

**AFTERMATH OF THE REBELLION –
A STUDY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
TRENDS IN MALABAR FROM 1921 TO 1935**

*Thesis submitted to the
Department of History, University of Calicut,
for the award of the Degree of*
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY

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DECLARATION

I, Sreevidhya Vattarambath, hereby declare that the thesis, "**AFTERMATH OF THE REBELLION - A STUDY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TRENDS IN MALABAR FROM 1921 TO 1935**" is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other degrees.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis "**AFTERMATH OF THE REBELLION – A STUDY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TRENDS IN MALABAR FROM 1921 TO 1935**" submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Calicut is a record of bonafide research carried out by Smt. Sreevidhya Vattarambath under my supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any degree before.

University of Calicut
Date: 30.03.2007.


Dr. K.N. Ganesh
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CONTENTS

Acknowledgement
Abbreviations
List of Maps

CHAPTER		PAGE No.
I	INTRODUCTION	1 - 24
II	THE REBELLION	25 - 85
III	POST REBELLION PERIOD – REALITIES AND RELIEF WORKS	86 - 144
IV	POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS IN THE POST REBELLION MALABAR – 1921 TO 1930	145 - 223
V	POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS IN THE POST REBELLION MALABAR – 1930 – 1935	224 - 267
VI	CONCLUSION	268 - 290
	GLOSSARY	291 - 292
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	293 - 312

LIST OF MAPS

1. Location Map of Malabar showing *Taluk* boundaries after 1860
2. Locational Map of the South Malabar – Interior
3. The Moplah Rebellion, 1921 : Centres of the Uprising and rebel strongholds.

ABBREVIATIONS

Admn.	:	Administration
AKG	:	A K Gopalan
CDM	:	Civil Disobedience Movement
CKC	:	Central Khilafat Committee
CMO	:	Correspondence on Moplah Outrages Act
CSP	:	Congress Socialist Party
Dept.	:	Department
DMRT	:	Devadar Malabar Reconstruction Trust
EMS Namboodiripad	:	Elamkulam Manakkal Sankaran Namboodiripad
G.O.	:	Government Order
Govt.	:	Government
HMS	:	Hindu Maha Sabha
INC	:	Indian National Congress
JNU	:	Jawaharlal Nehru University
KCSP	:	Kerala Congress Socialist Party
KPCC	:	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
KPKC	:	Kerala Pradesh Khilafat Committee
MCRC	:	Malabar Central Relief Committee
MKS	:	Malabar Kudiyan Sangham
MLC	:	Member of Legislative Council
MNNPR	:	Madras Native Newspaper Reports
MR	:	Malabar Rebellion of 1921
MRF	:	Malabar Relief Fund
MTA	:	Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930.

MTCR	:	Malabar Tenancy Committee Report
NCM	:	NonCo-operation Movement
NMML	:	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NSS	:	Nair Service Society
Pol.	:	Political
RAC	:	Regional Archives, Calicut
RSS	:	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
RTC	:	Round Table Conference
SNDP	:	Sree Narayana Dharma ParipalanaYogam
TNA	:	Tamil Nadu Archives, Chennai

INTRODUCTION

Sreevidhya Vattarambath “Aftermath of the rebellion trends - A study of political and social trends in malabar from 1921 to 1935” Thesis. Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Malabar Rebellion of 1921 has been a topic of most interested and controversial one in the history of Kerala. From the very early time onwards attempts were made to examine and explain the nature of the Rebellion. As a result of this, contradictory statements, reports and declarations about the Rebellion were published. A lot of studies also came out regarding the same. At the same time, little attention has been paid to the conditions of population in the riot zones during the post Rebellion period ¹ and also to the further socio-political changes that happened in the background of the Rebellion. This work is an attempt to trace the major changes that occurred in the polity and society of Malabar during the post Rebellion period.

The Rebellion was an important event which occurred in Malabar as a part of the Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement that were purportedly launched at an all India level on the strict observance of nonviolence and the maintenance of communal harmony. But, this policy of non violence of Gandhi was broken by the people of Ernad during the Rebellion and in the later part of the upheaval, communal tensions also occurred. Violence during

¹ Post Rebellion period denotes the period after the suppression of the 1921 Malabar Rebellion. It is so defined in order to understand the tendencies that developed in Malabar politics after the 1921, in which Rebellion itself became a reference point.

the Rebellion became a handy weapon used by the authorities to curtail the political freedom in Southern Malabar. This affected all the further social and political life of entire Kerala during the post Rebellion period and resulted in tensions in the Hindu Muslim relations. Thus, the Rebellion is reckoned as a turning point in the history of Kerala.

A number of research studies on the Rebellion have appeared recently. But almost all of them give only little attention towards the changes occurred in Malabar in the post Rebellion period. They explained in detail the nature and events of the Rebellion, which provides a background to the present study. There are mainly three views regarding the Rebellion- nationalist perspective, community based perspective and socio economic perspective. The nationalist writers argued that Malabar Rebellion had taken place as part of the freedom struggle. K.Madhavan Nair, K.P.Kesava Menon, Moozhikunnath Brahmadathan Namboodiripad and so on, who were contemporaries of the Rebellion, are of this view. Another group of writers are of the view that the Rebellion was purely based on religion. The British writers like Hitchcock, Stephen.F.Dale and so on are the supporters of this view. Another group of writers like Saumyendranatha Tagore and Conrad Wood are of the view that the Rebellion was because of peasant grievances.

K. Madhavan Nair gave a nationalist interpretation to the Rebellion

in his work². He was a contemporary of the Rebellion. He was an active Congress worker who tried best to dissuade the *Mappilas*³ from resorting to violent methods, but the rebel upsurge was too much for him and his co-workers in the national movement to stop. The book was published by his wife in 1971. She says in her preface that the book was written soon after the Rebellion. In this work Madhavan Nair argued that the main factors that led to the Rebellion were: the belief among the Muslims that the British broke their religious faith, the inability of the nationalist leaders to lead the people in a nonviolent manner, the inability of the non co operators and government to check their efforts, the cruel oppression of the participants of khilafat and NCM, the arrest of leaders etc.. The combination of all these events caused the people to rebel, according to Madhavan Nair. He accepted the view that the cruelties of *jenmies* and the right of *melcharth* played a major role in the genesis and growth of these revolts. In this work, he mentioned the two phases of the Rebellion – one was before the murder of Ali Mussaliar and other was after his death. It was in the second phase that the rebellion turned in to a communal one, according to him. He pointed out that the most suffered one due to the Rebellion were the Muslims, who were not the supporters of the Rebellion. Though, he didn't look into the impact of the Rebellion in the

² K. Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam*, (1971), Calicut, 1993.

³ The Muslims of Malabar are called as *Mappilas* or *Moplahs*. They consist of pure Arab settlers of the descendants of Arab traders and women of the country and of converts to Mohammedanism mainly from lower castes.

social, economic, political and cultural life of the people of Kerala, it is more useful to analyze the events happened at the instant of the Rebellion especially the compulsory conversions and relief camps. He attempted to present as full a picture of the various aspects of the upheaval without rancor or ill will. He had used extensively the statements of refugees, both Hindus and Muslims, who sought asylum in towns outside the rebel area during the Rebellion.

K.P.Kesava Menon, another nationalist leader expressed his views regarding the Rebellion in his autobiography⁴. In his view the Rebellion originated from the police repression and not from *jenmy kudiyan* issue or the religious issue. It was started as a challenge to the British authority. He said that, in the early stages the rebels did not turn against the Hindus, but later, when the Hindus began to help the British authorities, it turned to be a fanatic one. He argued that compulsory religious conversions had taken place during this period. He wrote about the cruelties of the police towards the rebels and also the partiality shown by the authorities towards them during the time of trial. In one chapter, he gave a brief explanation of the condition immediately after the Rebellion, especially the functioning of national movement.

Another important nationalist writer was Moozhikkunnath Brahmattan Namboodiripad. He was a Congress leader and a victim of the

⁴ K.P.Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam*, Calicut, 1957.

police repression. In his work⁵ he argued that it is not correct to call this Rebellion as Malabar *Lahala* or *Mappila Lahala*; instead it should be call as revolution. He is also having same attitude of Kesava Menon that the cruel police repression was the main cause of the Rebellion. In his view, it was not a revolt, but a civil war. He also briefly describes the political changes in Malabar immediately after the Rebellion .He criticized the Congress for not dissolving the NCM immediately after the Tirurangadi incident. In his view, the Rebellion caused the spread of communal riots in Northern parts of India.

Another important contemporary writer of the Rebellion was Koyatti Moulavi,⁶ a native of Tirurangadi, the small town from where the first rebellious acts started on 20th August 1921. He propounded the view that the Rebellion was essentially a fight against the British power for gaining independence. But in the absence of proper leadership, it became an anarchic uprising and results for the death of 12,000 brave *Mappilas* . Moulavi is of the view that the violent upheaval could not have been averted if the British authorities had permitted able national leaders to enter the place from where the revolt started. He rejected the view that the Rebellion was a peasant revolt. He pointed out that the majority of *Mappilas* of Tirurangadi from where Rebellion broke out did not suffer from the oppressive *jenny* system.

⁵ Moozhikunnath Brahamdattan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, Calicut, 1965.

⁶ Koyatti Moulavi, 1921 le *Malabar Lahala*, Tirurangadi, 1956.

In contrast to this view, the analysis of some other writers is primarily religious oriented. Hitchcock, a British officer expressed his view in his work⁷. He was the District Superintendent of Police during the Rebellion. He naturally sided with the Government and viewed that both the rebels and non co-operators should be suppressed. His view is purely based on religion. In his view, the Rebellion was started definitely against the government. He argued that the *Mappilas* started the Rebellion with a religious view. The Rebellion was only a series of reckless attacks on Hindus by the *Mappilas*, according to him. The argument of Hitchcock was obviously a continuation of the standard colonial characterization of the *Mappilas* as religious fanatics.

Stephen.F. Dale⁸ also based his argument on religion. Dale rejected the nationalist interpretation of the Rebellion. He argued that, it was an archaic form of pretest and an attempt to establish an Islamic state. He argued that the violent faction of Khilafatists led by Ali Mussaliar was responsible for the outbreak of the Rebellion on August 1921. The common element of protest was not social or economic, but religious, according to Dale. To him, The uprising appeared as religious acts inspired by a small faction of Ulamas who formed the single, critical determinant of *Mappila* outbreaks. In his view, the *Mappilas* did rebel against the British and many peasants gave support to the

⁷ R.H Hitchcock, *The History of Malabar Rebellion 1921*, Madras, 1925.

⁸ Stephen. F. Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922*, Oxford, 1980.

rebels. In his view, 'the Rebellion was not a national movement, not a peasant revolt and not a modern political event'.

Here we can see that Hitchcock and Dale had same view regarding the Rebellion. Hitchcock was a British administrator and Dale, a British historian. Despite these differences, their perception of the Rebellion is primarily based on religious identity of the rebels.

Not only British officials, but some Indians also tried to analyze the Rebellion as a religious one. The first book on the Rebellion in this direction was *The Moplah Rebellion 1921* by C.Gopalan Nair⁹. Nair was a retired officer of the government of Madras, but had no access to the government records on the background and incident of the Rebellion. However, he had collected valuable materials from the newspaper reports and Government's press communiqués at the time of the Rebellion and also used court proceedings, legislative council debates, etc. The work suffers from conscious as well as unconscious feelings of the author against the rebels, which, perhaps, could not be avoided at that time by him both as a retired officer and as the member of a wealthy *taravad* of Palghat taluk of Malabar. He gives a detailed account of forcible conversions conducted by the *Mappilas* during the period of the Rebellion. In his view the *Moplahs* of Ernad and Valluvanad started a career of *Hal Ilakkam* (religious frenzy) and then killed Hindus in

⁹ C.Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion 1921*, Calicut, 1923.

the 19th century. He pictured Tirurangadi as one of 'the most fertile breeding grounds of active fanaticism'. He also made an examination of the growth of nationalism in Malabar and its influence over the people of Malabar. At the same time, he characterised *Mappilas* as the most fanatic section. He stated that "the Hindus believed in Hindu Moslem unity and never dreamed of a day when the Moslem would turn against him, but the *Moplah* had no such delusion; he wanted Moslem Swaraj and he worked for it". According to him, "the Ernad *Moplah* had no the refinement or culture, even enough mental capacity to understand the ideal of Hindu Muslim unity placed before by Gandhi". He also gives a detailed account of the reconversion process undertaken by various agencies.

It had been stated that even before the suppression of the Rebellion in early 1922 M.N.Roy, then in Moscow, wrote in his book *India in Transition* (1922) that it is "the latest phase of agrarian trouble" in India.¹⁰ Roy had then very little information about the happenings in Malabar and their background. His view reflects his knowledge about rural poverty in India in general and the perception that the colonial government upheld the interests of the landholders as against those of the poor peasants.¹¹

¹⁰ M.Gangadharan, "Malabar Rebellion.1921-22 An Historiographical Note", working paper.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

An attempt to view the Rebellion as a rising of the peasants was made firstly by K.P.Gayatrivallabha Iyer speaking as the president of the Reception Committee for the second Kerala Province Conference held at Palghat in 1923. His view was based on William Logan's observations on the *Mappila* revolts of the 19th century and his own knowledge about the then existing tension between the *jenmies* and the tenants in Southern Malabar.¹²

Saumyendranatha Tagore also had of the view that the 1921 was purely a peasant revolt¹³. His view is that the Rebellion was a reaction by the *Mappilas* against the *jenmies*. He characterized the Rebellion of 1921 as "the spontaneous revolt of the peasants in Malabar against British imperialism". Later religious fanaticism also joined with the peasant grievances. He argues that the *Mappila* peasants were not anti *jenmy* and anti government. He also wrote about the role of Arya Samajists in the relief work with the support of the government .They considered only the grievances of Hindus and ignored the *Mappilas*. He criticized the attitude of Gandhi and Congress towards the Rebellion.

Conrad Wood also follows an essentially economic interpretation, treating religion only as a means of mobilization¹⁴. He argues that the 1921-22 Rebellion occurred not because of non co-operation of *Mappila* fanatics,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Saumyendranatha Tagore, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar 1921*, Bombay, 1937.

¹⁴ Conrad Wood, *Mappila Rebellion and its Genesis*, NewDelhi, 1987.

but because of the unresolved grievances of Ernad *Mappilas* against their *jemies*. It was directed against the apostate and the rule of 'infidel', according to him. He rejected the view of Dale that the 1921 Rebellion was a complete failure. The Rebellion influenced official response to the pressure for agrarian reform. The *Mappila* Tenancy Act of 1930, which represented the first step to curb the tenancy power, was the product of *Mappila* violence and it was a major turning point in the History of South Malabar, according to him.

In some extent, D.N. Dhanagare also tries to examine the various aspects of the *Mappila* riots and Malabar Rebellion of 1921 in his work¹⁵. In the article entitled "Agrarian Conflict, Religion and Politics: The Moplah rebellions in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth centuries" he made a close examination of the role of agrarian problems in the *Mappila* outbreaks took place in Malabar in the 18th and 19th centuries. In his view the 1921 rebellion, like the uprisings that occurred throughout the nineteenth century, was, in essence, an expression of long-standing agrarian discontent, which was only intensified by the religious and ethnic identity of the *Moplahs* and by their political alienation. He pointed out that it drew its strength primarily from the poor *Moplah* peasantry and the rich well-to-do *Moplah kanamdars* were not the principle actors in the insurrectionary drama. According to him the *Moplah* riots including that of 1921, were essentially

¹⁵ D N Dhanagare, "Agrarian Conflict-Religion and Politics: The Moplah Rebellion in Malabar in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries" in *Peasant Movements in India 1920-1950*, Delhi, 1989.

'pre-political due to several reasons like lacking of systematic organization and effective leadership and ideology. Dhanagare also deals with the immediate impact of the Rebellion at the close of the article. He speaks of the forcible conversions in the immediate post Rebellion period. He stresses the fact that it was only weeks after the uprisings that the first case of a forced conversion was reported. He is also of the opinion that the total number of conversions did not exceed 900. This was a very small number when compared with the large size of the Hindu population in the disturbed areas. Dhanagare is of the opinion that "the communal sentiments or 'fanaticism' of the *Moplahs* was only the symptom and not the diseases".

Other than these works, large number of articles are also published with divergent views of the nature of the Rebellion. One of the most important among this is that of Robert L Hardgrave¹⁶. Though there is peasant revolt even in the title of the paper, Hardgrave, after examining various factors that produced the Rebellion, is prepared to identify a multiplicity of explanatory factors in the analysis of the Rebellion. He points out the various causes as: agrarian discontent, the perceived threat of Islam, the Congress-Khilafat agitation, inflammatory newspaper reports and provocation by the government officers and police.

¹⁶ Robert L Hardgrave, "The Mappila Rebellion 1921-Peasant Revolt in Malabar", introduction to R.H. Hitchcock, *A History of Malabar Rebellion 1921*, Delhi, 1983.

Other than these, there are attempts to give a sympathetic view to the Rebellion of 1921. E M S Namboodiripad and K M Panikkar belonged to this category. They tried to explain the Rebellion on the basis of religious and economic factors.

E.M.S. Namboodiripad, famed communist ideologue from Malabar, writing in early forties, did not agree with the view that the Rebellion was purely a peasant uprising against the *jenmies*¹⁷. He did not deny the role of agrarian discontent in the uprising, but noted that for agrarian discontent “the *Mappila* would not have rallied round Khilafat and Congress flags in such large numbers and with such firm determination”. The Congress Khilafat leaders raised their voice against “both the British government as well as the *jenmy*” and this gave a “new hope and a new slogan to the oppressed who joined the movement in such a large number”. But Namboodiripad wanted the supporters of the argument that the Rebellion was purely agrarian one to answer certain simple but relevant questions before asserting that the Rebellion was only a ‘revolt of the peasants in Malabar’. The questions are mainly about the involvement of *Mappilas* alone in the Rebellion. He pointed out that the oppression and exploitation of the *jenmy* and the officials are as bad for the Hindu peasants as for their *Mappila* comrades. He also agreed that certain number of forced conversions had taken place during the

¹⁷ E.M.S. Namboodiripad, “A short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala”, (1943), in *Selected Writings*, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1985.

Rebellion. He explains why and how the Rebellion , in its later stages, took a partially communal turn. In another article¹⁸ he pointed out that in the beginning, the Rebellion was a political struggle against imperialism and feudalism and it became communal in its later stages. By “*ahwanam*” he means the political struggle against imperialism and feudalism. By “*thakkeedu*” he means the truth that such a political struggle later turned in to a communal riot.

K N Panikkar provided a significant work on the Rebellion¹⁹. Panikkar begins with an excellent analysis of the agrarian society of Malabar in the 19th century and goes on to examine the tradition of the *Mappilas* of Malabar. He notes the phenomenal increase of the *Mappila* population in the 19th and 20th centuries through conversion from lower castes of the Hindu community, their dependence on agriculture and trade and the scarcity of employment opportunities among them. Their condition was “worsened by none too friendly attitude of British officials, particularly during the first half of the nineteenth century”. In these circumstances the influential religious intellectuals among them contributed to the growth of anti-British feelings in the community. This is seen as the background of the 19th century uprisings. In his view both agrarian and religious grievances played a great role in this

¹⁸ E.M.S. Namboodiripad, “1921 le Ahwanavum Thakkeedum”(1946), in *E.M.S. Samboorna Kritikal* vol.7, Thiruvananthapuram, September 1999.

¹⁹ K N Panikkar *Against Lord and State: Religious and Peasant uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921*, Delhi, 1989.

uprising. He argues that, it was an uprising started by the *Mappila* peasants against landlord and the colonial state. In his opinion, the traditional intellectuals, who had very close links with in the community, have decisive influence in shaping the outlooks and actions of rural *Mappilas*. Several number of Ulamas and other religious functionaries like Mussaliars and Ghazis also influenced the rural *Mappilas* .In his view Rebellion is seen as “the ideology which enabled discontent to be translated into action”.

Another important work regarding the Rebellion is of M Gangadhara Menon’s *Malabar Rebellion 1921-22*²⁰. After giving an account of the land relations of Malabar in early 20th century, the book starts narration of events related to the nationalist movement in Malabar from its beginnings at Calicut in the second decade of the century. In this work he argued that the Khilafat played a major role in the Rebellion. He wrote “in the wake of Khilafat and NCM, there was a kind of readiness among a section of Khilafatists to rose against the authorities. There is no evidence of any organization behind their readiness, other than Khilafat”. He agrees that the religious organizations and centers and the effective signs and slogans like *koottabangu* and *takbir* played a major role in inspiring the people for a collective action. But, he rejected the role of traditional intellectuals in uniting the *Mappilas*. He viewed that support of British authorities towards the *jenmies* against tenants also caused

²⁰ M. Gangadhara Menon, *Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922*, Allahabad, 1989.

for disturbances in Malabar. His main argument is that the military that fostered the violent faction of Khilafatists led by Ali Mussaliar was responsible for the outbreak. He wrote that the impact of the Rebellion had considerable share in causing the growth of communal feelings and politics as a whole. The book takes note of the influence of the 'vicious circle of accusation and counter accusation' between religious communities, which followed the Rebellion. Its impact on the northern provinces of India is seen to have contributed to the growth of the communal politics and of Muslim separatism finally leading to the partition of sub continent into India and Pakistan in 1947²¹.

The agrarian changes, that went ahead with the nationalist and secularist movement in Malabar, that made great changes in the social and political realm of Malabar have been discussed by many scholars. One of the major works in this direction was written by T.C. Varghese²². This work throws light on the agrarian system that affected the economic development of Kerala. It seeks to identify some of the links between agrarian structure in the widest sense of term and the process of its development in traditional societies. T.C. Varghese has used the case study method for his investigation selecting Kerala for this purpose. In this work, he tries to analyze the socio-

²¹ M. Gangadharan, "Malabar Rebellion 1921-22 An Historiographical Note", op.cit., p.10.

²² T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Changes and Economic Consequences – Land Tenures in Kerala 1850-1950*, Calcutta, 1970.

economic organizations evolved in Kerala through the centuries. Varghese examines the impact of Malabar invasions of Tipu Sultan and British, which made changes in the social structure, in land tenures and in taxation policies as they took place in the course of the subsequent century and a half. In Northern Kerala, the invasions of Tipu Sultan had two such effects - one was to face the large majority of the Namboodiri landlords to migrate southwards and to threaten the social and economic position of the more affluent members of other communities. Another result of the Muslim invasion was the introduction of direct taxation on land that did not exist in Kerala until then. The British found it to their interest to derive support from precisely the strata of society that had been adversely affected by the Muslim invasions. Both political exigencies and the bias of the British legal system, thus, tended to favor those who were in a position to claim ownership of property. Varghese also gives a detailed account of how a few British administrators tried to view problems of land tenures with a more progressive frame. As a part of the study on the agrarian changes and economic consequences in Kerala, he tries to explain the Malabar Rebellion and its consequences in the land relations, the existing landholding system and also the attempts made by government to improve the conditions of poor peasants.

P. Radhakrishnan, in his book²³ made a detailed analysis of the land

²³ P Radhakrishnan, *Peasant struggles Land Reforms and Social Change-Malabar 1836-1982*, New Delhi, 1989.

reforms introduced in the post rebellion period. He says that after 1920, the tenancy reforms figured as a major demand in every regional political conference. Radhakrishnan examines the aspects of *Malabar Kudiyan Sangham* especially its attempts at introducing bills for Tenancy Legislation. According to him the Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930 marked the close of the second phase of the tenancy movement in Malabar. The main beneficiaries of 1930 Act were the *kanakkar* themselves. Radhakrisanan is of the opinion that after the introduction of the bill, the plight of the *verumpattakkar* was similar to that of the tenants under the *jenmies*. The passing of the Act, while curbing the rights of the traditional *jenmies*, created a new class of *jenmies*. In the post Rebellion agrarian movements, the peasant struggles were carried forward mainly by the *verumpattakkar*, who, in the second phase were “the meek camp followers of the *kanakkar*”. Radhakrishnan also examines the *verumpattom* tenants agitations and subsequent land reforms.

M A Oommen in his work *Land Reforms and Socio-Economic Change in Kerala An Introductory Study*²⁴, makes a passing reference to the Malabar Tenancy Act. He also is of the opinion that in spite of certain good aspects of the Act, the poor *verumpattakkar* were hard hit by this legislation. At the same time, the *jenmies* and the *kanakkar* benefited by it. So another Committee is appointed in 1939 to study the Tenancy reforms in Malabar. He

²⁴ M A Oommen, *Land Reforms and Socio-Economic Change in Kerala An Introductory Study*, Bangalore, 1971.

also examines the activities of this committee about the existing land relations in Malabar.

Recently various studies in connection with various aspects of the Rebellion came out. One of the most important among them is the study regarding the role of rumours in the Rebellion by K.Gopalankutty²⁵. In this article he seeks to analyze the role of rumour in popular uprising in the region concentrating on the Malabar uprising of 1921. Though the Rebellion has attracted the attention of many scholars, not many have subjected the role of rumours to a detailed analysis, often limiting their comments to a line or two. It was in such a circumstance that Gopalankutty selected rumours in the Rebellion as a special topic. Gopalankutty viewed that “it was the advent of the Subaltern group of historians that rumours acquired great significance as a force of history”. In his view a subaltern historian’s analysis of a peasant uprising or a Gandhian agitation would have a section of the role of rumors. He pointed out that archival sources reveals the fact that British officials gave more importance to rumours. Gopalankutty noted out various rumours that spread in different circumstances in Southern Malabar. The British officers, on account of these rumours, tried to maintain law and order and to nip in the bud all attempts to create disturbances. But, in his view, the fact remains that rumours were not dismissed as loose bazaar gaps. “In a society, where

²⁵ K.Gopalankutty, “Rumours and Rebellion in South Malabar: A Preliminary Enquiry”, in Kesavan Veluthatt and P.Sudhakarn (ed.), *Advances in History Essays in Memory of Professor M.P.Sridharan*, Calicut, 2003.

printing was absent and where levels of illiteracy were very high, information was passed orally. Religious congregations, country fairs and the weekly markets were the important areas where 'news and gossips' were exchanged". This was one form of communication in Malabar in the early part of 20th century, according to the author. He also explained why such rumours spread and who spread them. He pointed out that people who attributed different motives to the spread of rumours, didn't regard them as loose talk. Rumours were spread with a definite purpose, according to him.

Even though lot of such studies are available regarding the Rebellion, almost all of them gave importance to Rebellion and the related events. And no studies are there with Rebellion as a reference part. Almost all these works failed to analyze the major changes took place in Malabar in the background of the Rebellion.

The present study is an attempt to trace out the major socio-political changes occurred in Malabar from the very early years following the Rebellion. It mainly concentrates on the all round effects of the Rebellion in the public sphere²⁶, the development of various caste and communitarian

²⁶Haber Mass defines the term public sphere in his work *Structuration of Public Sphere*(1952) in a wider scale. The sites in which people used to interact with others, other than their homes, became their public sphere which is different from their private sphere ,that is, family, kinship etc..These,ofcourse, includes the organizations like schools, health care centres,hospitals,public organizations, services and recently the press, even internet, art,literature,music etc.. the idea of public sphere is used here because community representations are basically interactive in nature, that is , one community defines itself as against another community. Therefore, the negotiation takes place in public.

elements emerging in the scene in the background of the Rebellion and how these changes later affected the secularist political and social movements in Kerala. It also discusses the agrarian changes that went beyond the Satyagraha agitations and later merged with the secularist left wing political party in 1930s, which also played a major role in the formation of polity and society in Malabar. The main trend that is visible in the post Rebellion period was the growth of Hindu organizations, Muslim organizations and later the Muslim League. The agrarian changes that taken place in the post Rebellion period affected much on the development of such a trend in Malabar. One of the major issue behind the Rebellion was land and in the post Rebellion period clamoring for land reforms intensified the scene along with the nationalist and communitarian movements. Later, in 1930, the Tenancy Act was passed which provided some privileges to the *kanakkaran*. But at the same time, the *verumpattakar*, who were the actual cultivators, did not get any benefit. Most of the *verumpattakar* were *Mappilas* and *kanakkar* were upper caste Hindus like *Nairs*. This simply means that the *Mappilas* didn't get any benefit from the Rebellion. Is it true? If it is true, how did they confront the situation? How did the nationalist Hindus respond towards such a situation? How did it affect the inter communal relations? On the one side there can see the *Mappilas* and *jenmies* and in the other side there were *verumpattakar* who were either *Mappilas* or others. In concrete social and political practice, how did this manifest? Apparently in the post Rebellion period, there was a hidden

communal polarization, but not rioting. Most important example of this is the formation of Muslim League. If it was so, there must have been a socialist trend also. Then how it meet with the others? That is what is going to examine in this study.

Both primary and secondary sources are used for this study. Primary sources includes archival materials including unpublished files and published works, newspaper reports and oral sources. All the available records in the TamilNadu archives related with the subject including Madras Native Newspaper Reports and extracts from various newspapers like *The Hindu* and available records in the Regional archives, Calicut, especially government records related with the subject are used. Newspaper reports acted as the major source for this study. Reports from *Mathrubhumi*, *Al- Ameen*, *The Hindu*, *Bombay Chronicle* etc. are used as major sources for the study especially for analyzing the social implications of the post Rebellion Malabar. Oral sources collected from prominent personalities who has knowledge regarding the changing scenario of Malabar also have been used for this study. Major works related with the Rebellion, agrarian relations and related works on the socio-political changes of the post Rebellion Malabar are used as secondary sources.

The method used in this study is an integration of Archival materials, oral history, newspaper reports etc. and also the secondary sources. The

archival sources, newspapers etc. recorded the major events that occurred in the contemporary period. Information from the rebel zones are available from official records. But there is no way to understand the actual sufferings and mental dispositions of people. Hence, for understanding the mentality of the people, oral sources have been used extensively. But now only some persons are alive who have information about the incidents of these days and so it is not possible to use oral sources in a wide scale.

This study is not a theoretical one. It looked out all the socio-political tendencies that were appearing and tried to generalize it whenever possible. Socio-political changes using specifically to the community experience and its interaction and not going to lookout entire massive socio-political changes. It is having the characteristic of a social history. Communal politics is a social issue. Naturally effort is made to analyze the political and social changes in the period. But avoided normal practice of using the term communal. Instead, here used the term public sphere. So naturally, the interplay of different social groups as they are represented in the public sphere is tried to analyze.

This study mainly divided into 'six' chapters. The first chapter is the introductory character. It deals with the aims and objectives of the study, scope of the study, review of literature, a note on the sources and also the methodology used in this study.

The second chapter discusses the particular land system and population of Malabar and includes a short account of the 19th and 20th century uprisings. It describes the particular land system existed in Southern parts of Malabar. It also looks into the suppression of the poor tenants by the *jenmies*. It was such repressive policies of *jenmies* that forced these tenants to take arms against their landlords. These riots started by the depressed tenants against the *jenmies* were later characterized by the British authorities as 'Moplah riots'. It also analyzes the repressive policies of the government towards the rioters.

The third chapter mainly focuses on the immediate impact of the 1921 rebellion in the realm of the life of the common population of Malabar. The Rebellion left everlasting traumas to the common population of Malabar, almost all of these were mainly due to the cruel repressive policies of British police and military more than the atrocities committed by the rebels. The compulsory religious conversions of Hindus by the *Mappilas* and the reconversion process conducted by various religious organizations are detailed in this chapter. It also discusses the Andaman scheme introduced by the government and the reactions against it. It also analyses various relief measures undertaken by various agencies for those who ran away from the riot zones.

The fourth chapter examines the political and social repercussions of the 1921 Rebellion till 1930. Politically, there appeared a political stagnation

in Malabar during this period. People followed a negative attitude towards the Congress and they even blamed Congress for all their sufferings. The impact of the Rebellion in the public sphere also described in this chapter. The emergence of various caste and communitarian organizations in the post Rebellion period is highlighted in this chapter.

The fifth chapter discusses the political and social changes occurred in Malabar in 1930s and after. It describes the right-left rift within the Congress and also the appearance of leftist political party i.e. the CSP. It also analyzes the major social changes that took place in Malabar in the background of anti-untouchability campaigns of Congress that is the *savarna-avarna* groups and the *sanatani haindava* group.

The sixth chapter is the concluding chapter. It describes how all these changes along with land reforms helped to create the further socio-political formation of Malabar, which also incorporated a two way drift, between communal polarization and a secular politics that centered the communal tendencies.

THE REBELLION

Sreevidhya Vattarambath “Aftermath of the rebellion trends - A study of political and social trends in malabar from 1921 to 1935” Thesis. Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007

CHAPTER II

THE REBELLION

It is evident that the Malabar Rebellion of 1921 played a crucial role in structuring the social and political life of Malabar. Its influence was felt far beyond the immediate area of impact extending to the whole of Kerala and other parts of India. Its overall reactions created “waves of social transformation”, according to one author.¹ In this study an attempt is being made to analyze the impact of the Rebellion upon the socio-political and economic life of Malabar in the immediate post Rebellion period. This chapter focuses on the characteristics of the *Mappilas* revolts of up to and including 1921 Rebellion. It also discusses the social structure including the land relations that existed in Malabar during the beginning of 20th century, which provides a necessary background for the subject under discussion.

(a) The Land of Malabar and its People

Malabar was one of the districts of Madras Presidency, situated in the West Coast of India stretching along the shores of Arabian Sea about a distance of 150 miles.² It is bounded on the North by the province of Canara, on the East by those of Coorg and Mysore, to the South-East by Coimbatore and to the South by the

¹ N.P. Muhammad, “Pirakkatha Vachanangal” in *Mathrubhumi* Weekly, 1996 October 13, p.26.

² C.A. Innes and F.B.Evans, *Malabar (Gazetteer)* Vol I&II,(1908), Govt. of Kerala, 1997, p.1.

province of Cochin.³ During the British rule, the four Northern Districts of present Kerala State- Cannannore, Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palghat formed the Malabar District of Madras Presidency. The erstwhile District of Malabar consisted of Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Calicut, Wynad, Ernad, Walluvanad, Ponnani and Palghat Taluks. A part of Cochin State was also aligned to the district. It included the towns of British Cochin and seventeen *pattoms* or small isolated estates.⁴

Alberuni was the first person to call the region by the name Malabar.⁵ In the earlier period, the name Malabar was used not only for Northern parts of Kerala, but for the whole region of Kerala. Barbosa mentions that the land of Malabar begins from the place called Cumbala and in all form Hill of Dely and ends at Cape Comerin.⁶ After British occupation Malabar was formed into a District and the whole Malabar district was divided into two i.e. South Malabar and North Malabar. South Malabar roughly corresponded to the Taluks of Ernad, Walluvanad, Ponnani and Palghat and North Malabar consisted of Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad and Calicut Taluks. In the present study, the main focus

³ Ward and Conner, *A Descriptive Memoir of Malabar*, Govt. of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1995(Reprint), p.1.

⁴ C.A. Innes and F.B. Evans, *op. cit.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.2. Also see in *Mathrubhumi*, dated 28th September 2004, report entitled 'Sthalapuranam' by K.V. Vijayaraghavan, p.11.

⁶ M. Gangadharan (ed), *The Land of Malabar- Letters from Barbosa*, School of Social Sciences, M.G.University, 2000, p.1.Cumbala is Kumbala,a few kilometers north of Kazargode, Hill of Dely is Ezhimala,and Cape Comerin is Kanyakumari.

is on South Malabar, because it was the centre of almost all the *Mappila* uprisings. An analysis of the geography of South Malabar is attempted below.

Ernad has an area of 966 square miles containing 94 *amsoms*.⁷ It is bounded on the North, generally by the ridge of Ghats from Wynad for 48 miles, on the North East by the crest of Nilgiris and Koondah Mountains for 28 miles, to the South East and South by the Wallavanad Taluks for 47 miles; the Pandaloor (Panthallore) range of hills and portion of Tiruvangad defines the limit on this side; to the South West from Shernad Taluk for 28 miles, to the West and North West by the Calicut Taluk for 33 miles, the ridge of the lofty range of mountains called Wawool running South from the Ghats and Pannycod range to the West defines the limit of 22 miles.⁸ It is a tract made up of hills, clothed with forest, the eastern portion including the Valley of Nilambur, which produces teak and other timbers.⁹ It had a population of 401, 101 including Mussalmans-237,402, Hindus-163,328 and Christians-371 in 1921.¹⁰ Ernad was the main centre of the outbreaks of 19th and 20th centuries.

Vallavanad is one of the largest divisions in Malabar and it had an area of 880 sq. miles and had 118 *amsoms*.¹¹ It is bounded on the North by Ernad Taluk for 69 miles, by the crest of Koondahs to the North East which defines the limit in

⁷ C. Gopalan Nair, *Moplah Rebellion 1921*, Calicut, 1923, p.1.

⁸ Ward and Conner, *op. cit.*, p.112.

⁹ C. Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.2.

part, to the East by the Coimbatore province and the Nilgiris for 69 miles, to the South by Neddunganad for 56 miles, the Cherpulacherry river being the limit for 23½ miles, to the South West by Bettadanad and Shernad for 13 miles.¹² It had a population of 394, 517, Hindus 259, 979, Mussalmans 169,919 and Christians 619 and it lies along the foot of Western Ghats in 1921.¹³ Out of its 118 *amsoms*, 68 were in the rebel area.

Palghat, the most South Eastern District of Malabar was divided into two divisions, dominated Tennamullappuram and Wuddamullappuram, and was bounded on the West by the districts of Chalagekurray and Trichuvapairoor, of Cochin to the South by a high ridge of mountains defining the limit common to Shalagoody (Chalakkudy), South East by the subdivisions of Chittoor, to the North by the Coimbatore province and the North West by the Nedungenad Taluk.¹⁴ It was one of the most fertile divisions of Malabar and extensively populated. According to the 1827 census it had a population of 13,898.¹⁵

Ponnani had an area of 426 sq. miles with 121 *amsoms*. It had a population of 533,252, Hindus-281,155- Mussalmans 229,016 and Christians 23,081 in 1921.¹⁶

¹² Ward and Conner, *op. cit.*, p.159.

¹³ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Ward and Conner, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ C. Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

At the beginning of 20th century Malabar was the most populous districts of Madras province. The population of Malabar District in the 19th and 20th centuries, shows a steady growth. In 1802, the population of Malabar District was 4,65,514, while it was 7,07,556 in 1807. In 1921, the population had increased to 30,98,871.¹⁷ The following tables show the nature of population of Malabar from 1802 to 1921.

Table I¹⁸

Population of Malabar District 1802-1921

YEAR	POPULATION
1802	4,65,514
1807	7,07,556
1831	11,13,497
1851	15,14,909
1861	17,09,081
1871	22,61,250
1881	23,65,635
1891	26,52,565
1901	27,90,281
1911	30,15,119
1921	30,98,871

Table II¹⁹

YEAR	GENERAL POPULATION	HINDUS	MUSLIMS	CHRISTIANS
1807 *	707,556	531,399	170,113	6,044
1921	3,098,871	2,039,339	1,004,327	54,640

¹⁷ K.N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religious and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar-1836-1921*, Delhi, 1989, p.31.

¹⁸ *Census Report*, Madras Presidency, 1921, Part II, p.350, TNA, Chennai.

¹⁹ *Census of India 1807-1921*, also see in M. Gangadharan, *Malabar Rebellion 1921-1922*, Allahabad, 1989, p.34.

From the above tables, it is clear that there was a steady growth of population in Malabar from 1802 to 1921. In 1891, the total population of Malabar was 2.64 million of which 7,59,242 (about 29%) were Muslims. In 1901, the proportion of Muslims population was 30%. It was 31% in 1911²⁰ and 33% in 1921.²¹ Table II₃ shows the Hindu-Muslim population in various Taluks of Malabar in 1921.

Table III²²

TALUKS	HINDUS	MUSLIMS
CALICUT	1,96,435	88,393
CHIRAKKAL	25,498	87,337
COCHIN	7,318	4,999
ERNAD	1,63,328	2,37,402
KOTTAYAM	1,75,048	55,146
KURUMBRANAD	2,59,799	96,463
PALGHAT	3,15,432	47,946
PONNANI	2,81,155	2,29,016
WALLUVANAD	2,59,979	1,33,919
WYNAD	67,845	14,252

The above table shows that about 60% of the Muslim population were concentrated in Ernad, Walluvanad and Ponnani Taluks where the Rebellion took place in 1921. In 1881, 6% of the Muslims were living in towns, the rest were in

²⁰ D.N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India, 1920-1950*, Delhi, 1989, p.71.

²¹ *Census of India 1921*, TNA, Chennai.

²² *Census Report of India 1921*, Malabar District, Part II, Table II, p.356, TNA, Chennai.

rural areas in small villages (*amsoms*)²³. The rural urban distribution of Muslim population does not appear to have changed dramatically in 1921.²⁴

In the towns, the well-to-do *Mappilas* were mainly engaged in the various service or wage earning sectors. In the inland regions, cultivation of land was the principal source of livelihood, although a fair proportion of the *Mappilas* were engaged in small-scale business, shop keeping and trade. The occupational distribution of *Moplahs* engaged in agricultural occupations at this time was a little over 62%.²⁵ In the Southern Taluks, where this proportion was still higher, an overwhelming majority of *Mappila* peasants were illiterate and unskilled.²⁶ In the Ernad Taluk, there were no schools within miles and even the very few *Moplah* schools existed there were very badly attended.²⁷ The only education they got was from their religious teachers.²⁸

In addition to this, many *Mappilas*, who lived in the smaller market towns or ports such as Perinthalmanna, Ponnani, Tirur, Manjeri, Irikkur and Parappangadi, were involved in trade or landholdings in neighboring villages.²⁹

²³ Dhanagare, *op. cit.*, p.71.

²⁴ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, P.J.Chcrian(ed.), Kerala Gazetteers Department, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, p.180.

²⁵ Dhanagare, *op. cit.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Interview with Chengalat Achutha Menon by correspondent of *The Times*, published in *The Leader*, Wednesday, September 1921, cited in K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *Peasant Protests and Revolts in Malabar*, New Delhi, 1990, p.418.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Dhanagare, *op. cit.*

Close links existed between the countryside and towns in Malabar because of their deep involvement in trading activities. But the main occupation of the people of most of the *Mappilas* concentrated areas in Ernad, Walluvanad and Ponnani Taluks was agriculture. For subsistence, the *Moplahs* in these areas solely depended on land.³⁰ These poor *Mappila* peasants formed the core of all the 19th and 20th century uprisings.

(b) Land System in Malabar in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Malabar land system during the British period consisted of three components—the *jenmy*, the *kanakkaran* (cultivating tenant) and *verumpattakkaran*.³¹ Besides this, there were a large number of agricultural laborers who worked as *adiyars*. Among the *jenmies*, there were earlier *Rajas*, *Namboodiri Brahmins*, important *Nairs* and *Nambiar* families and in some places even *Mappilas*, (though they were much fewer in number).³² But in the beginning, a few *Thiyyas* and even some *Mukkuvans* (fishermans) were among the *jenmies*³³ and most of the tenants were *Mappilas*.³⁴

³⁰K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar in Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in A.R. Desai (ed), *Peasant Struggles in India*, Delhi, 1992, p.604.

³¹ A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala- Their History and Culture*, Trivandrum, 1989, p.88.

³² T.C.Vargheese, *Agrarian Changes and Economic Consequences. Land Tenures in Kerala 1850- 1960*, Calcutta, 1970, p.35.

³³ Innes and Evans, *op. cit.*, p.319.

³⁴ E.M.S Namboodiripad, *Selected Writing* Vol. 2, Calcutta, 1985, p.171.

In 1861, it was estimated that about 2/3 of the population were directly depending on land.³⁵ Out of this, the agricultural population comprised of 1.15 million, the *jenmies* numbered only 24,7114; out of them 829 were classified as principal *jenmies*, 23,635 as minor *jenmies* and 250 religious institutions.³⁶ The *jenmies* altogether accounted for less than 2% of the total agricultural population. To this *jenmies* constituting an insignificant minority of agricultural population, belonged particularly every right and interest connected with land, in Malabar.³⁷

The rest of the agricultural population was divided almost equally into two groups-tenants and agricultural laborers, each accounting about 0.55 million.³⁸ Among the tenants, even at the beginning of the century, there was a large section known as customary tenants. To a large extent, they enjoyed fixity of tenure and paid nothing or only very nominal fees. Majority of agricultural laborers were poor *Mappilas* and lower caste Hindus particularly in South Malabar. They were subjected to more exploitation in the hands of both *jenmies* and tenants.

According to K.N. Panikkar, the traditional structure of agricultural society in Malabar was based on 'fragmented feudalism'.³⁹ The *jenmi*, the *kanakkaran* and

³⁵ T.C. Varghese, *op. cit.*, p.39.

³⁶ William Logan, *Malabar Special Commissioners Report on Land Tenures*, Vol. 2, pp.57-59.

³⁷ T.C.Varghese, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Distribution calculated from *1891 census figures*, cited in *Ibid.*

³⁹ A term used by K.N. Panikkar in "Peasant Revolts in Malabar" in A.R. Desai (ed.), *op.cit.* p.604.

the peasant shared the produce equally working out a social equation, on the basis of mutual dependence and reciprocal interests, within the confines of a feudal system of exploitation.⁴⁰ There were a number of tenants called the *kanakkudians* (*kanakkaran* or *kanamdar*) who stood between the *jennies* and actual cultivators, who were mostly *verumpattam kudians* or tenants-at-will.⁴¹ The *jenny* usually retained a small part of his land and gave the rest of his land to *kanakkudians*, who in turn, after retaining a part of land for direct cultivation, leased out the remaining land to *verumpattomkudians* for a short term, usually one year.⁴² Also there were a number of other tenurial relations in the district, but *jennam*, *kanam* and *verumpattom* set the general pattern of land holding, especially in the Southern Taluks.⁴³

The Mysorean conquest of Malabar made far-reaching consequences in the traditional land system of Malabar. It was the Mysorean rulers who had put the first challenge against the traditional system. They introduced a new land revenue system in Malabar, where as there was no regular or settled revenue collection until the Mysorean invasion⁴⁴. Hyder Ali made an arbitrary assumption that the state was the exact landowner by law, and the rightful recipient of a portion of its

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ M. Gangadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.7.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, Vol. II, (1807), Delhi, 1988. p.65.

income⁴⁵. It was, therefore, required that those who worked in the land should pay land tax directly to the Sultan's representative. This new system weakened the firm hold and authority of the *jenmies* over the land. Many *Nairs* lost their position due to the land tax system introduced by the Mysore rulers and these *Nairs* were replaced by the *Mappilas*.⁴⁶ These *Mappilas* were appointed as tax collectors in the name 'muppans' and they got full protection from the rulers.

But it could not make any positive material impact to alleviate the injustice suffered by the poor farmers. These arrangements opened doors for bribery and corruption. Logan has reported that tax rates were assessed arbitrarily and at the highest possible levels to assure personal gains.⁴⁷ Therefore, criticisms arose against the new revenue arrangement. Though the non-*jenmy* classes got pleased at the decline of the *jenmi's* power, their own position was not a happy one, and they resisted the ruinous policies of Mysore rulers⁴⁸. The position of *Mappila* peasants not only remained unchanged, but also became much deteriorated. They also had to suffer, the oppressive taxation along with their Hindu brethren. Meanwhile, the losing of the hold of the *jenmy* over the land and its produce and the acquisition of some lands for themselves opened up a new vision for the *Mappilas*. This vision of land ownership and new economic hope did not disappear after the Mysorians

⁴⁵ Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A study in Islamic Trends*, Madras, 1992, p.98.

⁴⁶ Francis Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p.53.

⁴⁷ William Logan, *Manual*, *op.cit.* p.625.

⁴⁸ Roland E Miller, *op. cit.*, p.99.

had left⁴⁹. It remained even after the elimination of the Mysorean system and it produced an attitude of resentment and conflicts with the old owners of land.

It was the permanent settlement system introduced by the British in 1793 that made fundamental changes in the traditional land system of Malabar. The introduction of British administrative institutions led to the dissolution of the old system by the substitution of a strong central power in place of the divided authority of the feudal chieftains. The British revenue policy and land settlement further helped this process by recognizing the *jenmy* a free hold proprietor, a position that they had enjoyed never before⁵⁰. Due to this, landholders became landless ones overnight.⁵¹ The absolute ownership of land was again vested in the hands of the *jenmy*, he was left free to extract as much as he could from the tenants and under tenants. The most common features of exploitation were (i) enhancement of rent, (ii) eviction and (iii) imposition of renewal fees.⁵² Those who held land directly from the *jenmy* under a variety of tenures like *kanam*, *kuzhikkanom* and *otti* and the subtenants and tenants-at-will, *pattakkar* and *verumpattakkar* were all subjected to the capacity of landlordism.⁵³

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar" in A.R. Desai (ed.) *op.cit.*, p. 604.

⁵¹ A.K. Poduval, *Keralathile Karshaka Prasthanathinte Oru Lekhu Charitram*, Taliparamba, 1969, p.3.

