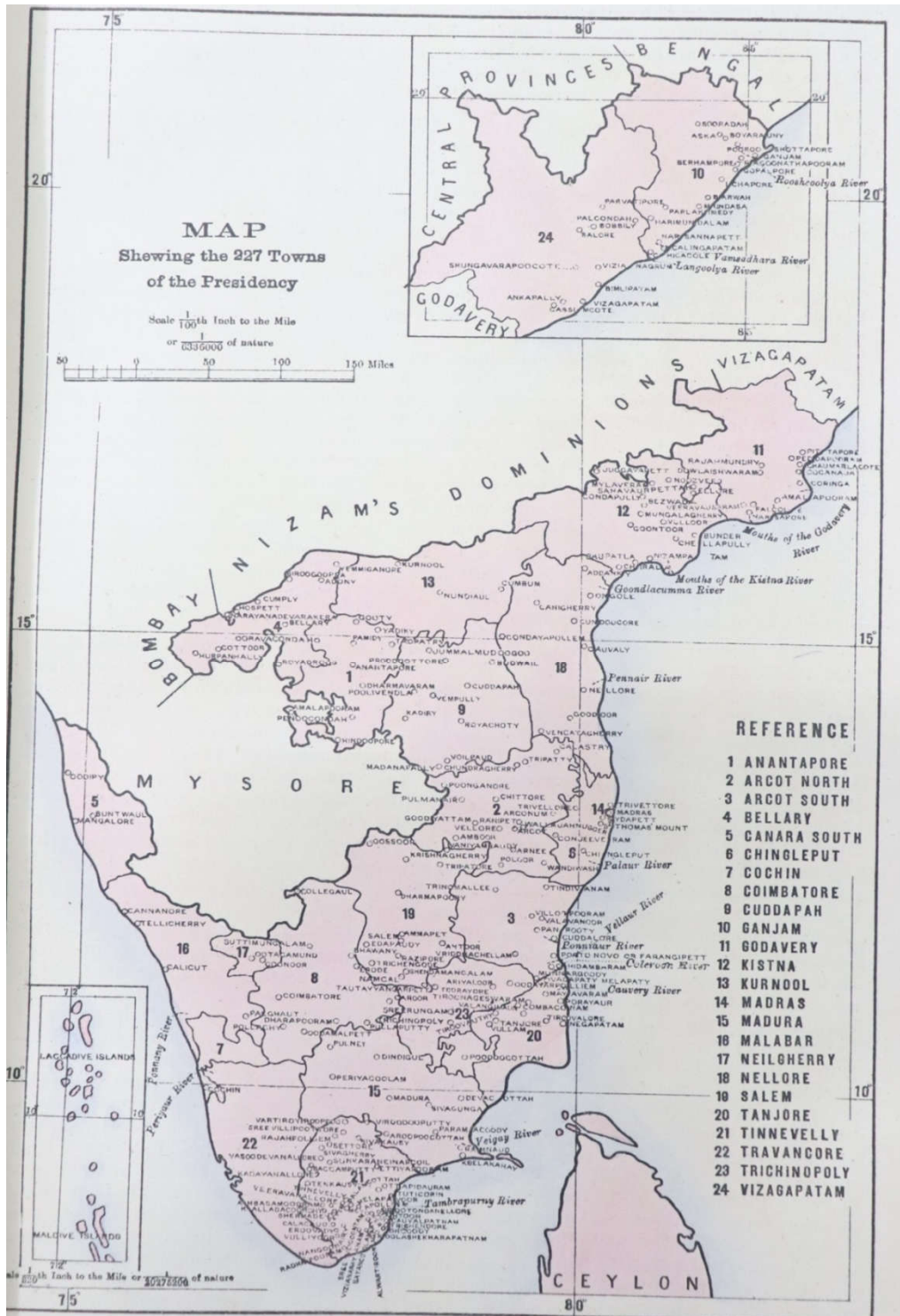
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