⁵² K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar" A.R. Desai (ed.), *op.cit.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

The *kanakkaran's* independent right in the soil got further reinforced and a system of renewal of *kanom* agreement did exist.⁵⁴ The *kanakkaran* had to pay *kanappanam* to the *jenmy* either as advance of rent or as security for payment of rent. The advance was periodically revised, which was known as *polichezhuthu* or renewal of *kanom* deed. Initially, renewal seems to have taken place only at time of succession to *jenmam* or *kanom* with the *kanakkaran* paying renewal fee as succession duties.⁵⁵ Renewal became more frequent and *jenmy* had the right to enhance the rent or to change the *kanakkaran*, since *jenmy's* share was fixed by customary law. As a part of the British land revenue policy, the judicial courts decreed the renewal of *kanom* tenure at the end of every twelve years. The automatic termination of the contract implied in this decision was not in conformity with past practice.⁵⁶ Thus it introduced fundamental changes in the structure of land relationship.

In the wake of the establishment of British rule in Malabar in 1792, many of the Hindu landlords, who fled from Malabar during the Mysorean rule, returned to Malabar. On their return, the *jenmies*, whether they were at first fully conscious or not of the rights of absolute landlord they had on paper acquired, were in practice, so heavily in debt to the *kanakkudiyans* that they, in any case, lacked the

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ William Logan, *Manual, op.cit.*, p. 679.

⁵⁶ K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar" in A.R. Desai, (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.605.

means necessary to enforce those rights.⁵⁷ Moreover, the likelihood of the *jenmies* being able to redeem their mortgage was reduced by the heavy demand of land tax, which was deductible from the *jenmi's* share of produce.⁵⁸ The *jenmy* had to face a heavy pressure of burden due to the land revenue assessment. Graeme and Munro were anxious of such heavy demands levied by the Govt. on the annual agricultural outturn in Malabar and later Graeme proposed a general reduction in the land revenue demand in Malabar and it was sanctioned. But this never lessened the burden of taxation and the burden of assessment price of grain in Malabar.⁵⁹ For long years, the land revenue burden was intensified by low prices for agricultural produce. But the percentage of the assessment of rent was inversely proportional to the selling prices. The second quarter of 19th century recorded a steep rise in the prices of all commodities amounting about 27% during a period of two years.⁶⁰ In the fifties, there was a further increase and over a period of nine years, the price of almost every produce increased by more than 100%.⁶¹ Naturally the value of land and its demand suddenly increased. In the traditional system as well as in the British settlements the cultivator was earmarked 1/3 of

⁵⁷ Conrad Wood, *Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis*, New Delhi, 1987, p.64.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.64-65.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶⁰ *Report of Malabar Special Commission*, pp.1881-2, TNA, Chennai.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.194.

the net produce, but by the beginning of the 20th century his share went down to 2 to 12%.⁶²

Conrad Wood is of the opinion that the rise in the price of grain was of great importance in the re-emergence of *jenmy* power in the countryside of Malabar. Only when prices began to rise above the low levels prevailing in 1809-18 and the revenue burden was in consequence reduced in real terms, could the *jenmy* begin to pay off his debts to the *kanakkudians* who only then would begin to appreciate that British rule meant a resurgence of a *jenmy* power.⁶³ Armed with the powers given to the *jenmies* through this new British revenue policy, the landlords not only demanded exorbitant rents and renewal fees, but also introduced several provisions, which facilitated eviction earlier than the stipulated period.⁶⁴ The failure either to give rent or even to provide presents to the satisfaction of landlords was sufficient reason for eviction.⁶⁵ As early as 1833-34 the *Mappila kanakkudians* was being faced with eviction suits brought against him in the local courts by the Hindu *jenmi*.⁶⁶

⁶² F.B. Evans and C.A. Innes, *Notes on Tenancy Legislation*, Madras, 1915, Appendix, quoted in K.N. Panikkar (ed.), "Peasant Protests and revolts in Malabar", New Delhi, 1990, p.X.

⁶³ Conrad Wood, *op. cit.*, p.66.

⁶⁴ K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar" in A.R. Desai (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 606.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ For example see *Decree of Court of Adalat in Malabar Zillah*, Original Suit No. 137 of 1833, cited by Conrad Wood, *op. cit.*, p.66.

The tenants, due to all of their difficulties, could not pay the increased amount of rent and they were at the mercy of landlords. The proceedings of British courts and the elaborate rules and regulations which guided their decisions only added discomfiture to the disadvantages of the peasantry.⁶⁷ Between 1862 and 1880 eviction decrees were passed against 91,720 people.⁶⁸ In other words about one in every twenty cultivators had a decree or eviction passed against him annually. Evictions without resorting to judicial proceedings were more numerous, due to financial stringency and lack of evidence. The tenants found it impossible to defend their rights in the court. The burden of every renewal of lease or *melcharth*, and an upward revision of rent, was borne by the actual cultivator in effect worsening his condition not better than a laborer on subsistence wages.⁶⁹ This resulted in widespread indebtedness of the peasantry. Logan felt that the number of cultivators whose indebtedness was due to the executions of landlords was much higher than actually recorded.⁷⁰ Since, they gave their evidence in the presence of the agents of the lands, most of them preferred to blame the weather or expenses of maintaining their families rather than their landlords. Due to all these,

⁶⁷ K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar" in A.R. Desai (ed.), *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *Peasant Protests*, *op. cit.*, p.X.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.XI.

⁷⁰ Cited in *Ibid.*

many of the peasants fell in to extreme poverty. This poverty and unbearable sufferings later forced these illiterate and backward poor peasants to take up arms against their landlords.

(c) The 19th Century Uprisings

These oppressed tenants and subtenants, majority of whom were *Mappila* peasantry, rose repeatedly in revolt against the existing system of exploitation, from the very beginning of 19th century onwards. The rural society of Malabar was in a state of "perpetual ferment".⁷¹ The revolts, decoits, thefts and social banditry, which occurred regularly, were essentially an expression of protests of the rural poor against oppression and exploitation.⁷² This oppressed peasantry mainly included the *Mappilas* holding land either directly from a Hindu *jenny* or from an intermediary. The land was almost exclusively held by Hindus.⁷³ Hence, these conflicts between *Mappila* peasantry and the Hindu land owning class were characterized superficially as the results of communal tensions. These violent insurrections by the *Mappilas* broke out frequently in the 19th century was a never ending source of horrified fascination for British officials in the Madras Presidency.⁷⁴ The British authorities termed these outbreaks as "*Mappila* outrages".

⁷¹ Term used by K.N. Panikkar, in *Against, op. cit.*, p.49.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar", in A.R. Desai (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.608.

⁷⁴ Conrad Wood, *op. cit.*, p.7.

The insurgents predominantly came from the ranks of poor peasants, agricultural laborers, artisans and petty traders, majority of whom were *Mappilas*.⁷⁵ Some times, due to this predominance of *Mappila* peasants in the conflicts, the British authorities tried to represent these conflicts between *Mappila* peasantry and Hindu landlords as communal conflicts.

Even though there were a large number of Hindus also among the tenants, their participation was lacking in the 19th century uprisings and was very less in the 1921 Rebellion. The landlords also subjected these Hindu tenants to severe oppression and exploitation. Among the *jenmies*, along with savarna Hindus there were elitist Muslims also. But it was the *Mappila* tenants who take up arms against the *jenmies*. Naturally there will arise a doubt why it was so? The existing social relations among the Hindus were powerful to check an outbreak against their *jenmies*. The Hindu tenants were mainly confined to the lowest strata in the caste hierarchy. These low caste Hindus were bounded by all pervasive caste system and were prevented from rising against the higher castes. They had been provided a very high status to these landlords. In addition to this, the caste differentiation and untouchability that prevailed in Hindu Society created disunity within the community. All these checked them to take arms against their lords. At the same time, to the Muslims, there were not having such problems. There were no shackles to prevent the *Mappilas* from organizing against the oppressive *jenmies*. They were not against the Hindus, but against existing

⁷⁵ K.N. Panikkar, *Against, op. cit.*, p. 48.

systems in the society like evictions and the implementation of law and order through the Hindu *adhikaris*. These high officials also followed repressive attitude towards the poor sections of the society. More over, there is a concrete idea of solidarity among them, probably the principle of Islam, which acted as a rallying point among them. The mosques and religious prayers as well as the influence of higher Ulamas of Malabar, particularly those in the main centers like Tirurangadi, Manjeri and Ponnani helped greatly in developing solidarity among the *Mappilas*. There is an objective base among the Muslims, but it was not there among the Hindus.

The *Mappila* priests were working with a deliberate purpose of clouding the vision of *Mappila* peasants. E.M.S.Namboodiripad commented about the action of the religious priests as: "it is the interests of these priests to turn the anti-*jenmi* sentiments of peasants in to the anti-Hindu sentiments of the *Moplahs*."⁷⁶ But we cannot accept this version completely because, the religious priests who influenced these riots were not preaching anti-Hindu sentiments, but in their preachings, they gave more emphasis to anti-British and anti-landlord sentiments. But, unfortunately, some communal atrocities took place in the midst of all these.

The religious leaders, who were generally known as Ulamas (including both *Sayyids* and *Sufis* of whom the former being the descendants of Prophet

⁷⁶ E.M.S Namboodiripad, *Selected Writings*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p.171.

Muhammad) were held in high esteem by the *Mappilas*.⁷⁷ These Ulamas were divided into three groups of professional functionaries, designated as Thangals, Mussaliars and Mullas⁷⁸. Of these, the Thangals enjoyed greater respect in the community on account of their Sayyid lineage⁷⁹ and their traditional Islamic scholarship. The Mussaliars were well educated and acted as teachers and mosque officials throughout the district. Mullas were generally individuals who were performing local household ceremonies.⁸⁰ The earlier British sources indicate that the members of *Mappila* Ulama had themselves participated in the violent attacks upon non-Muslims, which they atleast, implicitly sanctioned in religious terms⁸¹ and sometimes already leading the outbreaks.⁸² It was seldom that *Mappila* divines openly instigated *Mappilas* to undertake in an outbreak to get their grievances redressed.⁸³ More considerations were given to the Ulamas who had commanding influence over the religious believes and social and political attitude of the wider

⁷⁷ Hussain.K, "Uddat-al-Umara, A Compilation of Religious Decrees on the *Mappila* Peasant Revolts of 19th century", Paper presented in Indian History Congress, Calicut University, 2000, p.1.

⁷⁸ Stephen. F. Dale, *The Mappilas of Malabar-1498-1922*, Oxford, 1980, p.111.

⁷⁹ Syyids were people who suppose to migrate from Hadramauth in Yemon. During 18th century several families migrated into Malabar. The Ba-Alavis of Mamburam was the most important Sayyid family and two members of them-Sayyid Alavi and Sayyid Fazal had a major role in the major uprisings of the 19th century.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² A.P. Ibrahimkunhu, *op. cit.*, p.90.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Mappila population.⁸⁴ These "traditional intellectuals"⁸⁵ had close link with in the *Mappila* community.

Among these intellectuals, the most important were -Umar Quazi of Veliyamkode, Sayyid Alavi Thangal and Sayyid Fazal Thangal of Mamburam⁸⁶. Almost all these priests or 'Ulamas played a major role in inculcating an anti-British feeling among the *Mappilas*. Through their speeches, they aroused anti-British feelings in the community. Umar Quazi was believed to have magical abilities to create miracles. This helped him in earning considerable influence and popularity. He raised his voice against heavy taxation of British authorities and advocated for non-payment of taxes.

Mamburam Thangals- Sayyid Alavi and his son Sayyid Fazal- also enjoyed special religious influence among the *Mappilas* due to their lineage from Prophet Muhammad. Due to this lineage as well as their spiritual and mystic disposition, the Mamburam Thangals earned special mark of respect and veneration. Sayyid Fazal severely criticized the government and the *jenny* system in Malabar. He is believed to have declared: "it was not a sin, but a merit to kill a *jenny* who evicted a peasant from his land".⁸⁷ The British authorities considered the *fatwas*

⁸⁴ Stephen F Dale, *op. cit.*, p.112.

⁸⁵ Term used by K.N. Panikkar, in *Against, op. cit.*, p.60.

⁸⁶ K N Panikkar talks about four Ulamas including Makthi Thangal. But he did not play any direct or indirect role in the Rebellion. Instead, he was against such violent Rebellions.

⁸⁷ Quoted in William Logan, *Malabar Special Commission Report 1880-82*, Vol.II, p.48 on the basis of the information given by C.Kanaran, Deputy Collector of Malabar.

issued by Sayyid Fazal as a tool causing anti-Hindu and anti-British attitudes among the *Mappilas*. Any how, one thing is clear that the teaching of Mamburam Thangals were highly influential in the religious and cultural spectrum of *Mappilas*. The Mamburam Tangals, especially Fazal, tried their best to create aspirations for freedom and feelings of nationalism among the *Mappilas*.⁸⁸

These traditional intellectuals collectively interpreted, elaborated and propagated the religious ideology and provided an intellectual tone to them by establishing a network of mosques for prayers and congregation.⁸⁹ Their interventions in the social and religious life and their widely believed ability to do miracles, tended to reinforce the popular culture based on religious faith and superstition.⁹⁰ It was stated that the religious legitimisation of *Mappila* uprisings was drawn from this cultural context, expressed by these traditional intellectuals. In this sense, the Ulamas and other religious leaders became a crucial element in the uprisings,⁹¹ but they did not constitute a formally organized religious, social or political movement as in the case of the Wahhabi campaigns in North India in the 19th Century.⁹² The legacy of Mamburam Thangal had existed in Mamaburam, Thirurangadi regions even after the deportation of Thangal. Muslims gave more importance to Isnad (reportage). Most of these traditional stories had

⁸⁸ Ottamaliyekkal Muthukoya, *Mamburam Thangal Charitram*, Thirurangadi, 2001, p.28.

⁸⁹ K.N. Panikkar, *Against*, *op. cit.*, p.65.

⁹⁰ *Correspondence on Mappila Outrages Act*, p.446, TNA, Chennai. Cited in, *Ibid.*

⁹¹ K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*

⁹² Roland E Miller, *op. cit.*, p.135.

given a written value. There was a feeling among them that Sayyid Fazal give away voluntarily and not deported. There was belief among them that he will come back. Such traditional believes helped much to the existence of anti-British feelings among them⁹³. In short, it has to be made clear that, even though the Ulamas were not the direct participants in the Rebellion, the influence of their ideas and preachings played a major role in leading the community for waging a war against British imperialism.

From the early part of 19th century onwards, there were a large number of uprisings in the Southern Taluks of Eranad, Valluvanad and Ponnani. Among these attacks, majority were against Namboodiri Brahmins or *Nairs*. The assaults and murders were generally prefaced by a similar series of rituals, and in all but a few instances their climax was the self-sought martyrdom of the assailants. Taken as a whole, the attacks represented a continuation of *Mappila* challenge to the economic and social power of the upper castes and also to the political authority of the British. But as the ritual context of the outbreak made clear that the *Mappilas* were conceived and carried them out as religious acts.⁹⁴ The largest single groups of incidents were directly or indirectly related to the control of land and others were prompted by issues such as apostasy of lower caste converts or sometimes imply a desire to attain martyrdom. In the 1841 Pallippuram uprising, the leader was a small tenant with a family of 17, who had been evicted from his land by a

⁹³ It is reported from oral testimony from numerous old men of the area.

⁹⁴ Stephen F Dale, *op. cit.*, p.119.

court decree. This had been the cause, which led to many of the outbreaks. But no doubt that the element of religion was also there which provoked the *Mappila* tenants to conduct a collective action. But their main targets were not religious attacks, but British officials, *jenmies* and their dependents.⁹⁵

Almost all these assaults and murders were generally preceded by certain rituals. This made all activity the character of a Jihad from their perception, but actually they have to be considered as 'real social protests carried out in the form of religious acts.'⁹⁶ The preparation for an outbreak involved the intending participants donning the white clothes of martyr, divorcing their wives, asking those they felt they had wronged for forgiveness, and receiving the blessings of a Thangal (as Sayyids) for the success of their great undertaking.⁹⁷ The one good that may be said to have emerged from "these meaningless sacrifices was the opening of some eyes to the injustice under which the *Mappilas* labored."⁹⁸

The riots were mainly localized incidents. One or two persons, who were ready to die after killing their enemies, took up arms against their opponents. On the way they used to kill or convert persons who belong to non-Muslim

⁹⁵ K.N. Panikkar, *Against, op. cit.*, p.70.

⁹⁶ William Logan, *Manual, op. cit.*, pp.554-55.

⁹⁷ Conrad Wood, *op. cit.*, p.7. The belief in the blessings of Thangals and their super powers is wide spread among the local *Mappilas*. They believed that if they got blessings of Thangal and wore a protective thread, no one could catch them. Interview with Yusuf C.K, Melmuri, Malappuram, aged 76, on 23-12-04.

⁹⁸ Roland E Miller, *op. cit.*, p.109.

community.⁹⁹ They attacked not only their *jenmies*, but also British Offices, courts, railways etc., those stood as symbols of British authority.

The British authorities considered all these outbreaks as a law and order problem arose out of the fanaticism of the *Mappilas*. The District Collector, Mr. Conolly, recommended for the appointment of a commission to report on the causes that have produced or influenced the unhappy state of feeling between the *Mappilas* and Hindus and to suggest remedial measures to prevent similar events in future.¹⁰⁰ T.L. Strange was appointed as the special commission on 17th February 1852, whose report was very significant in the attitude of the British towards the *Mappilas*. He rejected the view that the disturbances had their origin either in the agrarian discontent or in poverty.¹⁰¹ His conclusion was that the general character of the dealings of the Hindu landlords towards their tenantry, whether *Mappila* or Hindu is equitable and far-reaching.¹⁰² The commission reported that the outbreaks were due to the most decided fanaticism of the *Mappilas* stirred by the teachings of ambitious priests.¹⁰³ Strange recommended a repressive policy, which was enacted into law in the *Moplah* Outrages Act XXIII & XXIV of 1854 and Act XXV and XXX in 1859.¹⁰⁴ The punitive measures of

⁹⁹ Madhavan Nair, *Rebellion, op.cit.*, p.19.

¹⁰⁰ *Correspondence on Moplah outbreaks for the year 1849-53*, Vol.8, Madras, 1863, pp.268-73, TNA, Chennai.

¹⁰¹ Robert L. Hardgrave, *op. cit*, p.5.

¹⁰² CMO, *Op. cit.*, p.441.

¹⁰³ *T.L. Strange Commission Report*, Dated 25th September 1852, p.411, TNA.

¹⁰⁴ Robert L Hardgrave, *op. cit*.

these Acts were provocative and against the interests of the peasantry. These measures adopted by the Government were not a complete solution to the tenancy problem in Malabar.

After the passing of these *Mappila* Acts, the Government came to be looked upon by the people as the protector of the landlords and due to this, anti-British attitude among the Mappila peasantry was further intensified. This later led to the murder of H.V.Conolly, the District Collector, who had ordered for the deportation of Mamburam Thangal, on 12th September 1855, by three *Mappilas* in the presence of his wife. This provoked the British authorities and they later took severe measures against the *Mappilas*.

In the post 1854 period, many attempts were made on the lives of landlords and many others. Later the whole District was rife with rumours about some internal revolts in one part or the other. On the basis of an anonymous petition, Mr. William Logan, the District Collector was appointed as Special Commissioners in 1881 to inquire into the land tenures and tenant rights in Malabar.¹⁰⁵ The special commissioner found that the problem had its root fundamentally in the early British misunderstanding of the traditional relationship of *jenny* to the land and the report of Strange that 'the cause of the riot was not agrarian discontent' was wrong.¹⁰⁶ But the officers thought that the agrarian

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

discontent would culminate in the fresh acts of fanaticism directed against individuals, not withstanding the penalties of Strange's repressive legislation.¹⁰⁷ They recorded that the tenants were in perpetual fear of eviction by the landlord, chronically in debt and were driven to the limits of starvation.¹⁰⁸ Thus, according to Logan, agrarian distress was the basic cause of *Mappila* uprisings. The British Resident in Travancore and Cochin, Mr. Mac Gregor forwarded the recommendations.

But, fearing the enmity of the Hindu landlords, British authorities did not take any concrete step to protect the rights of the tenants. They again appointed William Logan as a special commissioner generally to inquire into the question of tenure of land and of tenant rights in Malabar, the *kuzhikkoor* (prize getting to the tenant during the time of eviction) as well as the question of rites for mosques and burial grounds.¹⁰⁹ In his recommendation Logan pointed out that by recognizing *jenmy* as the absolute owner of his holdings and therefore free to take a big share of the produce as extort from him, the British had presented him with powers, which were not customary in Malabar.¹¹⁰ The ultimate result of his proposals was the passing of Malabar compensation for Tenants Improvement Act of 1887,

¹⁰⁷ William Logan, *Manual, op. cit.*, p.581.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.583.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.581.

¹¹⁰ William Logan, *Report on Malabar Land Tenures*, in Report on *Malabar Special Commission*, Vol. 3 Madras, 1882, p.xvii, TNA.

which was amended in 1900. The Act provided for granting compensation to the evicted tenants for the improvement marked by them on the land.

In actual practice, these Acts did not offer any substantial relief and it did not protect the tenants from indiscriminate eviction and enhancement of rent, even the limited benefit of compensation did not reach them, and, the interpretations of the provisions of the acts by the courts was not favorable to the peasants.¹¹¹ Although the basic intention of the Act was to provide the market value of the improvement to the tenant, in most cases, the court did not take into account the market value at all. Instead the compensation was allowed considering the expenses for making improvements through planting trees etc.¹¹² In his report on the working of the Tenancy Improvement Act, H. Bradley, the acting Collector of Malabar, reported that the object of this Act to check evictions has not been attained.¹¹³ This showed that the authorities did not try to use this Act in its actual practice in Malabar and thus caused further tensions within the Malabar society. The *kanakkaran* got some benefits due to this Act, but it did not produce any change upon the conditions of *verumpattakkar*.

The Malabar Special Police, which was organized in 1885 after two violent 'outbreaks' in 1884 near Malappuram, as well as the Act of 1887, failed to check the recurrence of the outbreaks. All the efforts of the government especially the

¹¹¹ K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *Peasant Protests, op. cit.*, p.xviii.

¹¹² M.Gangadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.15.

¹¹³ Revenue Dept. Go. No. 4114, dated 25th October 1894, TNA.

opening up of eastern parts of Ernad and Walluvanad with roads, the efforts to impart modern education to the *Mappilas* of the interior through the establishment of a number of *Mappila* schools, enlisting some members of the *Mappila* Ulama on the side of the Government and against the outbreaks, the expansion of the job opportunities to the *Mappilas* in the army, plantations etc. might have contributed to bring about a long respite in the violent risings at the beginning of this century.¹¹⁴ But again there occurred violent outbreaks and this continued till 1919. This led to severe repression on the parts of the authorities through various means including deportation and fining the *Mappila* inhabitants of the rebel areas. The net result of all these was the growth of anti-British and anti-Landlord sentiments among the *Mappilas*, majority of whom belonged to *verumputtakkar*, mainly due to the communal repression and the cruel punitive measures taken by the British Government. This later led to a severe Rebellion in 1921, which has been mentioned by the British authorities as *Mappila* Rebellion.

(c) The 1921 Rebellion

The 1921 Rebellion, which occurred in Malabar on the eve of the launching of Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement, was one of the most important one comparing to all the other outbreaks that occurred against British imperialism. The character of the Rebellion was quite different from the 19th century uprisings. The 19th century uprisings were mostly localized ones and conducted by the

¹¹⁴C A Innes and F B Evans, *Gazetteer*, op. cit., p.81.

Mappilas with the aim to become Shahids after the murder of the *jenmies* who had treated the *Mappilas* very cruelly. This was mainly led by individual and social vendetta against their *jenmies* which had the characteristic of an ordinary insurgency. But the 1921 uprising was conducted mainly with the aim to eliminate British imperialism from the Indian soil.

The 19th century uprisings were confined only in a village or two and the attacks were confined only towards one or two landlords in the vicinity. Even though, they were confined only in one or two villages, the news of these uprisings spread into other areas through friendly congregations, religious ceremonies like *nerchas*, *mouleeds* etc. The weekly markets, folk songs, religious festivals etc. helped to spread the news of the resistance, among the people of very remote areas. This contributed much to the growth of an anti-British and anti-landlord feeling among the rural *Mappila* population. Rumours that spread in these areas played a major role in dispersing the news of such attacks among the commoners.¹¹⁵ What was lacking in the Rebellion was a common organization, especially a political organization, to foster effective communication among the people. Even though there was no organization for effective communication among them, they got all important news that happened in the world from the learned men in the area around the region. The pan Islamic messages of Khilafat spread

¹¹⁵ K. Gopalankutty, "Rumours and Rebellion in South Malabar: A preliminary enquiry" in Kesavan Veluthatt and Sudhakaran(ed) *Advances in History: Essays in memory of prof: M P Sreedharan*, Calicut, 2003, p.102.

among them very early period onwards. Leaders like Ali Mussaliar, who went to Mecca and other areas gave such information to them. The emergence of nationalist movement in Malabar imparted a new spirit and energy to the poor people of Malabar. Even though the District Congress Committee and other organisations had been formed in the early part of the 20th century itself, they failed to establish effective network of communication and consciousness of the day to day national level politics. In 20th century, this vacuum was filled by the formation of Tenancy, Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movements. The emergence of these movements helped to promote a political consciousness in the society, which fostered the feelings of nationalism among the illiterate and backward communities. This dragged *Mappila* peasantry into the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist struggles. K.N. Panikkar remarked that "neither the Khilafat, nor the Non Co-operation Movement, however provided the cause for the Rebellion, but without them, it would not have been so intense and widespread."¹¹⁶

Even before the emergence of these organisations, from 1880s onwards, there were certain other organizations especially among the *Mappilas*. In 1880s, the *Mappila* elitists, who got education, began to involve in local politics and established Himayathul Islam Sabha (also known as *Mappila* Sabha).¹¹⁷ But its membership was confined only to the elitist section of the society such as Thangals, Qazis, traders, merchants, few wealthy *kanamdars*, commercial farmers

¹¹⁶ K.N. Panikkar, *Against*, *op. cit.*, p.116.

¹¹⁷ Dhanagare, *op. cit.*, p.74.

and professional men. The poor *Mappilas* had no contact with this organization and it remained preoccupied with the aspirations and demands of *Moplah* urban middle class.¹¹⁸ This Sabha expressed its concern over the poverty of the *Mappila* masses, but it condemned their periodic Rebellions.

Another elitist *Mappila* organization was Mannath-UI-Islam Sabha, which was started at Ponnani in 1900. Its main aim was to establish a network of *Mappila* preachers all over Kerala and also to secure new converts to the faith.¹¹⁹ The Sabha worked mainly for the conversion of Hindus into Islam, according to one writer, about Malabar Rebellion.¹²⁰ It was basically an ultra loyalist body dominated by highest echelons of *Moplah* ecclesiastical order and its primary aim was to maintain its own prestige and status.¹²¹ These two organizations could not make any hold or create any political enthusiasm among the poor *Mappila* peasants, who took up arms against their oppressors. Instead, these organisations, through their religious speeches, could establish a kind of religious feelings among the *Mappilas*. But they ignored poor *Mappila* tenants and their condition remained unchanged. Between 1910 and 1921 evictions, heavy rent, excessive lease, renewal fee and poverty of tenants reached its high peak. Thus the peasantry was thrown to the extreme state of poverty and

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.75.

¹²⁰ Dasarathi, *Malabarile Mappila Lahala*, Trivandrum, 1969, pp.94-100.

¹²¹ Dhanagare, *op. cit.*

desperation. The *Mappila* peasantry of South Malabar was also helplessly left in the hands of heavy oppression by the landlords.

It was in such a tense situation that the waves of nationalism spread into Malabar and it changed the situation in to more enthusiastic and energetic. Organized political activity motivated by nationalist sentiments started in Malabar only in the second half of the second decade of 20th century.¹²² However, the development of a kind of national consciousness can be traced to the decades of 19th century itself, especially through the writings of many people in vernacular languages¹²³. Even though, there was the Congress organization in Malabar since 1903, it could not establish its deep roots in Malabar till 1916. It was with the formation of Malabar District Congress Committee at Calicut that the Congress got an organized form¹²⁴. Later the tenancy organizations were also established and it got more popularity than Congress, because at that time the Congress was an organisation of elitist middle class. Hindus and the poor tenants had no role in it. It was in the later days, especially after the introduction of Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement that the Congress and its nationalist activities reached into the hands of poor as well as wealthy people of Malabar. This tenancy, Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement soon succeeded in

¹²² M. Gnanadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.48.

¹²³ For example O. Chandu Menon, *Indulekha*, Calicut, 1965(Reprint).

¹²⁴ Perunna K.N. Nair, *Keralatiele Congress Prasthanam*, Cochin, 1985, p.20.

drawing the *Mappila* peasantry into the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist struggle.¹²⁵ In the words of Gail Minault, "in Malabar District, as with the Kisan Movements in U.P, political activity during the Non Co-operation Movement was combined with the local demands for tenancy reform".¹²⁶

Before the starting of Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement the Tenancy Movements were started in Malabar. From the very early period itself, the *Mappila* and *kanam* (mostly Nairs belonging to middle class) tenants tried to find out a solution for tenancy problem. It was stated that in 1909, the Hidayathul Muslimin Sabha at Manjeri, submitted a memorial before the Governor, related to the difficulties of *Mappila* tenants and appealed for a solution to their sufferings.¹²⁷ But it became fruitless. From 1915 onwards, these tenants started organizing Tenancy agitations, but it was confined only to the *kanakkadians* and *verumpattakkudians*, and the poor tenants had no role in it.

Till 1916, no attempt had been made to launch an organized revolt, and in 1916, the Malabar Tenancy Association was formed. Very soon it could establish its branches in various parts of the District.¹²⁸ In the early periods, it could not get the support of Congress due to the elitist majority in the Congress. The tenancy

¹²⁵ K.N. Panikkar, *Against*, *op. cit.*, p.116.

¹²⁶ Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement-Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, Delhi, 1950, p.145.

¹²⁷ A copy of the memorial is available in Hidayath-ul-Muslimin Sabha library, Manjeri. Information given by Muhammad Poozhikath, Malappuram.

¹²⁸ Its leaders were M. Krishnan Nair, K.P. Raman Menon, G.Sukumaran Nair, and M.M. Kunhrama Menon. For details see A.K. Poduval, *op. cit.*, pp.16-17.

question came up for discussion in the First District Conference of Congress held at Palghat on 4th and 5th March 1916. The leaders of Malabar Tenancy Association tried to pass a resolution in the conference, but due to the oppression of the *jenmies*, the resolution had to be withdrawn.¹²⁹ The *Mappila* participation was very less in this conference and the participants were confined to a few merchants, businessmen and former civil servants. From Valluvanad Taluk, only one *Mappila* attended the conference and there were no *Mappila* delegates from Kurumbranad, Wynad and Ernad Taluks.¹³⁰ Due to this, the *jenmies* got prominence in the conference and they could check the passing of the resolution.

Similar annual conferences were held in Malabar from 1917 to 1919, and the tenancy question was a point of debate also, but it failed to draw attention to the basic agrarian problems of Malabar or bring *Mappila* masses closer to the national movement.¹³¹ Thus power politics, between 1885 and 1920, alienated *Mappila* peasants, particularly in South Malabar. Meanwhile at the national level, the pathetic conditions of *Mappila* peasants, got attention. Even Gandhiji questioned the attitude of Hindu landlords and officials towards the *Mappila* peasants.¹³² Even then the authorities were not ready to open their eyes towards these poor sections of the society.

¹²⁹ Madhavan Nair, *Kalapam, op.cit.*, p.87.

¹³⁰ Dhanagare, *op. cit.*, p.76.

¹³¹ P.K.K.Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1972, pp.73-76.

¹³² M.P.S. Menon, *M.P. Narayana Menon- A forgotten pioneer*, Calicut, 1998, p 15.

Eventhough the first Tenancy Association was formed in 1916, they did not launch any organized agitations until 1919. In the 1920 Manjeri Conference, a resolution was presented demanding Tenancy Reforms. K.P. Raman Menon presented this resolution in the conference. In spite of all protests of the *jenmies* the resolution was passed. Following this, many Tenancy Committees (*Kudian Samghams*) were organized in Malabar.¹³³ Later this Tenancy Association had its branches all over Ernad, Valluvanad, and Ponnani and in other major Taluks. The anti-landlord and anti-British character of the movement attracted *Mappila* peasantry in the tenancy agitation. Due to the influence of its leaders like M.P. Narayana Menon and Kattilasserri Muhammad Mussaliar the movement achieved immense popularity. The *Mappila* tenants in these areas themselves took initiative to organize and to resist against the oppression of the landlords.¹³⁴

The local *Mappilas* were more enthusiastic in forming such associations. It was with the initiative of these local *Mappilas* that the Zamorins Estate Kudiyan Nivarana Sangham (Union for Readdress of Grievances of Tenants of Zamorins Estate) was formed at Kottakkal. Its main aim was to resist the oppression of the *jenmies*.¹³⁵ But in many places, the tenants used these Union for unlawful agitations without the recognition of Tenancy Associations. Madhavan Nair had written about the difficulties suffered by the innocent *jenmies* at the hands of some

¹³³ Madhavan Nair, *Kalapam, op. cit.*, p.82.

¹³⁴ K.N. Panikkar, *Against, op.cit.*, p.121.

¹³⁵ Madhavan Nair, *Kalapam, op. cit.*, p.

tenants at Kodur and Kuruva. These *jenmies* were even unable to meet their daily needs.¹³⁶ Eventhough, such rare instances were there in the midst of their functioning, the Tenancy Association had played a major role in organising both *Mappilas* and Hindu tenants under one banner and thereby confining a collective action among them. In these Tenancy Associations, major participation was confined to the *Mappila* peasants. Regarding the role of *Mappilas* in the movement E.M.S Namboodiripad commented that: “with all his traditional illiteracy, backwardness and priestriddenness, the *Mappila* peasant is much more a class conscious peasant than a community conscious *Moplah*”.¹³⁷ The Tenancy Movement, thus, got much popularity among the common people mainly due to the influence and work of its leaders. It has been stated that along with Kattilasserri Muhammad Mussaliyar, M.P. Narayana Menon traveled in almost all villages in Ernad and Valluvanad Taluks and organized *Kudiyana Sanghams* and set up meetings and associations.¹³⁸ These meetings and discussions helped to arouse nationalist feelings among the illiterate and poverty stricken *Mappila* peasants and they decided to join under one banner. As a result of all these organisations and efforts of their leaders, in 1920, a District-wide Tenant Association was formed known as Malabar Kudian Sangham. It was in such a

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.85-86.

¹³⁷ E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Selected Writings*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p.

¹³⁸ M.P.S.Menon, *op. cit.*, p.25

situation prevailing in Malabar that the Khilafat and NCM made their entry into Kerala and it could introduce deep roots in to the soil.

The *Mappilas* of Malabar entered into the political scene only after the introduction of Khilafat movement, which was started by the eminent Muslim leaders as a reaction against the ill-treatment meted out towards the Sultan of Turkey by the British Government. The British Government dishonoured the commitment which they had given to the Muslims of India that in the event of an allied victory, Turkey would not be dismembered. But contrary to this agreement, after the war, they prepared a plan for dividing the Turkish Empire.¹³⁹ The Khilafat Movement was started by the Indian Muslims, as a reaction towards this treachery of the British. Muslim leaders like Muhammad Iqbal, Abul Kalam Azad and Moulana Muhammed Ali sought to develop Indian Muslims sympathy towards Pan-Islamic ideas in general and Ottoman Sultan and the Khilafat in particular.¹⁴⁰ As a result of this, the Muslims of India showed their full support to the Khilafat. 17th October 1919 was observed as Khilafat Day by Muslims throughout India.

Mahatma Gandhi was more sympathetic towards the Muslims. Meanwhile the Congress decided to start Non Co-operation Movement as a reaction to the

¹³⁹ O.P. Ralhan, *Indian National Movement-Panjab Martyrs of Freedom*, Vol.2, Delhi, 1994, p.173.

¹⁴⁰ P. Hardey, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p.117, cited in M. Gangadharan, *Rebellion*, *op. cit.*, p.69.

Jalian Wala Bagh incident and against the passing of the Montague Chelmsford reforms. The first Khilafat Conference conducted at Delhi in November 1919 was followed in February 1920 by the organisation of the Central Khilafat Committee at Bombay, which prompted a day of fasting by all Indian Muslims on 19th March, 1920.¹⁴¹ This conference was conducted under the chairmanship of Mahatma Gandhi. It was in this conference that Mahatma Gandhi, for the first time, declared Non co-operation with the government. Mahatma Gandhi and leaders of Indian Muslims decided to launch the Khilafat and NCM from a common platform. As Gandhiji and Ali brothers proclaimed a Hindu Muslim entente, the two communities began working together as never before or since¹⁴².

The *Mappilas* of Malabar also didn't keep away from this general wave of Muslim concern for the fate of Turkey. The conditions of Malabar at that time were very favourable to keep Muslims under the banner of an anti-imperialist struggle. The conditions in Malabar had deteriorated after 1st World War in several respects. Poverty became rampant. The conditions were now aggravated by the significant increase in population and by the fact that many soldiers had returned from the war and remained jobless¹⁴³. The prices of all essential commodities to the people of interior Malabar increased and the poor people were unable to purchase these commodities. This created disillusion and

¹⁴¹ Roland. E. Miller, *op. cit.*, p.130.

¹⁴² Unity in the real sense not unity between Hindus and Muslims, but between Congress and Khilafat.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.126.

dissatisfaction among the commoners.¹⁴⁴ When the prices of all necessary items such as rice increased in double, the eyes of poor section who were not in a position to purchase it, turned into the "*pathayams*" (store places) of the *jenmies* and this created all the troubles¹⁴⁵. A contemporary observer mentions that a "food riot" that occurred in Malabar during the first stage of the Rebellion and in the earlier months of the Rebellion, the rebels requested for sacks of grains from those who possessed it.¹⁴⁶ It has been reported that in this stage they demanded only food grains and not threatened to take away the life of prominent wealthy Hindus.¹⁴⁷ In this stage the messages of Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement reached Malabar and the movements received widespread support from the *Mappilas* of Malabar. Such economic troubles and difficulties dragged the poor *Mappilas* into the Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement, which they believed, would end the feudal hierarchy that existed in society. *The Cochin Argus*, a newspaper published from Cochin wrote about the sympathy shown by the *Mappilas* in a number of places in Malabar.¹⁴⁸ The District Magistrate in his report about the role of *Mappilas* in Pan-Islamic movement pointed out that the educated *Mappilas* in centers such as Malappuram, Perinthalmanna, Mannarghat

¹⁴⁴ Surendran, "Malabar lahala- Karshaka lahalayano" in *Prabhatham* newspaper, dated 30th May 1938.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Perumpalli Manakkal Krishnan Namboodiri, aged 85, Mankada-Pallippuram, Malappuram, on 20-8-2003.

¹⁴⁸ *Cochin Argus*, dated 25th November 1911, MNNPR, TNA, cited in M. Gangadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.71.

and Mampad were following the course of war with keen interest. The Magistrate also reported about continuous prayer for forty days conducted in Perinthalmanna mosque presumably for the success of Turkish Sultan.¹⁴⁹ This shows the keen interest shown by rural *Mappila* population of Malabar towards the movement.

The Tenancy issue also acted as a strong motivating force in the process of drawing people, especially *Mappilas* in to the Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement. In the early days of 1921, the tenants conference had decided to begin Non Co-operation Movement against *jenmies* demanding fixity of tenure for all tenants in South Malabar.¹⁵⁰ Hearing the rumours about tenancy reforms, the landlords evicted more tenants.¹⁵¹ As the agrarian tensions increased, the Nair leaders of Tenancy Association and the Congress sought to mobilise the active support of the *Mappila* cultivators both for tenancy reforms and in the name of Khilafat.¹⁵² Due to the participation of *Mappila* tenants in the Khilafat movement, it received more enthusiasm and a rising tide of such enthusiasm was sweeping allover the country.

The Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement could establish its deep roots in Malabar as a result of the Manjeri Conference held in April 1920. In this

¹⁴⁹ C.A.Innes to under Secretary, Government of Madras, 25th November 1912, Madras Judicial Proceedings No. 2040, dated 9th December 1912, pp.5-14, TNA, cited in *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁰ *Madras Mail*, 20th January 1921, p.6, MNNPR, TNA, Chennai.

¹⁵¹ Robert.L. Hardgrave, *op. cit*, pp.7-8.

¹⁵² *Ibid*.

conference majority of the delegates were *Mappila* peasants.¹⁵³ A resolution demanding tenancy legislation was passed in this conference inspite of the opposition by the *jenmies*. The clear stand taken by Manjeri Conference on the agrarian question paved way for taking Congress politics to the rural areas and it ensured the involvement of the *Mappila* peasants in the national agitation.¹⁵⁴ More than this, the Manjeri Conference had also passed resolutions regarding various issues, especially the Khilafat and the 1919 Constitutional Reforms, though there were oppositions against these from the part of Annie Besant and many other leaders. Besant was of the view that Congress should not launch the Non Co-operation Movement. But the demand of Mrs. Besant was rejected upholding the quest for freedom from the cruel repression of Punjab and other places and the political demand of regaining the power of Turkish Sultan. The tenancy problem also combined together in the political scene of Malabar. As the majority of the tenants in Malabar were *Mappilas*, the call of Gandhi and ShoukathAli sparked very spontaneously in Malabar.

Following the Manjeri Conference, Malabar witnessed an unprecedented progress in national awakening. Tenancy and Khilafat committees were established in every nook and corner of Malabar. A series of meetings were conducted in the common platform and the leaders of the Tenancy and Khilafat

¹⁵³ K.K.N. Kurup, *Mahathaya Mappila Parambaryam*, Calicut, 1998, p.65.

¹⁵⁴ S.M. Muhammed Koya, "Peasant masses in Malabar 1921" in E K G Nambiar(ed), *Agrarian India-Problems and Perspectives*, Association of Peasant Studies, University of Calicut, 1999, p.56.

Movements were the same.¹⁵⁵ The audience and speakers were also the same and "these two movements were inextricably merged into one", according to Bipan Chandra.¹⁵⁶ Following the visit of Mahatma Gandhi and Shoukath Ali on 18th August 1920 at Calicut to bring the messages of Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement to the people of Malabar, Khilafat Committees were formed in various parts of Malabar. After the Nagpur Congress in December 1920, Malabar Khilafat Committees became more active. Khilafat offices were opened in various parts of Central Malabar, especially at Manjeri, Thirurangadi, Ottappalam, Ponnani and Calicut and united propaganda of the Congress and the Khilafat became very strong.¹⁵⁷ It was during this time that the National spirit rose into its practical form in Malabar. Each village became centers of Khilafat and NCM propaganda. The joint conferences of Congress, Khilafat and students at Ottappalam from 23rd to 26th April 1920 gave a new spirit to the nationalist activities.¹⁵⁸ British authorities got alarmed while witnessing the progress of the popularity of Congress-Khilafat agitators in Malabar, which was a centre of series of outbreaks in the earlier period. So they started widespread repressions. Even at the venue of Ottappalam Conference, ruthless police beating was carried out. Malappuram Kunhi Thangal, Ramunni Menon, K. Madhavan Nair and the like leaders roused the tendency of taking revenge among the crowd at Ottappalam. The advice of leaders like K.P.

¹⁵⁵ E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *Malabar Kalapam-Oru Vilayiruthal*, Trivandrum, 1997, p.7.

¹⁵⁶ Bipan Chandra *et.al.*, *India's Struggle for Independence*, Delhi, 1989, p.201.

¹⁵⁷ P.A. SaydMuhammed, *Kerala Muslim Charitram*, Trichur, 1969, p.224.

¹⁵⁸ K.K.Muhammad Abdul Kareem, *K.M. Moulavi Sahib*, Thirurangadi, 1985, p.89.

Kesava Menon, Kattilasserri Muhammed Mussaliar Sahib and so on made the situation calm. The discipline and communal harmony maintained in the Ottappalam Conference created a feeling of fear among the imperialist authorities. It is said that the authorities started preparations for a revolt in Malabar from this conference onwards.¹⁵⁹

Alarmed by the popularity of these movements, the District administrators adopted severe coercive measures like the arrests of the leaders, the prohibition of public meetings, fines on newspapers, search of Khilafat offices and arrest and harassment of volunteers. These repressive measures made the movement more popular and militant.¹⁶⁰ Moozhikunnath Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad, an innocent victim of police repression, remarked that "it was the police repression that caused the Rebellion of 1921".¹⁶¹

In the midst of all these repressions, the Khilafat Committees became more active in Malabar. Provincial Khilafat committees were formed at Kondotty, Malappuram, Tanur, Thirurangadi, Parappanangadi, Pandikkad, Aravankara and Pookkottur. Khilafat volunteer corps was formed and a particular dress code was implemented for it. They wore a Turkey hat with moon symbol, kakki shirt and

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ K N Panikkar, "Peasant Protests and Revolts in Malabar" in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *Perspectives in Kerala History*, Trivandram, 1999, p.420.

¹⁶¹ Moozhikkunnath Brahmaddathan Namboodiripad, *Khilafat Smaranakal*, Calicut, 1965, p.10.

pants.¹⁶² The Khilafat flag with the crescent symbol and words of virtue sprang up all over Eranad. The volunteers were given training by former *Mappila* soldiers, who had retired from service after the 1st World War.¹⁶³ Through these actions, the movement could establish deep roots among the poor *Mappila* population in Malabar.

The Rebellion had its origin with the attempt to arrest V.Muhammed, a local Khilafat worker and tenant of Nilambur Kovilakam at Pookkottur. The *Mappilas* reacted against this very severely.¹⁶⁴ But this incident was happened behind the curtain and the curtain was removed only on 20th August, 1921 with the arrest of large number of Khilafat workers. This arrest following the Thirurangadi raid "caused panic", in the words of K.P. Kesava Menon.¹⁶⁵ The news of Thirurangadi raid spread like a wildfire through out the surrounding areas and with in the next five days, it spread to the whole of Ernad and Valluvanad Taluks and it swept with a "startling spontaneity".¹⁶⁶ Very soon the Rebellion spread into the entire Malabar and it really shocked the British authorities.

¹⁶² K.K.N. Kurup, *Mappila Parambaryam*, *op. cit.*, p.71.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ M. Gangadharan, "The first Kerala State Conference", in *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 4th November 2001, p.49.

¹⁶⁵ K.P. Kesava Menon, "Crusading a Cause", in *1921 Movement: Reminiscences*, Publication Division, Govt. of India, 1971, p.189.

¹⁶⁶ Roland E. Miller, *op. cit.*, p.137.

The leadership of the Rebellion was largely drawn from the Khilafat Committee members and from the Tangal group of religious leaders. Many of its leaders had the experience of participating in earlier outbreaks. One of the most important leader, Ali Mussaliar, had earlier experience in participating some other revolts raised against the British authorities. He was a religious leader who had severe enmity towards the British authorities. He had been deported from Malabar along with his father for their active participation in the Manjeri outbreak of 1896. It was only 10 years before 1921 that he had returned to Malabar. He became the *Mudaris* of Thirurangadi Jamyath Mosque.¹⁶⁷ He had great influence among the *Mappilas* of Malabar. It was the rumour of his arrest that provoked the *Mappilas*, which was later, turned in to the Rebellion of 1921. Like Ali Musliar, there were a large number of other leaders such as Variankunnath Kunhahammad Haji, Kattilasserri Muhammad Mussaliar and so on who also had great influence among the *Mappilas*. But in the later stages, slight deviation can be seen in the attitude of some other religious leaders. Both Tottenham¹⁶⁸ and Moozhikunnath Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad¹⁶⁹ have referred to the attitude of Kunhi Qadar, the leader of the movement at Tanur, who regarded it as "purely religious movement" and war which mixed up with all ridiculous Hindu propaganda". For them, religion was a medium, which shows ways to them in the crucial movement which separates

¹⁶⁷ K.K.Muhammed Abdul Kareem, *1921 le Khilafat lahalayum Ali Mussaliyarum*, Thirurangadi, 1968, pp.14-17.

¹⁶⁸ Tottenham, *op. cit.*, p.6.

¹⁶⁹ Moozhikkunnath Brahmaddathan Namboodiripad, *op. cit.*, p.iii.

good and bad in way of their life.¹⁷⁰ More than religious reasons, such people had intense hostility to the British, as they were responsible for losing all of their privileges, which they had enjoyed during the Mysorean rule.¹⁷¹ It was these leaders who played a major role in sowing the seeds of nationalism among the *Mappilas*. It is said that as part of the religious sermons in Muslim mosques, the leaders emphasized the religious importance of the struggle against "British giant".¹⁷² These sermons helped a lot to arouse both anti-imperialist and religious feelings among the illiterate *Mappilas* who ever considered the words of religious leaders as the final.

During the first stage the Rebellion, the hostility of the *Mappila* rebels was clearly directed against the government and the landlords. The mode of action was similar in all places. Government offices were destroyed, records were burnt, treasuries were looted, and police stations were attacked. The system of communication was completely disrupted, telegraph wires were destroyed and roads were blocked by laying cut down trees. As a result, police posts were expanded and the government offices were abandoned and the administration was completely collapsed.¹⁷³ Many Hindu landlords were attacked and their houses

¹⁷⁰ M.G.S. Narayanan, "1921-Prasnangalum Sameepanangalum" in *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika*, Calicut, 1981, pp.92-96.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² E.M.S Namboodiripad, *Keralam Malayalikalude Mathrubhumi*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1948, p.236.