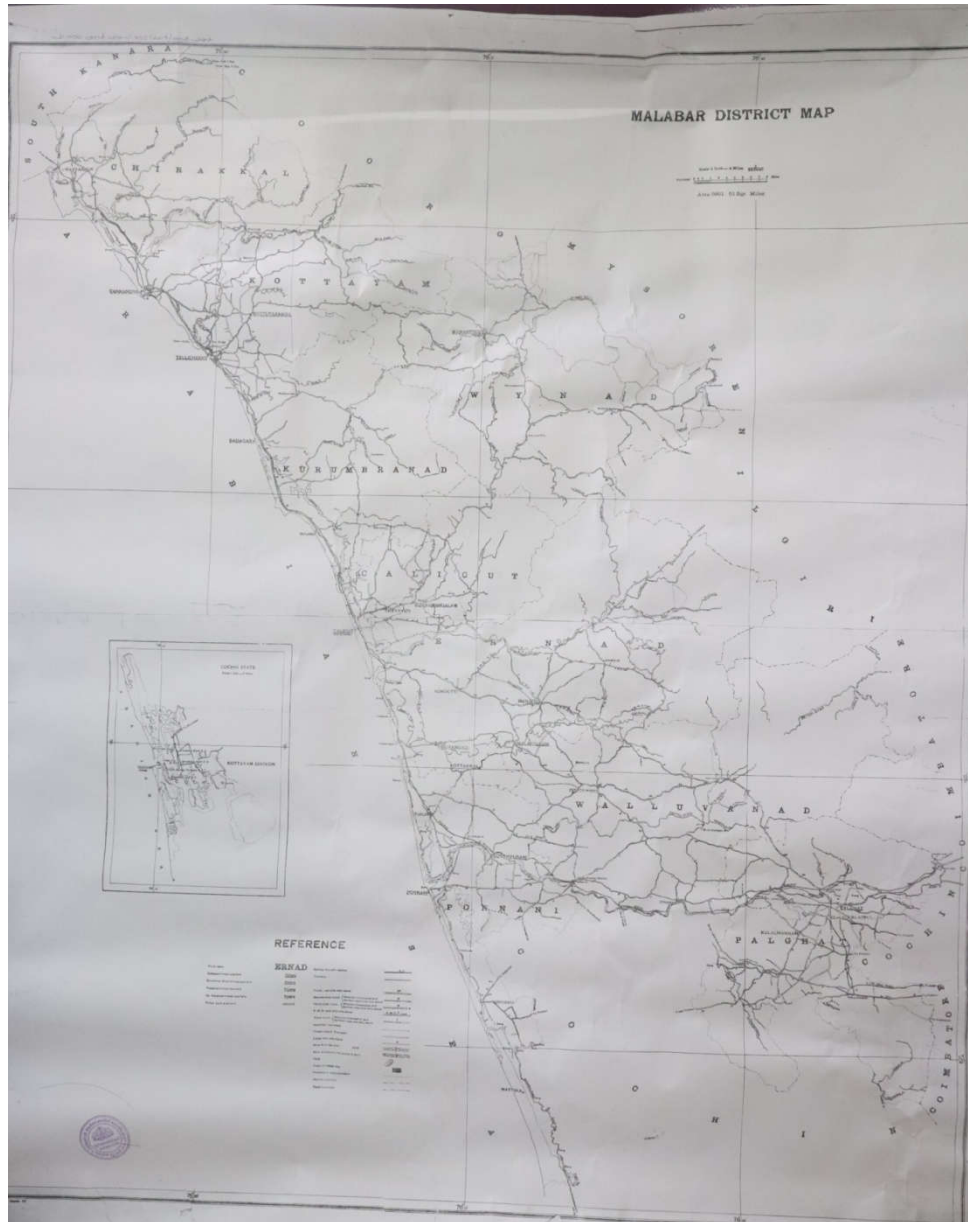
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Appendix



1. Map of the Madras Presidency in 1885¹⁴²

¹⁴² Manual of Administration of Madras Presidency, vol. I, Madras, 1885, RAK.

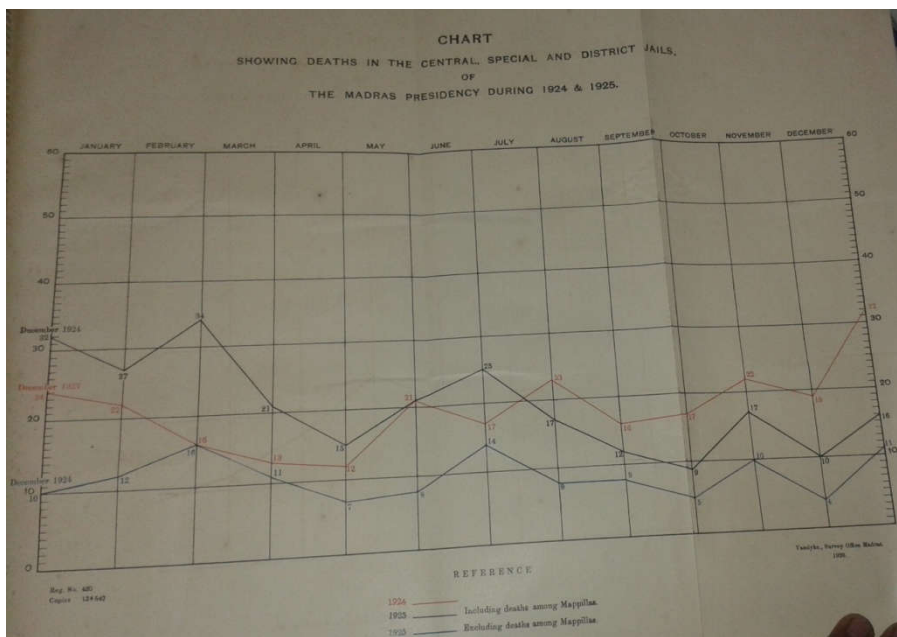


2. Map of Colonial Malabar (n.d.), RAK¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Map of the Malabar District preserved in the Kerala State Regional Archives, Kozhikode



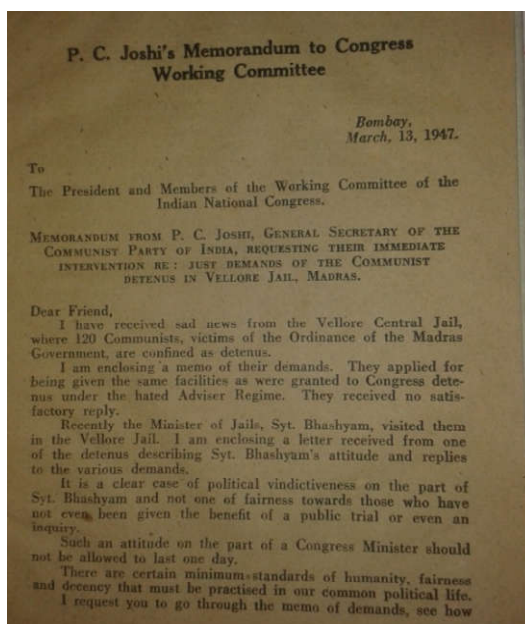
3. M P Narayana Menon in prison dress¹⁴⁴