¹⁷³ K N Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts" in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.), *Perspectives, op. cit.*, p.423.

were looted. Initially, the objective of the rebels was to establish a stronghold, acquire supplies of food grains, arms and ammunition and to demolish all symbols of British Raj.¹⁷⁴ By the end of August, the whole interior regions of South Malabar, with the exemption of Palghat Taluk, were under the control of the rebels and the government had to ask the army to take over the civil administration. The attempts, which were made by some liberal Congress and Khilafat leaders to pacify the rebels, were in vain.¹⁷⁵ It was stated that the Congress leaders like K.P. Kesava Menon, K. Madhavan Nair, and U. Gopala Menon were afraid to go to the interior areas and preach the message of nonviolence to the *Mappilas*.¹⁷⁶ Melmuri Abdu Haji and his followers hated Madhavan Nair and Gopala Menon and instructed not to mention their names with Shoukathali and Muhammed Ali. He often said, "Madhavan Nair and Gopala Menon should be killed first".¹⁷⁷

At the end of August, the Rebellion spread over the entire South Malabar. The angry *Mappilas* burnt Taluk courts, many public buildings and killed some government supporters.¹⁷⁸ Till 28th August, in many areas of Malappuram, the British administration was paralyzed and it ceased to exist in Tirurangadi, Manjeri and Perinthalmanna. In these areas, free rule under the rebel leaders was

¹⁷⁴ Dhanagare, *op. cit.*, p.80.

¹⁷⁵ C.F. Andrews, "The first days of Moplah rising" *Modern review*, Calcutta, Vol. XXXI, 1922, pp.469-72., cited in *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁶ M.P.S.Menon, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁷ Statement of Karatt Moideen Haji to inspector M. Narayana Menon on 8th June 1922, in Hitchcock, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.190.

¹⁷⁸ A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, Kottayam, 1986, p.294.

established.¹⁷⁹ Most regions of the Eranad and Valluvanad Taluks came under the control of the *Mappila* rebels. Some more zealous among them are said to have occupied seats of the judges of the local courts, assumed the title of Ali Raja in a ceremony at the Jamayat Mosque in Ponnani, the central mosque of *Mappila* religious organization.¹⁸⁰ In Eranad region 'Khilafat Rajs' were established and Kunhahammad Haji and Mammed proclaimed themselves as presidents. They recruited armies, organized police and instituted courts for trying criminals. Kunhahammed Haji proclaimed the liberation of the country from the British. A moratorium on all taxes for one year was granted. Passports were issued for those who wanted to travel outside his 'Raj'. A fee was charged for the passport which was determined by the financial ability of the applicant. The peasants were ordered to harvest the paddy crops of the landlords.¹⁸¹ Seethikoya Tangal of Kumaramputhur was said to have declared himself as the "king of Mannarghat". At the same time some other leaders like Chembrasserri Tangal turned their attention towards Hindus¹⁸² and it is reported that he murdered about 38 Hindus.¹⁸³

It was in the second stage of the Rebellion that the army and police started taking over the rebel areas and sought the help of Hindus to capture rebels, and

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Robert. L. Hardgrave, *op. cit.*, p.16.

¹⁸¹ C.Gopalan Nair, *op.cit.* pp.76-80.Also see in K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolts in Malabar", in A.R. Desai (ed.) *op. cit.*, p.620.

¹⁸² In an interview with Nellikuth Muhammed Mussaliar, aged 85, Nellikuth, Manjeri, on 7-10-2004, he told about these types of murdering by some leaders.

¹⁸³ Robert.L. Hardgrave, *op. cit.*

thus the Rebellion was turned in to an anti-Hindu one. In this situation the rebels committed many atrocities against the Hindus. In many areas they did not attack any Hindu brethren, but captured almost all the wealth from their houses, especially from the Namboodiri *Illams*. These activities created a panic in the minds of all Hindus, especially due to widespread rumours regarding *Mappila* attacks on Hindus. Due to fear, most of the Hindus, especially upper sections, left their native regions and sought shelter either in the nearby *kovilakams* or in the houses of relatives in nearby areas like Trichur. They came back only after six or eight or even one year after the Rebellion.¹⁸⁴ And these happenings made the Hindus believe that the fanatic activities of Muslims caused all of their sufferings. It has been reported that one section of the *Mappilas*, after capturing of their leaders by the authorities turned violent and it was these section that had committed all the atrocities against Hindus. The position of Hindus in the riot region was most embarrassing as unless they gave no information about the possible hiding places of the rebels and movements of them to the troops (who were not familiar with the topography of the land), they would be arrested or persecuted for being pro-khilafat.¹⁸⁵ If they gave such informations, the rebels would turn towards them. It has been reported that at Thuvvur, a place near Karuvarakundu in the Eastern Ernad some Hindus were massacred. The refugees

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Perumpalli Manakkal Krishnan Namboodiri, Mankada Pallipuram, aged 86, on 20-8-2003. Also see in E M S Namboodiripad, *Atmakatha*, Thiruvanthapuram, 1995, p.45.

¹⁸⁵ P.K.K. Menon, *op. cit.*, p.100.

from Thuvur reported that the rebels burned about 50 houses of Hindus and about 34 Hindus were murdered and their heads were thrown into the near by well.¹⁸⁶

Kerala Patrika reported the story of the death of one Krishnan Nair, who had rendered a lot of help to the authorities for arresting the rebels. First his skin was pecked off from the body, his legs and his two arms were completely cut off, and ultimately his neck was cut off. The other two were soon hacked to pieces.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, a rebel pierced his knife in to the abdomen of a pregnant woman and a baby of six months was snatched away from the breast of its mother and was cut into pieces by another rebel.¹⁸⁸ Such instances could be seen in Malabar, as a mark of the cruelty of these of rebels. The rebels engaged in not only murder, but in plunder also. The remnants of such atrocities can be seen in many of the old houses of Hindus even at present. But Muhammad Abdu Rahiman had denied the view that the *Mappila* attacks on Hindus were due to the help rendered by them to British military. In a letter to the Central Khilafat Committee Secretary, Bombay, Muhammed Abdurrahman wrote that: "I have got reliable information to the effect that the Muslim attacks against Hindus have been leveled not only for the reason that the Hindus helped the police for their arrest, but also that they committed rape, and looting of Muslim houses in the absence of men. Such acts happening

¹⁸⁶ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 6th October 1921, Madhavan Nair and others also reported that they saw the heads of these Hindus in the well and in it they counted heads of three *Mappilas*.

¹⁸⁷ *Kerala Patrika* dated 1st March 1922, Wednesday, cited in C.Gopalan Nair, *op.cit.*, p.63.

¹⁸⁸ C. Gopalan Nair, *Ibid*, quoting of a refugee.

more or less in every place provoked Muslims and fomented trouble".¹⁸⁹ There was a report in *Malayala Manorama* about a petition given by some *Mappila* women against some Nairs, who had raped them in the absence of men.¹⁹⁰ Though Hindus denied this allegation, it was a fact that, not only *Mappilas*, but Hindus also utilized the situation for all kinds of atrocities inflicting upon their own brethren. This helped to create a feeling of hatred and suspicion among Muslims and such incidents provoked Muslims to commit more atrocities such as the murder of Krishnan Nair. The rumors of such murders spread all over Malabar. But later it had been revealed that some of these were merely rumors. Once a report spread about the murder of a pregnant lady near Ferook by the army.¹⁹¹ What ever might be the truth, one thing was clear that both the police and the rebels inflicted unending sufferings to the poor population of Malabar.

The government of India took drastic measures to suppress the Rebellion. In the last of August itself martial law was declared in the Taluks of Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnani¹⁹² and military Commanders were appointed to administer Martial Law. Special tribunals and summary courts with limited powers were supplemented with additional military courts having more ample powers to

¹⁸⁹ Letter from Muhammed Abdurrahman, President, Khilafat Committee, Calicut to the Secretary, Central Khilafat Committee Bombay, dated 8th October, 1921, TNA.

¹⁹⁰ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 30th November, 1922.

¹⁹¹ K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam*, Calicut, 1986.p.60.

¹⁹² Telegram (extract) to the Government of India, No. 1711, dated 22nd August 1921, cited in Tottenham (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.293.

deal with resurgence on the spot.¹⁹³ To rescue and substitute the English troops, battalions of Gurkha, Garhwale (of Indian origin), and Kachin Chin and Karen troops were dispatched.¹⁹⁴ These troops were well trained in guerilla warfare. With the arrival of military, the situation of commoners as well as the rebels underwent a sea change.¹⁹⁵ Afterwards, a military reign was established there in interior Malabar. The government permitted full freedom and right to do any repression of the rebels. They really established a reign of terror in Malabar. They took fierce and cruel action against the *Mappilas* and desecrated their places of worship and humiliated their leaders. The Muslims were oppressed and insulted in every aspect.¹⁹⁶ Due to the most inhuman deeds of police and military, women and children had to suffer all sorts of plunder and looting, which the police and military treated as the most joyous entertainments.¹⁹⁷ *The Muslim* reported that: “the soldiers, for mere amusement shoot down *Mappilas*. After setting fire to the houses, the soldiers shoot down the *Mappila* inmates who were rushing out. They walked out with as much money and jewellery as they could find in the houses of *Mappilas*. Police officers appropriated huge amounts of money by

¹⁹³ Sukhbir Choudhari, *Moplah Uprising*, *op. cit.*, p.54.

¹⁹⁴ Home (Pol) Department, Government of India, File No. 241/XVI/1922, Telegram Section, p.3, TNA.

¹⁹⁵ Sukhbir Choudhari, *Moplah Uprising*, *op.cit.*, p.55.

¹⁹⁶ Special Branch Criminal Investigation Department, Strictly Confidential No.1400C, Extracts from a report dated 16th November 1922, Editorial of *Azad Hindu*, an Urdu daily of Madras, cited in K.N. Panikkar (ed.), “Peasant Revolts in Malabar” in A.R. Desai (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.363-64.

¹⁹⁷ Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha*, Kottayam, 1985, p.33.

intimidation. Even after receiving money, they continued ill-treatment and several police personnel have become rich after the Rebellion."¹⁹⁸ *The Swarat* observes the ill treatment of the people by the military thus: "the military, with the help of police, instead of arresting the culprits, created unrest and created havoc wherever they went. They hunted out certain completely innocent *Mappilas* and blindly ill-treated them. They trumped up false charges against them and got them sentenced and imprisoned. The military set fire to numerous Mohammedan houses and carried away whatever they could get. They cruelly insulted aristocratic and respectable Mohammedan women. This created an impression in the minds of the *Mappilas* that the government has particular determination in harassing them and this impression was strengthened by rash actions of thoughtless bureaucrats, especially the police officers".¹⁹⁹ In more than 220 villages, the gruesome human hunting of police went on incessantly. Almost all sections of the people, both young and aged, became victims to the police brutality.²⁰⁰ It has been mentioned that in many villages in Ernad and Valluvanad Taluks, there were lot of *Mappila* houses without even a single male member. As the police caught everybody irrespective of their involvement in any criminal activity, a wave of insecurity was flowing in the minds of Ernad *Mappilas* which readily intensified the Rebellion than earlier.²⁰¹ The *Mappilas*, who were subjected to severe police brutalities,

¹⁹⁸ *The Muslim*, 15th December 1921, MNNPR, TNA.

¹⁹⁹ *The Swarat*, dated 13th October 1921, MNNPR, TNA.

²⁰⁰ M.Rashid, *Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib*, Calicut, 1998, p.25.

²⁰¹ *Mathrubhumi* dated 20th March 1923, Tuesday, p.7.

gradually turned to be absolute mutineers and started guerilla warfare against the regiment as well as against those who were supporting them.²⁰² The British caught Muslims unscrupulously without any discrimination between pro-rebels or anti rebels. It has been stated that the false information given by government authorities to military regarding the life style and appearance of Malabar people were totally misleading, as they were absolutely ignorant of the life styles of Malabar. They were informed that all people having clean shaven head are Muslims²⁰³ and those men wearing ear rings are Hindus.²⁰⁴

The control of the rebels in these areas lasted till the British army arrived. The most horrible incident that took place in connection with the Rebellion was the Train Tragedy, which is popularly known as Wagon Tragedy. On 10th November 1921, about 90 prisoners were being taken from Tirur to Coimbatore in a closed wagon without any ventilation. When the wagon was opened at Podanur, only a few of them were alive. Sixty four were dead.²⁰⁵ When news of this cruel treatment faced by the prisoners appeared in the Madras papers, the military kept silence and they had no words to say anything about it. It is interesting to note that the affected people in this train tragedy include not

²⁰² M. Gangadharan, "Mahamardhanathinte Kalam" in *Wagon Tragedy Smaranikaa*, op. cit., p.49.

²⁰³ Moidu Moulavi, "Vargheeya Lahalayo?Alla Swatanthrya Samaram" in *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika*, op. cit., p.25.

²⁰⁴ Information given by relatives of Kannan Panikkar, Amarambalam, Malappuram.

²⁰⁵ The number varied according to differences of views.

only *Mappilas*, but also Hindus who were arrested and accused as supporters of the Rebellion.²⁰⁶ It was reported that Hitchcock was one of the principle person responsible for the massacre in the wagon affair.²⁰⁷ It was remarked by Mr. Venkataplli Raju that there would certainly have been a worldwide storm of agitation, if, instead of *Mappila* prisoners, some Europeans had met with such a tragic death.²⁰⁸ The Rebellion, which was forcibly crushed by the British Government, lasted about six months. It caused uncountable casualties. Many were imprisoned which included even innocent people, many were murdered, many were deported and the rest had to bear numerous sufferings. Women and children, who were accused of providing help to their men, were imprisoned for long years.²⁰⁹ Even small boys were also imprisoned and considered by court as dangerous persons and were jailed. Such boys were sent in to Juvenile courts.²¹⁰ Many of the *Mappilas* were deported in to Andamans and their sufferings could not be expressed through words.

²⁰⁶ Moidu Moulavi, "Mappila lahala-Charitram Thiruthan Padilla" in *Mathrubhumi*, dated 13th November, 1973.

²⁰⁷ *Kerala Chandrika*, Quilon, 25th September 1922, MNNPR, TNA.

²⁰⁸ Report in *The Swarat*, Quilon, 26th September 1922, MNNPR, under caption "The Mappila Train Tragedy.

²⁰⁹ Files:1922, public, letter from Malabar District Magistrate regarding release of Kakkanadchalil Thamasikkum Aliyangal Ayisha Umma of Pandikkad Amsam, her son Ayammed Kutty aged 13 and her daughters Amina Umma aged 15 and Pathumma aged 10, RAC. .

²¹⁰ R.Dis No. 5270/23, *Mappila* Rebellion-Juvenile-Kaduvath Ummaru and P. Mammed, Ref: 5210/J/23, RAC.

The Rebellion made an everlasting impact upon the life of the people of Malabar. The news of the Rebellion induced communal tensions in North India. Through their communiqués, the British government tried their maximum to depict the Rebellion as a communal one. On 25th August 1921, *Bombay Chronicle* published a communiqué of Madras Government, which stated that: "there have been indications for sometime past that the agitations in Malabar have been working on the well known religious fanaticism of the more ignorant class of *Moplahs*.²¹¹ The communiqué then proceeded to refer "a widespread and dangerous agitation that had been created in certain parts of Malabar, evidently, according to the Government, the outcome of seditious pamphlets and seditious speeches.²¹² Again *Bombay Chronicle* published another appeal of government to the press to support the authority. It was reported that "according to latest details received from Eranad, the *Moplah* fanatics there, are alleged to be looting all Hindu houses, intimidating Hindu landlords, threatening to kill them and extorting huge sums of money.²¹³ Such news spread all over India and it led to the misunderstanding among the population outside Kerala that the mass movement had turned into a communal one in Kerala. The impact of this news spread through papers regarding religious persecutions and British communiqués lead to communal rifts in Northern India and later paved way for many communal

²¹¹ *Bombay Chronicle*, dated 25th August 1921, Tuesday, p.7.

²¹² *Ibid.*, dated 26th August 1921.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, dated 27th August 1921.

outbreaks.²¹⁴ Gandhiji also blamed the *Mappilas* and referred the Rebellion as “a malpractice of the *Moplah*”.²¹⁵ He wrote: “the incidents that took place in Malabar have disturbed the Hindu minds”.²¹⁶ He argued that “the violence of *Moplahs* were likely to alarm us, it impedes our progress”.²¹⁷ The Congress leaders also blamed the *Mappilas* for conducting such atrocities. E M S Namboodiripad commented that: "really the entry of Muslim religious leaders in the Non Co-operation Movement gave a colour of Islamic fanaticism to the secularist movement of Gandhiji."²¹⁸ Even Madhavan Nair, who stood throughout for pacifying the rebels, wrote: "what will be there in the Rebellion is nothing other than religious madness of *Mappilas*".²¹⁹

The 1921 Rebellion was started as a part of Khilafat and NCM. The rebels were mainly included from the category of poor *Mappila* tenants or *verumpattakkar*. They were not aware of nationalism or national movement even long years prior to the formation of national organizations like Congress. It was after the launching of Khilafat and NCM that the poor illiterate people of Malabar were aware of the movements against British imperialism. The Congress and Khilafat leaders tried best to infuse anti-British feelings among them. Even before

²¹⁴ Brahmadattan Namboodiripad, *op. cit.*

²¹⁵ *Young India* 26.1/1922 in *Collected Works of Gandhiji*, Vol. XII, p.267.

²¹⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, 7th June 1923.

²¹⁷ *Collected Works of M.K. Gandhi*, Vol. XXL, August- December 1921.

²¹⁸ E M S Namboodiripad, *Malabarkalapam-Oru Vilayiruthal*, *op.cit*, p13.

²¹⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 17th October 1924.

this, the anti-*jenmy* feelings were ardent among them which is visible in almost all the uprisings of 19th century. It followed in the early part of 20th century also. But it was the anti-British feelings induced by the nationalists along with many other factors caused for the 1921 Rebellion. Even though it was started by the poor *Mappilas*, it was not religious in the early part. But in the later stages of the Rebellion, it turned into a communal struggle. The rebels started to attack the Hindus. Rumors and stories spread regarding the cruelties committed by the rebels towards their Hindu brethren. They even engaged in compulsory conversions of Hindus into Islam. Naturally there will arise doubts in front of us why it turned into a communal? How does communalism emerge here?

A complex set of circumstances led to the turning of the Rebellion into a communal incident. The *jenmies* followed cruel repressive policies towards the poor tenants. Such cruel policies of *jenmies* led the *Mappilas* to take arms against them in the 19th century. These *jenmies* rendered full support and co-operation to the British authorities for their unpopular policies. When the Rebellion started, the Hindus *jenmies* provided full support to the British. Not only the *jenmies*, but their *kanakars* or *karaysthans*, who were mostly *Nairs* also gave help to the British authorities to capture the *Mappilas*. It was because of this that the rebels turned against such sections along with *jenmies*. This was more increased when they rejected protection to them. As their lords, it was the duty of the *jenmies* to give protection to their subjects, irrespective of religion. Here, instead of giving protection, they were considered as traitors and provided facilities to the British

authorities to attack them. This infuriated the *Mappilas* and later they considered as a religious war and attacked Hindu *jenmies*, local *Nairs* and other *karyasthans*. In the rural areas, the illiterate *Mappilas*, who had no leadership to lead them, considered this as a chance to take revenge against the local Hindus and conducted cruel atrocities towards them irrespective of any differences.

Moreover, the Khilafat background was also there which helped to foster communal feelings to the *Mappilas*. The *Mappilas* joined hands with the nationalists not because of their personal grievances but in the name of Khilafat. What was more ardent among the *Mappilas* was the ill treatment of Turkey than Hindu Muslim unity fostered by Mahatma Gandhi and Ali Brothers. The religious feeling of ill treatment of their religious leader was the main reason behind the joining of the *Mappilas* of Malabar in the Rebellion. The *Mappila* leaders who were there in the foreign countries like Ali Mussaliar returned back to Malabar and spread the stories of ill treatment of Turkish Sultan by the British. This helped for the development of the feeling of Muslim solidarity among them. This, along with the repressive activities of Hindu *jenmies* and their *karyasthans*, led to the turning of the Rebellion into a communal one.

The repressive policies of British government also helped to foster communal feelings among them. The British authorities followed a cruel repressive policy towards the rebels. They were treated very brutally the innocent non participant Mohammedans. They did not kept away *Mappila* women and

children. People, fearing of police repression, seek shelter in jungles. The military and Police Raj rendered unending traumas to them. There is clear evidence of absolute miseries in the areas during this age. They even used Hindus against *Mappilas*. In this stage, most of their prominent leaders like Ali Mussaliar were captured or murdered. There were no leaders to check further cruelties. Moreover, there was a food shortage in this period. This caused of turning of the rebels into robbery and plundering of Hindus, because most of the elitists Hindus were very rich, which later caused of turning of the Rebellion in to communal incident.

POST REBELLION PERIOD – REALITIES AND RELIEF WORKS

Sreevidhya Vattarambath “Aftermath of the rebellion trends - A study of political and social trends in malabar from 1921 to 1935” Thesis. Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007

CHAPTER III

POST REBELLION PERIOD - REALITIES AND RELIEF WORKS

The Malabar Rebellion of 1921 was a traumatic experience for both the Hindus and Muslims. It was stated that the Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement had wrought a dramatic change all over India and the undercurrents sweeping over the country too influenced even Malabar.¹ But the Rebellion of 1921 that broke out as a part of Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement, has wrought another dramatic change, which shook the common life of Malabar in every sense. It caused miseries and sufferings to both the Hindu and Muslim population and led to the death of thousands of people. The cruelties committed by both the rebels and the Government authorities had made a lasting impact on the life in Malabar. This chapter mainly focuses on the conditions of Malabar immediately after the Rebellion.

a. Conditions of Malabar Immediately after the Rebellion

It took long years to heal the wounds made by the Rebellion. The British Government took severe repressive measures to suppress the Rebellion and the direct acts of repression continued up to December 1921, when all resistance came to a stop. The physical damages caused by the

¹ K.P. Raman, "Kesava Menon and *Mathrubhumi*" in *Kesava Menon 90*, Calicut, 1977, p.50.

Rebellion and the subsequent acts of repression were incalculable. Thousands lost their lives. Thousands were injured. It is estimated that on the Government's side 50 armed special police men died and 30 were wounded, 8 army officials including one colonel was killed and 200 men were dead or injured.² It is impossible to say for certain about the total number of rebels killed in this action. It is assumed that about 2,337 *Mappilas* had lost their life. Unofficial estimate places the numbers at about 10,000. 45,404 rebels were captured or had surrendered.³ More than 14,000 were Court Martialled and were sentenced to death or transported for life.⁴ The estimates are at best approximations and it is difficult to estimate the actual numbers. A large number of *Mappilas* were deported in to Andamans and a large number of Hindus and pro-government *Mappilas* were murdered by the rebels. The army also butchered hundreds of *Mappila* women and children. Apart from execution, arrests and deportation, lakhs of rupees were collected from them as fines. It is estimated that about Rs.1 to 20 has been exacted from the *Mappilas*, who could escape from imprisonment and death⁵. It is very difficult for the poor *Mappilas*, who were struggling hard to earn their livelihood, to pay such an amount to the government. This transformed many poor

² M.P.S. Menon, *M.P. Narayanan Menon- A Forgotten Pioneer*, Calicut, 1998, p.104.

³ Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence*, New Delhi, 1987, pp.202-03.

⁴ Koyatti Moulavi, *1921 le Malabar Lahala*, Tirurangadi, 1953, pp.91-93.

⁵ Report of Yakub Hassan, who visited the riot stricken Malabar, *Mathrubhumi*, dated 19th April 1924.

Mappilas in to beggars. Even many innocent men were sentenced for long year's rigorous imprisonment. Among them included Moozhikkunnath Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad, E.Moidu Moulavi, K. Kelappan, and M.P. Narayana Menon. All those who were imprisoned at Bellari, Selam, Coimbathoor, Trichinopolly, Madras, Rajamantri and Kannur were subjected to severe persecutions by the jail authorities⁶. It has been estimated that about 4,500 persons were packed in the Bellari jails, which had facilities for only 1,500 persons. Such a cruel treatment was to be suffered by those who were imprisoned by the British authorities. Muhammad Abdurahiman protested against these cruelties and on several occasions he undertook a hunger strike against these cruel treatments. Many died in jails due to the cruelties of police.

The military rule that prevailed in Malabar for 6 months, destroyed the country. The military established a reign of terror in Malabar and, instead of arresting the culprits they created unrest and generated havoc wherever they went. They hunted out many innocent *Mappilas* and cruelly ill-treated them⁷. They were tramped up and were sentenced and imprisoned. It has been

⁶ S.K.Pottekkad *et.al.*, *Muhammad Abdurahiman*, Calicut, 1978, p.111. Moozhikkunnath Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad in his *Khilafat Smaranakal* and E.Moidu Moulavi in his works *Moulaviyude Atmakatha* and *Ente koottukaran* explain the cruel treatment that they meted out in various jails. M.P.Narayana Menon was sentenced to about 12 year's life long imprisonment.

⁷ *The Swarat*, dated 13 October 1921, MNNPR, TNA, Chennai.

reported that about sixty percent of the male members were imprisoned or died in the Rebellion and many families in South Malabar were without any single male member to protect them⁸. Accusations against these unscrupulous arrests arose widely and various newspapers especially *Bombay Chronicle* published articles against such indiscriminate arrests⁹. The police and military resorted to violence against the *Mappilas* and they were oppressed and insulted in all respects.¹⁰ They also insulted even wellborn and respectable Mohammedan women very cruelly.¹¹ They used to butcher *Mappilas* unscrupulously and massacred thousands, who were hiding in forests, hills and uninhabited houses¹². The most suffered one due to the inhuman deeds of police and military were Muslim women and children¹³. The military rule destroyed all. They shot down the panic- stricken people, who were running away, killed those who were hiding, raped helpless women and their houses were set on fire.¹⁴ People were in completely frightened state. C.F. Andrews records that during his trip to Malabar he saw four *Mappila* women insane

⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 10th August 1924, Report of Madhavan Nair and Yakub Hassan.

⁹ *Bombay Chronicle*, dated 3rd September 1921.

¹⁰ Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Strictly Confidential No.1400C, Extracts from a report dated 16th November 1922, Editorial of *Azad Hindu*, an ordinary daily. Cited in K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *Peasant Protests and Revolts in Malabar*, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 363-64.

¹¹ *The Swarat*, op. cit.

¹² Moyarath Sankaran, *Ente Jeenthakatha*, Calicut, 1965, p.175.

¹³E. Moidu Moulavi, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha*, Kottayam, 1985, p.33.

¹⁴ Koyatti Moulavi, op. cit., pp.91-93.

with terror, one woman wounded by bayonet and a mutilated young boy¹⁵. It has been reported that about 130 houses of Muslims have been burnt down sparing the houses of anti-non co-operators that were marked “not to be destroyed”¹⁶. Muslim women were widely molested. It is said that the dead bodies of Muslim women clasping their sucking babies on their bosom were found in the river below Tirurangadi.¹⁷ Ruins and devastation continued everywhere.

Under Martial law, the people lost all their freedom such as freedom of expression, freedom of printing and publishing, freedom to assemble and freedom to travel even within their own locality. All human rights were under the restriction of martial law¹⁸. Through the proclamation of an order, the British government absolutely restricted the mobility of Muslim women and children. Therefore, they were not in a position to move beyond the borders of rebel Taluks¹⁹. If they had the need to move somewhere, they had to get a permission letter from either a Sub-Magistrate or a Police

¹⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 5th September 1923.

¹⁶ Letter from Muhammad Abdurahiman, K.P.K.C, Calicut to Superintendent. CKC, Bombay, dated 26 September 1921 (strictly confidential), SF 410-1, No. 1467, Special Branch, Criminal Investigation, Chennai.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ M.Gangadharan, “Mahamardhanathinte Kalam”, in *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika*, Tirurangadi, 1981, p.43.

¹⁹ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 28th March 1922.

Inspector²⁰. For preventing them from crossing the boundaries, the police were deployed in the railway stations and on roads. So the poor *Mappila* women and children were compelled to stay in the rebel areas fearing the police and military attacks,²¹ and suffering poverty. It has been reported that these poor people lived there trying to survive by eating palm powder and some wild fruits²². They were hiding in the forests and even in the caves in forests, fearing police and military attacks. The outside world was completely ignorant of such pathetic conditions of this poor people, due to the prohibition orders in these riot stricken areas. No person or press had the courage to publish the actual events taking place in the rebel areas. Therefore, there were no means to understand what was happening in these areas²³. The only persons who knew everything were the inmates, but they were not in such a situation to reveal all of their sufferings, because they had lost all connections with the outside world.

After long years, Alavikutty Haji of Thrikkalangode explained his own experiences of the Rebellion in an interview with Abdu Cheruvadi²⁴.

²⁰ M. Gangadharan, "*Mahamardhanathinte*", *op. cit.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *The Mathrubhumi*, dated 10 August 1924.

²³ M. Gangadharan, "*Mahamardhanathinte*", *op. cit.*, p.43.

24. This interview is published by Abdu Cheruvadi under the Caption "Agathikal, Anathakal, Vidhavakal, Vijanagramangal" in *Wagon Tragedy Smaranika*, *op. cit.*, pp.110-11.

Thrikkalangode, near Manjeri, was a place, which did not have direct involvement in the Rebellion comparing to Pookkottur, Pandikkad or Tirurangadi. Even then, the people of these areas had to face untold sufferings. Abdu Cheruvadi quotes Alavikkutty Hajji's memories thus: "fearing the horrible human hunt of the military, no one came out of their houses. All the shops were closed down. So all were in the verge of starvation. No lamps were lighted in the houses due to lack of a single drop of kerosene. The members of the houses were hiding in the nearby shrubs as well as in the attic of the house. My father and his friends some how managed to bring some rice and kerosene, while we were on the verge of death due to starvation. However, before they could distribute that, the army came. All the male members took refuge on the attic, children and women screamed in vain. The army took my father and his friends away. Within two months, we were informed that my father breathed his last in that wagon even without getting a drop of water to drink ". Hajji was incapable of calculating how many persons were killed or captured in this human hunting. Hajji continues: "for a couple of months there was no Jumu-ah in the Masjid due to lack of men. Later, including the number of children, they completed the quorum. Almost all the houses were looted or plundered and most of the people were unemployed. Even if, there were any job opportunity, no men were there to do that job". Through these words, one would realize the terrible sufferings and traumas experienced by the people of Malabar. These are not

only the experience of Haji alone, but of all those who lived in South Malabar during the Rebellion.

Against these inhuman activities of the police and military, appeals and reactions came out from many parts of India. *Kerala Chandrika* published an appeal from the Secretary of the Jamiyath Devathi Islam Sabha, on behalf of the distressed Mappila women and children in Malabar. The appeal says: "the wretchedness is increasing day by day at a terrible rate. There are only two figures to be seen in Malabar evincing enthusiasm and joy- one of *Kalan* (the God of Death) and the other of hard-hearted authorities. However, the *Mappila* men and women, young and old are immersed in a sea of sorrows and present a true picture of helplessness and misery. Even a stone would melt at a single glance at them. Such is their plight today. Corpses of *Mappila* women had to remain for many days uninterred in a village called Mampuram, as there was not a single man in that place. In another village 66 helpless families were receiving help from a society, but the recent arrests of men have added another 55 families to the group. In another village, where there were 50 families before, only three women and four children are now left"²⁵. Similar plight could be seen in every part of interior South Malabar. It has been reported that even the Hindu neighbors also had committed atrocities

²⁵ *Kerala Chandrika*, Quilon, dated 22nd October 1922 and also in *The Muslim*, Alleppey, dated 28th September 1922, MNNPR, TNA, Chennai.

against *Mappila* women. As they had no other means for subsistence, the *Mappila* women were compelled to sell themselves²⁶. But there is no clear evidence for the credibility of this report, and so, we cannot confirm whether these things had really happened.

Witnessing this life, full of miseries, Muhammad Abdurahiman wrote a letter to Yakub Hassan on 7th September 1921, regarding the pitiable condition of Malabar. The letter says: "unfortunately, the Hindus are no longer sympathetic towards Muslims. Even the Congress activists also had requested for the sustainment of military regime, as they are afraid of *Mappila* rebels. The militants shot at the Muslim houses and plundered Muslim shops. It is heard that more disastrous things are taking place. I am not writing it all as I don't know to what extent they are true. For God's sake, earnestly try to terminate the military regime for the helpless Muslims. I promise to give an assurance that no Hindu will be attacked if military is withdrawn. It is felt that the Congress is consoling only Hindus. Won't you do something to mitigate the sufferings of the innocent Mohammedan children and women"²⁷. But Yakub Hassan was helpless to do anything for the sufferers due to the prohibition orders of British authorities preventing him from entering Malabar.

²⁶ On the basis of the report in *Ibid*.

²⁷ CID Report, File No. 327 A, 2nd November 1921, Under Secretary's Safe File, TNA.

The military and police failed to establish peace and security in Malabar. Later the military left Malabar, shifting all powers to the police, whose rule was more severe than the military²⁸. The police walked off with all money and jewels found in *Mappila* houses. The police officers extracted huge sums of money by intimidation.²⁹ This was really a 'harvest' like situation for the pro-government people. Many people, pleading for protection, approached them with handsome amounts. This sort of people could be seen in some parts of Manjeri. Later they could lead a luxurious life³⁰. It has been reported by Moidu Moulavi that almost all the huge structures constructed in Manjeri after the Rebellion belong to such people who got money both from the hands of rebels as well as from these kinds of intimidation³¹. It has also been reported that, when the prisoners were brought to the interior parts of Malabar as a part of the implementation of Andaman Scheme, the police utilized them for locating treasures, which might be left in different places by the rebels at the time of the riot and the subsequent police raids³². Meanwhile, many rich people became poor,

²⁸E. Moidu Moulavi, *Atmakatha, op. cit.*, p.79.

²⁹ *The Muslim*, dated 7th December 1921, MNNPR, TNA.

³⁰ E.Moidu Moulavi, *Atmakatha, op. cit.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Mathrubhumi*, dated 2nd October 1924.

especially the pro-nationalist people. The police harassed and exacted money from them and many of them became mere beggars.³³

Both the Hindus and non participant Muslims also had to face harassments from the hands of both the rebels and the military. The position of Hindus in the riot region was most embarrassing. They had to fear both military and rebels. Almost all the Hindu houses were emptied, they abandoned all of their belongings and took shelter in the surrounding areas of Calicut and Trichur³⁴. Many of the prominent Nair families of these areas left their home and took shelter in the houses of their relatives or in the nearby shrubs³⁵. Many of the Hindu houses in the eastern parts of Eranad Taluk were subjected to plunder and looting from the hands of rebel *Mappilas*³⁶. It was a common experience for a whole family to depart with the exception of one member left to look after their possessions³⁷. But the poorer classes stayed back as long as they could. Finally they also were forced to leave their houses. They had to wait till the approach of troops, which made it possible for them to reach Calicut by night marches. They had to leave all their

³³ S.K. Pottakkad *et .al., op. cit.*, p.94.

³⁴ On the basis of interview with Perumpalli Manakkal Krishnan Namboodiri, Mankada –Pallipuram, aged 85 on 20-8-2003.

³⁵In a conversation with Manamadathil Meenakshi Amma, aged 77, Padinhattummuri, Malappuram on 10-6-2004, she told that her parents and other members of the family took shelter in one of the prominent Nair Tharavadu, at Thamarakuzhi, Malappuram.

³⁶ K.Madhavan Nair, “Malabarile Mappila Lahala-Kudiyan Prakshobham”, in *Mathrubhumi*, dated 2nd August 1924.

³⁷ Hitchcock, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.152.

property³⁸. In this state of wretchedness and sorrow, hundreds of Namboodiris and their women, some almost naked, some in advanced pregnancy, some with new born babies in their arms, left their Illoms without any property and took shelter in Zamorin's Kovilakams³⁹. The Nair servants of Namboodiri Illoms also had the same fate as their household vessels had all been looted. Their masters were afraid of returning even after the suppression of the Rebellion. And they and their families had been fallen poverty.

It was reported that the rebels had committed more atrocities at Thuvur, a place near Karuvarakundu in the Eastern part of Eranad Taluk, on the ground that its people were helping the military. Houses of prominent Nair families were plundered and looted. They took all the money and jewelers from these Nair houses⁴⁰. Women in the rebel areas, for fear of attack and disgrace, had taken shelter in the forests. And it was reported that some Hindu women had premature deliveries in the forests on account of fear⁴¹. It was only six or seven months after the Rebellion that many of those who had left their houses in fear of rebel attack, came back. When they returned, they could see that, all their valuables and property were either destroyed or

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Presidential address of the Zamorin in the Conference of Sufferers from the *Mappila* Rebellion held at Calicut on 19th February 1922 under the auspices of the Malabar Reconstruction Committee, Proceedings of the Conference, NMML.

⁴⁰ Information given by relatives of V.Gopalan Nair, Thuvur, who was a victim of these atrocities.

⁴¹ *The Leader*, 8th September 1921, MNNPR, TNA.

plundered. Their crops were failed due to neglect and so the economic condition was more difficult to deal with. They needed new seeds and ploughs for cultivation. Even after the suppression of the Rebellion and capturing of the rebels, the people were living in a fearful situation, due to the alarming reports of raids, which are bound to occur here and there.

The same was the fate of the non-participant Mohammedans. They were completely isolated from the entire community. The rebels, government and their Hindu brethren considered them as enemies. Their houses were attacked in day time by the soldiers and in the night by the rebels, accusing that they had rendered help to the military⁴². So they had to pass their days hiding in the jungles or in the thickets. These people led a very gruesome life for seven or eight months, after their houses were put in to ashes and since they had nothing to do for living⁴³. Madhavan Nair, who toured in the rebel areas along with V.S.Srinivasa Sastri, representative of Servants of India Society, during April-May 1922, reported that they could not see any house that had not been burnt and in this regard military had not shown any discrimination between Hindus and Muslims⁴⁴. This reveals that even though

⁴² A .P. Ibrahim Kunju, *The Mappilas Muslims of Kerala-Their History and Culture*, Trivandrum, 1989, p.134.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ K. Madhavan Nair, *Kalapam, op.cit.*, pp.278-79.

the *Mappilas* were perpetrating some atrocities, the police and military certainly excelled the *Mappilas* in this matter⁴⁵.

Due to the Rebellion, agriculture had been destroyed, employment was in a stagnant stage, famine had spread everywhere and sufferings were there in every part of Malabar. Hundreds of *Mappila* women and children became wanderers. Many were subjected to life long imprisonment as they were accused of providing indirect help to their men. It is seen in the Archival records that Kakkanad Chalil Thamasikkum Aliyangal Ayisha Umma of Pandikkadu Amsom, her son Ahammed Kutty aged 13, her daughter Amina Umma aged 15 and Pathumma aged 10 were remanded to the Cannannore jail on 14th February, 1922 by the Sub Magistrate of Kunnamangalam on a charge of supplying provisions to rebels⁴⁶. It was reported that the District Magistrate of Calicut ordered for the release of the boys and two girls, but it was in vain, while their mother was in jail, they had no place to go⁴⁷. Like this, a large number of innocent children had to spend their childhood behind bars, even though they didn't commit any crime. Such a plight could be seen in every nook and corner of Ernad and Valluvanad Taluks in the post Rebellion period.

⁴⁵ *The Malayalee*, dated 22nd October, 1921, MNNPR, TNA, Chennai.

⁴⁶ Letter from Malabar District Magistrate's Office, Calicut, 1st June 1922, File-1922 (Public) 13-99, RAC.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Regarding the conditions of people in the immediate post Rebellion period, Madhavan Nair recorded that: "while traveling through Malabar the cries of dejection and depression were heard every where. Everything had been looted by the mutineers. The dispossessed and disgusted Hindu and *Mappila* communities have undergone undesirable traumas due to the indiscriminate human hunting. The local *Mappilas*, who were held responsible for the Rebellion, were subjected to severe persecution. They had to suffer a lot. Even one year after the Rebellion, the police haven't withdrawn their actions. The pursuit of innocent people was still going on. People, guilty of serious offences, were roaming around freely, while innocent people were put behind the bars⁴⁸. Most of the poor women and children were leading a miserable life, as their men, who had been striving hard to protect their families with small business and farming, were imprisoned due to the negligence and irresponsibility of some police personnel⁴⁹ and many had lost their patrons. Misery and poverty could be seen irrespective of religion. No *Mappila* member was seen there who hasn't endured the traumas of the Rebellion⁵⁰. Some of them earned their livelihood by picking firewood and selling it. They had no other means to earn⁵¹.

⁴⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 20th March 1923.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 22nd March 1923.

⁵⁰ Report of Yakub Hassan after his visit of Malabar in *Mathrubhumi*, dated 19th April 1924.

⁵¹ *Kerala Chandrika*, Quilon, dated 2nd October 1922, MNNPR, TNA.

Madhavan Nair and Uppi Sahib, who visited the riot stricken locality mentioned about the supply of gruel to the poor by one Moosa, the Sub Registrar of Vilayoor. It was reported that more than one thousand people used to gather to get gruel⁵². Even though hatred, mutual suspicion and fear existed between both Hindu and Muslim communities, in an era of sufferings they lived together with mutual co-operation⁵³.

The plight of the Hindus who were subjected to forcible conversion in the hands of the rebels, were more deplorable for they could not live in any of the communities. These conversions disturbed the existing social order and created absolute disorder. It was stated that the deliberate and systematic attempts of forced conversions by the rebels only appear to have taken place in a few places i.e. Pookkottur-Melmuri area and Iringaattiri- Areacode area of the Ernad Taluk and Cheruvadi in Kodiathur Amsom and in Puthur amsom of the Calicut Taluk⁵⁴. The Government, as a matter of policy, never attempted to make proper estimate of the cases of all these forced conversions. But in November 1921, the Secretary of State required a 'safe' estimate of the number of forced conversions. The District Magistrate of Malabar stated, in response to it, that reliable information had been received

⁵² *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16th August 1924. Report captioned " Condition of Ernad and Valluvanad.

⁵³ This conclusion was made on the basis of interview with Valachetty Krishnan, 85 years, Padinhattummuri, Malappuram, on 2-11-2003 and C.K. Yusuf, Melmuri, aged 80 on 23-12-04.

⁵⁴ M.Gangadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.354.



relating to 180 conversions. It is added that the total must exceed to 500 and may ran up to thousand⁵⁵.

An unofficial report says that more than 5000 Hindus were forcibly converted into Islam, but some later estimates put the total bare minimum of 1000-1500⁵⁶. Some other estimates shows that the forced conversions range between 200 and 2,500⁵⁷. Hitchcock reported about 900 forcible conversion and he had noted that in an event at Melmuri alone about 57 Hindus were converted⁵⁸. K.P. Kesava Menon in an interview with Roland .E.Miller on April 1972, puts the number in between 200 and 300 out of which 52 he could personally document⁵⁹. Pundit Rishi Ram, who was in charge of works of re-conversion of forced converts, undertaken by Arya Samaj, believes that the total number of such converts exceeds 2500.⁶⁰ But E.M.S Namboodiripad has remarked that if Malabar Rebellion is a communal riot, the 2,500 forced conversions in an area with 4 lakh Hindus is very low indeed.⁶¹ It has been

⁵⁵ District Magistrate, Malabar, Telegram No. 687, 8th November 1921 in G.R.F.Tottenham (ed.), *The Malabar Rebellion 1921-1920*, Madras, 1922, p.173.

⁵⁶ F.B. Evans, Notes on the Rebellion, 22nd March 1922 in the file of Public Department, G.O. No. 337, 15th April 1922, TNA.

⁵⁷ Roland E.Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala-A Study in Islamic Trends*, Madras, 1992, p.148.

⁵⁸ Hitchcock, *Rebellion*, *op. cit.*, p.145.

⁵⁹ Roland E. Miller, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ In the Arya Samaj Register alone 1766 cases of forced conversions have been recorded and if figures from all relief committees were collected, then the number is sure to exceed 2500. Pundit Rishi Ram, letter cited by C.Gopalan Nair, *Moplah Rebellion 1921*, Calicut, 1923, p.119.

⁶¹ E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *National Question in Kerala*, Bombay, 1952, p.283.

recorded that in the refuge camp at Edavanna alone about 181 were forcibly converted⁶². Whatever may be the statistics of forcible conversion, information are not reliable and so it is difficult to say the exact number.

In the beginning, the Congress sources believed that there were only three cases of forced conversions. Later, Gandhiji confessed to the representatives of *Daily Express* that some other cases also had been brought into the notice of the Congress people, and they were much regretted⁶³. An investigation committee consisting of T. Prakasam and T.V. Venkata Rama Ayyar, visited Malabar with the purpose of inquiring into the causes of the Rebellion and issued a report which stated that there were only three cases of forcible conversions⁶⁴. Later the issue of forcible conversions became very serious and news regarding this was published in various newspapers. The *Madras Mail* Special Correspondent at Calicut has wired a long account of interview he had at Calicut with Komu Menon, a wealthy landlord of Ernad and a retired officer of Salt and *Abkari*, who had been attempted to be converted forcibly some days before with his entire family. Komu Menon's entire family escaped from the cruelties of *Mappilas* due to the sound of drums that they could hear as a warning at that time. Komu Menon said that

⁶² Roland E. Miller, *op. cit.*, p.147.

⁶³ Sukhbir Choudhari, *Moplah Uprisings (1921-23)*, Delhi, 1997, p.44.

⁶⁴ Home (Pol.) Department, Government of India, File No. 601/1922, p.4, cited in *Ibid*

even then, he did not bring any single *Mappila* into the court⁶⁵. K. Madhavan Nair quoted the words of sufferers from one forced conversion camp which was reported in a press on November 1st that: "almost all these conversions to Islam were done at Puthur Mana on the same day. Those who were not ready to convert, were shot and their bodies were thrown into a nearby well".⁶⁶

C.F.Andrews wrote in *Young India* that he witnessed pathetic situation in various places during his journey through Malabar. He saw very crucial evidences of forced conversions. He saw a half dead Hindu who had lost all his energy and strength due to the *Margakalyana*(circumcision) done by the fanatical *Mappilas*.⁶⁷

Such incidents had taken place in various parts of Malabar. The most significant thing in connection with all these conversions is that none of the important leaders like Ali Mussaliar, Variankunnath Kunhahammed Haji and Chembrasser Tangal did not favor such forcible conversions. Instead, they were against this. It is said that most of them were sanctioned and permitted by Konnara Thangal, Abdu Haji and Moideen Haji⁶⁸. But, in fact, all these conversions were not confined to the efforts of these four leaders. Several

⁶⁵ *Bombay Chronicle*, dated 19th September 1921.

⁶⁶ K. Madhavan Nair, *Kalapam*, *op. cit.*, p.222.

⁶⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 7th July 1924.

⁶⁸ K.M. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State- Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar 1836-1921*, Delhi, 1989, p.186. also said by Nellikkuth Muhammed Mussaliar, grandson of Ali Mussaliar, aged 85, Nellikkuth, Manjeri on 7.10.04.

rebel bands were actively involved in such forcible conversions. In many parts, such atrocities were committed by some gangs of rebels lead by Maravakulath Abdullakutty, the under trial prisoner forcibly released from police lock up by the rebel mob at Manjeri⁶⁹.

The worst of all was the plight of the converted people. Both women and men had to suffer mental torture. If the unhappy victim of conversion reverted to Hinduism, the fanatic Muslims considered him as an apostle. And they regarded it as a religious duty to punish apostasy with death⁷⁰. Most of the converted people were upper caste Hindus and there were no reports regarding the lower caste converts⁷¹. These converted people had to face many social problems also. Their relatives discarded them and he and his family lost all contacts with the entire society. Life became a severe hardship to such people⁷². In the earlier period, the *Mappilas* welcomed these converted people with full support, as their number would increase. But in the later days, the relationship was not so affable and these converted people seemed to be a burden to the *Mappilas*. In this stage, there were no patrons to

⁶⁹ M. Gangadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.358. He gave a detailed report of these forced conversions. In Hitchcock, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, and Tottenham (ed.), *Rebellion, op. cit.*, also have details of the trials of those who involved in such atrocities.

⁷⁰ Sukhbir Choudhari, *op. cit.*, p.45.

⁷¹ All the accounts may add some exaggerations and the number of converts were not so high.

⁷² *Mathrubhumi*, dated 26th March 1923.

protect these poor people and they became helpless. They suffered mental depression⁷³. This mental depression of the local Hindu is revealed in a letter dated 29th August 1921 from P.V. Ramunni of Mahe to W.W. Haily, Finance Member of Viceroy's Council, Government of India⁷⁴. Disappointed with the behavior of *Mappilas*, a Hindu friend of Gandhiji, wrote a letter in the last week of September in which he showed his apprehension that the success of Khilafat might embolden the fanatical *Mappilas* to attempt forcible conversion of Hindus⁷⁵. In the Assembly of Madras, S. Mudaliar demanded that the government should guarantee the safety of the lives of those who had been forcibly converted and who were taken back to their original faith. He also demanded that a promise had to be extracted from the Thangals that no harm would be done to the converts⁷⁶. Through an appeal Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad declared that if such cases of violence and force occurred, it is against Islamic law⁷⁷. Gandhiji wrote on 20th October, 1921 in *Young India* that: "these forced conversions and plundering of Hindu houses by *Mappilas*

⁷³ Inference made on account of the mentioning in Menon.S Marath, *Wounds of the Spring* (Novel), Translated into Malayalam by M. Gangadharan.