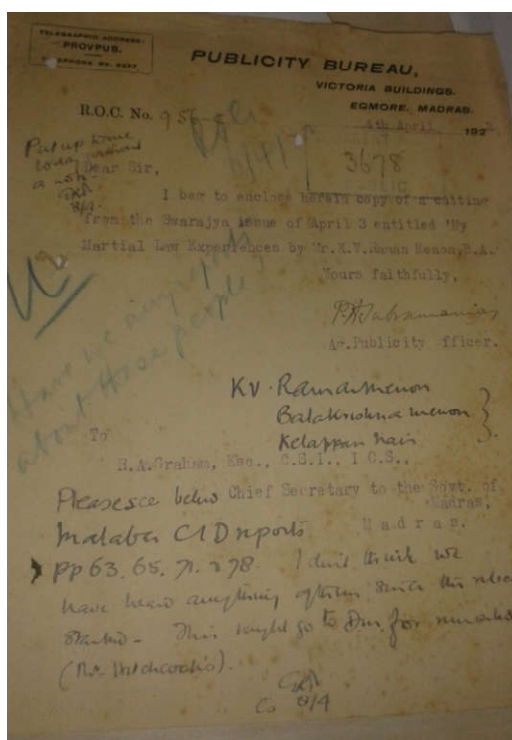
4. Graph representing death of prisoners in the jails of Madras Presidency, 1924-1925¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ *Mathrubhumi* weekly, October 1934, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁴⁵ *Report of the Administration of the Jails of the Madras Presidency-1925*, Madras, 1926, RAK.



5. Communist Detinues at Vellore Jail¹⁴⁶



6. CID Report on the martyrdom of K V Balakrishna Menon¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Letter From P C Joshi on Communist Detinues, Archives of Contemporary History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

¹⁴⁷ Public G O No 506, 1922, TSA.

giving also the approximate additional expenditure, if any, involved by the proposal.

(ii) *Accommodation—Government of India's decision.*—The Government of India have suggested that a separate jail in each province for classes 'A' and 'B' is desirable and that a special staff may be sanctioned for dealing with 'A' and 'B' class prisoners.

Local Government's action.—The Inspector-General has been requested to submit proposals as regards separate accommodation for the 'A' and 'B' class prisoners and also the employment of a special staff for dealing with such prisoners.

(iv) *Prison tasks—Government of India's decision.*—The tasks allotted to prisoners in 'A' and 'B' classes should be assigned after due consideration on medical grounds and with careful regard to the capacity, character, previous mode of life and antecedents of the prisoner.

Local Government's action.—Pending the issue of amendments to the Jail Manual, the Inspector-General has been asked to direct all Superintendents of Jails strictly to observe these orders.

(v) *Facilities for reading—Government of India's decision.*—Literate prisoners shall be allowed to read books or periodicals in the jail library. 'A' and 'B' class prisoners shall be allowed to read books and magazines from outside, subject to the approval of the Jail Superintendent, a larger allowance being made for 'A' class prisoners.

Local Government's action.—In view of the importance of the subject, the Inspector-General has been requested to report whether he considers it desirable to appoint a special officer to examine the libraries and submit a report to Government with recommendation for improving them.

(vi) *Newspapers—Government of India's decision.*—Under the existing rules for special class prisoners, newspapers may be allowed in special circumstances and with the approval of the Local Government and this rule shall be retained as regards daily papers. As regards the periodical supply of news to literate prisoners, where the Local Government publish a separate Jail Journal, such practice should be continued.

Local Government's action.—The Madras Jail Department is already publishing the Weekly Prison News sheet known as the *Howard Journal* in English and in the vernaculars. The Inspector-General has been instructed to take steps to see that the *Howard Journal* is enlarged to contain more news. He has also been told that sufficient copies of the journal should be placed in the jail library for the use of literate prisoners and that the existing rule under which arrangements should be made in each jail for reading out the news published in the journal to the illiterate convicts should be given effect to.

(vii) *Letters and Interviews—Government of India's decision.*—The Government of India have decided that 'A' class prisoners may write and receive one letter and have one interview a fortnight instead of once a month as at present. 'B' class prisoners may write and receive one letter and have an interview once a month. Publication of matters discussed at interviews or of the substance of letters received from prisoners may entail the withdrawal or curtailment of the privilege.

Local Government's action.—Pending the issue of amendments to the Jail Manual, the Inspector-General has been directed to give effect to these changes immediately.

(viii) *Other privileges to 'B' class prisoners—Government of India's decision.*—Apart from the concessions given to this class of prisoners described above, they will be treated as ordinary prisoners save that some other privileges in respect of furniture, lights, private bedding, etc., now accorded to European prisoners and to Indian prisoners who have adopted a European standard of living under the present rules will be extended to all prisoners of this class.

Local Government's action.—With reference to this decision the Inspector-General has been asked to specify the privileges that should be extended to 'B' class prisoners.

3. *Reclassification of prisoners now undergoing sentence—Government of India's decision.*—The establishment of an intermediate class 'B' necessarily involves some re-classification of prisoners now undergoing sentences. It will be impossible in these cases to follow the method of classification described in paragraph 1, *supra*, as in many cases, the personnel of the trying courts will have changed since the prisoners were convicted. In such cases, therefore, reclassification will be carried out by the jail authorities subject to confirmation and review by the Local Government.

Local Government's action.—The Inspector-General has been requested to submit as early as practicable, for the approval of the Government, a statement showing the names of prisoners now undergoing sentences who may be classified as 'A' or 'B' class prisoners, giving reasons, in each case, for his recommendation.

4. *'Under-trials'*

(i) *Classification and treatment—Government of India's decision.*—The Government of India, accepting the principle that some differentiation of treatment is desirable in the case of under-trial prisoners, who by social status, education or habit of life have been accustomed to a superior mode of living, have decided that there should be two classes of under-trial prisoners based on previous standard of living only. The classifying authority will be the trying court subject to the approval of the District Magistrate. The diet provided for 'A' and 'B' class convicted prisoners should be given to the former class and the diet for 'C' class prisoners to the latter. Prisoners in either class should be allowed to supplement this diet by private purchase through the jail authorities. The Government of India have also commended for adoption the suggestion made to them that in cases where under-trial prisoners are inadequately clad or are unable to obtain clothing from outside, suitable clothing which should not be prison clothing should be provided by the jail authorities.

Local Government's action.—The attention of all Magistrates has been drawn to the instructions of the Government of India regarding the classification of under-trial prisoners.

Under-trial prisoners are even now allowed to supply their own food, if they so desire, subject to such restrictions as the Superintendent may impose. They can also supplement, at their own

7. Order representing the A B C Classification of prisoners¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Fort St. George Gazette, Part II, 1930, RAK.