⁷⁴ Home (Political) Department, Government of India, File No: 241/Pol/Part IA, Serial Nos-123, p.31, cited in Sukhbir Choudhari, *op. cit.*, p.45.

⁷⁵ *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol XXI, p.202, Also in Sukhbir Chaudhari, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ Home (Pol.) Department, Government of India, File No. 24/922/ Part II, A/ Serial Nos 1-9, p.12, cited by Sukhbir Chaudhari, *op. cit.*, p.46.

⁷⁷ *Bombay Chronicle*, dated 17th September, 1921.

will be a shame to other Muslims”⁷⁸. Presiding over the meeting that was addressed by Gandhiji at the Madras beach on 15th September 1921, Yakub Hassan condemned the *Mappilas* for their brute and mad behavior against the Hindus. In the same meeting, he explicitly pointed out those Hindu men and women who were supposed to have been forcibly converted were "inadmissible to the faith of Islam".⁷⁹

This forcible conversion of certain Hindus and the inhuman behavior committed against them by the *Mappilas*, led to the creation of a strong apprehension in the minds of certain Hindu leaders⁸⁰. Instead of going deep into the reasons of these disturbances, they resorted to a remedy, which could only work temporarily, leaving the main problem unsettled as before. It was under the initiative of these leaders that attempts have been made to reconvert the Hindus who were converted forcibly or willingly to Islam and other religions. Such Hindu leaders, to reconvert the already converted Hindus, formed the Shudhi Movement⁸¹. On knowing the news of forced conversions in Malabar as a part of the Rebellion, attempts were made in various parts of India by different organizations and persons to provide relief. It has been reported that, the Khilafat Committee, who condemned these forcible

⁷⁸ Quoted by Saumyendra Nath Tagore, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar 1921*, Bombay, 1937. Translated in to Malayalam by M. Rasheed, *1921-Malabarile Karshaka Lahala*, Kollam, 1997, pp.35-36.

⁷⁹ *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXI, p.120.

⁸⁰ Sukhbir Choudhari, *Growth of Nationalism in India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1973, p.396.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

conversions, endeavored to give a certain sum of money for the relief of those Hindus who had suffered by the atrocities of the *Mappilas*.⁸² It has been reported that a meeting was conducted at Nagpur to make arrangement for the converted ones to revert into their own religion. For this purpose, they decided to raise a fund also⁸³. Sree Sankaracharya Swami also agreed that there was no objection to readmit the converted Hindus into their original religion. He calculated the need of an amount of Rs.50,000 for conducting Sudhi, and gave permission to his followers to collect that money⁸⁴.

The Arya Samaj stood in front of all in the reconversion process. They came with the aim of undertaking reconversion process, through the Shudhi movement. They appear to have received help from the officers of the District as well as the orthodox section of Hindu society in their effort to make arrangements for the reversion of the forcibly converted ones to their original faith⁸⁵. In view of this, a meeting was held on 20th August, 1922, under the presidentship of Zamorin, Raja of Calicut, with a council of Namboodiri *vaidikans*⁸⁶ to decide the further question of the future status of

⁸² Sukhbir Chaudhari, *Rebellion, Op. cit.*, p.362.

⁸³ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 14th January 1922.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, dated 1st April, 1922.

⁸⁵ M. Gangadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.362.

⁸⁶ *Vaidikans* literally means one who is well versed in the Vedas. It means 'purohitas' who were responsible for conducting religious ceremonies in Hindu religion.

these forced converts⁸⁷. The meeting was conducted in the presence of several gentlemen including the District Magistrate. The objective of this meeting was to consider the question of receiving a great number of Hindus, forcibly converted into Islam or compelled to do things against the accepted rules of Hindu religion, back to the Hindu fold⁸⁸. The meeting resolved to prescribe certain '*prayaschithams*' (expiatory ceremonies) to expiate the sins forced on them⁸⁹. It was decided that the victims of forced conversion had to produce a certificate from the owners or managers of temples regarding observance of expiatory ceremonies before the Zamorin and the Zamorin would then issue formal certificates to the effect that the persons concerned were restored to the religious status they were having before the Rebellion⁹⁰.

Majority of these types of reconversion processes were undertaken under the auspices of Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj sent Pundit Rishi Ram in to Malabar for this purpose and opened an office at Calicut. The editor of '*Aryagaja*', Kusalchand and M.Venkatachalayyar visited the interior parts of Malabar under the auspices of Aryasamaj and provided help for many in the reconversion process⁹¹. Still, till the end of April, about 150 converted persons were there in Malabar other than those who came under the custody

⁸⁷ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.116.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ M. Gangadharan, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.362.

⁹⁰ Report in *West Coast Spectator*, Calicut, dated 22nd August 1922, cited in C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, pp.117-18.

⁹¹ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 30th May 1922.

of Arya Samaj for the purpose of reconversion⁹². Pundit Rishi Ram claimed that they are the only one organization, which was undertaking the re-conversion process in Malabar⁹³. It was stated that, as a part of *prayaschitha* ceremony, which had been decided in the earlier meeting of *Vaidikans* at Zamorins Kovilakam, about 2500 persons were reconverted and among this itself about 1766 were reconverted under the auspices of Arya Samaj alone⁹⁴.

For providing relief to those people who were subjected to forcible conversion, a separate relief camp was opened at Calicut under Malabar Central Relief Committee. After the suppression of the Rebellion, they provided all facilities to these sufferers and made many arrangements for these converts to return to their original faith as well as to their homes. Even then, protection of these forcibly converted Hindus from possible future violence was a question in front of the authorities⁹⁵. Even months after the suppression of the Rebellion, many converted had not returned in some amounts as they were being kept in a specially provided relief camp at Calicut⁹⁶. A resolution was passed, in the conference of the sufferers of the *Mappila* Rebellion held at Calicut on 19th February 1922, which proposed to undertake proper steps to readmit in to Hinduism the persons converted in to

⁹² Letter of Pundit Rishi Ram, published in *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Statistics given on the basis of report in *Ibid.*, dated 22nd September, 1922.

⁹⁵ Government of Madras, Public Department, G.O. No. 363, 26th April 1923, Note by the Special Commission for Malabar Affairs, No.4798/D1/221, RAC.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Mohammedanism.⁹⁷ But it appears that such reconversions soon became a cause of anxiety to all concerned.

b. INITIAL RESPONSES

Relief and Reconstruction

With in a few days after the Rebellion, people of the rebel areas were compelled to abandon their houses, in fear of *Mappila* attacks. Many of them took asylum in both inside and outside of the rebel areas. For providing food and shelter to these refugees, relief committees and camps were formed in different parts of Malabar. Understanding the sufferings of these people, helps flowed into Malabar from various parts of India. Many social organizations and associations came into Malabar and rendered their help to the sufferers. The Government also joined hands with these organizations and philanthropists for the reconstruction works. Local *Rajas* also had rendered relief to these refugees.

These relief works can mainly be classified into four categories:

(I) relief measures initiated by local magnates in and around the rebel area, (II) attempts made by national political organizations, (III) attempts of pro-governmental agencies and (IV) relief works rendered by voluntary non-

⁹⁷ Proceedings of the Sufferers Conference held at Calicut on 19th February 1922, under the auspices of MCRC, NMML.

governmental organizations like Servants of India Society, Arya Samaj of Lahore, Poona Seva Sadan Society, Y.M.C.A. etc.

When the Rebellion became violent many Hindu and non-participant Muslims ran away, leaving their homes, for securing their life and took asylum in the houses of relatives, or prominent *Tharavads* or *Kovilakams*, which were not supposed to be attacked by the rebels. It has been stated that most of the prominent Hindu members of Padinhattummuri, a place near Malappuram, took asylum in one of the prominent Nair Tharavad at Thamarakkuzhi, Malappuram.⁹⁸ Members of Perumpalli Mana and nearby Illams of Mankada-Pallippuram had gone to Mankada Kovilakam. Perumpalli Manakkal Krishnan Namboodiri remembered that ‘when their family had reached Mankada Kovilakam, they saw a large number of refugees gathered there, among whom majority were Namboodiri Brahmins. They were provided with gruel that was prepared by the upper sections of the society⁹⁹. It was reported that Rao Bahadur Krishna Varma Raja of Mankada palace spent about Rs.20,000/- for relief¹⁰⁰. MadhavanNair’s house at

⁹⁸ Information given by Manamadathil Meenakshi Amma aged 77, Padinhattammuri, Malappuram in a discussion on 10-6-2004.

⁹⁹ Interview with Perumpalli Manakkal Krishnan Namboodiri, aged 85, Mankada Pallippuram, on 20-8-2003.

¹⁰⁰ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 20th September 1923.

Manjeri became a center for these poor sufferers, and he provided food and shelter to them¹⁰¹.

The camp at Mankavu Palace (Zamorins Palace) started giving relief on 27th August 1921. To this camp some Namboodiri families came from the eastern parts of Calicut Taluk and also from the adjoining villages of Ernad Taluk. The Zamorins Kovilakam had spent about Rs.16,000/- for relief¹⁰². Kavalappara Mooppil Nair of Kavalappara Kovilakam provided food, shelter and clothing to more than one thousand five hundred persons at both Vaniyamkulam and Kavalappara¹⁰³. By 10th October 1921, the Kavalappara relief camp, which was opened in the beginning of October itself, was affiliated to the Central Relief Committee and it contributed about Rs. 8,299-14.0/- towards the relief at Kavalappara. The Moopil Nair gave an initial subscription of Rs.300/- to the relief fund and spent considerable amount for the relief of the refugees¹⁰⁴. The Kulathur Sulapani Varier also had provided food for victims, which came around 1500 at his residence, even though the rebels attacked him.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Madhavan Nair, *Kalapam*, *op. cit.*, p.123.

¹⁰² C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.101.

¹⁰³ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 20th September 1923.

¹⁰⁴ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.105.

¹⁰⁵ *Malayala Manorama*, *op. cit.*

The relief camp for those who sought protection at Kottakkal Kovilakam began on 21st August 1921 itself¹⁰⁶. The number of persons fed began with 100 and gradually increased till it reached to about 2000 after the 25th of the month when murders and conversions commenced¹⁰⁷. It was reported that Manavikrama Raja of Kottakkal Kovilakam spent more than Rs.21,000/- for refugees¹⁰⁸, and protected a large number of Namboodiri's. The Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala, under the auspices of Vaidyaratnam P.S. Varier had also rendered relief to all refugees, irrespective of caste. A very large number of women and children were protected and fed under the Vaidya Sala. It was reported that the term '*Varier*' was a safe passport in those days in Ernad Taluk and that helped not only the civil population in and around Kottakkal, but also proved to be of unaccountable help to the officers of the Government¹⁰⁹. Later, Servants of India Society started organizing relief works at Kottakkal itself. One peculiar feature of Arya Vaidya Sala and its head was that they had rendered kind service to *Mappilas* also, which was not the case with all other camps. In the opinion of P.S. Varier: "Rebellion is not the creation of women and children, but of the male members of the

¹⁰⁶ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.103.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Malayala Manorama*, *op. cit.* C. Gopalan Nair wrote that Kottakkal Kovilakam spent about Rs. 27,424/-.

¹⁰⁹ Keezhedath Vasudevan Nair, *Vaidyaratnam P.S. Varier-A Biography*, Kottakkal, 1977, p.59.

community and so humane kindness and justice should be rendered towards them"¹¹⁰. It seems that G.D. Devadhar, leader of Servants of India Society, later turned to the issue of providing relief to the *Mappilas*, after his conversation with P.S. Varier¹¹¹.

Another attempt for relief to the sufferers of the Rebellion was done under the auspices of Indian National Congress and All India Khilafat Committee. The Kerala Congress Committee started giving relief at Manjeri on 9th September 1921 and at Calicut on 5th October¹¹². On those days, Madhavan Nair's house at Manjeri was transformed in to a refugee camp for the Hindus. Later Madhavan Nair left to Calicut, to seek means for providing food to these refugees. When he reached Calicut, he saw that the Calicut town was filled with refugees from Ernad and Valluvanad. The Congress workers under the leadership of Madhavan Nair sought help from even Rajaji and Gandhiji for providing food and shelter to these sufferers¹¹³. Madhavan Nair's house at Chalappuram was also transformed as a relief camp. In response to the appeal made by Madhavan Nair, Rajagopalachari reached Calicut and formed a Congress Relief Committee under the supervision of Madhavan Nair. Ambalakkatt Karunakara Menon, K.P. Kesava Menon,

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.60.

¹¹¹ *Malabar Rebellion, Moplah Relief, An appeal to Mohammedan Community*, sub file 12, BSML, NMML, cited by T.MuhammadAli, 'Social Life in South Malabar-Reform and Nationalism,' Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Calicut, 2003.

¹¹² C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.99.

¹¹³ C.K. Moosad, *Madhavan Nair-Biography*, Calicut, 1987, p.127.

P. Achuthan and K.V. Gopala Menon were the members of the committee¹¹⁴. Money was sent from different parts of India to Malabar for relief works, and even Mahatmaji himself came forward to collect money for relief work¹¹⁵.

Relief camps were opened at Azhchavattom, Vazhappilli and Francis Road at Calicut for about 25000 refugees. They were provided with rice for preparing food and facilities for the diseased persons¹¹⁶. These relief works continued at least for 6 months. With the help of Khilafat leaders, Madhavan Nair and other Congress leaders could collect food items from different parts of Ernad¹¹⁷. From the relief fund, they could provide help to the families of the killed and imprisoned ones. When criticisms came up blaming that the Congress Relief Camps were mainly meant for Hindus, and neglected Muslims, Madhavan Nair with the help of C.K. Komukutty Moulavi and Abdullakutty Moulavi, spent about half lakh rupees exclusively for *Mappilas*¹¹⁸. After the suppression of the Rebellion, they decided to stop some of the relief camps and on 28th February, most of the refugees returned to their homes. On 1st March the refugees remained at Calicut was 1129, exclusive of *Mappilas* from the interior of whom relief was extended for one week. On 8th

¹¹⁴ K. Madhavan Nair *Janma Sadabdhi Smaranika*, Calicut, 1982, p.38.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinhakalam*, Calicut, 1986, p.121.

¹¹⁷ K. Madhavan Nair *Janmasadabdhi*, *op. cit.*, p.39.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

September 1922 relief work at Calicut was completely stopped¹¹⁹. Under the leadership of Kurur Neelakandan Namboodiripad, a relief camp was organized at Trichur also¹²⁰. In Malabar, V.R.Nayanar also organized some rehabilitation centers for the sufferers of the Rebellion. It was from this fund that later DMRT was formed. Gandhiji was infinitely fascinated with these relief measures and he collected some funds in accord of this from different parts of the country¹²¹.

All relief work was mainly concentrated the refugees who had poured into Calicut and surrounding areas only, and rehabilitation of those who were there in the riot stricken area was totally neglected. The *Mappila* women and children, who had suffered severely from the authorities, were not permitted to come out of the area, which was under the Martial Law, and they had to keep away from the sympathy of the public. The Khilafat leaders, especially, Muhammad Abdurahiman, were very much sympathetic towards these innocent people. He had intended to go to the interior of Ernad and Valluvanad, but was prevented by the District Magistrate from leaving the boundaries of the Calicut Municipality¹²². He had complained that even the Congress workers also seemed to provide relief to Hindus only and neglected

¹¹⁹ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.100.

¹²⁰ *Mathrubhumi yude Charitram*, Vol.I, Calicut, 1998, p.43.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Letter of Muhammad Abdurahiman to the Secretary Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay, U.S.S.F, No. 410-1, dated 24th October 1924, TNA.

Muslims¹²³. He wrote a letter to the editor of *The Hindu* saying: "innocent women and children of Islam who haven't any involvement in the riot, are not permitted to leave the place"¹²⁴.

Muhammad Abdurahiman took initiative to bring the *Mappila* women and children, who had been hiding in the caves in forests, to the outside world. He provided food to these people, by trekking for many days through mountains, hills and forests, which were inaccessible even for the Gurkhas¹²⁵. Under the initiative of Muhammad Abdurahiman, a relief camp was opened at Kallai when the number of *Mappila* women and children increased day by day¹²⁶. He wrote a letter to the Superintendent of Central Khilafat Committee seeking help for relief to the innocent Mohammedan women and children, who were starving. He applied for a loan of Rs.1000/- from Central Khilafat Committee¹²⁷. It was reported that the British authorities, especially the District Magistrate, Thomas, was irritated by the activities of Muhammad Abdurahiman and began to put every kind of obstacles in his activities¹²⁸. Abdurahiman wrote to Yakub Hassan that he did not get the money of

¹²³ Public Department (Confidential) G.O.No.327 dated 2nd November 1921, TNA.

¹²⁴ *The Hindu*, dated 18th October 1921.

¹²⁵ A.K.M. Kadir, *Sher-e-Malabar Muhammad Abdurahiman*, Kodungallur, 1945, p.10.

¹²⁶ Muhammad Poozhikkath, 'Muhammad Abdurahiman: Pursuits and Perspectives of a Nationalist Muslim', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Calicut, 2005.

¹²⁷ Letter from Muhammad Abdurahiman, K.P.K.C., Calicut to the Superintendent, CKC, Bombay dated 17th September 1921. From the Criminal Branch (strictly confidential) SF 410, TNA.

¹²⁸ M.Gangadharan, *Rebellion*, *op. cit.*, p.500.

Rs.1000/-, which was sent by Hassan¹²⁹. Hearing that Muslim women and children were desiring to come to Calicut from the area which was under the Martial law, Muhammad Abdurahiman wrote a letter to C.P. Thomas requesting him to instruct the police and military not to prevent Muslim women and children from leaving those areas seeking relief, and also he demanded for a permission to send a few persons to bring all the sufferers there¹³⁰. Muhammad Abdurahiman sent this letter to the District Magistrate with the help of Kunhamu, Secretary of District Khilafat Committee, but the District Magistrate refused to accept the letter. So he sent this letter by registered post. When the letter was not responded, Muhammad Abdurahiman sent it to the prominent nationalist newspapers in India and through *'The Hindu'* and *'Bombay Chronicle'*, it came to light¹³¹.

As a consequence of this, aids were poured into Malabar from various parts of India. Sympathizing with the refugees, a public meeting was conducted at Chaupathy Beach, Bombay and money and other aids were sent to the sufferers¹³². Food, clothing and medical aid began to flow to Malabar. Abdurahiman was called to Delhi to meet Ali Brothers, Jawaharlal Nehru and

¹²⁹ Letter from Muhammad Abdurahiman, KPKC, Calicut, to the Superintendent, CKC, Bombay, dated 26th September 1921, From Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, TNA.

¹³⁰ Letter from Muhammad Abdurahiman to Central Khilafat Secretary, Bombay dated 18th October 1921.

¹³¹ S.K. Pottekkad, *et. al., op. cit.*, p.117.

¹³² M.Rasheed, *op. cit.*, p.25.

Dr. Ansari. He could get an advance of one lakh rupees from the All India Khilafat Committee for his relief activities in Malabar¹³³. A *Mappila* Relief Committee was formed under Moulana Yakub Hussan to impart help to the refugees¹³⁴. Knowing all this, E.F.Thomas got provoked and MuhammadAbdurahiman was arrested on 22nd October 1921 and was sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment on charge of "disseminating false information against the government"¹³⁵.

Even though, Muhammad Abdurrahman was arrested, his efforts bore fruit. In response to the request of *Mappila* Relief Committee, a huge amounts was sent to the relief of Malabar from different parts of India. Knowing the pathetic condition of *Mappila* women and children, Moulana Qusuri, one of the wealthy person at Amritsar, send his sons Moulana Mohiyudheen Ahmmed and Moulana Abdul Khadar Qusuri to Calicut to undertake relief works¹³⁶. They reached Calicut as the workers of Jamiate-e-Dovali-e-Thableg-e-Islam, the headquarters of which was at Punai¹³⁷. They visited the riot stricken areas and organized relief camps in six centers¹³⁸. Through these camps, they supplied rice free of cost to about 25,000 people,

¹³³ A. Muhammad, *Swathantrya Samara Smaranakal*, Calicut, 1981, p.79.

¹³⁴ P.A. Sayd Muhammad, *Directory, op. cit.*, p.314.

¹³⁵ *Bombay Chronicle*, dated 1st November 1921, NMML.

¹³⁶ Parappil Muhammed Koya, *Kozhikkotte Muslimgalude Charitram*, Calicut, 1994, p.189.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ P.A. Sayd Muhammad, *Kerala Muslim Directory*, Cochin, 1960, p.374.

and repaired about 285 demolished houses and also provided clothes to more than 1700 women and about 5000 children. For the rescue of the orphans, they established the first orphanage of Kerala, which is known as JDT Islam Orphanage in 1922 at Calicut in the Calicut-Wynad Road. They also had established employment centers (factories) at different places. One among them was at Areekode¹³⁹. They also had to face severe criticisms from the orthodox sections of the community and even were accused as Wahabis. But they didn't care these criticisms and continued their work. Now JDT Islam has some other branches¹⁴⁰ also and functions even now as a rescue center for the orphans.

Another attempt to provide relief to Muslims came from the Moplah Amelioration Committee, a pro-government association, formed at Calicut. This committee was formed as a response to the statement of Pompy, the General Secretary of YMCA in '*Madras Mail*', that there were about 75,000 Muslims in riot stricken areas who had no means for food, clothes and shelter. He pointed out that: "their life will be in danger, if we fail to help them in time"¹⁴¹. Mr. Jamal Muhammad Sahib, a notable merchant at Madras was the President of the Committee and many notable wealthy persons were also

¹³⁹ Moidu Moulavi, *Atmakatha, op. cit.*, p.90.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Parappil Muhammed Koya, *op. cit.*, p.167.

there as its members. They formed a branch committee at Calicut with Kanhirambalath Koyasan Koya Haji as the secretary. All the members of the committee provided financial assistances to it¹⁴². With the permission of the Government they visited the riot stricken areas and provided relief and rehabilitation to the poor *Mappila* sufferers, who were kept in the midst of police and rebels in the interior parts of South Malabar.

The non-government agencies like Arya Samaj, Servants of India Society, YMCA etc. also provided notable relief work to the poor sufferers in Malabar. Knowing the sufferings of the Hindus in the riot stricken area, the workers of Arya Samaj under the leadership of Pandit Rishi Ram reached Calicut for providing help¹⁴³. The mission arrived at Calicut on 11th November 1921 and after inquiring in to the local conditions, started relief activities on 29th. By January 22nd, the number of refugees receiving rice from the Arya Samaj went up to 1800¹⁴⁴. On 5th March onwards, they opened another relief camp at Mayanad and it functioned till April 18th, 1922. In this camp, they supplied rice to about 4300 persons¹⁴⁵. Both in March and April, they provided rice to about 3 lakhs of people. They also provided employment to men, who were ready to work under Municipality and also gave salary to them. They also supplied *charka* to women for weaving, which

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ K.R. Achuthan, *C. Krishnan (biography)*, Kottayam, 1971, p.150.

¹⁴⁴ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.99.

¹⁴⁵ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 30th May 1922, letter from Pundit Rishi Ram.

was provided free of cost by the Congress¹⁴⁶. Arya Samaj distributed rice from five different centers like Calicut, Tanur, Nilambur, Tirurangadi and Neerala Mukh in the months of June, July and August 1922, when people were in extreme difficulties due to excessive rains and lack of labor. The total number of daily recipients was more than 10,000¹⁴⁷. The entire money, except two or three donations of small amounts, was collected from the local persons of Punjab and some other places out side the Madras presidency¹⁴⁸. They were the one and only organization, which had engaged in Shudhi movement to reconvert Hindus, who were forcibly converted into Islam. The Arya Samajists under Pundit Rishi Ram stayed in Malabar for long years and had engaged in uplifting the downtrodden sections of Hindu community. They also had worked for the regeneration of the whole Hindu community in the post Rebellion period.

The government through various agencies and organizations also took part in the relief and reconstruction works. On seeing the failure of crops and other damages in Malabar, it has been reported that C.F Thomas, wired to the Government of India on 26th August 1921, regarding the conditions of the state and emphasizing the need for further help. The Government promptly sent the Asiatic line S.S.Nawab with supplies which arrived on 28th August

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

1921 and prevented any immediate danger of distress at Calicut¹⁴⁹. But it is not obvious that how government had distributed this help among the distressed people. There are reports that the Government had distributed loans for the cultivators at lower rents under the provisions of Agricultural Loans Act¹⁵⁰. It is calculated that for about 13,500 people, at least around 5 lakh rupees was given as loan under the Agriculture Loan Regulation. And *Mappilas* were also provided loans for 7% interest¹⁵¹. There is no clear information regarding the direct distribution of the relief by government in addition to the above. The reports say that majority of the relief works of the government was through the non-governmental agencies in the field.

Many individuals also had taken initiative to collect money for providing relief. It was reported that lady Willington, the wife of Madras Governor conducted an exhibition at Madras in which the Malabar Village was the most attractive one and the income from this exhibition was meant for providing help to the poor sufferers of the Rebellion¹⁵². Lady-Willington also set up a lottery in connection with the exhibition for raising funds. Raja of Kollangode donated the prize of the lottery, an elephant, to her, and Zamorin of Calicut won it¹⁵³. But there is no other information regarding how much

¹⁴⁹ Hitchcock, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.152.

¹⁵⁰ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 20th September 1923.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Malayala Manorama*, dated 20th March 1923.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, dated 28th March 1923 .

amount was collected in the exhibition, and how was it spent in the distressed area.

On 13th September 1921, addressing to the public, Thomas issued an appeal to the press requesting for helps to the sufferers¹⁵⁴. The appeal was met with responses from all corners. In the very first days itself, many prominent socially committed gentlemen in Calicut like A.V. Govinda Menon, T.M. Appu Nedungadi, Manjeri Ramunni, T. Sankunni and others engaged in collecting food stuffs and distributing it in the rebel areas, especially in Manjeri and surrounding areas. Among them, K. Appu Menon had not only assisted in the work in Calicut, but also proceeded to Ernad and took an active part in the relief works there. And until on 9th October 1921, he had been in charge of the Muriat Camp¹⁵⁵. One deputation including K.P. Raman Menon, M.S. Ramayyar, Nilambur Ilaya Thirumulpad and C.Krishnan visited Malabar Collector and held discussions with him regarding the supply of relief to the refugees from Ernad¹⁵⁶. Thus, many refuge camps were organized. The Vellayil Camp was under the supervision of C. Krishnan¹⁵⁷.

In September 1921, the Servants of India Society's deputation under G.K. Devadar and three other members visited Malabar to investigate in to the

¹⁵⁴ Hitchcock, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.153.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ A.R. Achuthan, *op. cit.*, p.149.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.148.

conditions and decided to organize relief works with the co-operation of local organizations, the government and other philanthropic bodies¹⁵⁸. At that time, there were a large number of associations and organizations, which were ready to provide relief to the sufferers. All these organizations, came from outside to help the people of Malabar, decided to merge each other for the purpose of efficiency in their activities, to attain unity in their objectives, ensuring harmony of work and also to avoid multiplication of agencies. A new agency was then formed called Malabar Central Relief Committee in 9th October 1921¹⁵⁹. In the public meeting held at Bombay on 6th January 1922, G.K. Devadhar declared that: "the committee definitely accept the principle that the character of the relief would be thoroughly non-sectarian and fully humanitarian and that it would extend help to all classes of people-Hindus, Christians and *Mappilas*, so as to relieve sufferings of all irrespective of caste and creed. It kept its doors opened to the rich as well as the poor. A large number of well-to-do Namboodiri Brahmins and Nair's had taken shelter under its auspices¹⁶⁰. The MCRC had found, its necessity to develop a system for distributing relief in camps to a large number of homeless and destitute people who had rushed to Calicut from the neighboring areas pillaged and devastated by the rebels. The committee set up seven different

¹⁵⁸ C.Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.95.

¹⁵⁹ G.K. Devadhar, A statement on "Measures of Relief and Need for Help" in BSMP sub file (12) NMML.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

camps in Calicut, which bore the appearance of refuge villages. At one time the total number of refugees in these Calicut camps alone went up to six thousand five hundred. In these camps, people were given cooked meals, supplied with clothing, oil, soap, medicine and other comforts¹⁶¹. Under MCRC many branch committees were organized to conduct work of relief by going in to several places in the interior. The number of centers gradually grew up to 15 and nearly 20,000 men, women and children, in addition, were being helped in these camps, and at one time the total number supported under the schemes exceeded 26,000. Within a few weeks, there were 22 camps¹⁶². Money flowed from Madras, Bangalore, Bombay, Allahabad, Delhi, and Lahore and also from Basrah, Mesopotamia and Singapore to MCRC account. In spite of all this, the Bombay Committee sent almost half of the total amount of the fund¹⁶³. A Malabar Relief Fund was set up in Bombay in January 1922 under Jamshedji Jeejabhai as the President, with specified objective of collection of money and material required for the relief work.

About the beginning of January the refugees began to leave the camps for their homes and the committee provided liberal reputation doles in money ranging from Rs.5 to Rs.20 per family in addition to a week's provisions and

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Hitch Cock, *op. cit.*, p.153.

¹⁶³ G.K. Devadhar, *op. cit.*

the wages earned by them under the employment scheme¹⁶⁴. The relief camps were closed at the end of February, with the end of Martial Law, except one in Calicut for forced converts, decrepit, old and infirm people and this was maintained till July, 1922¹⁶⁵. The committee's attention was later directed to relief to those who did not receive help from the Government, mostly *Mappilas*. Money for the rebuilding of houses, food and clothing were given liberally¹⁶⁶. About Rs 2,72,000/- was spent by MCRC, much of which was received from Bombay through Mr. G.K. Devadhar. The balance of nearly Rs.36, 000/- was converted into a Reconstruction Fund after the name of G.K. Devadhar, who rendered help to Malabar in her hours of distress. The fund was known as Devadhar Malabar Reconstruction Fund. Devadhar decided to continue his work in Malabar, even after the winding up of the relief work. With the aim of using fund for reconstruction of riot stricken Malabar, Mr. Devadhar established Devadhar Malabar Reconstruction Trust¹⁶⁷. Mr. Devadhar, through DMRT, introduced several new measures of moral and economic reconstruction. With regard to the aim of moral reconstruction he declared: "the great problem before the people of Malabar now is the peaceful rehabilitation of the refugees after peace and order are restored. The two

¹⁶⁴ G. Gopalan Nair, *op. cit.*, p.96.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Hitchcock, *Rebellion, op. cit.*, p.154.

¹⁶⁷ T.M. Vijayan, "DMRT and its functions in Malabar", in V. Kunjali (ed.), *Kerala Society -Historical Perspectives*, Calicut University, 2002, p.200.

great communities in Malabar the Hindus and *Mappilas*, have to learn to live together as brothers and good citizens and lead a peaceful and united life in perfect harmony and self-respect. The Government and the leaders of the two communities will have to put their heads together to dense economic and educational measures. So that each community learns to respect the rights and religion of the other as all good citizens do"¹⁶⁸.

In the post Rebellion period, with the aim of spreading education among the poor and illiterate people of Malabar a large number of educational institutions were established under DMRT. In the earlier periods they were in the form of night schools. Such schools were established at Kottakkal, Farook etc¹⁶⁹. By 1930-31 DMRT had a higher elementary school at Tanur and Gokhala Elementary School at Gopalapuram at Quilandy¹⁷⁰. Later a number of schools were established under it and now almost all these schools are functioning very well under various managements. These attempts of DMRT made revolutionary changes in the political field of immediate post Rebellion Malabar.

¹⁶⁸ G.K. Devadhar, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22nd November 1924.

¹⁷⁰ Income and Expenditure Statement of DMRT, for the year 1930-31, File No. D.Dis 3116/31. RAC.

Containment Strategies – The Andaman Scheme

One of the most debated issue that aroused in the political scene of Malabar in the post Rebellion period was the Andaman Scheme. The slow resurrection of *Mappila* Community in Malabar was haunting to the British authorities. The restoration of peace and security, especially in the places where *Mappilas* had prominence, was a threat not only to the British authorities but also to the regeneration of old feudal order. So the British authorities, with the support of feudal lords thought of new measures to eliminate *Mappilas* from the soil of Malabar. A meeting was conducted for this at Calicut under the President ship of the Zamorin, the Raja of Calicut. It demanded the imposition of fines on the whole rebel area under *Moplah* Out Rages Act and also for the prosecution and deportation of various culprits¹⁷¹. There existed confusion among the British authorities about the possibility and expediency of employing *Mappila* prisoners on public works¹⁷². Rumors spread, that the authorities were even thinking of sending them into Assam for employing in the British estates there¹⁷³. Knapp, the Special Commissioner for Malabar affairs, reported that he had investigated a large number of schemes, but most of these have unfortunately proved impractical and at last he had under correspondence a scheme for employing *Mappila* deportees in

¹⁷¹ Home (Politics) Department, Government of India, File No.241/Part III A/1922, p.9. TNA.

¹⁷² Tottenham (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.407.

¹⁷³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 18th March 1924.

the Middle Islands of Andamans, where forest development work was in progress¹⁷⁴.[†] Almost simultaneously, the estate owners of Andamans conspired with the authorities to facilitate the deportation of *Mappila* prisoners and their families to the Island with the motive of exploiting them. As a part of it, the Government put forward a detailed plan to deport *Mappilas* to the thick forests of Andamans and this scheme has been termed as the *Andaman Scheme*.

The Government of Madras presented before the Government of India the scheme for the colonization of Andamans by the *Mappila* convicts and their families. The Governor in the Council wrote that a considerable number of *Mappilas* who had already been transported into Andamans must quite safely be placed in the free colony, instead of being kept in a closed prison. It says: "in case where the wife will not go, His Excellency in Council thinks that it would probably be best that the man should remain in transportation in ordinary way"¹⁷⁵. From this it is clear that the motive behind this scheme was not the welfare of the *Mappilas* but their ruin. The authorities tired to spread the news that it was to alleviate Muslims, they tried to establish a Muslim colony at Andamans¹⁷⁶. The then Malabar Collector prepared the framework

¹⁷⁴ Government of Madras (Public) Department, GO. No. 363, 26th April 1922, Note by Special Commissioner for Madras Affairs, No. 4798/D1/22. RAC, also in Tottenham (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.407.

¹⁷⁵ Home Department, File No. 2473, dated 9th October 1922, RAC.

¹⁷⁶ P.A. Sayd Muhammad, *op. cit.*, p.373.

of the Andaman Scheme and published its content on 6th September 1922¹⁷⁷. He gave the details of fortunes that are awaiting the *Mappilas*, in Andamans. And as part of it, the Government compelled many *Mappila* prisoners, who were kept in various Indian jails to go to Andamans along with their family¹⁷⁸. It was by giving false information to the *Mappilas* that the Britishers were going to change Andamans into a *Mappila* colony that they motivated *Mappilas* to go to Andamans. Thus, it was clear that the intention of Government was not the welfare of the *Mappilas* but to harass them more. It was estimated that by 22nd March 1923, there were about 1277 *Mappila* convicts in Andamans¹⁷⁹. Many *Mappilas* decided to go to Andamans, in order to get relief from the cruel punishments at Bellari and other jails¹⁸⁰.

But many leaders realized that Andamans was not suitable for leading human life. It was an isolated Island filled with thick forests and mountains and it was the land of aborigines like Jarwas. So, when the Malabar Collector published the framework of Andaman scheme on 6th September 1924, allegations and criticisms arose against the intention of Government. The public did not know the Andaman colonization scheme until Rama Linga

¹⁷⁷ V.S. Keraleeyan, *Keralathinte Veeraputran*, Alwaye, 1998, p.115, also in Home Department, File No. 2473, date 9th October 1922, RAC.

¹⁷⁸ Presidential address of Yakub Hassan in the Kerala Muslim Yuvajana Conference, held at Calicut on 12th May 1923, Report in *Mathrubhumi*, dated 13th May 1923.

¹⁷⁹ Public (General) Department, Go. No.472, dated 25th May 1932, TNA.

¹⁸⁰ E.Moidu Moulavi, *Ente Koottukaran (Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib)*, Trichur, 1964, p.196.

Reddy raised accusations against this scheme in the legislative Assembly pertaining to the feeling of the *Mappilas* of Malabar with the scheme and whether it was morally right to send a few *Mappila* women to a place inhabited by a large number of convicts¹⁸¹. Rama Linga Reddy pointed out that it would help only to raise the wealth of the Island and not for keeping modesty and self-respect of women¹⁸². On the other side, the authorities strongly justified colonization on the ground of lack of jail accommodation to such a huge number of prisoners¹⁸³. Justifying this scheme, Thoran, the then Malabar Collector said that, in 1922 Madras Government informed Government of India that it would be better to allow prisoners to live at Portblair along with their wives rather than to keep them behind bars¹⁸⁴. Thus many prisoners agreed to live with their wives and on the basis of this the India Government also had agreed the scheme. The Government sent Abraham to Andaman for explaining the *Mappila* deportees about the benefits of bringing their families to the Islands and also advising them to live without outside help¹⁸⁵. After his inquiry Abraham returned on January and reported that about 123 prisoners had showed their readiness to bring their wives and children. On the basis of this report, Thoran appointed M.Kunhi Raman Nair

¹⁸¹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24th March 1923.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ F.B.Evans (ed.). *The Madras District Gazetteer, Malabar District*, Vol. II, Madras 1923, Appendix p.viii.

¹⁸⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24th March 1923.

¹⁸⁵ File No. RDis 1865-23, dated 28th November 1927, (RAC).

to meet the wives and children of those deported *Mappila* prisoners and for explaining them about the benefits that they would get in this Islands¹⁸⁶. As a response to this, about 5 women and 17 children agreed the proposal and started their journey from Ferook on 12th March 1923 to Madras and from there they went to Andamans in a ship named 'Maharaja' on 18th March and the Government would pay a little remuneration also to them¹⁸⁷. For providing aids to these families, a Malayalee Officer was also sent to Andamans.

Criticisms and protests arose against this hurried activity of British authorities. Later the press also had taken active role in the protest against this scheme. This scheme was first exposed on the public through the pages of *Mathrubhumi* and later *Al Ameen* was also actively involved in the protest against the scheme. *Mathrubhumi* viewed the scheme with a suspicious eye and wrote: "the diplomatic silence of the authorities make us to believe that they are going to allow the estate owners of Andamans to hire the *Mappila* prisoners"¹⁸⁸. The first edition of *Al Ameen* came out with an editorial against this unpopular scheme of the Government¹⁸⁹. In the view of *Al Ameen* "it was a scheme to make these uninhabitable islands fit for a white

¹⁸⁶ Law (General) Department Memorandum No. 2305, c-2, dated 16th June 1924, RAC.

¹⁸⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24th March 1923. From Malabar the government paid an advance of Rs.10 and decided to give Rs.40 to each from Madras.

¹⁸⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8th April 1924.

¹⁸⁹ P.A. Sayad Muhammad, *Directory*, op. cit., p.375.

(European) colony at the expenses of *Mappila* lives and Indian money”¹⁹⁰. Muhammad Abdurahiman started his continuous fight with the government against this scheme through the columns of *Al Ameen*. He and his press always warned *Mappilas* of Malabar to be careful about the treacherous scheme of the British authorities. Muhammad Abdurahiman presented a resolution for the withdrawal of this scheme at the All Party Conference held at Amritsar on 1st September, 1925. The Conference passed the resolution, despite the resistance from some pro-British Muslims¹⁹¹. On 28th December 1925, the All India Khilafat Conference also passed a resolution relating to the proposed settlement¹⁹² under the initiative taken by Yakub Hassan. The Kerala Political Conference held at Payyannur under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru in 25th February 1925 also demanded to leave out the Andaman scheme.¹⁹³ In the Third State Conference held at Calicut on 16th April 1927, Horniman, in his Presidential Address, also demanded the same¹⁹⁴. The Third Annual Conference of the Muslim Aikya Sangham, held at Calicut in the 1st week of June 1925 also had passed a resolution against the Andaman Scheme and expressed their deep resentment against the scheme. Supporting this resolution, Uppi Sahib made a long speech and in it he

¹⁹⁰ Fortnightly Report of the First Half of August 1924, p.2, TNA.

¹⁹¹ M. Rasheed, *Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib*, Calicut, 1998, p.10.

¹⁹² Sukhbir Choudhari, *Peasant, op. cit.*, p.64.

¹⁹³ V.S. Keraleeyan, *op. cit.*, p.116.

¹⁹⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 19th April 1927.

mentioned that Andamans was not suitable for human beings to live, and he accused that through this scheme the authorities were really trying to deport *Mappilas*¹⁹⁵. He had also accused the Government for using public money for the implementation of this scheme. He showed his anxiety that this scheme would result the decreasing of *Mappila* population and he raised his doubt that the Government might have undertaken such a scheme to appease the *jenmies*¹⁹⁶.

In the midst of all these oppositions, the government continued their propaganda. They could send about 300 *Mappila* women and children in to the Andamans¹⁹⁷. The authorities brought some *Mappila* prisoner from Andamans to Malabar wearing attractive dresses and were displayed before the public to attract *Mappila* families. It was reported that as a result of these campaigns, about 67 *Mappila* families, which included 260 members, left Malabar and went to Andamans¹⁹⁸. Another report mentions that 5 *Mappila* prisoners from Bellari jail were brought to Calicut and send to Valluvanad to bring their families along with them into Andamans¹⁹⁹. Like this, numerous *Mappila* women and children were deported to Andamans.

¹⁹⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4th June 1925.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Fortnightly Report of the First Half of July 1925, TNA.

¹⁹⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 25th June 1925.

¹⁹⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 25th October 1927.

Muhammad Abdurahiman used his tooth and nail for the dismissal of this scheme. He traveled throughout North India and spoke against this unpopular scheme. He had published articles against this scheme in many North Indian newspapers, which were both in the western and vernacular languages²⁰⁰. Through *Al Ameen*, he wrote strong articles against the scheme. In one article in *Al Ameen*, he openly declared that: "the over enthusiasm displayed by the Government to carryout the scheme, the large amount of money spent for the purpose and the propaganda done were all suspicious²⁰¹".

When strong oppositions arose from different parts of India, the Government appointed Khan Bahadur Usman Khan to inquire in to the state of affairs of *Mappila* deportation to Andamans²⁰². Later, Government appointed Muddiman Commission to the Andaman to make a report on the condition of *Mappila* prisoners and their families transplanted in to the Island. *Al Ameen* questioned the credibility of the Commission and described the members of the Commission as actors for the Government. Abdurahiman pointed that the appointment of the Muddiman Commission was against the decision of the Madras Legislative Council to appoint a non-official commission including the *Mappila* Members of the Council. He also pointed out that the government had not given a secretary to the commission and

²⁰⁰ M. Rasheed, *op. cit.*, p.50.

²⁰¹ *Al Ameen*, dated 12th July 1925, MNNPR, TNA.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

didn't give clear instruction as to what the commission had to report²⁰³. The commission was even considered as "mere actors for the Government"²⁰⁴. The appointment was also alleged to "show that the government was acting in accordance with public opinion"²⁰⁵.

Unable to resist such sharp criticisms, the government compelled to appoint another commission to Andaman. Muhammad Schamnad (M.L.A) Sayd Murtha Sahib (M.L.A), Mir AbbasAli (M.L.C) and Dr. Mugaseth were the members of the commission. Among the four commissioners, except Mugaseth, the other three opposed the scheme²⁰⁶. But the Government accepted the report of Mugaseth and majority opinion was rejected. When the Government decided to go ahead with the scheme, *Al Ameen* published its special supplement captioned "An appeal to those who are preparing to go to Andaman". It quoted the message of Janab Uppi Sahib to the *Mappilawomen* and children, who were getting ready to go to Andamans, requesting them to go through the reports of Muhammad Schamnad, Murtha Sahib and Abbas Ali and advising them not to believe the words of police and authorities²⁰⁷. It also requested the public to organize protest meetings at every parts of

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, dated 8th December 1925, MNNPR, TNA.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, dated 1st November 1925, MNNPR, TNA.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, dated 8th December 1925, MNNPR, TNA.

²⁰⁶ On the basis of report in *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22nd December 1925. also in *Al Ameen*, dated 30th November 1926.

²⁰⁷ *Al Ameen* Special Supplement (not dated), RAC.

Kerala²⁰⁸. *Al Ameen* published the full report of the inquiry committee in its 30th November 1926 edition.

Following the report of the commission, Government passed a new edict, in which it was proclaimed that the 'government will provide all facilities to those *Mappila* women and children who were having desire to settle in Andamans'²⁰⁹. *Mathrubhumi*, through its editorial, strongly criticized the Government and stated that: "everyone understands the value of the "desires" of those prisoners, who are behind the bars"²¹⁰. It wrote: "some prisoners out of desire to be freed from the jail may show the willingness to go to Andamans. But it does not mean that Andamans is fit for human life"²¹¹. The opinion of majority of Andaman committee was the same. Neglecting all these protest, the government, decided to go on with their campaigns and sent about 31 prisoners to Ernad and Valluvanad to bring their families with them to Andamans²¹². A special train was also allotted to Malabar for sending *Mappila* prisoners to Andaman²¹³.

In a public meeting held at Calicut beach for protesting against the Andaman scheme, Muhammad Schamnad revealed that the *Mappilas*, settled

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 12th October 1926.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*, dated 30th November 1926.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, dated 30th December 1926.

at Andamans, were leading a miserable life. Various diseases afflicted many and it was with tears these people had expressed their problems even in the presence of British officials. He told that while witnessing all these, even Mugaseth, who had reported in favor of this scheme, cried"²¹⁴. Schamnad appealed the *Mappilas* to refuse to go to Andamans. It was reported that three prisoners at Andamans tried escape in a Tub, but unfortunately, they were captured and forced to return to jails²¹⁵. All these reports revealed that the people, living in Andaman were leading a miserable life. But, neglecting all these, the authorities continued their colonization programme.

At last, the efforts of many nationalists met with its results. In spite of all the efforts of the authorities, the willingness of the *Mappila* women and children to go to Andamans got lessened day by day. Due to the efforts of Abdurahiman and various media, the government failed to complete the Andaman colonization scheme. The Government was forced to give up the scheme on 19th September 1931²¹⁶. From 1929 onwards, many of the *Mappila* prisoners, who settled Andamans with family, were allowed to return to their homeland. But, then also they had to face a lot of problems. They were compelled to bear full return expenses by themselves and of their families. This situation created a lot of hardships to them. Many had no

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, dated 30th June 1927.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, dated 23rd June 1927.

²¹⁶ *Madhyamam*, dated 23rd November 1990.

money with them and it has been reported that due to lack of money many released families were compelled to remain there itself²¹⁷. In 1930, about 72 *Mappilas* and one Nair, who were sentenced to life imprisonment at Andaman, returned to their native place²¹⁸. In 1936 July, about 100 *Mappilas* were released. Similarly, many were allowed to return to their homeland. Even then, it was reported that about 1400 families were still there in Andaman. They had given names, to their settled areas as Tirurangadi, Pookkottur etc. in memory of their homeland²¹⁹.

Even though these *Mappila* deportees could return to their homeland, they had to face lot of problems. They had already lost all their wealth and even their houses and were left as mere orphans. They had no means to maintain their life²²⁰. Many people had registered complaints to the collector for providing help to them. Many had lost their kith and kin together with a happy life. Thus through the unpopular colonization scheme, the government added only tears and sufferings upon Malabar. Under the initiative of Muhammad Abdurahiman, the people of Kerala observed Andaman Day on 14th August 1937. By conducting public meetings and by passing resolutions, they showed their protest against the negative attitude of the Government in

²¹⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 2nd April 1929.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, dated 14th December 1930.

²¹⁹ V.S. Keraleeyam, *op. cit.*, p.118.

²²⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 12th April 1930.

the release of the *Mappila* prisoners of Andaman²²¹. The Andaman colonization scheme of the authorities and the protests of various social workers, all were the net results of the Rebellion which, in later days, helped for the social formations of Malabar.

As a result of the Rebellion the people of South Malabar, irrespective of their religion, suffered a lot. Life was not possible in these areas. The military rule that was retained in the riot zones for long months had destroyed all. They had enough freedom to do any cruelties towards the poor people. They established a reign of terror here and arrested many innocent *Mappilas* and even some Hindus, who were suspected of providing help to the rebels. The Hindus had to fear both military and rebels. Almost all the Hindu houses were emptied, they abandoned all of the belongings and took shelter in the surrounding areas of Calicut and Trichur. Many of them took shelter in the houses of their relatives or in the nearby shrubs. They had to leave all their properties. Women in the rebel areas for fear of attack and disgrace, had taken shelter in the forests. The non participant Muslims were also suffered hard. They were completely isolated from the entire community. The rebels, government and their Hindu brethren considered them as enemies. Their houses were attacked in day time by the soldiers and in the night by the rebels. So they had to pass their days hiding in the jungles or in the thickets.

²²¹ Fortnightly Report for the First Half of September 1927, DO No. P.4-16, dated 3rd September 1937, TNA.

Women were widely molested. Ruins and devastations continued every where. People were in a completely frightened state. Due to the Rebellion, agriculture had been destroyed, employment was in a stagnant stage, famine had spread every where and sufferings were there in every part of Malabar. Hundreds of *Mappila* women and children became wanderers.

Even though relief was provided to them by both governmental and nongovernmental agencies, it was partial. Construction and relief- all were provided to Hindus only. The relief committees, philanthropists and other agencies rendered relief only to the Hindus and ignored the *Mappilas*. Among the Hindus themselves, how many of them got relief is not known. Correct documentation is not available .The only person who tried in some extend, to render relief to the *Mappilas* was Muhammad Abdurahiman. Though he tried his best, he also was unable to solve all their problems. People were thrown out of the region was not the only problem. It was not possible to undertake agricultural activities at least for five- six months. Relief means not relief in the camps only. The people who left their homes and returned after the suppression of the Rebellion were in extreme poverty. Almost all their wealth was looted by either the rebels or the government agencies . Te government did not take any further steps to render aid for agriculture and due to this they could not undertake agricultural activities. Life was a burden to the people in the region. Both communities started to blame each other for all their sufferings and looked each other with a suspicious eye. They blamed

Congress, who left them in their very crucial days. After the withdrawal of NCM, Congress concentrated on anti untouchability campaigns and upliftment of Harijans and didn't take care of the relief of the poor sufferers. Gadhiji's contemplation of the Rebellion 'as a mad practice of *Mappilas* towards the Hindu brethren', the popular belief about the atrocities of *Mappilas*, the oppressive attitude of Hindus towards them in the later days, the attempt of Congress to alienate Muslims from the national movement, the denial of them to follow the path of Muhammad Abdurahiman – all made the *Mappilas* silent in the post Rebellion period. On the other side, the government tried to deport *Mappilas* of these areas in to Andamans. This scheme created a feeling of consternation and fear among them. Through this scheme, the government intended to destroy the *Mappila* population of Malabar. Only Muhammad Abdurahiman and some others raised their voice against this scheme. The nationalist Hindu leaders kept silence in front of such cruel policies of government.

. It was from this fear and feeling of insecurity that they felt the need of their own organization to safeguard them from all traumas and depression. Not only Muslims, but Hindus also felt the need of their own organization to safeguard them from all their sufferings. It was as a part of this that later there formed various caste and communitarian organizations. This later paved way for communal polarization also.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS IN THE POST REBELLION MALABAR -1921 TO 1930

Sreevidhya Vattarambath “Aftermath of the rebellion trends - A study of political and social trends in malabar from 1921 to 1935” Thesis. Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS IN THE POST REBELLION MALABAR – 1921 TO 1930

In post Rebellion period the life of both Hindus and Muslims were filled with miseries and sufferings. The conversion and reconversion process, Andaman Scheme, and the relief measures undertaken by various agencies- all created changes in the polity and society of Malabar. All these affected much on the public sphere and caused for the emergence of new elements in the social structure of Malabar. The present chapter focuses on the political changes that took place in the immediate post Rebellion period and the influence of the Rebellion on the public sphere as reflected in contemporary literature, media and also in the governmental policies particularly in the realm of education. Attempts are also made at highlighting the social changes in Malabar during the post Rebellion period, particularly the attempts that the Hindu and Muslim communities made to regenerate their own communities and also the attempts to develop a Hindu religious ethos

a. Political Condition of the immediate Post-Rebellion Malabar

In the wake of the suppression of the Rebellion, struggle, purely for political freedom was on a low key, until almost at the end of the decade. With regard to the political condition of the post-Rebellion Malabar, K.P.

Kesava Menon commented: "for long time after the Rebellion, no public activity was possible in Malabar. Enmity towards Congress was evident everywhere. The authorities stated that the Congressmen had brought calamity into the country through participation in the Khilafat agitation. Some Hindu leaders¹ accused the Congressmen of treason for joining with the Khilafatists. They even wanted all the Congressmen in Malabar to be imprisoned. The Muslims complained that those who had induced them to join with the Congress, abandoned them when oppression and firing by the troops started"². It was also accused of that some of the prominent Congress leaders like K. Madhavan Nair and K.P. Kesava Menon had escaped from the riot zones. It was alleged that Madhavan Nair had escaped to Calicut, agreeing to obey the orders of Thoran and promising to keep away from Ernad till the Rebellion was over³. It is stated that K. P. Kesava Menon, the KPCC secretary, never had the courage to go to Ernad and so he kept away from the riot zones⁴. It was true that, situation then prevailed in Malabar was in no way suitable for these Congress leaders to take any initiative to check the Rebellion. Congress was not a mass organisation at that time. There fore they had limitations to intervene in it. The Congress leaders who were

¹ Some Hindu leaders in the sense those Hindus who were against the attitude of Congress leadership who joined with Khilafatists and also the pro-govt. and anti-Congressmen.

² K.P. Kesava Menon, *Kazhinjakalam*, Calicut 1957, p.128.

³ M.P.S. Menon, *M.P. Narayana Menon – A Forgotten Pioneer*, Angadipuram, 1992, p. 89.

⁴ *Ibid.*

responsible for the spread of the Khilafat and NCM in Southern Malabar were against armed Rebellion. Earlier, when the news regarding the breaking out of the Rebellion had reached at the ears of Madhavan Nair, K.P. Kesava Menon and Muhammad Abdurahiman, they tried to conciliate the *Mappilas*, but in vain. Probably, because of this deviation of Khilafat movement from a non-violent path into a violent way that the Congress leaders kept away from this area. The Congress considered the armed struggle of the *Mappilas* as a violation of the principles of non-violent non co-operation. Even C. Rajagopalachari, the Congress leader, condemned the uprising as "a mad outburst with terrible consequences"⁵. Gandhiji had also condemned the *Mappilas* and described the Rebellion as an act of "*Moplah Madness*"⁶. The INC at its session held at Ahamedabad in 1921 passed a resolution to the effect that the Rebellion was neither the result of the Khilafat movement nor the NCM and that there would not have any atrocities, if the creed of non violence had firmly taken root in the soil. They claimed: "if Gandhiji and Congress workers had been permitted by the authorities to visit the disturbed areas, they might have been able to restore peace, harmony and the rule of law"⁷. Thus, the Congress washed their hands off their responsibilities. They left the *Mappilas*, who had joined the national movement with the inspiration

⁵ *The Hindu*, dated 15th Septebmber 1921.

⁶ *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* Vol. XXII, p. 267.

⁷ P.K.K. Menon, *History of Freedom Movement in Kerala* Vol. I, Trivandrum, 1996, p. 104.

of Congress and Khilafatists in the very crucial days. It is said that the Congress followed a stepmother policy towards the Rebellion"⁸. The ordinary people were of the view that the Congress had betrayed them, by denying protection and support to the rebels⁹. The rebels felt that the Congress had cheated them and left them alone in the crucial days. Some tried to give a religious colour to this and alleged that the Congress was more bothered about the sufferings of the Hindus than those of the *Mappilas*¹⁰.

In response to all these allegations, the Congress leaders proclaimed that they were unable to enter the riot zones due to the retention order and were not having adequate rights to act freely. An order that prohibited K.P.Kesava Menon from crossing the Municipal boarder was still there. More over, they were suffering financial hurdles also. Due to all these, many Congress committees stopped functioning. The lawyers, who had boycotted the Courts, started reappearing, appealing for renewing their Sanad¹¹. But all these facts were not sufficient enough for shielding these leaders from the charges levelled against them. The retention order against some Congress men were not an appropriate justification for the mistake committed by the party towards the hapless poor people of Malabar. These retention orders

⁸ Moozhikunnath Brahmadathan Nambudiripad, *Khilafat Smarankal*, Calicut, 1965, p. 50.

⁹ M. Alikunhi, *1921le Malabar Kalapam: Oru Padanam*, Karapuzha, 1972, p 28.

¹⁰ M.P.S. Menon, *op.cit*, p. 97.

¹¹ E. Moidu Moulavai, *Moulaviyude Atmakatha*, Kottayam, 1985, p. 87.

cannot be taken as an appropriate reason for ignoring the mutineers and the helpless commoners, who were mercilessly harassed by both the rebels and the authorities. If a man earnestly believes that it is his duty to mitigate the miseries of his brothers (when he is informed about it) no retention order can prevent him¹². The Congress really ignored the inability of the poor *Mappilas* of Malabar to understand the value and meaning of non-violence. They alleged that it was without giving them adequate training in non-violence that the Congress has dragged them into the Khilafat and NCM. In the real sense, even Congress itself has not imbibed the principles of non-violence. Then how could they impart it on others?¹³ Actually, at that time, Congress leadership was in the hands of some Hindu elitists, even though a few prominent Muslims were in the forefront like Hassan Koya Molla, Muhammad Abdurahiman, and E. Moidu Moulavi. Thus, naturally there might be some doubts regarding the attitude of the Congress towards the Rebellion. The common people felt that the Congress was blaming them instead of supporting the *Mappilas* who had suffered hardships due to the Rebellion. This infuriated the commoners, who suffered a lot due to the Rebellion and they held a negative attitude towards the Congress.

Congress and Gandhiji faced more criticisms in response to the suspension of NCM on its very crucial periods (on 5th February 1922

¹² A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, Kottayam, 1986, pp. 98-97.

¹³ M.P.S. Menon, *op.cit*, p.30.

following the Chauri Chaura incident). Even the Congressmen themselves criticized the decision of Gandhiji: Moozhikkunnath Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad, who was a Congress leader and a victim of police repression remarked that: "if Gandhiji had taken the same stand that he took in the Chauri Chaura incident, the Malabar Rebellion would have been ended at the starting point itself"¹⁴. Gandhiji himself agreed that he did a blunder in connection with the Rebellion. While cancelling the NCM, he commended that: "the Malabar incident was a warning to me, but ignored it. Now that warning has been reiterated"¹⁵. But this reply was not a sufficient explanation to the problems faced by the commoners of Southern Malabar.

The Congress lost the public support and encouragement once enjoyed by it. A mysterious silence and negative feeling engulfed the state. A large number of former Congress workers became inactive. Most of the branches of the Congress itself melted in to the air¹⁶. K.P. Kesava Menon remarked, "they were (the Congress Workers) hated by the Muslims, looked suspiciously by the authorities and disliked by others"¹⁷. The fanaticism showed by some sections of the *Mappila* community during the Rebellion, their attacking tendencies and the inability of the Congress leaders to bring

¹⁴ Moozhikkunnath Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad, *op.cit*, p. 57.

¹⁵ Cited by E M S Namboodiripad, *Swathanthrya Samara Charithram*, Trivandrum, 1982, p. 34.

¹⁶ E M S Namboodiripad, *Atmakatha*, *op.cit*, p. 68.

¹⁷ M.Gangadharan, " Kesava Menon's role in the national movement in Kerala," in *Kesava Menon 90'*, Calicut, 1977, p.20.

them on to non-violence coupled with many other reasons, generating a feeling in the minds of Hindu Congress leaders that "*Mappila Nadu* is highly inflammable, don't play with it"¹⁸. All these created political stagnancy in Malabar. This was largely because of the brisk activity in the social front. The emphasis was mainly given on constructive programme in which all people could join together and work irrespective of political views or affiliation. In the later days, Congress adopted a constructive programme of actions such as the popularisation of Charka, the programme of temperance and the establishment of national educational institutions¹⁹. This also included impressive relief works in emergencies like floods, the promotion of Khadi and other cottage crafts, anti-liquor propaganda and social work among low castes and untouchables²⁰. The Gandhian Constructive Work gave more importance in building up rural support for Congress and above all in establishing wide support of Congress among low castes and untouchables²¹. But in Malabar, especially in the riot zones, it was not a suitable situation to propagate such a constructive agenda. The wounds created by the Rebellion were very deep and it took a long time to heal the injury. It was a lesson to

¹⁸E M S Namboodiripad, *Keralam Malayliyude Mathrubhumi*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1948, p. 237.

¹⁹ A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1995, p. 352.

²⁰ Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, New Delhi, 1983, pp. 229-230.

²¹ *Ibid.*

the future that the path of non-violence was not strewn with roses. All these feelings have created great repercussions in the society.

b) Influence of the Rebellion on the public sphere

The echo of the Rebellion reached the public very soon with divergent versions through various literacy works, press and also through various measures taken by Government under the guise of the Rebellion. Here the term public sphere denotes the reflections of the Rebellion in the purview of public and its reactions in the later Malabar polity and society. The Rebellion was characterised differently by different scholars and this had greatly influenced in shaping the mindsets of the public. In the post Rebellion Malabar newspapers, especially pro-nationalists, played a major role in this which later made great changes in the public realm.

Attempts were being made from various quarters to characterise the Rebellion as a *Mappila* Rebellion that took place due to the *Mappila* madness and fanaticism. Such attempts led to the break up of the Hindu-Muslim unity forged under great stress and strain, from its very inceptions in Malabar. And it caused a number of Hindu-Muslim riots in various parts of India especially in Punjab²².

²² P.K.K. Menon, *op.cit*, p. 113. Also see S. Gopalakrishnan, *Political movements in South India 1914-1929*, Madras, 1981, p. 69.

Literature

The Rebellion was reflected in various dimensions in various literary works. The noted poet Kumaranasan represented Hindu feelings in his famous work *Duravasatha*²³. He expressed his anger towards the Rebellion in his famous lines:

*"Kerala Jillyil kedaravum
Kadum Moorum Malakalu-
marnna Dikkil Kroora –
Muhammadar Chinthunna Haindava
Chorayal chonnezhum Eranattil".*

Here Kumaranasan characterises Ernad which is blessed with gardens, forests and mountains as having red colour with the blood of the Hindus caused by the wounds inflicted by the Muslims. These lines expressed the fact that Asan had not considered the Rebellion as a "dharma war". He tried to represent it as an attack committed by Mohammedans towards the Hindu brethren. The echos of these lines created great impact not only in Malabar, but also in Cochin and Travancore. Muslims of these area accused that Asan misinterpreted the role of Muslims in the national movement. The Muslims of Travancore raised their voice against Asan's representation of *Mappilas* as cruel demons²⁴. They conducted public meetings and passed resolutions and

²³ Kumaranasan, *Duravastha*, in *Asante Padyakrithikal*, Kottayam, 1975.

²⁴ P.A. Sayd Muhammed, *Kerala Muslim Charithram*, Thrissur, 1969, pp. 246-47.

raised criticism very severely against the publication of *Duravastha*. They arranged debates of scholars in the Muslim Hostel at Trivandrum under the leadership of Vakkom Abdul Khadar Moulavi. Later the situation was diffused when Asan agreed to change that portion in *Duravastha*²⁵. Such attempts helped to create divergent responses in the public realm.

Just like this, in the later days, many works were published with Rebellion as a theme. In V.T. Bhattathiripad's '*Rajani Rangam*', the pathetic condition of a Namboodiri Illom after the murder of male members of the family in the Rebellion is portrayed. In it, the lady character states that the main reason for all their sufferings was the murder of the male members of her family²⁶. The main theme of this work was not the Rebellion, but the pathetic condition of Namboodiri families. V.T.Bhattathiripad has explained in his '*Karmavipakam*²⁷' about the period during which his famous play '*Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku*' being staged. In this, he narrates an incident in which he dines with Moozhikkunnath Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad, who was excommunicated after suffering police torture and imprisonment during the Rebellion. The excommunicated Brahmaddattan Namboodiri was kept out of the caste as he refused to repent. It was the reform movement of V.T.Bhattathiripad that helped Brahmaddattan Namboodiripad to be reinstalled

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ V.T. Bhattathiripad, *Rajani Rangam* in *V.T.yude Samboorna Krithikal*, Kottayam, 1997.

²⁷ V.T. Bhattathiripad, *Karmavipakam*, in *Ibid.*

into the Namboodiri society. This shows that impact of the Rebellion have remained even after long years.

Press

In addition to the literary works, the news of the Rebellion had spread out through the media. The press had a great role in shaping the character of a particular event. The British Government tried to provide a communal colour to the Rebellion. Through their press communiqués, the British Government tried to express their versions. On 25th August 1921, *Bombay Chronicle* published a communiqué of Madras Government which stated that: "there have been indications for something past that the agitations in Malabar have been working on the well-known religious fanaticism of the more ignorant class of *Moplahs*"²⁸. The communiqué then proceeded to refer to a widespread and dangerous agitation that had been created in certain parts of Malabar, evidently according to the Government, the outcome of seditious pamphlets and seditious speeches²⁹. Again *Bombay Chronicle* published another appeal to the Government through the press to support the authority. It stated that: "according to the latest details received from Ernad, the *Moplah* fanatics were alleged to be looting all Hindu houses – intimidating Hindu

²⁸ *The Bombay Chronicle*, dated 28th August 1921.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 26th August 1921.

landlords, threatening them with death and extorting huge sum of money"³⁰.

Such news that spread all over the country created lot of tension

At that time, there were no nationalist newspapers or other such media to express the real nature of the Rebellion as well as the exact condition of the populace of the rebel areas. Even though some newspapers were been published like *Kerala Patrika*, *Malayala Manorama*, *Kerala Sanchari* and *Mitavadi* in Malayalam and *West Coast Reformer* in English, some of them were not only unsympathetic to the national movement, but also hostile to it. There were only two nationalist weeklies that supported the nationalist cause in Malabar – *The swarat* of A.K. Pillai and *Yuvabharatham* of T.R. Krishna Swami Ayyar. But they were also incapable of spreading news in every nook and corner of Malabar. Among these newspapers, *Mitavadi* and *Malayala Manorama* were the most reputed ones, which were proved to be as pure Government agents.

Mitavadi was started even as a *Thiyya* Magazine. Through its columns, it severely criticised the upper caste domination of the Congress and it viewed nationalist movement led by the upper castes with suspicion³¹. *Malayala Manorama* represented the Ernad and Valluvanad Taluks of South Malabar as "*Mappila* Taluks" which were centres of revolts of "*Johanakans*"

³⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 27th August 1927.

³¹ G. Priyadarsan, *Kerala Pathrapravarthanam-Suvarnadhyayangal*, Kottayam, 1999, p. 142.

(*Mappilas*) against Hindu brethren³². It tried to represent the *Mappilas* as a fanatic section who were trying to eliminate Hindus from its very deep root, by quoting the words of some refugees³³. It published poems of some Namboodiris that depicted the Rebellion as a cruel atrocity of *Mappilas*. One such poem is entitled as "*Hindu Muslim Mithri*" written by one Namboodiri which stated the condition of *jenmis* thus:³⁴

*"Kalikala Hindu Muslim Mithri Par-
thalathi lokeyum Parannadumoolam
Valiya Jenmikal avanidevarkkum
Valiya Kashtathakalilakappettuvullo
Kulukkamulkambilengumillatha
Malappuram, Tirur muthalayi pala
Sthalathu kolacheythitha surendrare
Palare Markathil Chathichu Cherthathum
Thalayil Thoppikalaniyichennadam
Khilafathayalum kilapathayalum
Kalahamitham bhavichatatbutham.
....."*

In this poem, the Hindu Muslim unity is despised as a feature of *Kalikalam*. Big *jenmies* are fallen in to miseries due to the murders committed by the unscrupulous Muslims of unshakable places like Malappuram, Tirur

³² *Malayala Manorama*, dated 8th September 1921.

³³ *Ibid.*, dated 4th & 8th October 1921.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, dated 4th October 1928.

area and the conversion in to Islam through cheating. The poet considers quarrels in this earth as the sole result of Khilafat. The poem clearly shows the attitude of *jenmies* towards the Rebellion and also towards the British Government. They wished for the existence of British government with its maximum strength. Another poem entitled '*Malabar Lahala*' explained the condition of Malabar in the period of Rebellion thus:³⁵

*"Ambo! Kaduppamavide Krishijoli theernnu
Kambala mokkeyumadachu, thapal mudangi
Swam poyi, theernnuthozhil, ippoathathe pradesam
vanporkkalathinude mathiriyayirippu,*

.....
*Santhanasambathsanadi vedinhu jeeva-
santhasanam karuthi rappakal nokkidathe
hanthadisandraniyannorukoottare
santhapamodithara nadukal pookidunnu.*

.....
*Cherkunnupolvimatare swamathathilekkum
nerkkunna lokareyumente purathilekkum".*

In this poem the post Rebellion Malabar is characterised thus: it is very harsh there; the agriculture work ended; the markets are closed; thapal is stopped and there is no employment. Now it is like a great battlefield. Out of fear for

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27th December 1921. Vembaliyathu Lakshmanan Namboodiri wrote this Poem.

life, without the distinction between day and night, people were fleeing to other areas, leaving their children and wealth. Along with these compulsory religious conversions were also staged.

These poems show how the Rebellion was portrayed in other places. It is a fact that this kind of propaganda exposes only the cruelties of the *Mappilas* that had great influence in shaping the attitudes of poor people. A special correspondent of *Malayala Manorama* had depicted Chembrasseri Thangal and Seethikoya Thangal as cruel demons Sumali and Malyavan respectively³⁶.

Like this, *Malayala Manorma* criticised very severely the caste spirit that existed among the Hindus³⁷. As *Malayala Manorama* was a reputed newspaper at that time, it created an immediate impact in the public sphere in different ways.

The Hindu, published from Madras in English, followed an almost impartial attitude towards the Rebellion. It mainly focused on eyewitness accounts. Through its columns, one Ramunni Nair, a victim of the murder of Eaton, analysed the tenancy issue as one of the chief cause for the revolt³⁸. It published a letter of Variyankunnath Kunhahammed Haji in which he had stated that the news of forcible conversions is entirely untrue. In his view,

³⁶ *Malayala Manorama*, dated 29th December 1921.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, dated 17th September 1921.

³⁸ *The Hindu*, dated 14th September 1921.

such conversions were done by Government party and reserve police in mufti mingling themselves with the rebels³⁹. On 27th August 1921, it published the experience of C. Karunakara Menon, who had tested the reliability of the rebels by leaving his three young daughters alone at Angadipuram, which was a centre of the Rebellion. He had stated that the rebels didn't harass the girls⁴⁰. Such reports helped very much to reduce the misunderstandings about the deeds of the rioters to the population inside and outside Kerala.

Even though such media were there in Malabar during the Rebellion they failed to impart any nationalist feelings among the common people of Malabar. It was in such a milieu that nationalist newspaper *Mathrubhumi* was started its publication from Malabar on 17th March 1923 as a result of the initiatives taken by some Congress leaders like K.P. Kesava Menon and K. MadhavanNair. *Mathrubhumi* had appeared on the scene just following the Rebellion. So the details of the post-Rebellion Malabar came to light through the early editors of *Mathrubhumi*. The news of the imprisonment of Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib for two years during the period of the military rule following his write-ups on the orphan conditions of Muslim women in the post-Rebellion Malabar, his fast in jail against the hardships that the prisoners had to face in jails and the outright rejection of Chakkara

³⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 18th October 1921.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 27th August 1921.

Chettiyar, who undertook to probe into the same by the Government- all reached to the people through the first edition of *Mathrubhumi*⁴¹.

The editorial of *Mathrubhumi* entitled "Eranattile Sthithi" (situation of Ernad) dated on 20th March 1923, made both communities aware of the fact that, if they want to avert another tragedy, both of them must work understanding their responsibilities. It also published articles related to the conditions of both Muslims and Hindus in the post-Rebellion Malabar⁴². Madhavan Nair wrote a series of articles in *Mathrubhumi* related with the riots in Malabar. It severely criticised the Andaman scheme of the Government and wrote articles against it. *Mathrubhumi* provided detailed reports of various caste and communitarian organisations that emerged into the scene during the post-Rebellion period. Like *Mitavadi* and *Malayala Manorama*, *Mathrubhumi* also blamed the prevalence of untouchability among the Hindu community. In an article dated on 26th May 1923, *Mathrubhumi* wrote: "if the fanaticism of the *Mappilas* was a reason for the Malabar Rebellion, the blind adherence to the caste system by the Hindus had been a cause for the calamities among them"⁴³.

Mathrubhumi worked in the main arena for the peasant organisations to develop. The articles published in *Mathrubhumi*, highlighting the

⁴¹ *Mathrubhumi*, 17th March 1923.

⁴² *Ibid.*, dated 30th March 1923.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, dated 20th May 1923.

problems of the peasants, made the common men aware of their problems. It had played a great and lively role in the Vaikom Satyagraha, which was started on 1st April 1924. In an editorial, it wrote about the Satyagraha: "it is not an event that affected only in that area that was going to happen at Vaikom. It is a great event regarding the freedom of the downtrodden people of Kerala. Perhaps, it may happen without any hindrance or there will be obstructions from the part of the rulers. If obstructions arises or not, we believe that all Hindus would participate in it unitedly in an attempt to wipe-out untouchability and unapproachability in Kerala"⁴⁴.

In the case of Guruvayur Styagraha *Mathrubhumi* took a favourable stand more zealous than in the case of Vaikom Satyagraha. It also took on active part in the CDM and through various articles it tried to regenerate the Muslims of South Malabar to make them to participate in CDM. There were detailed reports in *Mathrubhumi* about the activities of the Muslims in the post-Rebellion period, from the origin of Aikya Sangham to it's merging with the Muslim Majlis, the formation of Muslim League etc. *Mathrubhumi* had to engage in a great debate with *Al-Ameen* following the Hindu-conference of 1929 at Thirunavaya. Through its editorials, it made an attempt to justify the participation of the Congress in the conference. *Mathrubhumi* and *Al-Ameen* continued ideological fights following this. So also *Mathrubhumi* played a

⁴⁴ Puthupally Raghavan, *Kerala Pathrapravarthana Charithram*, Kottayam, 2001, p. 73.

big role in strengthening the divisions between the rightists and leftists in the Congress.

On many occasions, *Mathrubhumi* had to face severe actions from the Government due to its rigorous criticisms against the activities of Government. The editorial entitled "Dhairyamo Dhikkaramo" (Courage or High Handedness), published on 7th September 1932, was an appropriate instance for the Government that had been looking for a chance to suppress *Mathrubhumi*. The Madras Government imposed a fine of Rs. 2000/- on it for publishing this editorial. Following this, its publication appeared without editorial. This continued upto January 1933. The Madras Government ordered a ban on *Mathrubhumi* following the publication of the article written by Sanjjayan (M.R. Nair) severely criticising the atrocities committed by the British soldiers at Cochin. But following the mass agitations, the Government was forced to withdraw the ban. Like this, *Mathrubhumi* spent long years among the populace by highlighting people's agitations and national movement.

Just like *The Mathrubhumi*, it was with the aim to spread nationalism among the Muslims that *Al-Ameen* was started from Calicut in 1924. The man behind this was Muhammad Abdurahiman, the prominent national leader of Kerala. The 1st issue of *Al-Ameen* came out on 12th October 1924. The *Al-Ameen* appeared on the scene when Malabar was drowned in the miseries and

sorrows of Malabar Rebellion. *Al-Ameen* was especially helpful for knowing the news of the Khilafat. Regarding the birth of *Al-Ameen*, Vidwan T.K. Raman Nair says: "the time when *Al-Ameen* made its appearance was not a golden period. As an aftermath of the Rebellion, both the Hindus and Muslims were fanatically broken The people had no peace, solace or easiness. It was for the atmosphere before the Rebellion that the people were waiting for. But even most shrewd observers could not see any sign of such an immediate appearance"⁴⁵. Therefore, *Al-Ameen* had to struggle hard for its existence. There were lot of obstacles in front of it. A section of Hindus perceived *Al-Ameen* not as a national newspaper, but as an Islamic one. On the other hand, *Al-Ameen* was a strong enemy for Muslim conservatives. It incessantly attacked the evil practices and superstitions in the community. Meanwhile, it criticised the unjust attitude and atrocities of the Government with all its strength. It criticised the merciless steps taken by the Government against the Muslims of Malabar.

Al-Ameen played a major role in the rehabilitation of the community at the time of 1921 Rebellion and bringing them back to the forefront of freedom struggle. It was through the pages of *Al-Ameen* that the pathetic stories of people of Malabar came into the limelight. Arguing for the release of the *Mappila* prisoners of the 1921 Rebellion, even after long years, *Al-*

⁴⁵ G. Priyadarsan, *op.cit*, pp. 201-22.

Ameen wrote, "there are hundreds of *Mappila* prisoners without being brought before the court of law or without knowing the crime they had committed against the state and society". It pointed out: "even the consideration for the release of other prisoners has been denied to the *Mappilas*". The paper appealed to the Government to release the *Mappila* prisoners in the name of justice. When the authorities tried to justify the detention of the *Mappila* prisoners by pointing out that their release will affect badly the Hindu Muslim relations, *Al-Ameen* wrote: "communal disorder between the Hindus and Muslims in Malabar is only a memory of the past". Further the paper initiated a deputation of the Hindus and Muslims from the riot affected area to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor, with petitions for the release of *Mappila* Prisoners"⁴⁶. It functioned against the Andaman Scheme started by the Government with the objective of deporting the entire Muslims of Malabar. In order to make the illiterate poor Muslims aware of it, a special supplement was published. It tried to expose the treachery behind the Andaman scheme before the Muslims through the supplement⁴⁷. The first editorial of *Al-Ameen* questioned the cruel policies and objectives of the Government exposing the Andaman Scheme⁴⁸. *Al-Ameen* published many articles revealing the inhuman behaviour of the British officials and the pitiable condition of the prisoners. It is reported that, to some extent, it was because of the newspaper

⁴⁶ *Al-Ameen*, dated 4th January 1931, MNNPR.

⁴⁷ *Special supplement to Al-Ameen* (not dated), RAC.

⁴⁸ G. Priyadarsan, *op.cit*, p. 204.

Al-Ameen and its editor Muhammad Abdurahiman that the atrocities committed by British Government in the 1921 Rebellion for destroying *Mappilas*, came to light⁴⁹.

It provided wholehearted support to the boycott of the Simon Commission. Appealing to the general public to boycott the Simon Commission, *Al-Ameen* wrote: "the task before the freedom loving Indians is not to be frightened by the threats of British and not to be misled by the petty promises"⁵⁰. It published articles to inject nationalism among the poor *Mappila* population of Malabar, who were frightened due to the evil after effects of the 1921 Rebellion. With this aim, it published a very inspiring article captioned "Jihadul-Akbar" (The Great Holy war). The article began: "if patriotism is an integral part of religious faith of Muslim and if Islam is a religion which extorts the message of freedom, it is the bounden duty of every true Muslim to sacrifice everything including life for freedom and salvation of the motherland"⁵¹. Similarly, it also used to portray illustrations from Islamic History to infuse patriotic spirit in the minds of the Muslims through its columns.

Al-Ameen had to confront with the government many times. During this time, the interests of the high caste Hindus dominated *Mathrubhumi* and

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁵⁰ *Al-Ameen*, dated 2nd February 1925, MNNPR.

⁵¹ *Al-Ameen*, dated 6th July 1930.

Congress. *Al-Ameen* raised its voice against this tendency of *Mathrubhumi*. It severely criticised the Congress for its active participation in the Thirunavaya Hindu conference. In 1929, many of the editorials of *Al-Ameen* and *Mathrubhumi* came out with severe debates on this issue.⁵² *Al-Ameen* also raised its voice against the Press Act Ordinance of Lord Irwin and stated that the Ordinance was intended to downgrade the newspaper from being a public organ in to a mere Government Gazetteer⁵³. Due to these criticisms, the Press Act caught *Al-Ameen* also and it was banned on 4th August 1930. It reappeared in to the scene on 20th November 1930. After the repealing of CDM, it turned into a leftist newspaper. It supported the views of Subash Chandra Bose and at the same time raised its tongue against the rightist section of the Congress⁵⁴. On the other hand, *Matrhubhumi* provided its full support to the rightist wing of the Congress and criticised socialist movement. *Al-Ameen* always stood for communal harmony and used its columns for propagating messages of it. It published an article of Chekkutty, the main stress of which was the need of Hindu Muslim harmony⁵⁵. Like this, when the *Thiyya* Muslim riot broke out at Edakkad in Kannur, the paper called upon the leaders of two communities to sit together and to find an amicable

⁵² The details of the Thirunavaya Hindu conference is explained in the next part of this chapter.

⁵³ *Al-Ameen*, 1st May 1930, MNNPR.

⁵⁴ M. Rasheed, *Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib, op.cit.*, p. 36.

⁵⁵ *Al-Ameen Special Supplement*, 1929.

solution. The paper also reminded that such riots were sprung from silly and insignificant causes and India does not gain anything by such rivalry. It also serves to make India the laughing stock of the whole world"⁵⁶. Thus, it is clear that *Al-Ameen* imparted an impartial attitude towards all such communal affairs. Though it could not last long, *Al-Ameen* was the only Muslim newspaper that existed for a long time. In the article "Thirinhunokkumbol" EMS Namboodiripad reminds: "*Al-Ameen* was the energy and delight of an important age in Kerala History. It played a great influence upon the nationalists like me more than *Mathrubhumi*"⁵⁷.

Al-Ameen was banned by the government in 1939 following its call for the people not to co-operate with the war attempts of Britain and it disappeared from the scene. Years after independence, the followers of Abdurahiman Sahib restarted it as an evening daily, but it again came to an end. Thus ended an era of intellectual debates among the nationalists through the media.

The public sphere of the post-Rebellion Malabar, thus, filled with debates and discussions through media and literary works. It was through

⁵⁶ *Al-Ameen*, dated 1st April 1934, MNNPR. The Kazhcha of Thiyyas to the Thalap Sundaresa Temple at Kannur through the way of the nearby Muslim Mosque caused the Thiyya Muslim riots at Kannur and Edakkad. The denial of the demand of Muslims of the area to stop the *vadyaghosha* in the premises of Muhammadeeya *Pallikkadu* led to such a riot. Most of the social workers openly declares their attitude towards this and viewed it as an attempt to destruct the communal harmony meted out after 1921 Rebellion as an unfortunate one.

⁵⁷ *Desabhimani weekly*, dated 23rd October 1977.

these media that the major political and social changes came out in its absolute sense. It is obscure that these media had played a major role in shaping the future Malabar society and polity. Along with these, the policies of British Government also played a substantial role in shaping the polity and society of post Rebellion Malabar. Their aim was secular, but a fracturing one.

Educational policy

Through their educational policies, the British Government tried to introduce a new form of schooling system in Malabar and this later created tensions in the social sphere of Malabar. The British Government estimated that the educational backwardness of *Mappilas* in Malabar caused all the problems. So they decided to introduce some changes in the educational scenario of Malabar. In the early part of 19th century, the educational condition of Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponnani Taluks, where there were more *Mappila* population, was highly deplorable. They gave more priority to religious education than general and there were separate schools for both Hindu and Muslim communities. There aroused demands from various parts to abolish such separate elementary schools. As a result of this, the British Government appointed a *Mappila* education committee in 1923 to investigate the priority of these schools. The committee reported that in Ernad, there were only 4,484 boys attending school, in Valluvanad Taluk only 4,250 and

in Calicut 1,382. Of these, a little more than half were attending aided *Mappila* schools while the remaining attended Board *Mappila* Schools or Hindu schools⁵⁸. The committee expressed their disapproval for the abolition of separate schools and it also recommended for the introduction of compulsory education to all children. It also recommended for the abolition of separate inspecting staff for the *Mappila* schools⁵⁹. Even though the Government accepted all recommendations of the committee and provided facilities to run special educational institutions, the common people could not favour it in its real sense.

According to the custom then prevailed, only *Mappila* teachers could teach in *Mappila* schools. This gave way to many problems. Whenever a Hindu teacher was appointed in a *Mappila* school, there were attempts to highlight it as a communal issue⁶⁰. Mean while, the Government came with a new project called the 'Champion Scheme'. The Education Director has ordered the abolition of separate Hindu and Muslim schools and directed to amalgamate them. Widespread protests broke out against this order from different parts of Malabar. On 31st January 1934 a public meeting, presided over by Janab M.V. Muhammad Sahib, was held at Mankada and a resolution was passed criticising severely the decision of the Director and demanding the

⁵⁸ G.O.No. 376 law (education) Dept, dated 9th March 1923, RAC.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Some reference are there in *Mathrubhumi* regarding the problems arouse due to the appointments of such teachers. *Mathrubhumi.*, dated 30th June 1934.

continuation of separate *Mappila* schools⁶¹. These protests set stage for a big debate on the issue. Some argued that separate schools and instructors were essential for Muslims, but the others were against such a separation. Media, during this period, were full of divergent views expressed by different persons. Some were in favour of the demand for providing facilities for religious education to Muslim students. Meanwhile, they were against separate school and Deputy Inspectors. Following this, N.S. Nambissan had published an article in *Mathrubhumi* in which he had revealed his anxiety thus: "demand for separate schools for the learning of different languages is reasonable, where as, the rational behind the demand for separate schools for separate community is undesirable"⁶². He asks: "is it impossible for Mohammedans and Christians to learn the alphabets of the language, arithmetic or geography as they are studying together with their Hindu classmates?" He further asks: "whether unanimity and friendship would grow by learning in the same class barring caste differences? By raising another question, 'isn't it essential to provide religious instructions for Hindus just like Muslims who were demanding for religious schools for it? Nambissan had exposed his actual intention through this article that he was against allowing separate schools for Hindus and Muslims.

⁶¹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6th February 1984.

⁶² *Ibid.*, dated 10th February 1934.

As a part of implementing the Champion Scheme, the Deputy Education Director had visited many parts of Malabar. At that time, school managers and representatives of Valluvanad Muslim community had submitted separate memorandums. The managers opposed the decision of Malabar Education Council for allowing the separate Muslim and Hindu schools to continue. According to them, "in such separate Muslim schools, Hindus outnumbered Muslims and so the other schools were badly affected. They demanded that if permission is given to start separate Muslim schools, Hindu students should not allow seeking admission there.⁶³ Mean while, in their memorandum, the Valluvanad Muslims expressed their concern over the harms suffered generally in the education of all people in the Taluk and Muslims in particular due to the amalgamation of schools. They had been of the view that: "*Mappilas* are attracted to schools as Khuran is being taught in separate Muslim schools. There are people who believe that it is anti-religious to send children to schools. Khuran learning begins from 9 AM onwards. If schools are amalgamated, this facility will be lost and it will give an impetus to the belief that schools are anti-religious. Similarly holidays on Bakrid, Ramzan and Fridays can be provided in the separate schools. This also will be lost due to the amalgamation. More over, if separate schools are

⁶³ *Ibid.*, dated 20th February 1934.

eliminated, the practice of sending Muslim girls to schools will get stopped as they are not permitted to interact with other boys"⁶⁴.

Following these debates, the Chief Minister, in his Presidential address in the anniversary meeting of the Hindu Balika School, said about the objectives of the scheme: "this scheme has not been proposed to implement without considering the benefits of the communities and castes. The champion scheme has been designed for the general benefit of the whole Madras province". He has assured that the Government would try its level best to implement the scheme without inflicting any harm to anybody. During the 1930s, separate schools and related issues continued to exist. This had become a subject to many literacy items also. Such a background can be clearly seen in *Muthassi* written by Cherukad⁶⁵. The details of this debate was brought to the minds of the general public through the media and it caused the spread of a communal spirit among them and no doubt, it created visible movements in the public sphere. All such debates and discussions in the post Rebellion period, later, played a great role in shaping the future Malabar society and polity, which culminated into the growth of communal and communitarian organisations in Malabar.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Cherukad, *Muthassi* (Malayalam Novel), Thrissur, 1989. In this the problems faced by a teacher character, Nanikutty, is explained.

c. Social Repercussions of the Rebellion

The political and social realm of Malabar was very intense and tensed due to the changes occurred in the Post-Rebellion period. The growth of nationalism was a slow process and the life of common people was in a difficult situation. Each of them felt a feeling of insecurity. Out of this, each section felt the need of their revival. As a result, attempts were being made from various quarters to revive their own communities. Thus, the post-Rebellion Malabar witnessed the emergence of various caste and communitarian organisations along with nationalism, which rendered tremendous changes in the existing socio-political realm.

(i) Attempts of Muslims to reorganise their community

Immediately after the Rebellion, some of the Muslim elitists felt the need of reorganisation of their community that resulted in the emergence of Muslim Aikya Sangham in the scene. The 1921 Rebellion had created a political vacuum as far as the *Mappilas* of Malabar are concerned. The repressive policies followed by the British government left no alternative for the *Mappilas*, but to remain silent spectators of the political development in the country at least for a time being. But consistent efforts were made from 1922-23 onwards by the *Mappila* leaders of Malabar to rouse their brethren from the stupors in to which they had fallen. Even though the Muslim League was established in all India level, it could not have any root in Malabar till

1937. There were many associations and organisations in Malabar prior to the formation of Muslim League like Ma' Unath ul Islam Sabha⁶⁶ and Himayathul Islam Sabha,⁶⁷ but they didn't like the Muslims of Kerala to unite to solve their problems. The Himayathul Islam Sabha, made little efforts in the Tenancy question in 1910s, but had no capacity to involve in any form of political or social activities. The Himayathul Islam Sabha at Calicut sent a deputation in 1923 to the Viceroy at Madras to infuse him about the pathetic condition of Muslims in the post Rebellion Malabar⁶⁸. But all these efforts failed to achieve its goal.

The *Mappilas* of Malabar were in a deteriorated condition in the post Rebellion period. They were politically beaten, economically backward, intellectually moribund and religiously medieval, there seems to be an adequate base for contenting with the modern forces it would encounter⁶⁹. The precarious condition led to a rethinking and self-assessment among the Muslim intellectuals and elite middle class and they came with the intention to reorganise the community. Considering Kerala as a whole, the main role in this resurgence was played by a socio-religious organisation called the Kerala

⁶⁶ It was formed in 1960 AD at Ponnani with the aim of the Welfare of the Community.

⁶⁷ It was formed in 1899 with the objective of imparting education among the Muslims of Malabar.

⁶⁸Public Department, (1923), G.O.No.960, dated 26-12-1923, RAC. The deputation informed the Governor that a large portion of *Mappilas* who were punished were innocent and appealed to take suitable measures for their problems

⁶⁹ Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras, 1992, p. 162.

Muslim Aikya Sangham. The task of ushering a new era of enlightenment in the socio-religious and cultural life of Kerala Muslims fell on this organisation⁷⁰. It was at this time when there were only sporadic individual efforts in social and religious reform; it was the Muslim Aikya Sangham that inaugurated concentrated efforts towards that end. It was no exaggeration to state the noticeable change that had taken place in the Muslim society from one end of Kerala to the other due to the initiative taken by Aikya Sangham in the matter. With the emergence of Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham, an organised form of reform movement could be visible in Muslim community. The most important social, economic and religious changes that is visible in Kerala in 1930s and afterwards was mainly due to the works of Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham.

After the Rebellion of 1921, many of the philanthropists and thinkers among Muslims thought of formulating an organised work to check further outbursts in Kerala. They realised the fact that the individual efforts were not enough and an organised effort is necessary for this. The idea was aroused firstly from the social workers of Kodungallur, who informed it to the elitist Muslims of the area⁷¹. Along with the group rivalry among the well to do families of Kodungallur, the 1921 Rebellion was also indirectly affected the

⁷⁰ K.K. Ashraf, "The Reform agenda of Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham", paper presented in Indian History Congress, Pattiala University, Punjab, 2004.

⁷¹ K.K. Muhammed Abdul Kareem, *K.K. Moulavi Sahib*, Tirurangadi, 1985, p.142.

area very much. Many of the *Mappilas*, who left the riot stricken areas, took assylum at Kodungallur and many well-to-do families of the area gave protection to them. Even though there formed an organisation called 'Nishpaksha Sangham' by the Muslim leaders, it failed to attain its objectives to solve the problem⁷². Therefore, a public meeting was held at Eriyad and changed the name of the organisation as Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham. The Sangham was formed under the auspices of the leaders like K.M. Moulavi and Hamadani Sahib along with the elitist Muslims of the area such as Manappatt P Kunhahammed Haji and Seethi Muhammed. The nationalist Muslim leaders like Muhammed Abdurahiman, Seethi Sahib and E. Moidu Moulavi were some of the early leaders of Aikya Sangham⁷³. Through annual conferences, the Sangham tried to spread its ideology among the commoners. From it's beginning onwards, the Sangham tried to encourage the Muslims to absolve the un-Islamic practices and believes⁷⁴. For the proper guidance and conduct of religious propagation effectively, the first conference of the Sangham (held at Eriyad in 1923) decided to form an organisation of the 'Ulamas of Kerala'. The second annual conference held at Alwaye on 10th to 12th May 1924) decided to form the Kerala Jamayathul Ulama with Moidu

⁷² K.P. Abdu Rahiman, "Keralathile Islahi Samkhatana" in *Prabodhanam special supplement*, 1998.

⁷³ Interview with Nellikkuth Muhammed Mussaliar, Nellikkuth, Manjeri, aged 85, on 7.10.04.

⁷⁴ K.M. Abdul Samad, *Islam in Kerala – Groups and movements in the 20th Century*, Kottayam, 1998, p. 80.

Moulavi as its secretary⁷⁵. The Aikya Sangham appealed to the Muslims of entire Kerala to render all helps to the Muslim brethren of Malabar, who were suffering a lot due to the Rebellion⁷⁶. The Sangham more zealously engaged in reformist attempts and generated a sense of socio religious awakening among the Muslims. It worked for the upliftment of Islamic religious principles by raising severe criticism against the orthodox ideas of Muslim Ulamas. It also stressed on the spread of educational institutions to impart education among both men and women and also worked for the propagation of Islam. Aikya Sangham raised its voice against the Andaman Scheme⁷⁷. It also decided to check the contamination of the community through the political interference.

The relationship between the Aikya Sangham and Nationalist Muslim like Muhammed Abdurahiman began to diminish when Muhammad Abdurahiman started to criticise the Sangham through his press *Al-Ameen*. The dispute was mainly on account of the establishment of a Muslim bank at Eranamkulam by the Sangham⁷⁸. It has been claimed that the severe poverty and economic decline followed by the Rebellion inspired the leaders of the Sangham to think of such an economic reformation. For this purpose, they attained *fatwas* of some Moulavi's and claimed that there is nothing wrong in

⁷⁵ K.K. Muhammed Abdul Kareem, *op.cit*, p. 147.

⁷⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29th May 1924.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, dated 2nd June 1925.

⁷⁸ S.K. Pottakkad *et.al.*, *Muhammed Abdurhiman*, Calicut, 1978,p. 269.

accepting little interest⁷⁹. The nationalist leaders like Muhammed Abdurahiman and E. Moidu Moulavi raised staunch criticisms against the attempt of the Sangham through its columns. The differences in the opinions between Aikya Sangham and *Al-Ameen* created a lot of problems in the public sphere which ultimately led to the disintegration of the Sangham and also to the polarization of the founder members of the Sangham into two different political camps later.

In 1930's there organised another association known as Kerala Muslim Majlis⁸⁰ under the leadership of E. Moidu Moulavi and Uppi Sahib with the objective of political, social and economic upliftment of Muslim community. Later Aikya Sangham was amalgamated into the Muslim Majlis. In 1937 a unit of Muslim League was also established in Malabar, which led to the expulsion of Muslims into a separate political camp. It was the only organisation that could put all Muslims of Kerala under the banner of one political organisation and nowadays also Muslim League is an inseparable factor in the politics of the highly segmentary society of Kerala. The Muslim communitarian element was so strong in the post Rebellion period, which later acted as a unifying factor among the Muslims of Malabar.

⁷⁹ E. Moidu Moulavi, *Atmakatha, op.cit.*, p. 100.

⁸⁰ For more details of Majlis and Muslim league, see chapter V.

(ii) ATTEMPTS TO DEVELOP A HINDU RELIGIOUS ETHOS
Development of Caste and Communitarian Organisations in the Hindu
Religion

There emerged various caste and communitarian organisations among the Hindus also, like the Muslims, to safeguard the interests of their own caste. Communitarianism is quite different from communalism. These are two terms that are frequently used in Indian history for long years. One of the most important impact of British imperialism that is visible in the polity and society of India is the spread of communalism. Communalism is the making of a social and political identity based itself on religion and constructing itself against other religious identities⁸¹. But community sentiments or communitarianism is significantly different from communalism, though two could be often merge. Communitarianism offers a sense of security within one's own community, but without being against another. Socially significant features of communitarianism are that it is mostly confined to individual initiatives, uses institutional or state channels and circulates within a class, peer group or status group⁸². When a particular community upholds the rotten antiquity, it badly affects not only that community, but others also. The communitarian organisations conduct an organised attempt to eliminate these trends.

⁸¹ M. Muraleedharan, "Hindu community formation in Kerala, process and structure under colonial modernity" in *South Asian studies*, 2nd July-December 1996.