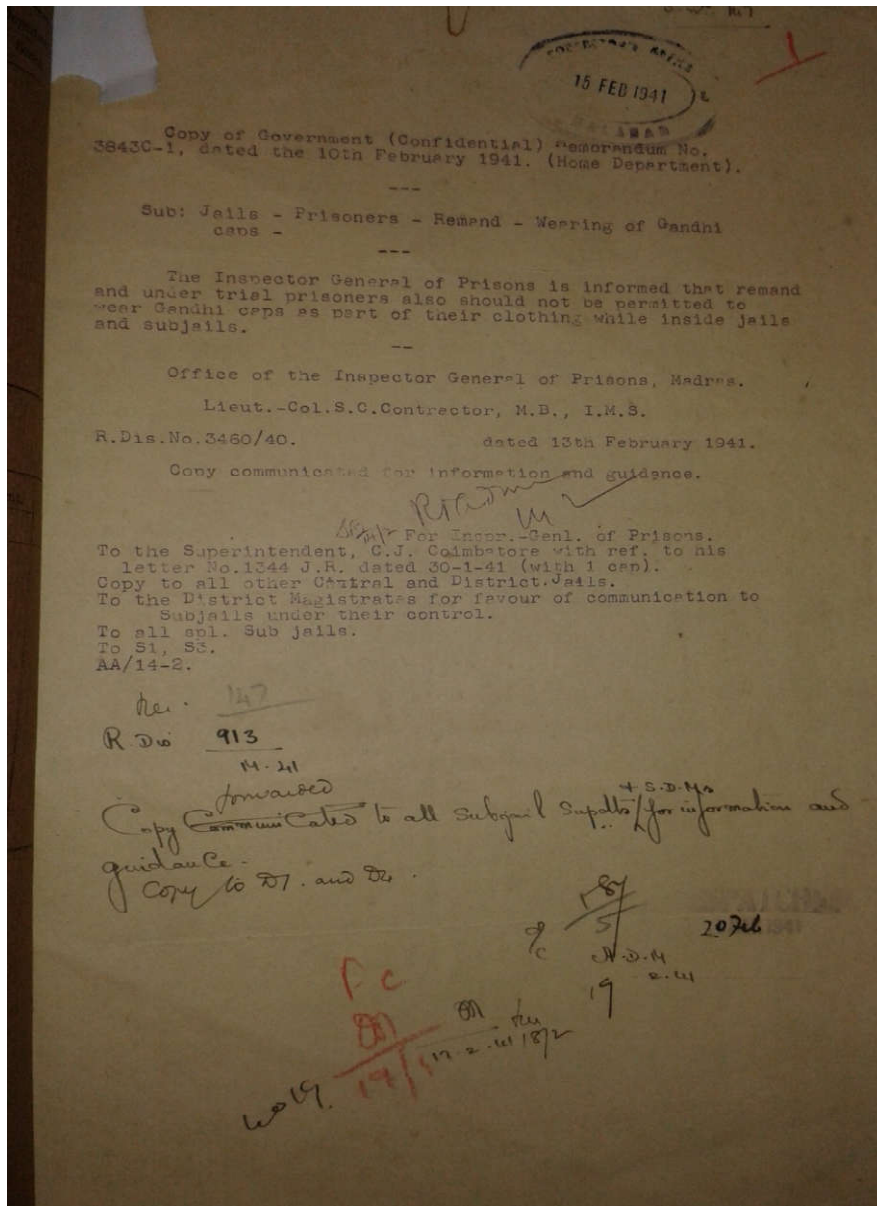
8. Individual Satyagraha: Released Prisoners¹⁴⁹



9. Reception and Tea party given to released political prisoners by the *Mathrubhumi*¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, 17th July 1945, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.

¹⁵⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, 25th July 1945, Mathrubhumi Archives, MM Press, Kozhikode.



10. Government Order Prohibiting the use of Gandhi Cap by political prisoners¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Revenue R Dis, Bn No. 544, Sl. 15, RAK.

6

List of articles:

Subject of the article.	Date of issue in which it appeared.	
1. The Viceroy's Address to the Legislative Assembly.	22 - 1 - 1931.	File of 1931
2. Madras Government and the Police.	1 - 2 - 1931.	1/16-17 ibid
3. R.E. the Governor's speech at the European Association Dinner.	4 - 2 - 1931.	1/19-20 ibid
4. The release of Mappilla prisoners.	9 - 3 - 1931.	1/5-10/6/31
5. the the Lahore executions.	25 - 3 - 1931.	1/2 ibid 25-8-31
6. Freedom.	29 - 3 - 1931.	1/3-4 ibid
7. Cawnpore riots.	7 - 4 - 1931.	1/3-4 ibid
8. The Peshawar Martyrs' Day.	21 - 4 - 1931.	1/3-4 ibid
9. Mappilla riot horrors recalled.	22 - 4 - 1931.	1/3-4 ibid
10. Government's readiness.	1 - 11 - 1931.	1/2 of
11. Message of peace.	12 - 11 - 1931.	1/2 of

Enclosure
 1
 11/12/31

11. List of controversial articles published in the *Al Ameen* during the Civil Disobedience Movement¹⁵²

¹⁵² *Public Confidential*, G O No. 425, 14th March 1932, RAK.