⁸² *Ibid.*

The post Rebellion Malabar also witnessed such a communitarian development. Almost all castes began to form their own separate organisations and associations for their own safety. Various associations, formed even before the Rebellion, became stronger and more energetic in the post Rebellion period. Among them the Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha, Nair Service Society and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam were more prominent. They became more enthusiastic and energetic in safeguarding the interests of their own caste. Besides these, the *Nambissans*, *Vaidyars*, *Nadars*, *Pulayars*, *Cherumans* etc also organised their own separate associations to safeguard their community from the evils of the Hindu society and also from its decline. The downtrodden sections formed such associations to protect themselves from the clutches of untouchability and unapproachability. But criticisms arose from various quarters against such attempts. Even Mahatma Gandhi criticised such attempts of Hindus and in his view such attempts were a great blunder and he felt such associations are unnecessary⁸³.

Irrespective of all such criticisms communitarian organisations became strong in Malabar. The social sphere of post Rebellion Malabar was, thus, filled with different caste and communitarian organisations. A joined meeting of '*Cherumas*' of Kalyasseri, Pappinisseri and Kannadiparamba was held at

⁸³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14th June 1924.

Kalyasseri in Kannur in 1924 with the aim of discussing the problems that they had faced and to find out solutions to these problems, especially to attain freedom to walk through public roads.⁸⁴ In the meeting, the '*Cherumas*' proclaimed that they didn't want to enter the houses of the *savarnas* or their temples, but they wanted the right to walk through public roads constructed with public money⁸⁵.

Attempts were being made to organise a meeting of the *Panchamas*⁸⁶ of Malappuram, Manjeri, Pallippuram, Panthallur etc. to make attempts for the eradication of the evil practices existed with in the community and also to get freedom from the cruelties of the upper sections of the society⁸⁷. The meeting was held according to the needs of enthusiastic *Kanakkans* of this area like Kunhikeeran, Cherukutti and others. Some leaders from *Nairs*, *Menons* and Muslim community, who were sympathetic towards these poor people, also attended the meeting. Persons like Nadimaster and Valiyachathan of Malappuram, Kutti from Manjeri, Kottiyal Peravan from Oorakam, Chathan of Kachinikkad, Kuncholan and Nochiladi of Pookkottur came forward and spoke about their grievances. They asked: "though our blood is similar to that of *thampurans*, why we are subjected to harassments"? Their important demands were: to get freedom to walk through the public roads,

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, dated 20th December 1924.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ The *Panchamas* of the areas are called as *Kanakkans*.

⁸⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 8th September 1925.

eradicate evil customs prevailed among them, encourage education of their children and bring light to their huts were their demands. Some people from the upper castes like Kumaran Nair and Karunakara Menon told that they would take initiative of solving all their problems. Similarly, a Kerala Panan Samajam of the *Pana* community also was established in Malabar⁸⁸. These attempts showed the fact that the downtrodden sections of the society were aware of their deplorable conditions.

As a lesson to the Hindu conservatives, a great summit of *Pulayas* was held at Pallikkavu in North Malabar, under the chairmanship of V.K. Kunhi kannan. In addition to *Pulayas*, *Nair* elitist like C.C. Appukkutty Nambiar and many Muslims and *Thiyyas* attended the meeting. Famous social activists like Mannath Padmanabhan, Kesava Pulayanar, and C. Kuttan Nair were also present in the meeting. This meeting was organised due to the harassment of the poor by a *Nair jenmi*, who was considered by them as their drinking water and air to breathe⁸⁹. Kesava Pulayanar told that the *Pulayas* can live like human beings only by having a community organisation and attaining education. He felt that the condition of *Pulayas* of Malabar is more deplorable than that of Travancore. He also told that despite the harassment by the master, the *Pulayas* should live honestly doing their work reasonably.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, dated 20th May 1928.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 5th June 1928.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

A Nambissan Samajam was organised in North Malabar with the purpose of safeguarding their caste from its decline. The Second Annual conference of the Samajam was held at Kuttiyadi on 14th May 1924 in which number of resolutions was passed with the aim to attain their goal⁹¹. While the reforms in the *Nambissan* community were underway, Koliprath Damodaran Nambissan wrote an article in *Mathrubhumi* on 24th March 1924 which stated: "the Nambissans of today are living in a most deplorable condition that that it is difficult to call them even as human beings. It is relevant to note at a time when the downtrodden communities are trying their best to improve their social status, other communities like *Nambudiries*, *Nairs*, *Thiyyas* and *Pulayas* are far ahead in their social reform attempts. *Pulayas*, whom we consider as the most impure and inferior are also moving on the same route. We are depending Nambuthiries to perform our most sacred practices and rituals like '*choroon*, *choulam*, *upanayanam*, *kanyadhanam* etc. It is a shame on our part that we have to depend often other communities like Nambudiries to perform our most sacred practices. Therefore we should take the responsibility of performing these practices using our own men. Though there are members within our community who are aware about the need for this change, no effort has been made to curtail these irrational practices"⁹². It was such awareness that motivated the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, dated 15th May 1924.

⁹² *Ibid.*, dated 24th March 1924.

Nambissans to form an organisation and try for their upliftment. It is no doubt, that, theirs was an anti Namboodiri's movement.

Similar to the efforts of the *Nambissans*, for the upliftment of their own community, an organisation under the name Keraleeya Vaidya Samajam has been established by the *Vaidya* community. An annual meeting of the Malabar Ayurveda Vaidyasala of Thalasseri and the Keraleeya Vaidya Samajam has been held near the Thalsseri Railway Station⁹³. Meanwhile, in order to think about the temporary situations faced by the *Varrier* community and for pondering over the way to uplift them, a meeting was held at Duriath Varriam on 8th June 1926.

The Malayalee Viswakarma Sabha, an organisation of the *Viswakarmas* (*Kammalas*, who were artisans) of Malayalam was also actively present in Malabar. The first annual meeting of this organisation, which was registered in 1926 to the regeneration of the community, was held at Cheruvannur under the chairmanship of Manjeri Ramayyar. Another meeting of the Sabha was held at Calicut on 24th October 1928, under the chairmanship of C.V. Siva Rao⁹⁴. Resolutions were passed in the meeting requesting the Government for giving tenders regarding the works of Local Boards and Government done by *Kammalar* to the community itself granting scholarship to *Kammala* students and appoint their own representatives in

⁹³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 9th April 1925.

⁹⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 28th October 1928.

people's bodies like the Legislative Assembly, District Board and Municipal Council.

Similarly it can be seen that the *Chaliya* community also involved in the activities for the improvement of their community and woke up from their sleep. Keeping this purpose, a meeting of *Samastha Kerala Chaliya Yuvajana Yogam* was held at the Panthalyani Board Higher Secondary School on 22nd January 22nd, 1927, under the presidentship of K. Kelappan and decided to work for the upliftment of the community⁹⁵.

With the aim of eradication of the disabilities of the *Peruvannan* Community of Kozhikkode Taluk and for undertaking measures for their upliftment, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of K.M. Nair BA. BL, at KSR High School, Chalappuram, on 15th January 1928. On account of the notice of Vaidyar K. Bapputty, many members of the community, including 20 women, attended the meeting⁹⁶. The meeting advocated for the upliftment of the society by eradicating the evil customs prevailing in the community like untouchability, child marriage and liquor consumption. Following this, on January 28, Sunday, a meeting was held at Kozhikkode under the

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, dated 29th January 1927.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, dated 28th January 1928.

Presidentship of Chamunni Vaidyar and decided to hold a public meeting of the community⁹⁷.

The sight that is visible in Malabar in this age is that even the noble caste, Nair community, has been divided into many sub divisions. Each sub section is trying to build up their own organisations and to oppose the harassment by their higher divisions. Examples for this are the Manavalan Nair Samajam, Veluthedathu Nair Samajam, Vellekkatu Nair Samajam etc.

Similar attempts were being made by the upper sections of the society also to improve their present conditions. *Kerala Yogakshema Sabha*, formed in 1908 March on the Sivarathri day in a meeting held under the chairmanship of Desamangalam Sankaran Namboothiripad at the *illom* of Cherumangalam Vaideekan, was the first organisation of the Kerala Brahmins. The earlier leaders of the movement were interested both in the priestly functions and progressive thoughts that became widespread as a result of the national movement⁹⁸. Even though the organisation was there even long years before the Rebellion, it attained a slow growth mainly due to the lack of strong leaders. In the post Rebellion period, many youths came to the forefront of it, especially those who were eager to modify the orthodoxy kept by the elders⁹⁹. The youth wing of Yokakshema Sabha put forward a new revolutionary idea

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, dated 31st January 1928.

⁹⁸ *Mathrubhumi* Charitram Vol. II, Calicut, 1988, p. 90

⁹⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 12th and 14th May 1925.

for the removal of evil customs existed with in the community. The 17th Annual conference of the Sabha was celebrated on May 1925, which helped to provide enthusiasm and self-confidence among the younger sections of the community¹⁰⁰. The activities of the Sabha helped to develop self-consciousness among the members of it and to strengthen unity among them. According to *Mathrubhumi*, the leaders of the Sabha were functioned with mere communal motives and policies. The Sabha advocated everybody to wear Khadi, but to keep the lower castes, who also wear Khadi, far away. The Sabha has rejected the resolution regarding the removal of untouchability. Meanwhile, *Mathrubhumi* advocated the Namboodiri youths to wakeup and it reminded that: if not, "it would badly affect the community"¹⁰¹. It was at this juncture that a radical wing of Namboodiri's emerged into the scene that advocated the eradication of untouchability and other evil customs existed in the society. One of the most prominent among them was Kuroor Neelakantan Namboodiripad, an active Congress leader and an advocate of the anti-untouchability campaigns. He made an attempt to pass a resolution regarding the abolition of untouchability from the community, in the Thrissivaperur session of Namboodiri Yogakshema Sabha held on 3rd May 1924, in which, he could win the support of the Sabha for the

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 12th May 1925.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, dated 14th May 1925.

same cause¹⁰². Many of the members of the Sabha were against the provisions of Tenancy Bill. Many decisions were implemented in the executive committee of the Sabha held at the Panal Temple on 27th September 1925. The meeting has applied to the Madras Government to take suitable measures to safeguard the *jennies*, who form the minority and faithful to the king if an injustice and harmful law is passed forcibly using the majority¹⁰³.

Thirty-one Annual meetings of the Sabha were conducted without fail. Since then, the Sabha became nominal. Some of the activists entered into politics. The others ensured a place in the field of art and culture. Majority have withdrawn to their own domestic circles. However the Yogakshema Sabha and its activities created a new fervour in the Namboodiri community.

The SNDP is the oldest and like biggest communal organisation of Kerala. While analyzing its aims and objectives, it is clear that it is not a communal organisation. However, as almost all members of this belong to particular community-*Ezhavas* and *Thiyyas*-this has been considered to be a communal organisation. SNDP was formed in 1888. Even though all communities were given representation in earlier days, later, this was exclusively taken over by *Ezhavas* and *Thiyyas*. *Ezhavas*, who claim to be Buddhists, had enjoyed more power in the working committee. This has

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, dated 6th May 1924.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, dated 3rd October 1925.

transformed the working committee meetings in to communal¹⁰⁴. Even though a resolution was once passed saying that all who joins the *Yogam* will be treated as Ezhavas, the downward castes lower to *Ezhavas* were not admitted to the *Yogam*.

Even though the *Yogam* was formed years before, it became active in Malabar only during the post Rebellion period. It was in 1929, a branch of *Yogam* was established at Kozhikode. Activities of the *Thiyyas* were conducted earlier in Malabar. Eradication of untouchability being its main agenda. A meeting of the *Thiyyas* of Calicut was held at Paranshall in May, 1924 and decided to extend full support to the cause of eradication of untouchability, which was considered as their main duty¹⁰⁵. There are references regarding the joint attempts of NSS and SNDP, in the later days, against the existing social evils. As a part of this, a joint conference of NSS and SNDP was held at Vaikom in 1924,¹⁰⁶ in which, it was decided to render full support to the cause of the Satyagraha. The NSS and SNDP became strong, not only in Malabar, but also in the entire Kerala. But later, its policies were changed and its leaders had moved in to severe criticisms against the national government and the Congress. Even they had demanded for separate constituency for the Ezhavas. Even though the SNDP *Yogam*

¹⁰⁴ *Mathrubhumi*yude *Charithram* Vol.II, *op.cit*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁵ *Mathrubhumi.*, dated 6th May 1924.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, dated 13th May 1924.

had accepted many policies entirely different from its earlier policies, it had grown into an organisation fighting for the upliftment of the Ezhava community.

NSS is another powerful communitarian organisation of Kerala. The Nair Samudayas Brithyajana Sabha formed at Mannam House of Changanasseri on 31st October 1914, was renamed in 1915, as Nair service Society and became a big communitarian organisation¹⁰⁷. The All Kerala Nair summits conducted by the society gave way to basic reforms in the community. The objective was to renovate the community by eradicating unnecessary evil customs and practices. NSS attempted to spread their hold even in the remote areas through Nair Samajams. Such Samajams, in their view, are necessary for a community to strengthen it by eradicating evil customs from the society. In their view, less work was done in Malabar for the upliftment of their community.

There arose criticisms from various quarters against the formation of such communal organisations. The critics had of the opinion that the growth of such organisations would effect badly on the political front. But the leaders of Nair community rejected this view and stated that such Samajams and Sanghams would regenerate the community, instead of letting them as mere political agents. The most notable fact here is that all these attempts

¹⁰⁷ *Mathrubhumi yude Charitram* Vol.II, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

were undertaken against the Brahmanical supremacy. At Calicut, a meeting was held to discuss various measures that would undertake for the internal reforms of the community¹⁰⁸. At Payyarmala near Payyoli, a Nair Mahayogam was held under the chairmanship of K.T. Kumaran Nambissan in which almost all Nairs of that area participated. It discussed the unification of various sections of Nair community to strengthen it¹⁰⁹. There were *Samajams* and *Sanghams* of NSS in various parts of Malabar. The Cheruvannur Nair Samajam was one of the most noted one, which had a strong hold among Nairs of the area. Such attempts were so strong in the remote places of Southern Malabar also. At Nilambur, Mampad and Wandoor attempts were made to establish such Samajams and also to bring the masses in to anti-untouchability campaigns.

The NSS decided to conduct local conferences for strengthening it and also to spread its ideas in every nook and corner of Malabar. One of the most important Nair conferences was held at Karuvatta in May 1929¹¹⁰. This conference decided to form branches of NSS *Karayogams* in all parts of Kerala. It passed a resolution which denounced the caste and national differences existed in the Nair community. Another resolution demanded permission to all Hindus to enter in to the temples and also recommended to

¹⁰⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4th May 1924.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 6th May 1924.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 11th May 1929.

handover the village reconstruction programme to *Karayogams*. A conference of Ponnani Nair Samajam was held at Ponnani High School ground in 1929 under the presidentship of Kannan Menon. It declared communal harmony and eradication of untouchability as its main aim¹¹¹.

The Nair conference held at Ponnani in January 1930 under the presidentship of K. Madhavan Nair decided to form a Malabar Nair Samajam, as a representative body of Niars of Malabar¹¹². In his presidential address, Madhavan Nair stated that: "even though some Nair Samajams are there in Malabar, like North Kerala Nair Samajam and Ponnani Nair Samajam, they were not having enough strength and influence among Nairs. So such an organisation is necessary for the regeneration of the community"¹¹³. It formed a working committee of about 30 members from various parts of Malabar. It also decided to apply to make changes in the *Marumakkathayam* system¹¹⁴. The conference was held immediately after the suspension of Kudiyan Conference. Therefore there arose doubts about the nature of Nair Samajams. Some doubted that *Kudiyan Sangham* was changed into Nair Samajam. As a response to this, M.M. Kunhikrishnan Nair declared that the doubt is worthless and these two have no relationship at all. He stated that the main

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, dated 17th May, 1929.

¹¹² *Unni Namboodiri*, dated 17th January 1930.

¹¹³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16th January 1930.

¹¹⁴ *Unni Namboodiri*, *op.cit.*

aim of the Samajam was eradication of untouchability and nothing else¹¹⁵. In later days, such Samajams and organisations were very active in Malabar which worked for the upliftment of the community by eradicating evil that existed within its purview.

Anti-Brahmanical feelings were so strong in Malabar along with the spread of such caste and communitarian organisations. Attempts were being made to form a Non-Brahmanical Association (*Abrahmana Sangham*), as a branch of South Indian Liberal Foundation in Malabar¹¹⁶. With this purpose, N. Gopala Menon and O.C. Srinivasan arrived at Calicut and organised a meeting at Parans Hall. There arose different views in response to the need of the formation of such an organisation and many raised criticisms against this attempt. One among them was C. Achuthan, who rejected the necessity of such a Sangham in Malabar. He was of the opinion that the organisation of such a Sangham would create group disputes, which was absent in Malabar till then. In his view the problem makers to untouchables were not the Brahmins, but the high caste non-Brahmins and in Malabar the differences between Brahmins and non Brahmins are very less¹¹⁷. He raised severe criticisms against C. Krishnan, who according to him, was the most important enemy of untouchables. But O.C. Srinivasan rejected the sentiments of

¹¹⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 16th January 1930.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, dated 6th May 1924.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, dated 6th August 1925.

C. Achuthan by stressing the point that even many Congress workers treated *Abrahmanas* very cruelly and therefore, some organisations like *Abrahmana Sanghams* only could help them¹¹⁸. The press was also very active in this debate. In an editorial dated on 6th August 1925, *Mathrubhumi* expressed the view regarding the formation of a Non-Brahmanical Sangham that the formation of such a communication organisation is harmful to the benefit of a society. Therefore, what is better according to *Mathrubhumi* is to let off the idea of the formation of such an organisation¹¹⁹.

By neglecting all such criticisms, a branch of *Abrahmin Sangham* was formed at Calicut as a continuation of South Indian Liberal Foundation with the aim to work for the benefit of *Abrahmins*. But who will include in the group of *Abrahmins* is not yet to be decided and thus it also remained as a subject of debate. It is reported that in the Calicut meeting even Muslims and Buddhists participated. In the eyes of Government all the Brahmins of Malabar were even included in the groups of *Abrahmins*. Many expressed their curiosity that such attacks of *Abrahmin Sangham* would create some bad impact in the minds of the Brahmins who were working for the cause of anti-untouchability campaigns irrespective of their caste or class. It is doubted that, in future, sometimes, such persons would compel to work selfishly and also in accordance with caste. They feared that it will effect not only to a

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

particular region, but also to the entire country. It is reported by an *Abrahmin* that *Nairs*, *Thiyyas* and even *Mukkuvass* were trying to join in the Sabha. He opined that each community is suffering a lot due to their prejudices, but kept silent in front of the declining state. They have to wake up from their silence and would start to work for saving their own community from its decline, other than to make attempts to join with such an organisation, according to him¹²⁰. It is true that this anti-Brahmanism was against the Hindu ethos.

But some scholars like Dilip M Menon is of the view that such an organisation did not exist¹²¹. This anti-Brahmin movement had its origin in the early part of 20th century in Tamilnadu. The attack on the brahmin/Namboodiri in Kerala was neither as sustained nor vituperative as in Tamil region. An added and more profound dimension here is that there was considerable soul-searching within the Brahmin community itself both for internal reform as well as for restricting its relation with other castes, particularly of Nairs. And this attempt later caused the development of new tendencies and elements in the social and political sphere of Malabar.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 13th August 1923.

¹²¹ Dilip M. Menon, "Being a Brahmin the Marxist way: E.M.S. Namboodiripad and the Pasts of Kerala" in Daud Ali (ed.), *Involving the Past – the Uses of History in South Asia*, Delhi, 1999.

Anti-untouchability campaigns and development of Hindu Religion organisations

These caste and communitarian sentiment led to the development of a Hindu religions ethos. Such feelings mainly arose from the rigid caste system existed in the society and attempts made by each community to get freedom from the barriers of caste. Caste shapes the boundaries of individual members' rights in the inter-household and intra household relationships. The Marxian concept of caste is based upon the mode of production. The caste system, in the view of Dilip Menon, was the mark of superior economic organisation which the Brahmins instituted allowing the shift from one mode of production to another¹²².

In the words of E M S Namboodiripad: “the differences between one caste and another are a difference in the stage reached by them in the evolution of society”¹²³. These differences later created lot of problems in the social sphere of Kerala. In Malabar, the caste hierarchy reached its height in the early 20th century. The noted poet Kumaranasan pointed out the real condition of Malabar in the period of Rebellion, in his famous poetry *Duravastha*.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ E.M.S Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, Bombay, 1952, p. 32.

"Thottukoodathavar Theendikkoodathavar

DrushtiyilPettalumDoshamullor

Ingin Ottallayao Ha!

*Jathikkomarngal.*¹²⁴

This poem mentions the condition of Hindu community of the age as: there existed untouchables, unapproachable and who cause evils happened to be before the eye. Like this lot of *jatis* were there in the society. The Hindu society was just like a watertight compartment, which was divided in to numerous castes and sub castes. The lower sections were considered as untouchables and they were denounced to enter the houses of higher castes and temples run under their management. The discrimination against untouchables was a common feature of Hindu society and it was denounced on a "bourgeois attempt to keep the masses disunited"¹²⁵. Even at the time of Rebellion, this bourgeois section didn't allow the untouchables to join them and provide a united action against the rebels¹²⁶. This meaningless caste and religion divided Hindus to *savarna* Hindus and *avarna* Hindus and also lot of sub division among them itself¹²⁷.

¹²⁴ Kumaranasan, *Duravastha*, in *Asante Padyakrithikal*, Kottayam, 1998..

¹²⁵ M.B.Rao (ed), *Documents of the History of Communist Party*, cited by Dilip M. Menon , *op.cit.*, p. 74.

¹²⁶ This is a subject of many of the novels in Malayalam. One of the most important important example of this is P C Kuttikrishnan's *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum*.

¹²⁷ *Unni Nambooridri*, daed 17th January 1930.

The Hindu nationalist Leaders, in the post Rebellion period realised the fact that such caste and communal barriers affect very much the growth of nationalism in Malabar and thus its removal was necessary. So they decided to render much attention to the cause of emancipation of untouchability and the propagation of Khadar as a media to the spread of nationalism. In Malabar, as a primary step to this, a *pandibhojana* was arranged in the last day of the Second Kerala Political Conference held at Palghat in May 1923, in which all sections of the society, irrespective of caste and creed were participated¹²⁸. The orthodox *savarnas* viewed this with a shocked eye. The upper castes, who participated in this *pandibhojana* were given severe punishments. Even though, this *pandibhojana* created a lot of problems in the social sphere, it instilled a new spirit and energy to nationalism.

Later, Congress decided to undertake the responsibility of anti-untouchability campaigns. The most important campaign was held at Vaikom in 1924-26 period against the obnoxious and irrational restrictions imposed upon the so-called untouchables. They were even restricted to walk through the public approach roads to Vaikom Temple. It was the first organised resistance against the evils of caste system in Modern Indian History¹²⁹. The general enthusiasm created by the Satyagraha along with solid

¹²⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 10th May 1923.

¹²⁹ M. Gangadharan, 'Kesava Menon's role in the National Movement', in *Kesava Menon 90, op.cit.*, p. 39.

nationalist propaganda of *Mathrubhumi* finally brought the nationalist movement in Kerala out of the isolation into which it had fallen after the Rebellion in Malabar.

In the realm of social reform, the Hindu religious elements were more eager to spread their hold upon the popular life of Kerala. They tried to undertake the anti-untouchability campaign under its banner. They organised the Haindava Mahasabha under the auspices of Keraleeya Hindu Maha Sabha to undertake the anti-untouchability and anti-unapproachability campaign in Kerala. With this purpose, they conducted a meeting at Alappuzha Sanadanam High school. The noted Malayalam poet Vallathol participated in the meeting and made a speech in which he stressed the need for removal of untouchability from the society to safeguard Hindu religion from its decline¹³⁰. The conference passed resolutions, which demanded the freedom of Temple Entry to all irrespective of caste differences. What is obvious here is the moving of religious elements along with nationalism for the same cause.

Along with this, the *savarna-avarna* conflict also removed its mask and came to the forefront. The attempt of nationalists and other social organisations to move hand in hand for anti-untouchability and anti-unapproachability campaigns irritated the *savarnas*. They prepared to react

¹³⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22nd March 1924.

very severely against this attempt of nationalists and the *avarnas*. This resulted in the *savarna-avarna* conflicts in the later days. News of such conflicts were heard from different parts of the state especially at Vaikom. What is quite unexpected here was the contention of some prominent persons like C. Krishnan, who claimed himself as an 'advocate' of the downtrodden section of the society. C. Krishnan and his press *Mitavadi* strongly criticised the attempt of nationalists at Vaikom. The activity of Krishnan astonished the people had seen the act of walking of C. Krishnan, an untouchable, along with K.P. Kesava Menon, Madhavan Nair and Manjeri Ramayyar, through the road in front of the Tale Temple at Calicut¹³¹. *Mitavadi* could not find any 'wrong' in this, but it raised its tongue now against the same attempt done by nationalists. *Mitavadi* and C. Krishnan saw the attempt of Congress leaders at Vaikom as an attempt to attract more people in to its anti-British struggle¹³². Here, the rift was mainly in between two sections – between pro-Britishers and nationalists as well as between *savaranas* and *avarnas*.

Mean while, the Vaikom Satyagraha could make an awareness about the anti-untouchability campaigns all over India. From many parts of India, messages flowed into Kerala condemning the governmental attitude towards the Satyagraha and many promised full co-operation to this attempt

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

The nationalist Muslims of Malabar promised full co-operation to the anti-untouchability campaigns of Congress. The Khilafat Committee of Kerala decided to send a team of volunteers to Vaikom for helping the Satyagrahis¹³³. In his presidential address to the North Malabar District conference held at Kannur on March 29, 1924, Yakub Hassan stressed the necessity of the removal of untouchability. In his view, it is not a matter that affected only in Hindu society, but also in Muslim and Christian societies¹³⁴. The most striking element here is the silence kept by the lower sections of Southern Malabar towards the anti-untouchability campaign, even though it was a centre of rigid caste system. This poor and innocent people were of the view that elements of untouchability and caste system were part and parcel of their life for long years. More over, they had an adamant belief that they have had no right to raise voice against their lords, because they were their *yajmanas* (owners) and their only duty was to obey the orders of their lords¹³⁵. It was because of this belief which was deep rooted in their minds and due to the lack of able and efficient leaders to inspire them, that these sections remained inactive in this Satyagraha. It didn't mean that all sections of Hindu community were silent with regards to this. The awareness of anti-

¹³³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 26th April 1924.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, dated 5th April 1931. Here what he intended is not clear.

¹³⁵ Interview with Valachetti Krishnan, 86 years old. Padinjattumuri, Malappuram, on 10.6.2004.

untouchability movement came to Southern parts of Malabar after long years (only in 1932)¹³⁶.

By getting encouragement from the anti-untouchability campaigns of the Congress, the Trichur Municipality took a historical decision in April 1924. It decided to open all public roads under its control to all people irrespective of caste and creed¹³⁷. They took such a decision realising the fact that these public roads were constructed with the money which were collected from the public in the form of various taxes. Through this action, Trichur Municipality acted as a model to the entire society.

In this state of affairs, when the question of eradication of untouchability reached its zenith, Mahatma Gandhi published an article in *Young India* in which he strongly criticised the participation of non-Hindus like George Joseph and Muhammad Abdurrahman in the Satyagraha¹³⁸. Gandhi stated that: "removal of untouchability was the duty of Hindus only and so they only should undertake it. There is no need of interference of non-Hindus and non-Keralites in the Satyagraha". Gandhiji rejected even the acceptance of financial support from the people other than Hindus of Kerala. He told the delegation that approached him for the same cause that the participation of George Joseph and Abdurahiman in the Satyagraha was

¹³⁶ This incident is detailed in the next chapter.

¹³⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 29th April 1924.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, dated 10th May 1924.

illegal and therefore they should apologise and get free¹³⁹. This attitude of Gandhiji created frustration and distress among all, who worked for the eradication of untouchability. But Gandhi had of the view that untouchability was an evil institution created by the Hindus alone and therefore, it is their duty to remove it from their life. They are unable to simply escape from their responsibility¹⁴⁰. Infact Gandhiji ignored the reality that emancipation of untouchability was not an agenda inaugurated by the Hindus of Kerala alone, but an activity undertaken under the banner of Indian National Congress, which was not an organisation of Hindus alone, but a nationalist one. This feeling created an opposite reaction with in the political and social sphere of Kerala.

Due to the ceaseless anti-untouchability campaigns and Vaikom Satyagraha, a change of heart became particularly noticeable in all over Kerala and Malabar was also not excluded from this. The Satyagraha started at Sachindram in South Travancore by M.E. Naidu in January 1926 and the Kalpathy issue at Palghat, a part of Malabar ,were the sudden reactions of the anti-untouchability struggles conducted at Vaikom.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 14th June 1924.

The Kalpathi issue and the Conversion and Reconversion process

The Kalpathy issue(1924-25) was the most noticeable one in the anti-untouchability struggle in Malabar. The issue was generally raised for the cause of getting the right to the depressed classes to walk through the public streets in the Kalpathy Agrahara. This issue created a platform of hot debate even in the Madras Legislative council¹⁴¹. In response to this issue the Government received a memorial from the Brahmin inhabitants of the Agrahara situated with in the Palghat Municipality praying that orders may be passed declaring that the *gramam* streets are not accessible to *Thiyyas*, *Ezhavas* and men of other lower castes whose approach will pollute a Brahman, their streets, dwellings, tanks and temples¹⁴². The Government gave reply to the memorials that the streets in Kalpathy Agraharam are registered as Govt. *puramboke*. The Govt. issued an order in response to the memorial thus: "the government desire to reiterate that the public have a right of access and use in respect of all high ways, but it is not for them finally to decide whether a particular street or road falls within the classification. In the present case the Government observes that the Palghat Municipality have maintained the road¹⁴³. This order shows that the Municipality had the right

¹⁴¹ Public (1925) Department, G.O.No.523, Dated 27.5.25. 25 Questions regarding the access of lower castes to streets in Kalpathy agraharam, Malabar, Madras records, RAC.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

to take necessary action regarding this issue. But the Government again passed an order on 9th January 1925 that "the Government have no power of interference unless the Agraharas are connected with business centres. The members of the depressed classes have no free access to the post offices located in the Agraharams"¹⁴⁴. Actually, through this order the depressed classes were being prevented from entering the Agraharas. Really, the order failed to impart justice to a long suffering community. It wounded the feelings of the community to a very great extent and also supported those who tyrannise over the depressed classes. But the Government denied these general allegations. This Government order created reactions against this in various parts of the country. The *Adi-Dravida* Conferences held at various places like Vaniambadi, Tiruppattur, Selem, Ootacamud and Coimbatour submitted copies of the resolutions to Government in between January and April 1925 praying to cancel or withdraw the G.O. passed.¹⁴⁵ Reactions against G.O. was raised not only from a single communitarian organisation, but from various parts of the state. To the social reformers it was a hot topic for their propaganda works.

All these attempts show that the ultimate aim of the reformers was, of course, to remove all obstacles under which untouchables laboured. The most

¹⁴⁴ Public (1925) Department, G.O.No. 1245, dated 21.12.25, Madras Records, RAC.

¹⁴⁵ Action on resolutions regarding the G.O. in Kalpathy agraharam, cited in *Ibid*, p.6.

substantial role in this direction was done by the Arya Samajists, who came to Malabar with the aim of popularising, propagating and reorganising Hindu religion. Later, they undertook the issue of eradication of untouchability under its banner. A branch of Arya Samaj was established at Palghat under the initiative of its leaders like Vedabandu¹⁴⁶. They propagated Shudhi and undertook re-conversion process. They propagated the idea that if any untouchables joined in Arya Samaj after undertaking Shudhi, they would be free from all caste restrictions and would have freedom to walk through the prohibited areas. This idea of Arya Samaj attracted many Ezhavas and other down trodden sections to Arya Samajam and many started to join in it. Dharmapal was the first Ezhava converted into Arya Samajam¹⁴⁷. Even after joining in the Arya Samajam, the *savarnas* were not ready to consider these Arya Samajist *avarnas* equal to them. The question of entry of Arya Samajists in to Kalpathy agraharam especially at the time of Car festival, (Rathotsava) thus, created lot of social problems. In response to this issue, Thoran, the then collector, reported that: "whatever may be the condition of the common Ezhavas, the Arya Samaj Ezhavas have the right to walk through the Kalpathi streets."¹⁴⁸ But the sub divisional Magistrate denied this fact and proclaimed an order against the order of Thoran. It stated that these converted Ezhavas have no right to enter the Kalpathy streets, especially at the

¹⁴⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 22nd November 1924.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* dated 22nd October 1925.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* dated 7th November 1925.

Ratholsava period¹⁴⁹. Incompatibility in these two statements created confusions and chaos among the general public of Malabar.

Regarding the question of Entry of Arya Samajists in Kalpathi streets, I.A. Thoran, the District Magistrate wrote to the Government of Madras through the Chief Secretary on 4th November 1925 that in his visit to the Kalpathi streets he met many gentlemen who were unanimous in stating that they objected the Aryasamajists who tried to walk through the streets¹⁵⁰. Thpugh they were ignorant about the caste of an Arya Samajist belonged before e joined in the Samaj, they abused the Arya Samajists and the converted people that their motive was nothing other than entering in the Agraharas¹⁵¹. These orthodox upper castes, at the same time, had no objection towards the entering of Christian or Muhammadan converts (from the polluting castes) entering the Agraharams because these were recognised religions distinct from Hinduism, in their view. Therefore, the downtrodden section of Hindu society had of the belief that if they joined in any of the religions other than Hinduism, they would be free from all the caste restrictions. Such attempts were also being carried on in Malabar in these days. Along with Arya Samajists, various Islamic and Christian organisations sent missionaries for the propagation of their own religions and also to attract

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, dated 17th November 1925.

¹⁵⁰ Public (1925) Department G.O.No. 82, dated 5.2.26, Madras Records, RAC.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*.

many downtrodden Hindus to their own religions. It is reported by Rao Sahib M. Kunhiraman Nair, the Sub Divisional Magistrate that there is a tendency on the part of other religionists like Christians and Mohammedans to induce the Brahmins to prohibit the Arya Samajists. Their motive is apparently to make the Arya Samajists less popular among the Ezhavas and indirectly to gain converts to their religions in preference to Arya Samaj.¹⁵² This shows the fact that, the Government was also aware of the issues of conversions and reconversions in Malabar.

It has to be reported that a group of Muslim proselytisers from Pune came to Malabar and engaged in propaganda works. As a result of their propaganda work, a lot of untouchables were converted to Islam and for this purpose a religious learning centre was also established¹⁵³. The Mau-nathul Islam Sabha at Ponnani elaborately engaged in such conversion activities. A report published by the Sabha stated that from 1st January 1925 to 20th July 1925 about 323 non-Muslims were converted to Islam and about 3230 rupees was spent for their needs¹⁵⁴. Muslim proselytisers came to Palghat to propagate their religion and also to undertake conversion process.

¹⁵² Confidential report of Sub divisional Magistrate, Kunhiraman Nair to District Magistrate, Calicut, cited in *Ibid*.

¹⁵³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 18th July 1925.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, dated 6th August 1925.

Along with Muslim Proselytisers, Christian Missionaries were also active in Malabar. The Basel German Missionaries were the most prominent among them. It is reported that as a result of their active propaganda works, from Malabar, two wealthy and young Ezhavas accepted Christianity and one accepted Islam¹⁵⁵. Those who accepted such religions could walk freely through the prohibited areas, without any barriers. In the later days, these conversion attempts attained more energy and strength. Sengel, member of Basel Mission visited many of the Taluks in this area and appointed some preachers to teach Bible to the Ezhavas of Malabar¹⁵⁶.

While knowing the news of such conversions of Hindus in a large scale to other religions like Islam and Christianity, the Bombay Hindu Mahasabha sent their prominent leaders Anandapriyan and Chandramani Motilal to look into this situation and to check such conversions. They met the Hindu elitists and sought measures to check such group conversions of Ezhavas to other religions. They also meet the *avarna* elitists and appealed to wait for some more time to solve their problems. They also gave an assurance to them that they will try hard to remove their problems with in a short span of time.¹⁵⁷ Under the initiative of Anandapriyan, attempts were made to establish a branch of Hindu Mahasabha in Malabar. With this purpose, a public meeting

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, dated 29th August 1925.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

was convened at Calicut Townhall. In his address to the public, he told that the aim of Hindu Mahasabha was not to contend Islam or Christianity, but to work for the regeneration and amelioration of Hindu community¹⁵⁸. The most prominent nationalist leaders of Malabar like Manjeri Ramayyar, Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad and K. Kelappan were active participants of the meeting and they made speeches regarding the present condition of Hindu community and the need of its regeneration. Anandapriyan stated that untouchability is the main enemy of Hindu Mahasabha and so its eradication was the main duty of the Sabha. The meeting decided to establish branches of the Sabha in various parts of Malabar. Under the auspices of Vedabandu, an Arya Samajists, a branch of the Sabha was established at Palghat. These two organisations worked together for the eradication of untouchability as well as for checking the conversion attempts. Many nationalists also rendered their full co-operation to them. At the same time, on the other side, the Islamic and Christian proselytisers were engaged in propaganda works. Thus, once again, the social sphere of Malabar was tensed with the questions of conversions and reconversions.

This process of conversions and reconversions created an open debate forum among the intellectuals and the media. All of them severely criticised the attempts of Hindus to convert to other religions. On 20th August 1925,

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, dated 18th August, 1925.

Mathrubhumi came out with severe criticisms against the attitude of Hindus who were leaving their own religion and accepting other religions¹⁵⁹. It called for the Hindus of Malabar to wake up from their deep sleep to awaken their own religion from its weaknesses. It opined that there is no need to any person, who belonged to any religion – Hindu, Christian or Islam – to accept other religions. Instead, they have to work together for the upliftment of their own community, by engineering internal reforms within the religion. Then also, according to *Mathrubhumi*, no one had the right to abuse others who are willingly accepted other religions. But that would be done peacefully, without making any problem to others. It condemned the persecutions of untouchables by the *savarnas*. According to *Mathrubhumi*: “it is a shame to the whole community, and therefore, the Hindus should try to get rid of it and work for the regeneration of their own religion”¹⁶⁰.

In *Mitavadi*, K. Ayyappan wrote an article under the caption “*Hindu Religion and Jati*”, in which he opined that the root of jati is Hindu and whenever Hindu religion exists, jati will not be abolished. So, he reminded that, before changing their religion, the *avarnas* should try to destroy the Hindu religion¹⁶¹. Kelappan, the nationalist leader, replied to this that: “Ayyappan saw only the artificial parts of Hindu religion. Kelappan opined

¹⁵⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 20th August 1925.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, dated 11th June 1925.

that the hatred against jati, which was there in the mind of Ayyappan, turned to be a hatred against Hindu religion and he saw only the evils of untouchability and jati existed in the society and he could not visualise the merits of religion.” Kelappan claimed very proudly that he is an adamant believer of Hindu religion and thus he would praise the merit of that particular religion¹⁶². He criticised the attempts of untouchables to change their religion and in his opinion, there is no necessity to change religions. He have of the view that the Hindu religion includes all rites and theories, which is suitable to all religious believers. But the condition of other religions are not like this. In Christianity the beliefs of all persons are the same. Therefore, the converts would be considered as a separate religion, but in Hindu religion, there is no need of such separatism. He stated that no other religions proposed such a freedom of thought like Hindu religion. Therefore, those who know the highness of Hindu religion should not think of leaving it and also it is nonsense to tell anyone to change their religion, according to Kelappan.¹⁶³

Attempts to form a Hindu Organisation.

Such debates and discussions regarding conversions and reconversions made the situation more apprehensive. The downtrodden sections of the society realised the fact that it was not easy to eradicate the evils of caste

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 13th June 1925.

system from the society. At the same time, other sections tried to remove such caste and communitarian difference and to form a Hindu organisation which would help to reunite all sections of Hindu community. Attempts were made for the formation of such a Hindu organisation especially to check the conversion of Hindus to other religions and also to conduct propaganda works in Kerala. For this, Mr. Anandapriyan and Chandramani were appointed by *Hindu Mahasabha* and they had made arrangements for the establishment of a branch of the Sabha. Their works were going on very smoothly which later culminated in the organisation of a Great Hindu Conference at Thirunavaya.

With the purpose of forming a branch of *Hindu Mahasabha* in Malabar, a public meeting was called at Calicut.¹⁶⁴ The meeting was held at the courtyard of Arya Samaj House and was presided over by Sri. Pattathil Narayana Menon. In the meeting, Manjeri Ramayyar moved a resolution demanding the formation of Kerala Provincial branch of Hindu Mahasabha and the commencing of a Great Hindu Conference.¹⁶⁵ The meeting decided to form a temporary committee for the same purpose. But this attempt of Hindu Mahasabha created some doubts regarding the aims and objectives of the Sabha. P. Ramunni Menon, the Congress leader, expressed his anxiety on the deviation of a socialist organisation to a communal organisation in future. He expressed that: "surely such an organisation is necessary for the upliftment of

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, dated 26th February 1929.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Hindu community. But the interference of communal members in the political field is not an acceptable one. If it is so, it will surely affect the development of a nation, especially it is a branch of Hindu Mahasabha, formed by Malavia, which had both political and social aims ".¹⁶⁶ As a response to this Hindu Mahasabha published their aims and objectives as- to impart unity among all members of Hindu Community, mutual co-operation, anti-untouchability campaigns, protection of Hindus etc. It also gave an assurance that it had no aim to merge or co-operate with any particular community as political party and also declared that conversion or reconversion is not an aim of it and it is established not for this purpose.¹⁶⁷ The Sabha decided to commence a Kerala Hindu Provincial Conference at Thirunavaya, the land of Mamamkam. The committee selected Pandit Madan Mohan Malavia as its president and Moonje as a specially invited participant¹⁶⁸.

Then also the anxiety still existed there. Majority of Hindus were unable to accept it in its real sense. Through its editorial, *Mathrubhumi* expressed its anxiety. Madhavan Nair, the most leading Congress leader in South Malabar stated that, if it is an organisation which fully accepted all the principles and ideas of Hindu Mahasabha, he was not ready to be a member

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 12th March 1929.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, dated 23rd March 1929.

of it. He expressed his readiness to co-operate with it, if they decided to organise it as an institution that was completely free from all political aims and would work for the upliftment of Hindu community by eradicating the evils existed in the society¹⁶⁹. Then, the leaders of the Sabha proclaimed that "there is no need to accept the ideas of Hindu Mahasabha and those who desired to regenerate Hindu community from its destruction only should participate in the conference"¹⁷⁰. This indicates certain change in the mentalities of the Nationalists and the ordinary people alike. *Mathrubhumi* appealed the people to make the conference a real success. The Congress leaders like K. Madhavan Nair and U. GopalaMenon decided to participate in the Great Hindu Conference at Thirunavaya. The Congress had faced a lot of criticisms from various quarters and the media played the most substantial role in this debate. The rift between *Mathrubhumi* and *Al-Ameen* removed its shroud and came out at this juncture. *At-Ameen* raised strong criticisms against the participation of congress leaders in this conference, while *Mathrubhumi* justified it¹⁷¹. *Mathrubhumi* published editorials to encourage the Hindus to participate actively in the Thirunavaya Hindu conference¹⁷². It wrote: "each community has the right to correct the evils affected within their

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, dated 9th April 1929.

¹⁷⁰ *Mathrubhumi*yude *Charithram*, Vol. I, *op.cit*, p.210.

¹⁷¹ Though the copies of *Al-Ameen* are not available, the only source regarding this debate is the quoting of such articles of *Al-Ameen* in *Mathrubhumi*.

¹⁷² *Mathrubhumi*, dated 4th April 1923.

own community. More over, it is their duty. Each ill stricken and declining community debar the progress of the country. It is not wrong, if the Hindus of Kerala are trying to regenerate their own communitarian organisations . . . If the *Sabha* is organised independent of All India Hindu Mahasabha, then it will prove more beneficial"¹⁷³. In another editorial, *Mathrubhumi* declares the true intention of All India Hindu Mahasabha – to allow Hindus as a member of Hindu community to participate in the political affairs which aroused confusions in the minds of many of the congressmen.¹⁷⁴ Again, through an editorial on 23rd April 1929, *Mathrubhumi* appealed to the Hindus to provide full operation to the Thirunavaya Hindu conference. It stated that: “the organisers of the Thirunavaya Hindu conference has decided that the participants of this conference are not committed to follow all the objectives of all Hindu Maha Sabha. In that case everyone has the freedom to participate in the conference. So it can be believed that the actions of the meetings are relevant to all Hindu of Kerala.

One V.M. wrote from Calcutta, commenting on the work of Hindu Mahasabha that the Sabha had created more evil effects than the benefit of the country. We have enough communitarian disputes and competitions in Kerala. Hence it is essential to check the elements that caused the increase of such tendencies ... if the Muslims of Kerala have similar opinion to organise

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, dated 6th April 1929.

such a Muslim Sabha in order to solve the communal problems existing in their community, let them do so. But it is better for them to keep away from political affairs ..." He openly states that as a Hindu, he is not ready to accept all the actions done by the Hindus. The main reason for all these suspicions was that it worked under the leadership of Pandit Madan Mohan Malavia and Moonje, who were not ready to give up their orthodoxy. so it is natural to doubt that it will be converted into a communal organisation. But *Mathrubhumi* tried best to remove such a fear. It wrote", it is the duty of this organisation to declare the removal of untouchability ,that tried to separate one Hindu from other in the name of caste and creed, as its main duty and also denied human right and tried to give all Hindus equal rights to engage in the functions of all organisations seen in the name of Hindu. Therefore, all Hindus have to participate in the conference"¹⁷⁵. But *Al-Ameen* asks: "though there existed Congress to work for the eradication of untouchability, is there any need for such a separate organisation to Hindus"? *Al-Ameen* was astonished by seeing the policies of Hindu Congress men, who were accepting such an organisation and working for it¹⁷⁶. But *Mathrubhumi* felt the need of such an organisation for removing all the evils that affected Hindu community. It blamed *Al-Ameen* for its write-ups that considered Hindu Maha Sabha and Arya Samaj as a single organisation which tried to create a

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, dated 30th April 1929.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, dated 2nd May 1929.

Hindu Raj by converting 7 crores Muslims of India to Hinduism. *Mathrubhumi* replied that there is no base for such a dangerous accusation¹⁷⁷. *Al-Ameen* had made severe attack on Arya-Samajists. *Mathrubhumi* reported that *Al-Ameen* wrote that the main aim of this organisation is to remove all the Muslims from India¹⁷⁸. *Al-Ameen's* claims like “our religion shines all over the world without any dimension” and the reply of *Mathrubhumi* towards this – all reveals the fact that in this period, the main reason for their contest was religion, and nothing other than else.

Madhavan Nair accused that the Muslims tried to consider the Thirunavaya conference as an attempt against their community. He expressed his anxiety about such opinions and declarations of *Al-Ameen*, that how the people of Ernad and Valluvanad, who fought against Britishers due to the spread of rumour regarding the shooting of Mampuram mosque, will react¹⁷⁹. There arose a hot debate on account of this opinion of Madhavan Nair. *Al-Ameen's* article entitled ‘Madhavan Nayarude Maraneengi’ (Madhavan Nair's Mask removed) and also the reply of Madhavan Nair – all were relevant subjects of debate during those days. But in reality, all such debates helped to widen not only the gap between *Al-Ameen* and *Mathrubhumi*, but also nationalist Muslims and Congress.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, dated 2nd and 4th May 1929.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 11th May 1929.

In the midst of all such debates and discussions Moonje, the leader of Hindu Maha Sabha delivered an attractive speech about the aims and objectives of Hindu Mahasabha. He said "Hindu Sabha is a communal organisation and not a political organisation like Muslim league. Religious and communitarian upliftment of Hindus is the main aim of the Sabha. Sabha does not intervene in political affairs. Congress is the only organisation that is working for the political development of India. I wished to see all Indians irrespective of their caste or creed should follow the principles of the Congress, for this reason Hindu Maha Sabha will not interfere the political matters. But, when Congress made alliance with Muslim league, then the HinduMahaSabha started to interfere in political matters". According to him, "the downtrodden sections have more devotion towards Hindu religion than the upper castes." Moonje stressed the aim of Hindu Mahasabha is "to unify the Hindu community by removing all evil customs like untouchability from its purview"¹⁸⁰. There is no doubt that, such declarations and debates helped to grow the feelings among the populace of Malabar saying "I am a Hindu", "I am a Muslim".

While all such debates and discussions were going on, the Congress leaders actively participated in the Hindu Conference. Even though some painful events happened in the midst of it, the Conference was a great

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, dated 10th May 1929.

success. Madhavan Nair moved a resolution which suggested to remove political issues and Shudhi from its programmes and also requested the Sabha to follow cordial relations with other religions¹⁸¹. The conference decided to organise a Kerala Hindu Sabha with its branches in different parts of Kerala. It also passed a variety of resolutions in connection with the upliftment of the community¹⁸². The participation of Moonje in the conference and his speech at Calicut became a controversial issue in the social and political realm of Malabar.

As a result of the decisions of the conference, branches of *Hindu Mahasabha* were organized in different parts of the State. At Ponnani, a branch of the Sabha was formed with P.V. Dorai Swami as President. U. Gopala Menon and Vedabandhu participated in the meeting of the Sabha and made delicious speeches stressing the aims and objectives of the Sabha¹⁸³. At Chavakkad, a meeting was held under the presidentship of Kadavath Krishnan to form a branch of the Sabha there. In the later days branches of Hindu Mahasabha were formed in various parts and became active in their own localities.

Attempts were being made, in this time, from various parts to maintain harmony among all communities, along with the development of

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, dated 30th April 1929.

¹⁸² The more details of the resolution see. *Mathrubhumi*, dated 7th May 1929.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, dated 30th March 1929.

communitarian and communal organisations. The main part played in this direction was the Yuvak Sanghams, which were formed at various parts of Malabar. A branch of Yuvak Sangham was formed at Kovummal near Payyoli under the Presidentship of Anandapriyan. In the meeting, the members of elitist section of the area like K. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar, K. Karunakaran Nair and many of the Muslims and *Cherumans* participated. At Valapattanam, a public meeting of the Sangham was held under the presidentship of C. Abdurahiman at the Board *Mappila* Higher Elementary school on 30th March 1930. In the meeting, S.K. Nair made a speech which stressed the need of Hindu Muslims harmony.

In the post Rebellion period in Malabar, attempts were made to introduce some communal and communitarian elements in the society, along with secularist tendencies. Both Hindus and Muslims formed their own organisations. Among the Hindus, castes and sub castes formed various communitarian organisations to safeguard their community form destruction.

But what is obvious here is that the Muslim communitarianism is weaker than Hindu communitarianism. Hindus were attempted to incorporate caste and communitarianism into a religion. The *savarna* Congress leaders like U Gopala Menon and Madhavan Nair were active participants of this. The Congress actively engaged in the upliftment of Hindu community through various popular agitations and conferences. At the same time, no such

attempt was there among the Muslims except the efforts made by Aikya Sangam and *Al-Ameen*. Naturally, there will arise a question why this was so? It was mainly because of the fact that among the Hindus, there were leaders on the public sphere to uplift such demands. At the same time, among the Muslims, there were no such leadership in the public sphere. It was only in the later days that there emerged a new leadership from the newly educated sections, who acquired education from *Mappila* schools.

Among the Hindus, on the one hand reform meant to fight against untouchability and unapproachability, the evil customs existed in the community. At the same time, on the other hand, it meant to develop a Hindu consciousness cutting across caste. Here the two tendencies- anti caste and secular tendencies – joined together at the same time. For example, Ayyappan gave more stress on anti-caste trends. At the same time, Kelappan acted as the spokesman of a Hindu consciousness. These two trends, which were ardent inside the nationalism, led to the later communitarian and caste developments. In 1930s, among Muslims also such communitarian organisations were so active. This shows the fact that along with radicalism, communitarianism and communal consciousness were so ardent in the society and polity of Malabar.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS IN THE POST REBELLION MALABAR - 1930-1935

Sreevidhya Vattarambath “Aftermath of the rebellion trends - A study of political and social trends in malabar from 1921 to 1935” Thesis. Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS IN THE POST REBELLION MALABAR – 1930-1935

The political and social developments in 1920s in Malabar played a great role in shaping the polity and society of Malabar. The influence of the Rebellion in the public sphere, the anti-untouchability campaigns held under the auspices of nationalists, the conversion and reconversion issue followed by this, the attempts to develop a Hindu religious ethos-all made a new atmosphere not only in Malabar, but also the entire Kerala. This chapter focuses on the political and social changes occurred in Malabar between 1930 and 1935 especially the tensions developed with in the Congress and emergence of left wing, the growth of communitarian elements in both the Muslim and Hindu communities like the emergence of Muslim Majlis and Muslim League, Guruvayur Satyagraha and the emergence of new elements with in the Hindu community following this.

A) Political Changes

With the commencing of Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 once again Malabar politics was filled with public protests and meetings. The declaration of Mahatma Gandhi to launch CDM made a tremendous response

in Kerala.¹

Even though, the population of Malabar were ready to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress leaders were in a puzzled state. Among them, there were different views regarding their participation in the CDM. The Nationalists were in fear of another Rebellion. Majority of them though of separating South Malabar, the riot zone from CDM and refused to involve Muslims of Malabar in it as far as possible². The prominent leaders of the Congress like K. Madhavan Nair and Uppi Sahib were not in favour of starting CDM in Malabar. They reported that they had feared to start any political agitation in Malabar due to the bitter experiences of the Rebellion of 1921. Instead of starting CDM in Malabar, they, therefore, recommended to send volunteers to Vedaranyam where C. Rajagoplachari decided to break salt law³. A section of Congress under the leadership of K. Kelappan severely raised criticisms against this attitude of the Congress and decided to go ahead with the preparation for launching Salt

¹ When Gandhi was not even received a satisfactory reply from Lord Irwin for his letter demanding 11 points, he decided to launch CDM. Along with his 78 disciples, he started his famous Dandi March (Dandi is a village on the Gujarat Sea Coast, about 200 miles away from Sabarmati Ashram) from Sathyagraha Ashram on Ist March 1930. By inaugurating a "wonderful year" to the country, he declared "either I will return back or my body will recede in the Arabians sea". In Malabar the Congress decided to organise committees and to enrol new members in it.

² E M S Namboodiripad, *Selected Writings* Vol. II, Calcutta, 1985, p. 110.

³ E.MoiduMoulavi, *Ente Koottakaran-Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib*, Trichur, 1964, p.80.

Satyagraha in Malabar⁴. The KPCC meeting held at the Vatakara Office (Kerala Kesari) under the president ship of Kelappan took the decision to start the CDM in Kerala immediately⁵. But comments arose from different quarters, questioning the appropriateness of starting CDM in Kerala. The land had only been liberated quite recently from the human massacre in Malabar and the pool of blood flowed in these regions as a result of the Ist CDM, started ten years before, had not been dried up. However the village has not escaped from the gloom affected during these days⁶. The veteran Congress leaders were fearing whether the Muslims would create any similar problems as the Ernad Rebellion⁷. They quoted, as proof of their arguments, the opinion expressed in some speeches of Moulana Muhammed Ali, who had been acting as a right hand of Mahatmaji since the very beginning of NCM, that “the CDM is a thoughtless act which may result in extreme blood shed”⁸. The problem became complicated when Kelappan declared that “if the *Uppusathiyagraha* has not been carried out in Kerala despite its consequences, it would be shameful, and in order to avoid this shame, he had firmly decided to hold a *padayathra* (journey on foot) from Kozhikode

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Madhavan Nair Janma Sadabthi Smaranika*, Calicut, 1982, p. 73.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Mathrubhumiyude Charithram* Vol. I, Calicut, 1998, p. 277.

⁸ *Ibid.*

together with some of his friends⁹. As a result of all these, the Satyagraha in Kerala was mainly confined in North Malabar. In the midst all these debates that Madhavan Nair resigned from KPCC with the excuse that he was not mentally prepared to participate on CDM¹⁰. This created uncertainty in the political realm of Malabar.

The K.P.C.C meeting held at Vatakara on 9th March 1930 decided to start CDM in Malabar and a committee headed by Kelappan was formed for the collection of money and enrolment of volunteers. A Satyagraha committee was formed in April 1930 and decided to organise a *jatha* from Calicut to Payyannur and to break the salt law¹¹. The most conspicuous thing here was the absence of Muslims of South Malabar in the Satyagraha. It is reported that when the Satyagraha March was started from Calicut to Payyannur, there was only one Muslim – Hassan Koya Molla – along with them¹². It was sometimes due to the memoirs of the bitter experiences they faced in the 1921 Rebellion or the fear of future problems, that the people of South Malabar, especially Muslims, lagged behind this mass movement. At the instigation of the authorities, a few elements calling themselves loyalists, sought to make some provocative incidents such as disturbing the public

⁹ *Madhavan Nair Janmasadabdi Smaranika, op.cit.*

¹⁰ *Mathrubhumi Charitram, Vo.I, op.cit., pp. 227-28.*

¹¹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 11th March and 6th April, 1930.

¹² M.G.S. Narayanan, (ed) *Malabar*, Calicut, 1994, p. 482 also in Moidu Moulavi, *Kottukaran, op.cit., p. 149.*

meetings organised by the INC in Malabar. They threatened the people that the continuation of the Satyagraha would plunge the land into utter chaos and would pave the way to a more disastrous Rebellion than that of 1921. Some newspapers like *Mitavadi*, *Darpanam* and *Sahodaran* strongly expressed their views against the new movement. Yet the movement gathered momentum day by day.

Despite the prevailing atmosphere of confusions, some of the Muslim leaders like Moidu Moulavi and Muhammed Abdurahiman actively participated in the Satyagraha. But they did not have adequate money for their further activities. Muhammed Abdurahiman expressed his anxiety regarding the ability of the Muslims of South Malabar to participate in the passive resistance without any proper training¹³. He said: “ what is the stand of *Mappilas* of South Malabar is a matter to re-considered in the background of lack of facilities for giving proper training to the illiterate and poor *Mappilas* of the riot areas, due to the prevalence of supreme rule of ‘Police Raj’ in these areas.¹⁴. This shows the fact that Muhammed Abdurahiman was aware of the real status of the poor innocent *Mappilas* of Southern Malabar. But he wanted these poor sections to be aware of the facts and also desired for their active participation in the Satyagraha mainly for deleting the

¹³ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 27th April 1930.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

notion "*Moplahs* are struggle section"¹⁵. Moidu Moulavi reminded that: "if anyone has readiness to join with him in the passive resistance without any arms against the armed authorities, they only should follow him." In his view, such a section only can do anything beneficial both to the country and the society¹⁶.

On 24th April 1930, Muhammed Abdurrahman Sahib wrote in *Mathrubhumi* under the title "The Civil Disobedience and the Kerala Muslims", "no one has to doubt that it is the indispensable duty of all Indians to make the great endeavour of Salt Satyagraha started by Mahatmaji upholding the slogan, 'either success or death' as a last resort for the freedom of the country, a success. My opinion is that the Kerala Muslims also have to uphold their pride by participating in this peaceful struggle making clear their patriotism. I know that people have various kinds of apprehension regarding the *Mappilas* that they are not fit for a peaceful struggle. But I, myself, who is not reluctant to say that I am also a *Mappila*, will not allow to say that the Kerala Muslims, especially the *Mappilas* of Malabar and more particularly my Muslim brethren of Southern Kerala, are backward than any other communities in patriotism, perseverance, sacrificing nature and carving for freedom. It must be seriously contemplated as to whether the Muslims of Southern Kerala, forming an important segment of the Muslim Community,

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, dated 29th April 1930.

who even though unfit for a peaceful struggle, are to be introduced to the stage of such a struggle without the necessary training. It is all the more a problem in the light of the fact that there is no facility for training in these areas because of the "police Raj" reigning there following the military rule. In this circumstance, it is not practical to make them to participate in such a peaceful struggle for the time being. Abdurahiman stresses the fact that the satyagraha must set apart the places demarcated by the government as rebellious areas. Still, my wish is that the Muslim youths who are ready for all sacrifices and daring enough to participate in the freedom fight, must go to other centres and take part in the Satyagraha. The Kerala Muslims are liable to participate in the Satyagraha struggle because of two reasons. The first is the fact that they have a duty towards motherland which is not lesser than any other Indian. This is multiplied in the light of the miseries particularly suffered by the Kerala Muslims. Secondly, there is a misunderstanding arising out of the last Rebellion that the *Mappilas* are fond of quarrels and fit for nothing but rebellions and plunder. So it has been the duty of any leader of the society having love to and pride in the society to wipe out this bad name by specially taking part in this Satyagraha"¹⁷.

Due to all these tireless propaganda and inspiration rendered by Muhammed Abdurahiman and his friends, the number of Muslim participants

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, dated 27th April 1930.

in the CDM increased day by day. Muhammed Abdurahiman wrote in both *Al-Ameen* and *Mathrubhumi*: "nothing in this world can dissuade us from the Satyagraha strike. No doubt, we have to go ahead until the fulfilment of our goal. We are fighting without any arms against the British King who had a mighty force adequate for eliminating us".¹⁸ It could be seen that some Muslims also turned against the Satyagrahis. Uppi Sahib wrote an article in *Mathrubhumi* under the title 'To the Muslims of Kerala' that: "quite recently, it is seen that some Muslims are harassing the Satyagrahis preventing them from their activities and creating quarrels and noises in their meetings. This is a troubling situation. what I desire to advocate the Muslims is that if you can't agree with the freedom movement, keep away from it, but don't harass and oppose those people who have already got ready for suffering everything for achieving a great objective. Such type of activities will be beneficial for a third party – the foreigner. Beware of it"¹⁹. Such a declaration revealed the fact that the Nationalist Muslims had faced rude criticisms from various corners especially even from the Muslim population itself. K. Kelappan and other Congress leaders also appealed to the Muslims of Malabar to join hands with the Congress. As a result of all these attempts, the number of Muslim participants in the CDM increased day by day.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, dated 6th May 1930.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 10th Mary 1930.

Following the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, a Hartal was observed at Calicut on 16th March 1930. Thousands of people attended the public meeting held at Calicut beach, following a procession from the premises of *Al-Ameen* press to Calicut beach at 5 p.m.²⁰ The police lathicharge and brutalities made by Police at Calicut instilled a new spirit and enthusiasm in entire Malabar. Men and women, labours and peasantry, advocates and doctors – all began to come into the forefront of the Satyagraha by ignoring arrests and police brutalities. Through editorials and columns the nationalist newspapers – *Al-Ameen* and *Mathrubhumi* successfully discharged their duties to the nation. They even congratulated the leaders who were arrested and gladly suffered police brutalities for the cause of their motherland. *Al-Ameen* declared that: "if the people and volunteers follow the vow of non-violence strictly, it would, of course lead the present struggle a complete success"²¹. It also inspired the Muslims to join in the Satyagraha and wrote: "Janab Muhammad Abdurahiman Sahib had gladly suffered all tortures of the police and courted jail life to save the fair name of the Kerala Muslims and

²⁰ In the meeting Abdurahiman proclaimed that he and his friends are going to break the salt law by processing salt at Calicut beach on 12th May, 1930. As a response to this declaration, a huge crowd gathered at Calicut beach on the same day. The police force under District Superintendent of Police Mr. Amu, was also present there and harshly lambasted the unarmed mass, arrested its leaders and imprisoned for about 9 months.

²¹ *Al-Ameen*, dated 14th May 1930, MNNPR.

that is the duty of the Muslims of Kerala to make his efforts a great success”²².

Thanking to the efforts of the nationalists leaders in Malabar, the messages of CDM spread to other areas also. Due to the prohibition of starting of CDM in princely states, the young Congress leaders from Cochin and Travancore came to Malabar and participated in the struggle. Alarmed by the popularity of CDM and Congress, in 7th July, 1930, Govt. declared an orders through which K. Madhavan Nair, T. Hassankoya Molla, U. Gopala Menon, K. Govinda Menon and P. Krishna Pillai were prohibited from participating in picketing and other forms of protests. They were arrested and imprisoned for ‘four’ months following the violation of the order in 9th July. Subsequently, huge protests were organised and even students of Malabar also resorted to strikes²³. The Government declared Congress as illegal and an urgent meeting of K.P.C.C. was summoned and decided to form "War Council" in place of K.P.C.C. with a 'dictator' as its head²⁴. The CDM received an unprecedented support in entire Malabar and even ladies and students came in to the forefront of the struggle. They were also subjected to serve punishments. The nationalist newspapers like *Al-Ameen* were caught by

²² *Al-Ameen*, dated 15th May 1930, MNNPR.

²³ Perunna K.N. Nair, *op.cit.*, p. 72.

²⁴ If the dictator was caught and arrest, he would have the right to appoint his successor. Mr. Potheri Madhavan was nominated as the Ist dictator. They secretly published and distributed "Congress Bulletin". The police failed to find out the root of its publication and distribution.

Press Ordinance. So it compelled to stop its publication on 4th August 1930. And it reappeared on the scene only on 20th November 1930.

Along with this mass support, oppositions also arose from different parts especially from the side of pro-Britishers. The pro-British newspapers like *Mitavadi* extended full support to the authorities. In various parts of Malabar, meetings were organized against the Satyagraha. The Paran Square meeting conducted by pro-Britishers was one among them. At Mampad, a place near Nilambur in Ernad Taluk of South Malabar, a meeting was conducted by some Mohammedans of this area and raised voice against the Satyagraha²⁵. In spite of all these resistances and reactions, the CDM gathered an unprecedented growth in all over Malabar. As a part of it, the Congress decided to boycott the Census work of 1931. The first person who took part in the boycott was P.M. Krishna Menon of Ramanattukara, Feroke. The sub-divisional Magistrate of Malappuram sentenced him for one year rigorous punishment under section 117 I.P.C.²⁶ It may also be noted that five persons, who were appointed as enumerators at Ramanattukara refused to do census work²⁷.

²⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 11th September 1930.

²⁶ P.K.K. Menon, *op.cit*, p. 220.

²⁷ Number of persons, who refused to do Census Work and other Govt. orders, were imprisoned. As the number of Satyagrahis going to jails tended to increase, the Govt. adopted new tactics and began to keep the arrested Satyagrahis as under-trial prisoners for long periods. The number of such persons, who were brought up for trial at Calicut up to 16th January 1931 was 90.

It was in this stage, when CDM had reached its height that Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on 5th March 1931, according to which the CDM was to be "effectively discontinued" and amnesty was awarded to those who were convicted in connection with it²⁸. Widespread responses were came out from various parts f the country in connection with the withdrawal of CDM. Regarding the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Muhammad Abdurahiman wrote: "in any case, there are indications to show that the moon is about to rise on the agitated political sky of India and the rising moon amidst of the dark cloud will loudly proclaim the end of the British regime in India"²⁹. The paper exalted the view of Gandhi on the perspective of Islam and stated: "Gandhi is following the excellent model of Islam".³⁰.

After the signing of Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the ban on KPCC was also lifted and attempts were made in various parts to regenerate its functioning. There are indications to show the attempts that were made even in the riot zones to recover the lost prestige and power of Congress. At Pulamanthol³¹ a Congress meeting was commenced in the presence of K. Kelappan.³² A rumour spread that the police, with the help of some *Mappilas*, made

²⁸ P.K.K. Menon, *op.cit*, p. 233. In spite of all reactions against the withdrawal of CDM, the Pact was welcomed in Kerala. The Congress ordered the people to observe the terms of Delhi Pact strictly.

²⁹ *Al-Ameen.*, dated 17th July 1931, MNNPR.

³⁰ *Al-Ameen.*, dated 2nd February 1931, MNNPR.

³¹ A place near Perinthalmanna in Valluvanad Taluk.

³² *Mathrubhumi*, dated 19th April 1931.

arrangements for disturbing the meeting. When the Congress meeting was started at 6 O'clock on 14th April 1931, a group of *Mappilas* along with Pulikkunnu Muhammad Mussaliyar (Kattappara), Rayiranallur Amsam Adhikari Kunhi Moidu Sahib and Pootheri Katharkutty arrived at the venue and tried to disturb it by holding a parallel meeting at a very near place. A resolution demanding the release of *Mappila* prisoners put in Andaman and other places was passed there. Pulamanthol was a centre of Nationalist activities in 1930s in Malabar. Most of the Congress leaders of Pulamanthol were strong believers of the leftist policies of Muhammed Abdurahiman and E M S.Namboodiripad.³³ All these realises the fact that tendencies were ardent against nationalism along with secularist feelings in Malabar in the post Rebellion Malabar.

b) Tensions with in the Congress

In 1930's tensions were occurred with in the folds of nationalism in Malabar, especially due to some ideological issues. The publication of *Mathrubhumi* in 1923 and *Al-Ameen* in 1924 accelerated the polarization in the Congress, even though its leaders hadn't such an intention. This created a gulf between Hindu and Muslim leaders in the Congress especially in the absence of strong exponents of Hindu – Muslim harmony like K. Madhavan

³³ Cherukad, *Jeevithapatha*, Trichur, 1994, p. 184.

Nair, K.P. Kesava Menon and M.P. Narayana Menon³⁴. This gradually helped to the formation of two separate groups- one cantering on K. Kelappan and *Mathrubhumi* and the other centring on Muhammad Abdurahiman and *Al-Ameen*. The Muslims, who intended to undertake special programmes to bring back the *Mappila* populace to the National Movement through the Congress constituted the National Muslim group. Abdurahiman and Moidu Moulavi were the leaders of the nationalist Muslims, who were called as *Al-Ameen group*. The section in Congress with unflinching faith in Gandhian ideology constituted the Right Wing (*Chalappuram Gang*).³⁵ When the Nationalist Muslims and the Socialists joined hands, the rightists became a minority in the Congress. Consequently, they had lost their control over K.P.C.C.³⁶

The rift became more widened when Muhammed Abdurahiman contested himself as a candidate to the office of the Chairman of the Council, ignoring the disagreement of the rightists. The rightists supported an independent Candidate, M. Kunhikrishnan against Abdurahiman³⁷. The two

³⁴ K.Madhavan Nair resigned from active politics at the time of CDM and died on 28th September 1933, K P Kesava Menon was not active in politics and M P Narayana Menon was in jail.

³⁵ Muhammad Poozhikkuth., 'Muhammad Abdurahiman – Pursuits and Perspectives of a Nationalist Muslim' PhD Thesis, submitted to the Department of History, University of Calicut, 2003, p.124.U. Gopala Menon was also a prominent member of the Chalappuram gang.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ S.K. Pottekkad, *et. al., op.cit.*, p. 258.

nationalist newspapers filled their columns with the pro-and anti propaganda of the nationalist Muslims and the rightists respectively. Thus, the election issue again widened the gulf between rightists and leftists within the Congress.³⁸ The rightist leaders showed an indifferent and repressive attitude towards Muhammed Abdurahiman and his colleagues.

This repressive policy affected the smooth functioning of national movement in Malabar. The Muslim community raised a question that, if the Congress had such an indifferent attitude towards Muhammad Abdurahiman, the person who had sacrificed his whole life for Congress, what would be its attitude towards whole Muslims? This attitude of the Congress leaders became a major hurdle in the attempts of Muhammad Abdurahiman in bringing the Muslim community in to the forefront of National Movement.³⁹ Even though all this was true, it is not possible to assume that this rift was wholly created divisions between Hindus and Muslims in Malabar. The victory of Muhammed Abduraiman to the Council from the Hindu majority ward proves that the rift existed within the Congress was mainly for power and not with respect to caste or community.

The right-left rift within the Congress cropped up when Muhammed Abdurahiman contested himself as a candidate to the Central Legislative Assembly Election of 1934 from a Muslim Legislative Seat. SatharSait, a

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

known supporter of Muslim League and a close associate of Muhammed Ali Jinnah, was the rival candidate. Both of them stood as independent candidates in the election. The right wing supported Sathar Sait against Muhammed Abdurahiman⁴⁰. The people of Southern Malabar provided full support to Muhammed Abdurahiman and they felt their own shadow in him.

This alarmed his opponents who were compelled to call him as "the richest poor"⁴¹. The voting system was much different at that time. Those who were having revenue *janmam* had only the right to vote.⁴² The common populace had no right to vote. Even important Nair families of the Southern Malabar had no right to vote, even though they had owned large acres of land, as almost all these lands were *janmam* lands. The voting system was mainly based upon wealth. Abdurahiman was not so much rich whereas his opponent Sathar Sait was a wealthy person. So the wealthiest section of the society rendered their support to Sait. Moreover, the people of North Malabar were in favour of Sait. The Election was a neck and neck one and Abdurahiman lost it. The defeat of Muhammad Abdurahiman and victory of Abdul Sathar Sait inflicted a significant impact upon the political structure of Malabar. It was due to Sait's relation with the Central Muslim League that in later

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² This simply means those who were *jenmies* and were paying revenues to the Govt. has only the right to vote. Interview with T. Sukumaran Nair, nephew of Madhavan Nair, aged 80, Malappuram on 10.11.02.

periods, the Muslim League could emerge as an influential political party in Malabar. These incidents not only helped for widening the gulf between the rightist and leftist wings of the Congress, but also the marginalisation of the Hindu and Muslim communities.

Along with this right and left wing rift with in the Congress, the Left Movement appeared in the Kerala Politics as an independent political element. The increased involvement of peasants and workers in the main stream of the politics of Kerala was an important factor in the political realm in 1920s and 30s. This enabled in pushing a tremendous mass force into the National Movement, contributing it with a new momentum and a social content. To a great extent the peasant and labour movements of 1930s were the causes as well as the consequence of the emergence of a powerful Left Wing in politics. In 1934, the Left nationalists with in the Congress joined together and organised the Congress Socialist Party.

The right-left rift with in the Congress came out vividly in the meeting of the Congress held at Calicut on 2nd May 1934. It sought to formulate a new programme of action and a new economic perspective based on the economic programmes put forward by Jawaharlal Nehru. The main issue of debate was in connection with the organisation of peasants and workers in the

Constructive Programme of the Congress⁴³. The Left Wing of the Congress in Malabar supported this programme and formed the Kerala Congress Socialist Party on 2nd May 1934, with the initiative of prominent Congress leaders like P. Krishna Pillai and E M S Namboodiripad, who tried to work as extremists within the Congress. The policies and economic perspectives of KCSP were different from the other wing of the Congress⁴⁴. The revolutionary nationalist Muslims like Muhammed Abdurahiman were ardent supporters of the KCSP. The right-left wing dispute crossed the boundaries in the Congress Session held at Shoranur in 1934 October. Kongattil Raman Menon resigned from the president ship of KCSP and A.K. Gopalan, a left wing leader, became the acting president.

The rift became evident in the 9th Kerala State Political Conference held on 28th May 1935 under the presidentship of H Belvi, the editor of *Bombay Chronicle*, in which a hot debate arose in connection with the characterisation of Rebellion of 1921 as "an agrarian revolt". The non-Socialist attitude towards the peasant movement was very clear from the stand they took regarding the characterisation of the Rebellion⁴⁵. The Conference

⁴³ EMS Namboodiripad, *Atmakatha*, *op.cit.*, p. 187. also in *Mathrubhumi* dated 2nd & 13th April 1934, also cited in K. Gopalankutty., 'National Movement in Malabar-1930-47', Unpublished PhD Thesis, JNU, November 1985, p. 120. In his *Muthassi* and *Jeevithapatha*, Cherukad clearly pictured the development of KCSP in Malabar, and difficulties it faced from the right wing Congress workers and Police.

⁴⁴ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 15th May 1934.

⁴⁵ K. Gopalankutty, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

moved a resolution demanding that the amount extracted from the Muslims as fine during the 'agrarian struggle' of 1921 should be set aside as *Mappila Reconstruction Fund*⁴⁶. K. Madhava Menon objected the characterisation of the Rebellion as an agrarian struggle and moved an amendment seeking to delete the word "agrarian struggle" from the resolution⁴⁷. A serious debate arose in response to this issue and later the amendment was noted out on account of the reply given by Unneen Moulavi, who had moved the resolution⁴⁸. Whatever solution were made, the right wing became harsher in their attitude. Some nationalist leaders tried to settle the difference between them and the Socialists. Attempts were made under the leadership of Samhamurthi, T. Prakasan, S.P. Balvi and so on. Later a K.P.C.C. was organised with a rightist majority. However, it failed to resolve the problem that had arisen within the Congress. Nevertheless, K.P.C.C. became a well knit organisation in Malabar. Through Summer classes and campaigns, they could establish deep roots even in the riot stricken areas⁴⁹.

At the same time, the Socialists also tried to establish their hold among the common populace. A better understanding between 'nationalist Muslims'

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ S.K. Pottakkad *et al.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 448-49. also in K.Gopalankutty, *op.cit.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Summer classes were organised even in the remote of South Malabar like Mankada-Pallippuram, Malappuram, Pulamanthol etc. Information given by Perumpalli Manakkal Krishnan Namboodiri, Mankada Pallippuram, on 20-8-2003, and Cherukad in his *Jeevithakatha* also speaks of such Summer classes.

and the 'Socialists' was arrived at following the tour of South Malabar undertaken by Mehr Ali⁵⁰. It was for the first time after the 1921 Rebellion that a national leader understood a tour to South Malabar. The understanding that developed between nationalist Muslims and Socialists enabled the Socialists to assume control of K.P.C.C.⁵¹. In 1937, the K.P.C.C. was reorganized and reformulated and a unit of Communist Party of India was formed in Malabar. In December 1939, the Congress Socialist Party in Malabar was transformed in to a unit of the CPI. By this time, the Congress and Nationalist Movement had almost completely kept under the control of Socialists. They worked earnestly within the Congress.

c)Growth of Communitarian Elements among the Muslims-1930-1935

Along with Nationalism, communal and communitarian elements were also strong in 1930s just like 1920s. The 1930s also witnessed the growth of various Muslim organisations with the aim of the upliftment of their community. One of the most important organisations established immediately after the Rebellion was the Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham,⁵² which had laid foundations for their present progress in religious, socio-political and cultural

⁵⁰ EMS Namboodiripad, "Thirinhunokkumbol" in *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 28th June 1937

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² For details of *AikyaSangham* see Chapter IV.

areas of life.⁵³ It tried to refine their rites and rituals by reconstructing both preliminary and higher religious education through the establishment of Madrassas which inspired others to follow it. It contributed substantially to the spread of women education also. The most outstanding achievement was the formation of the Kerala Jammiyathul Ulama, the first ever association for religious scholars in the state⁵⁴.

Even though it has a substantial role in shaping the Muslim community in a novel tone, it could not last long, especially due to the sharpening differences emerged with in the Congress. From the very beginning, there were disputes among the prominent workers of Aikya Sangham regarding various issues. The tension reached at its climax when the Sangham decided to start a Muslim Bank in the name of helping the poor *Mappila* community, who were struggling hard to earn their livelihood especially due to the hardships they suffered during the Rebellion of 1921.

The Nationalist Muslims like Muhammed Abdurahiman Sahib severely criticised this attempt of the Sangham. The sharpening differences between these two groups were not patched up satisfactorily due to several reasons. The political attitude of both the groups also contributed to widen

⁵³ E.K. Moulavi, "Kerala Muslim Aikya Sanghavam Navodhanavum" in P.A. Sayd Muhammed (ed.), *Kerala Muslim Directory*, Cochin, 1960, pp.468-477.

⁵⁴ Abdul Samad, *Islam in Kerala-Groups and Movements in 20th Century*, Kollam, 1998, p. 99.

the gulf between them.⁵⁵ By early thirties, the Aikya Sangham had lost its importance especially due to the dissensions on the question of participation of Muslims in political activities along with all other differences. The twelfth Annual Conference of the Sangham and the annual meeting of the Kerala Muslim Majlis that formed in 1931, were simultaneously held at Arakkal Palace, Kannur in 1934. As the prominent members as well as objectives of the Sangham and Majlis were the same, the Conference felt that there was no necessity of two separate organisations and a resolution was passed agreeing the amalgamation of the Sangham into the Majlis⁵⁶. Thus, the Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham, which was the real fruit of the 1921 Rebellion, ceased its functioning in 1934.

The Kerala Muslim Majlis was formed in 1931 under the leadership of E. Moidu Moulavi and Uppi Sahib with the objective of political, social and economic upliftment of Muslim community. This association was emerged into the scene when resistances were arising from various parts of the state against the functioning of Aikya Sangham. Moidu Moulavi remarked that: "those who are not able to afford messages of freedom struggle, are not capable to co-operate with the Sangham"⁵⁷. Many of the intellectuals and social workers were concerned about the future of Muslim community, which

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97

⁵⁷ C. Moidu Moulavi, *Ormakkurippukal*, Calicut, 1960, p. 67.

was receiving only religious education and keeping completely away from secular and modern education. It was in this point in time that, some Muslim leaders decided to conduct a Muslim Conference at Thalasseri on 22nd and 23rd August 1931, under the presidentship of Jamal Muhammed, with the aim of establishing an association which might have the capacity to work for the political, social and religious upliftment of the community⁵⁸. This conference was held especially on the initiative taken by some prominent nationalist Muslims like Moidu Moulavi. The participation of such nationalist Muslims invited criticisms from various parts especially from the elitist sections of Congress. Some considered this as an attempt to destroy Congress⁵⁹. The Conference passed a resolution, demanding the formation of an association to work for the social, political, economic and religious upliftment of the Muslim community⁶⁰. Thus the Kerala Muslim Majlis was emerged with the aim of uniting entire Muslims who were then scattered here and there and to undertake suitable measures to redress the religious, social, economic and political grievances of the community⁶¹. It mainly aimed at the elimination of the laziness prevailing within the community through united activities.

The Central Committee of Kerala Muslim Majlis was constituted with its headquarters at Thalasseri and under it there formed District Committees,

⁵⁸ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 9th July, 1931.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 25y August 1931.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, dated 10th April 1932.

Taluk Committees and Mahallu Committees. 'Four' ana was the annual membership charge⁶². The Central Committee deputed some of its members to spread the message of the Majlis all over Malabar. Prominent among them was K.C. Komukutty, who had been specially concentrating in Southern Malabar⁶³. Within a short period of two months he could establish branches of Majlis in different parts of Malabar especially at Wandoor in Ernad, Thiruvegappra in Tirur, Kodumunda, Thrithala etc. and also would admit about 60 members in to it. The Malabar District Magistrate gave permission to the Majlis members to organise meetings to spread its messages and to form branches all over Malabar⁶⁴. This action of Government indicates that it also rendered some support to the growth of such an organisation in Malabar.

The rules and regulations of the Majlis were formulated and passed in the meeting of Majlis working Committee held at Kerala Muslim Conference Hall, Calicut on 30th April 1933, which also decided to strengthen the functions of Majlis⁶⁵. In the later days, Majlis decided to expand its areas of operation. On 14th March 1934, the Working Committee meeting of Majlis decided to intervene in matters like the returning of relatives of Sayd Fazal

⁶² Parappil Muhammed Koya, *Kozhikkotte Muslimngalude Charitram*, Calicut, 1994, p.152.

⁶³ *Mathrubhumi*, *op.cit.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 6th May 1933.

Pookoya Thangal of Mampuram,⁶⁶ appointment of an Indian as Governor, appointment of judges in Madras High Court and representation of Muslims in it etc⁶⁷. Muhammad Abdurahiman played a major role in bringing all these issues in to the agenda of Kerala Muslim Majlis. Though he was an active member of Majlis, the officialdom of Majlis were against his extreme policies. Disputes were arouse with in Majlis workers and thus, in the later days its working were in a respite stage. It only served as a meeting place and sounding board for Muslim feeling.⁶⁸ Its workers were unable to get along with its smooth functioning. It failed to pave its deep roots among the common populace of the Malabar and later it kept faraway from them. Thus, in 1930s, the Muslim community was in a confused and chaotic state. The youth wing, who left away from Majlis in very early days itself, also were unable to undertake any further actions to regenerate a united feeling with in the community especially due to the lack of efficient leaders and money.

Subsequently, the new trend that emerged within the Congress, kept it far away from the Muslim populace. They felt that the Congress was neglecting them. Thus, in all India level itself, the leaders of the community

⁶⁶ Sayyid Fazal Pookkoya Thangal was sent to Mecca from Mampuram to check further problems in Malabar in 1852. In 1930s the question of returning of his relatives to Malabar led to hot debates and discussions and resolutions were passed from different parts for more details see Public (Gen) Dept. G.O.No.1232, dated 29.7.1935, RAC, Madras, also in *Al-Ameen*, dated 15.2.1943, 1934 Public (Dept.) No.240, dated 13.3.34.

⁶⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 14th March 1934.

⁶⁸ Roland E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras, 1992, p. 160.

raised severe criticisms against Congress. They even started to demand for separate Muslim Legislative Assemblies⁶⁹. It was in such a state of affairs, the issue of the participation of Muslims in active politics became intense, a meeting of some elitist Muslims was held at Himayathul Islam Sabha Hall with Abdul Sathar Sait as its Convenor and C.P. Mammu Haji as President to discuss the future of Muslims of Malabar. But the Muslim Youths did not co-operate with the meeting. They boycotted the meeting by denouncing it as ‘an attempt of Muslim elitists to sow the seeds of Muslim League in Malabar’⁷⁰. They abused it as a ‘feudalistic organisation’. The widening gulf between the Youth Wing and elitist Muslims led to the formation of the Young Men's Muslim Association at Calicut. As a consequence of all these, many of the Muslims withdrew from Congress to work for the revival of Muslim community. The most prominent among them was Seethi Sahib, who succeeded in bringing a significant number of influential *Mappilas* with him to the League⁷¹. The *Mappila* support to the League was demonstrated in 1934 when the popular Congress Muslim leader, Muhammed Abdurahiman

⁶⁹ Parappil Muhammed Koya, *op.cit.*, p. 153.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ M. Gangadharan, “Emergence of Muslim league in Kerala – A Historical Enquiry” in Asghar Ali Engineer(ed.), *Kerala Muslims – A Historical Perspective*, Delhi, 1995, p. 211.

Sahib was defeated in the election to the Central Legislative Assembly by the League Candidate, Abdul Sathar Sait⁷².

Even though the All India League was formed in 1906, its functions were confined only to Northern India and had an insignificant role in Malabar until this election. But after the Assembly Elections, it could establish roots in Southern India also. The first meeting for the formation of the League in Malabar was held at Kallai in 1936 under the leadership of Kadirikoya Haji, one prominent social worker and merchant of Calicut⁷³. A unit of Muslim League was formally established in the Malabar District (North Malabar) in 1937⁷⁴. Since the success of the Muslim League Candidate in the election of 1934, the League went on expanding its support base in Northern Kerala. Though one of the influential leaders of the League, B. Pokker Sahib, suffered defeat in the Assembly Election in 1937, this did not cause to reverse the growth of League in Malabar. The annual conference of the All India Muslim League proclaimed to strengthen the Muslim League in South India. In various parts of Malabar, branches of League was formed and it could acquire efficient leadership and proper support from the Muslim population. With in a short span of time, it would attract the attention of majority of Muslims in to politics.

⁷² Roland E Miller, *op.cit*, p.161.

⁷³ Parappil Muhammed Koya, *op.cit*.

⁷⁴ T.M. Savankutty, *Seethi Sahib*, Dept. of Cultural Publication, Govt. of Kerala, Trivandram.

What is obvious here is the shift of a large number of *Mappilas* from the camp of nationalist Congress to that of the Muslim League in thirties. At present, Muslim League has become an important factor in the politics of the highly segmented society in Kerala. It could include majority of Muslims under its banner and could made a separate culture in Malabar polity and society.

d) Guruvayur Satyagraha and the attempts of Hindus to develop a religious ethos in 1930s

In 1930s, when the political storm of Malabar turned in to another path, the Congress once again decided to undertake anti-untouchability campaigns as the main agenda of their programme. A Congress meeting was held at Guruvayur in June 1931 in which Kelappan openly declared the ideals of the Congress and the need for the participation of the common people in the freedom struggle and also pointed out the need of eradication of untouchability⁷⁵. Once again, thus, social issues were merged with the National Movement.

The meeting decided to organise a Satyagraha at Guruvayur for the untouchables to get permission to enter into temples along with higher castes. K. Kelappan played leading role in these agitations. But this attempt of Kelappan had to face a lot of criticisms from various parts of the state.

⁷⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 27th June 1931.

Some blamed that the Congress was unnecessarily trying to mix the anti-caste and anti untouchability campaigns along with the concept of Swaraj⁷⁶. Kelappan remarked that: “as long as caste disabilities existed, there would be no Swaraj as they keep the people divided”⁷⁷. He also raised his voice against the lower castes, who were keeping silence in the anti-untouchability agitations. Many of the leaders like A.V. Kunhambu considered it as a struggle against imperialism and not a struggle against the Lord of Guruvayur⁷⁸.

In the same juncture, the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch the second CDM. But Gandhi, after his returning from London (after the participation of RTC) advised the Congress leaders of Malabar to go ahead with Guruvayur Satyagraha, than to participate in CDM⁷⁹. Thus, the duty of conducting Satyagraha was separated from the Congress and a separate committee under K. Kelappan was formed to launch the Satyagraha. The waves of Satyagraha spread all over Malabar. As a result of this, two new elements appeared in the social sphere of Malabar – the '*savarnas*' and the '*avaranas*'. The *savarnas* reacted very severely against the attempt of the Satyagrahis and the *savarna-avarana* conflicts were common in those days.

⁷⁶ K. Gopalankutty, *op.cit*, p.73.

⁷⁷ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 23rd May 1931.

⁷⁸ M.N. Kurup, *Kunhambuvinte Katha* , p. 79. cited by k. Gopalankutty, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

⁷⁹ A.K. Pillai, *Congressum Keralavum*, *op.cit.*, p. 356.

The *Savarnas* arranged a conference at Guruvayur in which, along with about 300 common people, liegemen like Poomulli Manakkal Namboodiri, Puthezhathu Narayana Menon and Dr. P.G. Nair were participated⁸⁰. Punnathur Sankara Valiya Raja was the president of the Conference and K. Kelappan was the specially invited participant. A debate regarding the participation of P. Achuthan, an untouchable was raised in the Conference. The organisers refused P. Achuthan to participate in the Conference. Kelappan strongly attacked this attempt of the organisers and justified participation of P. Achuthan. A notable comment in this conference was made by Palacheri Narayanan Namboodiripad in which he stated that untouchability is a necessity in the society. *Mathrubhumi* severely criticised this attitude of the *savarnas* through an article captioned "Guruvayurile savarnar"(savarnas of Guruvayur)⁸¹. Kelappan made a remarkable speech in the Conference in which he stressed the need of removal of untouchability from the society⁸². Meanwhile, when one group of *savarnas* gathered together against the anti-untouchability campaigns, some section of Namboodiris of Calicut assured their full co-operation to the attempt of the Congress to eradicate untouchability⁸³. A Conference of the Namboodiris of Calicut was held under the presidentship of Poomulli Manakkal Krishnan

⁸⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 23rd September 1931.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid*, dated 25th September 1931.

⁸³ *Ibid*, dated 14th October 1931.

Namboodiri and passed a resolution which showed their co-operation to the Guruvayur Satyagraha. At this point in time, the SNDP and NSS decided to go hand in hand in the Satyagraha without any *savarna-avarna* differences. They also decided to provide hundred volunteers and about Rs.1000/- to the Satyagraha at the time of the visit of the Satyagraha Committee in Malabar and also passed a resolution for the same⁸⁴.

The Guruvayur Satyagraha Committee decided to celebrate a "Satyagraha Day" on 1st November 1931⁸⁵. It received spontaneous responses from all over Malabar including the riot zones. In various parts of South Malabar like Ramanattukara, Parappanangadi, Pallippuram, Pattambi, Perinthalmanna etc. public meetings and *ghoshayathras* were held in connection with the celebration⁸⁶. It is reported that even Christians and Muslims came to listen to Satyagraha speeches, because they wanted to know the real objectives of the Satyagraha. The Eranad Taluk Committee organised a group of volunteers to be sent to Guruvayur and also decided to conduct a Satyagraha Jatha from Ernad to Guruvayur, if necessary⁸⁷. Malabar acted as a model to all other parts of Kerala through the activity of Palolli Numboodiri of Perinthalmanna. He lighted the candle of revolution in Malabar by opening the Chakkuvara Vishnu temple of Kunnapalli, near Perinthalmanna

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, dated 6th October 1931.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, dated 26th October 1931.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, dated 5th and 6th November 1931.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, dated 28th September 1932.

on September 1932, two years before the Temple Entry Proclamation⁸⁸. The emotional scene in the Pavilion of Guruvayur Satyagraha in which Kelappan was lying with his head resting in A.K.Gopalan's lap put fire in the minds of Palolly Subrahmanyam Namboodiri and his friend Ramanunni Pisharodi. The answer of Namboodiri to the question of Pisharodi so as how to help this movement was like this: "Pisharodi, wait before participating in the Satyagraha. We both have one temple each. First of all let us open it for everybody"⁸⁹. On the return journey itself, a notice was printed informing that the Chakkuvara temple was being opened. This matter was declared in the friendly meeting at the Cherukara Kizhakkapathayappura. As there were no elders in the family, Pisharodi could not open his temple. Even after the declaration of opening of Chakkuvara temple no Harijan turned out for prayers. "As a result of their attempt, after one or two days one Harijan named Kulavan has decided to come", Cherukad describes in his *Jeevithapatha*, "Palolli Kunhuttettan of Pulamanthol Pisharam, one or two others and myself lead Kulavan to the temple. Everybody stepped into the pond, bathed him, made him wear a new dress, *basma* and sandal was put on his forehead and together we entered the temple and took the prayer. After

⁸⁸ This event has been ignored by historians. But Cherukad, in his *Jeevitha Patha*, described this great event in two chapters.

⁸⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24th October 2006.

circumventing, we went and conducted a public meeting"⁹⁰. For this Palolli had to face ex-communication. Following this, a 'mixed dining' (*misrabhojana*) was conducted in the temple and invited important leaders like Kelappan were participated. This provoked the conservatives and for years, they kept out of the temple and even they did not take bath from the temple pond⁹¹. This incident was a real challenge to the authorities who were trying to multiplying the magnitude of the deeds of the Conservatives. It was a major set back for the supremacy of the upper castes prevailed in Malabar.

There are inferences regarding the organisation of Sanatana Haindhava Samajam in various parts of Malabar, which became an important factor in the Malabar polity and society. There can see two groups of such Sanatana Haindavas – one rendered full support to the Satyagraha and the other group was against the Satyagraha. The earlier group tried to bring caste in to the forefront of the Hindu concept and thus to the general Hindu section. Even though it was organised by the higher sections of Hindu community, it kept its doors open to all, irrespective of caste barriers. A meeting of this Sanatana Haindava Samajam was held at Kannur on 8th August 1937 under the chairmanship of A.K. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar. It organised a working

⁹⁰ Cherukad, *Jeevithapatha*, *op.cit*, p. 220. It is mentioned by Cherukad that all the untouchables had a belief that if they entered in the temple, the Lord of temple will give punishment to them. Because of this belief that they were not ready to enter the temple.

⁹¹ *Mathrubhumi*, *op.cit*.

committee with A.K. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar as President, S.V. Ratna Das as Secretary, Sri. M.C. as treasurer and with eight other members⁹². Its main aim was to make some efforts for the benefit of Hindu community. But the at Guruvayur, a Sanatana Yogam was arranged at the *varanda* of the Sathram Banglow in which some elitist wings like Prof: Durgal, T.M. Krishna Swami Ayyar, Sasthri of Mysore, Somadeva Sharma, Prof: Sreejiva and Desvaswam Assistant Manager Chalatt Krishnankutty Menon made speeches in which all condemned the attempt of Congress.

Majority of the participants were Tamil Brahmins. The meeting abused Gandhiji as a "*duratma*"⁹³. There aroused widespread reactions against the Sanatanis. On 27th December 1932, the youths of Guruvayur conducted a *ghoshayathra* in which they kept black flags and banners which asked the people to boycott the Sanatanis⁹⁴. Following this, savarna Conferences were organised in various parts of Malabar. The most striking thing happened at this juncture was the changing of the attitude of some sections of orthodox savarnas. They began to render full support to Kelappan and Congress. Parallel savarna Conference was conducted at Chavakkad High School, Guruvayur, on 29th September 1932 under the president ship of Mattannur Madhusoodanan Thangal in which 1500 persons were participated.

⁹² *Mathrubhumi*, dated 11th August 1932.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, dated 24th December 1932.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, dated 1st January 1933.

The conference demanded the opening of Temple roads to all sections of society⁹⁵. At Tirurangadi a savarna Conference was held and passed a resolution requesting the Zamorin to open the Guruvayur Temple immediately to all sections of society⁹⁶. From Mankada, near Perinthalmanna, a huge petition signed by 61 members of reputed families, was sent to Zamorin demanded the same⁹⁷. Just like this, from various parts of Malabar like Shornur, Farook, Nilambur and Malappuram, meetings were conducted and resolutions were passed demanding the eradication of untouchability and opening of Guruvayur temple in front of all⁹⁸. At Guruvayur, a group of *Nayadis* presented a *Mangal Patra* to Kasuthurbai, when she made a visit to the Satyagrahis of Guruvayur Temple⁹⁹. All this incidents are indicators of the spontaneous responses created by the Satyagraha among the people.. Every nook and corner of Malabar were ardent due to the calling of anti-untouchability and Temple Entry campaigns. Jathas from various parts of Malabar like Perinthalmanna, Cherukara, Chundampatta, Naduvattam, Vallappuzha, Kolambali etc. and also from

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, dated 11th August 1932.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, dated 28th September 1932.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, dated 29th & 30th September 1932.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, dated 7th October 1932.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, dated 7th December 1932.

Palakkad met at Pattambi to conduct march to Guruvayur proclaiming support to the Satyagraha¹⁰⁰.

It was in this tense situation that the anti-untouchability Committee decided to organise an All Kerala Great Hindu Conference at Guruvayur on 19th February 1933, under the president ship of L.C. Kelkar¹⁰¹. Due to some difficulties, the organisers could not conduct it on the day planned and had to postpone it. Later it was held on 5th March 1933 under the Presidentship of Kavalappara Elaya Nair. The main participants of the Conference were K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon, P. Achuthan, V.P. Narayanan Nambiyar, Kelappan, Retired .Sub Magistrate K.P. Karunakara Menon, N. Krishnayyar, Kettuvath Krishnan Nair, Ikkanda Varrier and Kurur Neelakantan Namboodiripad. Large number of ladies and gents also participated in it¹⁰². In his welcome speech, V.P. Narayanan Nambiar expressed his concern about the dangerous situation that the Hindu religion had been facing. He told the Sanatanis that the Satyagrahis had no intention to create any difficulty to them. The conference severely criticised the prevalence of caste system in the society and passed a resolution demanding the right to entire Hindus, irrespective of caste as creed, to enter the temple¹⁰³. Following this, meetings were held in various parts of Malabar demanding the removal of

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, dated 30th September 1932.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, dated 7th March, 1933.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, dated 15th March 1933.

untouchability. At Manjeri, such a meeting was held under the president ship of Manjeri Venkata Ramayyar in which the main participants were K. Kelappan and Subrahmanyam Thirumambu. The meeting demanded complete eradication of untouchability¹⁰⁴.

On seeing all these unprecedented support from various parts, the Satyagraha Committee decided to strongly proceed the Satyagraha. K. Kelappan, the Satyagraha leader started a hunger strike on September 1935. The news of self immolation of Kelappan provide widespread reactions. The press tried to highlight the Satyagraha by giving it a revolutionary tone.

Responding to this *Mathrubhumi* wrote on 23d September 1932 that: "if the Vaidikans (divines) are going to meet themselves in Conference, let them remember one thing-it is from the flame of funeral pyre of heroes that revolutions proceeds. It is their blood that has to hold together several parts of the walls of the house of righteousness of the future. Such a revolution is at hand. The sacrifice of Kelappan has brought very near to us that inevitable revolution"¹⁰⁵. It concluded with a warning to the Zamorins family that "it was Louis XIV that had to bear the fruit of the sins of the many Louise's that proceeded him and if anything undesirable happens, we are bold even to

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Public (General) 1932, G.O.No.1434, confidential dated 8.11.32. Madras Records, RAC. Following this article, *Mathrubhumi* was caught by Press Act of 1931 and security was recorded from the publisher and keeper of press.

guess what the condition of Kerala will be then"¹⁰⁶. The press again reminded the Zamorin that if public opinion is not respected according to the need's of the times, Kerala's fate too must be the same as the fate of Kaliph of Turkey, Lords and Priests of Russia and condition of Spain. Leaders like Sriman Kelappan have maintained non-violence and have prevented revolution, but the Zamorin is now sowing its seeds¹⁰⁷. It also advocated the removal of the Zamorin of Calicut from his trusteeship of Guruvayur Temple¹⁰⁸.

All these made a tremendous impact in all over India and Mahatma Gandhi decided to interfere in this matter. He advised Kelappan to stop his hunger strike and it was stopped on 2nd October 1933. It was the end of an epoch making event in the history of Kerala. Thus, the attempt of the nationalists to eradicate untouchability from Malabar soil came to an abrupt end without achieving its final goal, like Vaikom Satyagraha. Even then both exemplified the immense potentialities of Satyagraha as an instrument of social change.

Even though the Satyagrahis failed to attain its goal, it created waves of evolutionary changes in the society and polity of Kerala. The *savarna-avarna* conflict and the emergence of a new Hindu elitist group –the Sanatani

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Malayalam Translator to Govt. to the Chief Secretary to Govt. of Madras, in *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Hindus – created some sort of social tensions within the society. Sanatanis became very strong to uphold the needs of the elitist sections of Hindu Community. The main arena of their activity was centred around Guruvayur and surrounding areas. There were reports about a meeting of these Sanatanis held at the Sathram Banglow in Guruvayur on 21st December 1932, under the president ship of Advocate Chathu Menon. Most of the participants were Tamil Brahmins. They severely condemned Gandhiji and the Congress for their attempt of eradication of untouchability¹⁰⁹. They ‘welcomed’ Gandhi with black flags during his visit to Malabar. Some of their leaders like Gopala Menon, Naidu and two other Sasthris who came from Bombay, abused and ill treated Gandhiji at Guruvayur, when he had reminded the Santanis that it was their duty to eradicate untouchability¹¹⁰. Dr. Naidu said that eradication of untouchability and upliftment of Harijans are against Sanatani religion and so he requested Gandhiji to abandon the scheme¹¹¹. All these debates and discussions revealed the fact that all these newly emerged groups were against the nationalist sentiments.

During the later days, only some elements give support to the national cause and also to the eradication of evil customs existed in the society. Most important among them were the revolutionary youth wing of Yogakshema

¹⁰⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 24th December 1932.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, dated 12th January 1934.

Sabha, which was under the leadership of progressive Namboodiri youths like V.T. Bhattathiripad and EMS Namboodiripad, who had created revolutionary changes in the social realm of Malabar. But some communitarian elements deviated from their earlier goals and stood for purely personal benefits. In the earlier stages, SNDP stood along with the Satyagrahis, but in the later days, they deviated from these ideals and started demanding separate assembly seats. It kept away from its nationalist character and turned to be a purely communitarian organisations. The annual session of SNDP held under the president ship of K.P. Asan in 1932, severely criticised the Satyagraha movement. He also stated that they would organise a voluntary army to keep Ezhavas of Malabar away from Satyagraha¹¹². *Mathrubhumi* raised criticism against this attitude of K.P. Asan. In its 33rd Session held at Changanasseri in 1936 May, SNDP declared that *Ezhavas* were not Hindus and it was the Hindu religion that had lead them into such a declining stage. So, it declared that *Ezhavas* were going to leave the Hindu religion. In this conference, they passed a resolution which demanding the same and declaring their Non co-operation in the Temple Entry Satyagraha campaigns, which in their view was 'aimed to remain *Ezhavas* with in the Hindu fold'¹¹³. *Mathrubhumi* had severely criticised the attitude of SNDP, especially of K. Ayyappan who was the President of the Session. In its editorial, vehemently criticising the

¹¹² *Mathrubhumi*yude *Charithram*, Vol. II, *op.cit*, pp. 95-99.

¹¹³ *Ibid*.

presidential address, *Mathrubhumi* wrote: "Ayyappan is trying to create a new theory that communalism is nothing but nationalism itself". Ayyappan further stated: "if the national independence, progress of the nation and the national rule is to be a reality, they must be accessible to all communities that are elements of the nation. For this, either the difference between communities must end or the representation of communities must be ensured perfectly". *Mathrubhumi* continuous to write that "it cannot be understood as to how the prefect communal representation becomes a means for the establishment of nationalism. Nationalism and communalism are mutually contradicting words"¹¹⁴. *Mathrubhumi* questions the claim of Ayyappan that 'there is no other community like the Ezhavas who try to abolish the caste system. The argument of communal representation is an impediment to the growth of all societies. The difference between communalism and nationalism are like that of night and day. *Mathrubhumi* reminds Ayyappan and SNDP that it is deplorable to fail to understand it. In the editorial, antagonism towards Hinduism also is rigorously criticised. *Mathrubhumi* also criticises Ayyappan's suggestions to SNDP Yogam that the way to destroy caste is to create a separate community called Hindu¹¹⁵. This shows that SNDP deviated far away from its, aims and objectives which was put forward by Sree Narayana Guru.

¹¹⁴ *Mathrubhumi*yude *Charitram* Vol.II, *op.cit*, p. 97.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

The 10th annual conference of Cochin *Thiyya* Mahayogam, held at Cochin, also demanded for communal representation, but it rejected the demand of separating Ezhavas from Hinduism. In the presidential speech, N. Kumaran, despite of his reiterated arguments for communal representation, opposed the argument that the Thiyyas had to give up Hinduism. He also added that the deplorable condition of Ezhavas can be solved by the 'temple entry' and 'eradication of untouchability'¹¹⁶. A meeting of Thiyya youths was conducted at Kannur shortly after the Cochin Conference and passed resolution that demanded to consider the *Thiyya* Malabar Association and North Kerala *Thiyya* Mahayogam as communal organisations¹¹⁷. Following this, the meeting of the *Thiyya* Malabar Yogam was conducted at Calicut on 5th June 1936, and declared its loyalty towards British emperor. The nationalists walked out from the meeting on account of the advice of P. Achuthan.

In course of time, just like SNDP, NSS also deviated from the nationalist feelings and turned to be a merely communal organisation in 1930s. It also began to reveal its weaknesses of a communitarian organisation. The presidential speech made by Mullur Govinda Pillai, in the Samastha Kerala Nair Summit held at Konny on April 1933 was better proof for it. In his speech Mullur said: "those who say that organizational activities are not necessary for *Nairs*, are unable to hear the uproars of communal

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.100.

struggles happenings around. Mullor even called all those who were against organizational activities among *Nairs* as 'enemies of the community". Mullor's argument was that the nation would progress only if each community attempts for their own upliftment. But, criticising this, *Mathrubumi*, opined that: the communal organizations are harmful for both the communities and the country as well"¹¹⁸. All the resolutions passed in the above summit were demanding communal representation. All these indicates the fact that, just like the *savarna- avarna* and *Sanatani* elements, various communal elements were also so strong in the Hindu community in 1930s.

In the post 1921 Rebellion period, both national and radical trends were ardent in the political realm of Malabar. This chapter concentrates what common historians says radical nationalism and also the trends which were going on along with this. In this study, no intervening is made in such views. At the same time, it looks in to the other side of nationalism especially the growth of right and left wing trends. In the functioning of Civil Disobedience Movement in Malabar, the right-left rift with in the Congress was very clear. In the later days, the right wing turned to be more and more communal. When the Muslim nationalists turned to be more and more radical, the right wing Hindu Congress leaders turned to be more religious. The Congress leaders looked upon the Temple Entry Movement in a radical way. At the same time,

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

others viewed it as an attempt of Congress to bring a Hindu unity. This was more evident in the case of Sanatani Hindus, who were stood for safeguarding community feelings than secular feelings. Thus, two trends were going on apparently- on the one side radicalism and on the other side growth of community consciousness. But the radical nationalist Muslims kept away from such community feelings and so kept away from all such organisations like Aikya Sangam and Majlis. In their place, there emerged new leadership, who gave more importance to community consciousness than secular trends. It was these sections who rendered much help to the formation of Muslim League. The caste and communitarian organisations, which were once going along with the national movement, later deviated from the secularist tendencies of the national movement. Hence, what is clear here is that both Hindus and Muslims have the capacity to organise people in the name of community. That goes against the secular radical slogan put forward by the left wing nationalists.. All these attempts later helped to deviate Muslims into Muslim League and also to create Hindu ethos among the Hindus. A communal polarization can be vividly seen in the polity and society of post Rebellion Malabar along with secularism, eventhough religion, during the era, was not a unifying force.

CONCLUSION

Sreevidhya Vattarambath “Aftermath of the rebellion trends - A study of political and social trends in malabar from 1921 to 1935” Thesis. Department of History, University of Calicut, 2007

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Even though the British could suppress the Rebellion with iron hands, it had tremendous impact upon the popular life of Malabar and it created fundamental changes in the routine life of the region. Along with nationalism, agrarian discontent also acted as a major driving force behind the struggle. All these later culminated into the growth of communitarian and communal organizations. As a result of all these factors, the social and political scenario was subjected to considerable changes.

From the very beginning of 19th century onwards, the oppressed tenants and subtenants, rose repeatedly in revolts against the existing system of exploitation of the *jenmies*. Most of the land was exclusively held by Hindu *jenmies* and most of the tenants were poor *Mappilas*. Hence, these conflicts between *Mappila* peasantry and Hindu landowning class was characterized by the British authorities and the other pro-government agencies as a revolt developed out of communal tensions.

The 1921 Rebellion was quite different from the 19th century uprisings. The 19th century uprisings were mostly localized ones. A small group of *Mappilas* turned against their *jenmies* for varied and often localized reasons. But the 1921 Rebellion was not a localized one. It spread to the entire South

Malabar and its echo spread not only in Malabar but entire Kerala. The Rebellion was started as a part NCM and Khilafat movements and purely an anti-*jenmi* and anti-British one. In the earlier stages of the Rebellion their prominent leaders played a major role in sowing the seeds of nationalism in the minds of poor *Mappilas*. In the occasion of religious preachings in mosques, the religious leaders expressed the religious importance of the struggle against British imperialism. These preachings helped much to arouse both anti imperialist and religious feelings among such illiterate *Mappilas* who considered the words of religious leaders as final. It was only in the second stage of Rebellion, when army and police started their rule in the rebel areas and seek the help of the Hindus to capture rebels, that the Rebellion turned into an anti-Hindu one. The *jenmies* rejected to provide protection to their subjects. Really it was their duty to render protection to their subjects without any religious restriction. But here, instead of providing protection to them they were considered as traitors. In this stage, the rebels committed many atrocities towards the Hindus like capturing wealth, looting of Hindu houses, compulsory conversion of Hindus into Islam, raping of Hindu women etc. Such atrocities created a fear in the minds of all Hindus which helped to maintain a consciousness among them that the fanatic activities of *Mappilas* caused for all their suffering. On the other hand, the Hindus also took the rebel situation as a suitable time to conduct atrocities towards their Muslim brethren. This helped to create a feeling of hatred and suspicion among the

Muslims and such incidents provoked the Muslims to do cruel atrocities. Infact, not only the *Mappilas*, but the Hindu also took the rebel situation as a suitable time to conduct atrocities towards their brethren. The non participant Mohammedans and Hindus also had to face the miserable situations. Both the Hindus and Muslims had a very difficult life for seven or eight months after their homes were looted and had nothing to do for living.

The plight of Hindus was also more deplorable. Many of them were brutally murdered and many of them were subjected to forcible conversion by the rebels. These conversions disturbed the existing social system and created disorder. The most noticeable thing here is that the most outstanding leaders of the Rebellion were against these conversions. Most of these conversion were undertaken by local leaders and several rebel bands. The condition of these converted people were more sympathetic as they had to face many social problems. The Hindu leaders decided to find out solutions to their problems, which later led to the reconversion process. The Arya Samajists stood in front of all such reconversion process and came through the Sudhi Movement. They received help from the orthodox sections of Hindu society in their effort to make arrangements for the reconversion of the converted Hindus. For providing relief to these forcibly converted persons, a separate relief camp was opened at Calicut under the auspices of Malabar Central Relief Committee. They provided all facilities to these sufferers and many made arrangements for these converts to return back to their original faith as

well as to their homes after the suppression of the Rebellion. Even then also, protection of these converts from future violence was a serious issue in front of the authorities.

Relief was provided not only to the converted sections, but also to the entire sufferers. The nationalists and philanthropists engaged seriously in this attempt for providing food and shelter to these refugees. Relief committees and camps were formed in different parts of Malabar. By knowing the sufferings for the people of Malabar, helps were flowed into these areas from various parts of India. Eventhough such relief was poured to the sufferers, in real sense, relief was partial. Such organizations and relief committees rendered relief only to the Hindu suffers and ignored the condition of poor *Mappilas* including women and children who suffered hard from both and the authorities and pro-government Hindus. They were not allowed to cameout from the martial law area and thus were kept away from the public sympathy. The only one who rendered relief to such section was Muhammad Abdurahiman who tried to help the poor *Mappila* women and children, who were hide in caves of wild animals and other hilly and forest areas. But he also could not solve the real problems of these sections. Even the government also ignored the living conditions of poor people of South Malabar after the Rebellion. Due to Rebellion and Police Raj, agriculture was destroyed and people were suffering from poverty. No one was there to help them. Both Hindus and Muslims blamed each other for all their sufferings. While

analyzing all the relief and reconstruction programmes of post Rebellion period, it can be seen that even though the nationalists tried to avoid communal differences in their attempts, knowingly or unknowingly such a deviation happened in the midst of them. Moreover, the government imposed heavy burden upon these sections, especially in the form of Andaman Scheme. Though the government gives up the scheme, it caused untold sufferings to the hapless poor *Mappilas* of Malabar.

All these provided a great setback to the national movement. For longtime after the Rebellion, no political activity was possible in Malabar. The common people believed that the Congress is responsible for all their sufferings. But the Congress washed their hands by saying that they could not enter the riot zones due to the prohibition order. The financial hurdles, faced by Congress also added with all these and thus the Congress functioning was in a dull stage. The fanaticism showed by some sections of *Mappilas* during the Rebellion, their attacking tendencies and the inability of Congress leaders to make them stick on to non-violence coupled with many other reasons created political stagnancy in Malabar.

The Rebellion made great influence in the public sphere. Different scholars characterized it differently and this had made great influence in shaping the mindsets of the public. Through various newspapers and literary works, news of such atrocities conducted by *Mappilas* against their Hindu

brethren , the cruel activities of British police and military – all came out, which played a great role in shaping the character of this particular event. The emergence of nationalist newspaper like *Mathrubhumi* and *Al-Ameen* helped to render energy and strength to the popular movements in Malabar. They tried to give same how, impartial news to the populace regarding the Rebellion and also regarding the post Rebellion conditions. In many issues, like the Thirunavaya Hindu Conference of 1929, *Mathrubhumi* and *Al Ameen* followed ideological fights that later caused for rift between two sections of Congress – the Chalappuram gang and *Al-Ameen* gang. The educational policies introduced by the government in the name of champion scheme and the debates and discussions came out in the name of this- all helped to create a separatist spirit among the people. The social sphere of Malabar was filled with communal questions and answers. While *Mappilas* were infavour of the existence of separate schools, Hindus were against this.

The establishment of two nationalist newspapers in the post Rebellion period accelerated polarization with in the Congress, even though its leaders were not having such an intention. This helped to create a gulf between Hindu and Muslim leaders in the Congress, especially in the absence of strong exponents of Hindu Muslim harmony. This gradually helped to the formation of two separate groups - one centered around K. Kelappan and *Mathrubhumi* who were known as chalappuram gang and the other centered around the Muhammad Abdurahiman and *Al Ameen* who were known as *Al Ameen* gang.

The relationship between the right-left wing became more worsened which affected much on the smooth functioning of nationalism in Malabar.

The entrance of radical left wing into the Congress in the midst of all these introduced a new chapter in the history of Congress. The revolutionary nationalist Muslims rendered support to the KCSP, which later enabled the socialists to assume control over K P C C. The socialists tried to establish their hold upon the common people. In 1937, the KCSP was reorganized and reformulated and a unit of Communist Party of India was formed in Malabar.

Along with nationalism, communal and communitarian elements were also strong in the post Rebellion Malabar. Each community felt insecurity and due to this, attempts were being made from various parts to regenerate their own community which led to the emergence of various caste and communitarian organizations along with nationalism. The repressive policy followed by the British authorities towards the Muslims gave them untold sufferings. Consistent efforts were made from 1922-23 by the *Mappila* leaders of Malabar to raise their brethren from this pitiable plight. It was in such a situation that the Muslim intellectuals and elite middle class tried to regenerate them through an organization called Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangam. The Sangam could introduce drastic changes in Muslim society and there took place an organized form of reform movement afterwards. For proper guidance and to conduct religious propagation effectively they decided

to form an organization of the Ulamas of Kerala called 'Jamyathul Ulama' with Moidu Moulavi as its secretary. In the earlier part there prevailed a cordial relationship between nationalist Muslims and the Sangham, but later it began to diminish. It was in this juncture, when the rift between Sangham and nationalist Muslim reached in its extreme stage that there organized another association known as Kerala Muslim Majlis under the leadership of E. Moidu Moulavi and Uppisahib with the objective of political, social and economic upliftment of Muslim Community. Later Aikya Sangam was amalgamated into Muslim Majlis. In 1937 a unit of Muslim league was also established in Malabar which led to the separation of Muslims into a separate political camp. It was the only organization, which would put all Muslim of Kerala under the banner of one political organization and this deviated Muslims from the secularist path.

Just like Muslim community, among Hindus also, there emerged various caste and communitarian organizations to safeguard the interests of their own community. Each castes and sub castes were engaged in organizing their own community to safeguard it from its degradation. Both the upper and lower section formed their own separate caste organization to protect their own interests. The downtrodden sections formed such associations to protect themselves from the clutches of untouchability and unapproachability. In the midst all these, attempts were made to form a non-Brahmanical association along with these caste and communitarian organizations, as a branch of South

Indian Liberal Foundation in Malabar. Some social workers like C. Achuthan rejected the necessity of the formation of such a Sangam in Malabar. Irrespective of all criticisms, an *Abrahmana* Sangham was formed at Calicut. Even then, no one had a clear idea of the communities or castes that included in the group of *Abrahmanas*. Some revealed their curiosity that the formation of such an organization would help to deteriorate the *Brahmanas* who were working for the cause of anti-untouchability campaigns, irrespective of their caste and creed. They expressed their curiosity that sometime, in future, such persons would compel to work selfishly and also in accordance with caste.

These caste and communitarian sentiments later led to the development of a Hindu religious ethos. Such a feeling aroused mainly from the rigid caste system existed in the society and attempts made by each and every community to get freedom from the barriers of caste. In the caste ridden Hindu society, the discrimination against untouchables was a common feature and the Hindu nationalist leaders, in the Post Rebellion period, realized the necessity of the removal of caste and communal barriers which affected the very smooth functioning of nationalism. The orthodox *savarna* group reacted very crucially towards such an attempt of Congress. The most important example of such an anti-untouchability campaign of the Congress was the Vaikom Satyagraha, which in later days, acted as a model to many other such attempts. It was in this situation that two new elements- the savarnas and

avarnas – emerged into the scene. The savarnas severely criticized the attempt of Congress. In the later history of anti untouchability campaigns like Kalpathy issue, the savarna-avarna conflicts were very strong and in later days it was a common feature in Malabar. Following the Kalpathy issue, Malabar was once again tensed with the conversion and reconversion process conducted by both Hindu, Muslim and Christian organizations. The works of Arya Samajists and various other organizations in the attempt of reconversion process and checking of wide range conversion of untouchables in to other castes helped much to create a Hindu religious ethos. Later, there formed a branch of Hindu Maha Sabha in Malabar, which was not only an organization of upper sections alone, but also of all sections of Hindus irrespective of caste and creed. The Sabha decided to commence a Great Hindu Conference at Thirunavaya. In this occasion, there aroused some doubts among the nationalists regarding the nature of the Sabha. They feared the possibility of deviation of a socialist organization in to a communal one. After a long days debates and discussion, the Congress leaders like K. Madhavan Nair decided to participate in the conference. The Sabha declared that those who desired to regenerate Hindu community from its destruction only should participate in the conference. It was afterwards that the Congress leaders decided to participate in it and *Mathrubhumi* appealed the people to make the conference a real success. The Congress faced criticism from various parts for their active participation and *Al-Ameen* and Muhammad Abdurahiman stood in

front of all criticisms, which later widened the rift between two gangs of Congress. It is reported that to check the communitarian disputes and competitions in Kerala, such an organization is necessary. The main reason for all criticisms was that the HMS was worked under the leadership of Pundit Madan Mohan Malavya and Moonje, who were not ready to give up their orthodoxy. So it is natural to doubt that it will be converted into a communal organization. Instead of checking the growth of such a tendency in Malabar, the support imparted by Congress to it caused for all such debates and discussions especially between Congress and nationalist Muslims through *Mathrubhumi* and *Al-Ameen*. What is obvious here is that Congress now started to deviate from its secular policies and turned into a savarna Hindu organization. At the same time, the nationalist Muslims stood for radical and secular ideas. This later helped to the emergence of communal feelings in the nationalist propaganda.

In 1930's the Congress once again decided to undertake the anti-untouchability campaign as the main agenda of their programme. The most important campaign in this connection was the Guruvayur Satyagraha. The *savarna-avarna* elements were so strong in this period than the previous time. The *savarnas* arranged a conference at Guruvayur against the attempts of Congress. More than this, a new Hindu group – the Sanatani Hindus – emerged in to the scene in the background of the Guruvayur Satyagraha. Sanatana Haidava Samajams were organized in various parts of Malabar,

which, in later days, became a part of Malabar polity and society. There can see two groups of such Santana Hindus – one imparted full support to the Satyagraha and the other was against the Satyagraha. The earlier group tried to bring caste in to the forefront of the Hindu concept and thus to the general Hindu section. It was in this background that an All Kerala Hindu Conference was held at Guruvayur. In the later days, many of the communitarian groups changed their secularist characteristics and started to demand for even separate assembly seats. Thus, in 1930s, it is visible that the caste and communitarian elements, which once had been going with the national movement, later deviated from the secularist tendencies of the national movement. This deviation was happened among Congressmen also. More than this Congress-CSP bent was also more important in 1930s. A communal deviation was vividly seen in the Malabar politics in 1930s. Attempts were made to deviate Muslims into Muslim League and also to create a Hindu ethos among Hindus under Hindu Maha Sabha.

All these changes were happened due to the social and economic impact of the 1921 Rebellion. The land was the main issue behind all the peasant revolts of the 19th and 20th centuries in Malabar. But there we have to see changes in the character of these revolts. The main difference was that the 19th century revolts were localized one and also of individual issue, not organized one. At the same time, the 1921 Rebellion was an organized one and not due to individual issues. It was mainly originated from the

kanakkudian-jenmy issue. That is what Conrad Wood said that there is a clear economic base behind Rebellion, along with common grievances. This common grievance persisted even after the Rebellion, but the condition of the common peasants did not change. Therefore, in the post-Rebellion period, the most important discussion was made on the Tenancy bill.

Along with various communal and communitarian problems, the Tenancy question was also a point of debates and discussion in the post-Rebellion Malabar. Because of its particular land system, Malabar had the highest percentage of tenancy, the most complex land system and the worst form of landlordism. As peasant struggles struck deeper roots in this region and continued to be more militant and protracted than in other regions, it is only to be expected that the impact of Tenancy Acts had been greater in this region than any other. It is possible to find out two stages in the history of Tenancy Movements in Malabar – one from 1910s to 1930s led by upper strata tenants (*kanakkudiyar/kanakkaran*) and the second from the 1930s with the emergence of lower class tenants (*verumpattakkar/ verumpattakkudiyans*). The later stage under leftist leadership is regarded as more radical¹. The real problem that the actual tenants faced were many such as capricious and arbitrary evictions which shows that the tenants were still entirely at the mercy of the *jenmies*.

¹ Thoshie Awaye, "Situating Malabar Tenancy Act", in *Local Agrarian Studies in Colonial India – Japanese Perspectives*, edited by Peter Robb *et al*, Centre for South Indian Studies, School of Oriental and Asiatic Studies, University of London.

The earlier parts of the peasant struggles were carried on by the *Mappilas*, who formed the bulk of the *verumpattakkudiyans*, whose demands were mainly prevention of eviction and payment of compensation at the full market value. But the Tenancy movement, from the very earlier part onwards (in the 20th century) was mainly carried on by the *kanakkudians*, who belonged mostly to the Nair caste. Like the *verumpattakkudians*, the *kanakkudians* were also so strong in South Malabar. The *kanakkudians* were backed by the National Movement and led by efficient and energetic leaders, but the *verumpattakkudians* lacked such a background.

At the top of the Tenancy Movement, there stood the elitist Hindu elements, mostly advocates who belonged in the *kanakkaudiyan* section and also the bourgeoisies. They approached the people with a message to establish an organization to carry out struggles for their own needs simultaneously holding an averse attitude against the oppressive *jenmies* and putting a blind eye over the desires and wishes of *verumpattakkudiyans*.² Thus, they could achieve wide public support.

Some of the lawyers of Pattambi Court thought of finding a solution to the tenancy problem through legislative means and with their efforts there formed the *Malabar Kudiyan Sangham* (Malabar Tenancy Union) at Pattambi in 1922 with T. Rama Kurup, a prominent lawyer of Pattambi Bar as

² EMS Namboodiripad, "KarshakPrasthanathinte Oru Lakhu Charithram", in *EMS Samboorna Kritikal*, Sanchika 5, Trivandrum, 1999, p. 41.

President and lawyer M.M. Kunhirama Menon and P.A. Raman Nair as Secretaries³. In December 1922, the MKS organized the first Malabar Kudiyan Conference at Pattambi. It was presided over by C.R. Reddy, a prominent member of Justice Party and also of MLC and attended by prominent tenant leaders. The organizers of the conference had given adequate publicity to their venture and to the oppression of the *kanakkudians* by the *jenmies*. This conference marked the beginning of the organized agitation of *kanakkudian*⁴. Before the 1st conference, a tenancy bill was prepared by M. Krishnan Nair and published for collecting public opinion. This bill was adequate for giving permanent possession rights to all *kanakkudians* and *verumpattakkudians* who had been holding the land for more than 6 years. The main resolution passed in the Pattambi conference was to reorganize this bill and make it a law⁵. In 1926, this bill was moved in the Legislative Council and the Council passed it. However the Govt. refused to accept it, and as a result a strong tenancy struggle broke out.

The core of these agitations consisted of a few lawyers, intellectuals and journalists from prominent *kanakkudiyan* families in and around Calicut. Their method of articulation were in keeping with their social and professional background. Due to the persistent campaigns, the MKS could

³ P. Radhakrishnan, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social change – Malabar 1836 – 1982*, New Delhi, 1989, p. 77.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 78.

⁵ K.R. Achuthan, *C. Krishnan – Jeevacharithram*, Kottayam, 1971, p. 223.

organize hundreds of units in different parts of Malabar in the course of eight years of its agitation. *Jenmies* were also so eager towards the activities of MKS. So they also decided to organize themselves against *kudiyans*. For fighting directly against the *kudiyans*, the *jenmies* selected Kollamkodu Vasudeva Raja as their leader⁶. At the same time, the North Malabar *jenmies* requested to avoid them from all such issues due to the fact that they were not practically evicting *kudiyans* from the *kudiyiruppu*⁷. *Mathrubhumi* published Sub-Edition on 29th September 1925 to analyse the tenancy issue and it described two public meetings convened by *Mappila* tenants at Ernad one at Malappuram and the other at Kodur. In both meetings, G. Sankaran Nair addressed the gathering describing the present state of Tenancy bill. He emphasized the need for getting permanent rights in the soil. A resolution was moved in the meeting demanding permanent right to the *kanakkudians* and *verumpattakkudians* and converting the bill into law with effect from the date on which it was presented in the council. It caused wide protests. The main opposition was from the law member C.P. Rama Swami Ayar, who severely criticized the opinions of select committee. He pointed out certain difficulties in the Bill and expressed general sympathy for homestead tenants and actual cultivators⁸. His foremost opposition was that the *jenmies* are not provided with adequate compensation when their authorities and rights are

⁶ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 2nd October 1923.

⁷ *Ibid.*, dated 27th July 1925.

⁸ P. Radhakrishnan, *op cit*, p. 82.

being restricted. He pointed out that the cultivating *kanakkar* should also be given permanent rights as they are giving adequate compensation⁹. After the select committee signed the report, he issued a dissenting note stating that the Bill, as amended by it, was so defective that it was incapable of being improved even by amendments. Under pressure from the Members, the Govt. changed its stands from total opposition to the introduction of amendments in the Bill. But the task of framing these amendments was entrusted to F.B. Evans, whose anti-tenant views were so notorious. Due to this the tenants throughout Malabar protested immediately against his appointment. And irrespective of all these protests he was appointed, Infuriated by Evans appointments and amendments, protest meetings of tenants were organized in different parts of Malabar.

In the wake of all these protests and pressures, the government appointed a committee in September 1927, with Diwan Bahadur Raghaviah as president and including six other members, to inquire into and report upon what disabilities were pressing hard on the tenants of Malabar in general and on the extent of unjustifiable evictions by the *jenmies* in particular¹⁰. It was accused that such a Bill wouldn't provide any benefit to the *kudiyans*. As the committee was filled with *jenmies* and their supporters, the MKS protested against its appointment and gave a call for boycotting it and campaigned

⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 12th January 1926.

¹⁰ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 1st March 1927.

against it throughout Malabar. Later, in the face of total non co-operation, the Governor decided to include a tenants' representative in it.

In the later days, there began some changes in the attitude of government towards the *kanakkudians* mainly due to the fact that the agitation was championed by the educated middleclass consisting of lawyers and government servants and belated realization of the political necessity of conceding to their demands. At last, the government passed the Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930, which provided permanent right in the owned land to the *kanakkudians*. The Malabar Tenancy Act XIV of 1930 was came into force on 1st December 1930.¹¹ It provided fixity of tenure in the soil to *verumpattakkudian* and also provided some provisions to impose *maryadapattam*. Almost all the demands, which the kanakkar raised, have been conceded. He can no more be evicted by capricious *jenmi* at his will. His interests in the land get as much value as the *jenmy's* own¹². The professional and commercial people, who accumulate decent amounts seek him out and try to purchase his interests, thus converting him into the possessor of almost liquid cash. His rents can't be enhanced, not can the *jenmy* make arbitrary levies on him as he used to do. The renewal fee that he

¹¹ Full Text of MTA published in *Mathrubhumi* dated 30th November 1930, also see in the Madras Code Vol. III, Local Dept. Unrepeated Madras Acts 1923-1939, Madras, 7th edition, 1953 TNA Chennai. For further details see Tenancy committee Report Vol. I & II, Madras, 1928.

¹² EMS Namboodiripad, "Karshaprasthanathinte", *op cit.*, p. 44.

was to pay to the *jenmy* every 12 year had lost all terrors of a periodically erupting volcano ruining his entire family according to the well-known and fixed principles in contrast to the arbitrary and unknown whims of the *jenmy*¹³.

But, the *verampattakkudian* could not be free from the holds of *kanakkudians* and *jenmies*, even after the passing of the Act also. Though the Act provided for fixity of tenure and fixation of fair rent (*maryadapattom*), in the case of *verumpattakkudians*, the loopholes¹⁴ in it, made these provisions illusory to all. This shows the fact that about 95% of the *verumpattakkudians* were subjected to evictions of their lords. A tenant could be evicted if the landlord desires to cultivate the land possessed by the tenant, even if he had paid the guarantee money. An exact example for this is the action of Kavalappara Moppil Nair. Soon after the bill was passed he summoned his estate supervisors and minors and held discussions. He stopped most of the years old renewals. If the bill became law, his plan was to evict all clients and hold cultivation dividing the whole land into blocks of 25acre each under supervision of paid servants¹⁵. This was done in the light of the provision in the bill permitting to evict for own cultivation of the *jenmy*. If their decision comes into force, how many families will be thrown into extreme poverty,

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Especially in the case of *jenmies* right of evictions for failure to pay one year rent in cash as security for personal calculations.

¹⁵ *Mathrubhumi*, dated 12 the December 1929.

devoid of houses and huts, is uncountable. The fates of the downtrodden classes in the society, like *Cherumans*, who are the actual cultivators, were not taken into account neither by the *jenmy* or the *kanakkudiyans*. Nobody tried to teach the Government about the pathetic condition of these classes. When the Hindu community branded them as outcastes, the *verumpattakkudians* and other communities viewed them as mere slaves. This later motivates such kinds of peasant to rally in the peasant movements led by leftist movement.

Here, through the passing of the Tenancy Act of 1930, *kanakkar* got land and along with *jenmies* they shared the fruits of Act. At the same time, even though the *verumpattakkudians* got some benefits like free from evictions, they didn't get land. More striking elements here is that most of the *verumpattakkudians* were *Mappilas*, who had grievances even after the passing the Tenancy Bill. They didn't achieve anything on account of the passing of the Act and this led them to join in the peasant movements led by leftists. Over all these, the *kanakkudians* who belonged to Hindu elitists caste like *Nairs* were there, who received more concession through the Tenancy Act. This simply means that, due to the tendency reforms the *kanakkudians* got land-that means land at the hands of savarna Hindus. This resulted in clashes between *janmies* and *kanakkudians* on the one side and *verumpattakkudians* on the other. These clashes later caused for communal polarization.

All these changes happened in the post Rebellion period reveals the fact that, in actual sense, the 1921 Rebellion did not achieve anything. It could not achieve religious freedom, it failed to solve the problems of poor tenants and even it could not solve the problems of common people. Instead, it gave way to lot of sufferings and tortures to the common people. In the broad sense, the Rebellion was a failure. In the post Rebellion period, the Muslims had to face two entities – firstly the problems that they faced as ordinary human beings. This consideration they had to get through relief and rehabilitation. But they didn't get it. The second one that they had achieve through Tenancy Act. But, it failed to give any conciliation to the poor *Mappilas*. It was not the case of *Mappilas* alone, but of all *verumpattakkudians*. As a result of the Act of 1930, the *kanakkar* got land that means the savarna Hindus got land. At the same time, it failed to give any concession to the *verumpattakkudians*.

There were no organisations or persons to provide support to the poor section. Despite the earnest efforts of Muhammad Abdurahiman and his secular group, no one attracted them. But they were also failed to provide any benefit to these poor sections. It was because of the fact that the savarna Congressmen didn't allow them to include in the national movement. Moreover, the Congress also didn't take any favourable position to the *verumpattakkudians*. Due to this, the poor *Mappila* tenants went into the hands of pro-British and anti-nationalist group. Later such sections played a

major role in the formation of Muslim League. It was not the radical left wing, but the right wing among the Muslims who took initiative to form Muslim League. The formation of Muslim League helped much for the development communal polarization.

Whereas, we find the drifting of savarna congressmen towards a Hindu unity, which is evident from the participation of Congress in the savarna Hindu conferences and the support rendered by *Mathrubhumi* towards this. At that time, *Mathrubhumi's* attitude represented the attitude of the powerful section of Congress that means the right-wing congress group was already thinking of communal politics. This communal politics came to manifest through the formation Muslim League. But in the case of Congress, it didn't appear publicly, because majority leaders of Congress, in 1930's became part of CSP.

The radical group like CSP stood for *pattom* reforms in 1930s. Through this way, they tried to improve the condition of poor peasants. At the same time, the right wing Congressmen thought of solving the problems of poor people through communitarianism. This led to communal polarization, eventhough Gandhian political ideas were very strong among nationalists. Gandhiji, was not against community formation, but against communalism. This is more evident in the case of activities of Kelappan, who was an ardent Gandhian and at the same time, supported the Hindu

cause. All these trends led to communal polarization, which was exposed through right wing Congress.

This demarcated the fact that Rebellion actually turned in to just opposite after the formation of the Muslim League. Rebellion was for the poor sections, but League stood for the cause of Upper sections of Muslim community. The Congress, in the later days, ignored the poor Hindus and stood for savarnas of the society. They later tried to form a communal polarization in the society through the formation of a Hindu religious ethos. Thus, what is evident in the post Rebellion period was the deviation of people into two groups-one under Muslim League and the other under the ideas of Hindu religious ethos. Along with these two the radical secularist trend was coming into being and took public turn with the formation of CSP in 1934.

But these drift that was taking place in the Malabar polity and society in the post Rebellion period was not manifested immediately. This is mainly because of the fact that League had little influence in the South India at that time and it was in its initial stage in Kerala. The sanatanis and the Muslim Majlis had not developed into dominant communal entities. The developments at All India level, in particular the right-left divide within the Congress that came into being after the CDM had its impact on the politics in Malabar and occupied much larger space in the public sphere than the communal polarization. Even the press and section of the Nationalists

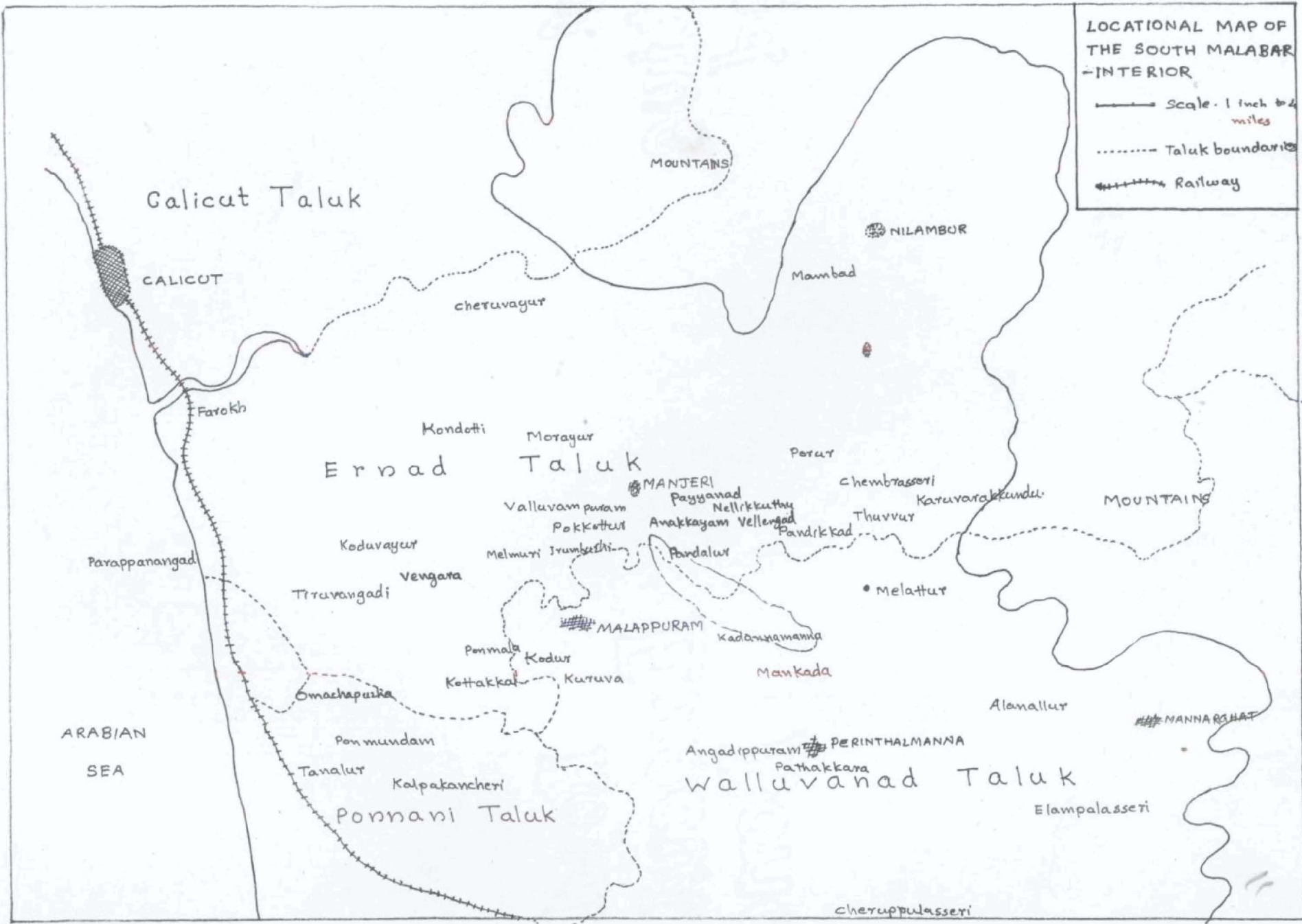
themselves tended to regard the growth of communalism as an aberration within the National Movement, and not as a distinct political entity. Obviously, the Nationalists and the people in general were not prepared for the upward swing of communal politics that became manifest after the emergence of the RSS as an independent entity and the spread of the activity of the Muslim League.

Locational map of Malabar showing taluk boundaries after 1860



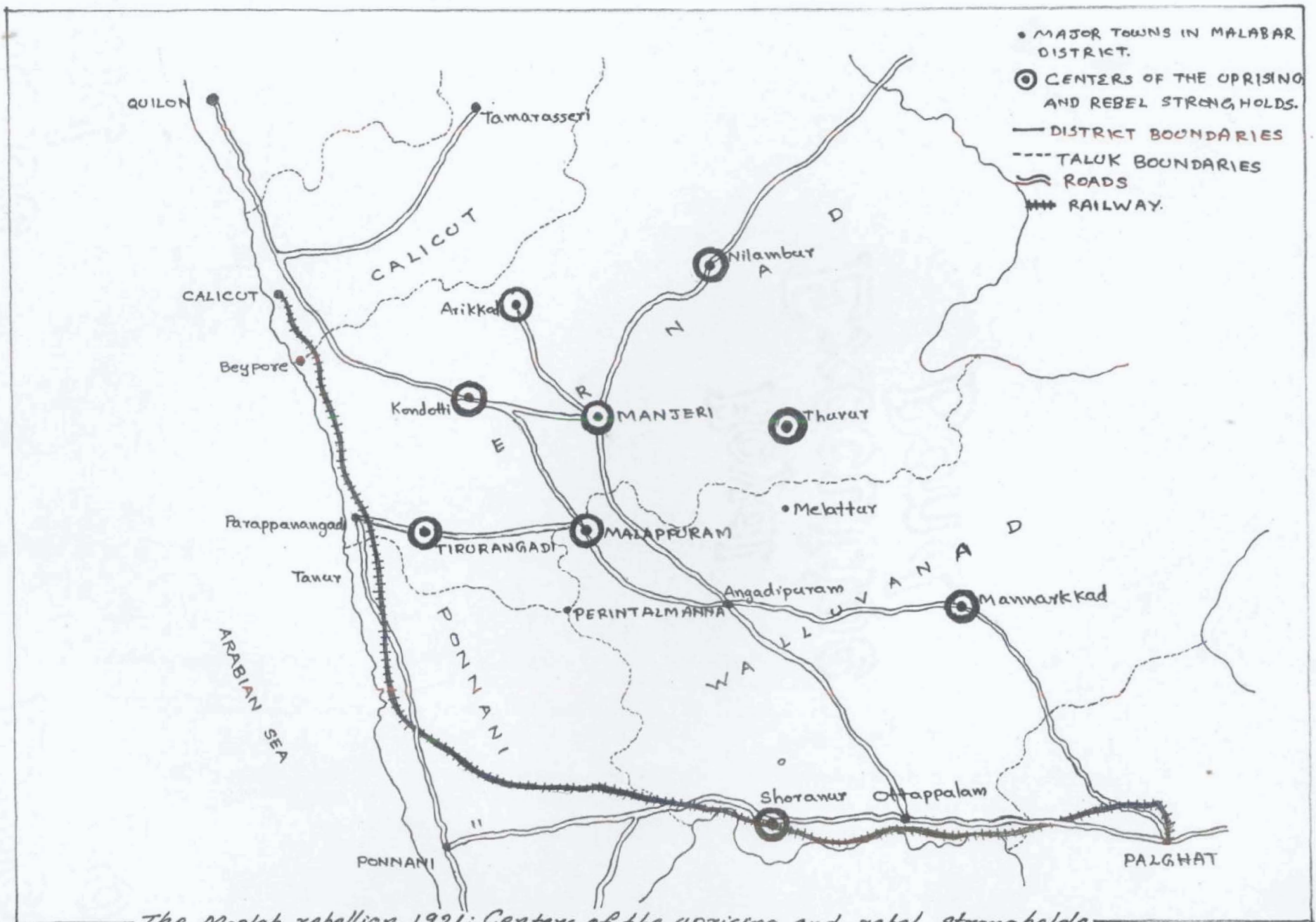
LOCATIONAL MAP OF THE SOUTH MALABAR INTERIOR

- Scale: 1 inch to 4 miles
- Taluk boundaries
- +++++ Railway



291 B

91. B



The Moplah rebellion, 1921: Centers of the uprising and rebel strongholds.

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GLOSSARY

- Amsom** : An administrative Unit or land revenue division in Malabar. It is comprised of one or more Desoms
- Desom** : A sub-division of an amsom. The village unit for which revenue statistics are maintained
- Cherumas** : A scheduled caste, generally agricultural laborers, who was formerly considered as an untouchable with distance pollution
- Jatha** : A procession on feet
- Banku** : Call for prayer from a mosque
- Charka** : An instrument for spinning, made almost a symbol of national spirit by Gandhiji
- Fatwa** : A legal decision of a Muslim jurist or religious scholar
- Illom** : Residence of a Namboodiri Brahmin
- Jenmi** : Land lord
- Jihad** : Fighting in self-defence. According to Islamic law the religiously obligatory effort to establish sway of Islam over the world or to defined Islamic territory
- Kovilakam** : The palace of an erstwhile ruler
- Janmam** : Full proprietary right in the soil subject to the payment of revenue to the Government
- Kanam** : A peculiarly Malabar Tenure which was recognized by the British authorities as part taking of the nature of mortgage and a lease
- Kudiyam** : Kanam tenant who cultivate the soil and gave rent to the Jenmi
- Kanam Kudiyans** : These who stood in between the jenmies and the actual cultivators who were mostly verumpattom kudyans or tenant-at-will. He has to pay a renewal fee finned by the jenmy
- Kuzhikkanam** : Mortgage of waste land with a view to its being planted

Melkanam	:	Given by the jenmy to a third party with power to redeem an outstanding kanam, created by document called Melcharth.
Mappila	:	A Muslim of Malabar
Menon	:	A sub-caste of Nairs
Nairs	:	An important Hindu caste group in Kerala
Panchamas	:	Lower castes or untouchables of Kerala
Nambiars	:	A sub-caste of Nairs
Namboodiris	:	The Malayali Brahmans
Parambu	:	Dry or garden land
Parayan	:	A scheduled caste, generally agricultural laborers, considered as an untouchable with distance pollution
Pattam	:	Rent
Polichezhuthu	:	The renewal of a lease
Verumpattom	:	Ordinary lease for a year 29.
Raja	:	Former rulers of Chieftaincies
Taluk	:	A revenue sub-division of a district
Thiyya	:	A caste group belonging to the 'backward' category known in many places of Kerala as Ezhavas
Maryadapattom	:	Fixation of fair rent

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