

**POLITICAL AGITATIONS AND THE TEACHERS
MOVEMENT-THE CASE OF MALABAR - 1920 -1956**

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
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DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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2009**

CERTIFICATE

I do hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Political agitations and the teachers movement -The case of Malabar - 1920-1956” is a record of bonafide research carried out by Sri. M.N.Padmanabhan under my supervision at the University of Calicut. This work has not been published or submitted either in part or in whole, for any degree at any university.

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Political agitations and the teachers movement -The case of Malabar - 1920-1956” is a record of bonafide research carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. K.Gopalan Kutty, Reader, Department of History, University of Calicut. This work has not been published or submitted either in part or in whole, for any degree at any university.

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PREFACE

The present study is an earnest attempt to analyse the struggles and agitations of the aided elementary teachers which was a major stream of the anti-imperialist movement in Malabar.

The condition of elementary school teachers was extremely miserable during the early decades of the 20th century. The social renaissance and national movement had awakened the teachers. They formed their own unions and demanded proper payment of salary and security of employment. They organised strong agitations against the management and the government. It grew as a part of the anti-imperialist movement in Malabar. They demanded abolition of the private management system. Many of them who were attracted to socialism got involved in the peasant and trade union movement and integrated them with the anti-imperialist movement. It paved the way for the formation of the communist party in Kerala. They took up the issues of the common people and integrated their movement with popular agitations during the war period. They repeated their demands and fought against the management and the government even after independence. It was the progressive role played by the teachers that prompted the first communist government to adopt certain remarkable steps to redress their grievances.

The pattern of documentation adopted in this thesis follows the style guide published by the Indian Council of Historical Research. It is hoped that there would be no difficulty in following the method adopted here.

It is with great pleasure that I record my gratitude to all those who have extended their help and assistance during the course of the preparation of this study. I wish to express my sincere indebtedness to my supervising teacher Dr.K.Gopalankutty, Dept. of History, University of Calicut. This study would not have been possible without his constant inspiration and timely help and encouragement. I am also indebted to all other teachers of the department for their sincere cooperation. I am also thankful to Dr. P.Mohandas, KMM Women's College, Kannur for his valuable advice and suggestions. I am also thankful to the University Grants Commission for awarding me a Teacher Fellowship for

pursuing this research programme. I also acknowledge with gratitude the service rendered by the Archivists of National Archives & Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi, Tamil Nadu State Archives, Chennai, State Archives, Trivandrum and Regional Archives Calicut. I would also like to express my gratitude to the staff of Mathrubhumi Calicut and A.K.G Centre Library, Trivandrum for helping me by supplying the back issues of the dailies, Mathrubhumi and Desabhimani. I would also like to extend a word of appreciation to the late Sri. P.K.Nambiar and K.P.Padmanabhan for giving me some of the pamphlets and records related to the teacher's movement. I would also like to express my gratitude to the family members of the late Sri T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and C.C Nair for giving me some of the old periodicals including some copies of the teacher's union journal. The source materials which I obtained in the field survey conducted as a part of this study are preserved for future reference. Let me extend my thanks to P.Chandramohan, NMML, New Delhi for this commendable work. Sri. P.Hareendranath, who accompanied me in the field survey and Dr. N.Sajan, who translated the poem listed in the appendix also deserve mention. My thanks are also due to all those who extended their help directly or indirectly to make this study a success.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	All India Congress Committee
ARP	Armed Reserve Police
BEM	Basel Evangelical Mission
CAPTA	Cochin Aided Primary Teachers Association
CPI	Communist Party of India
DA	Dearness Allowance
DBTU	District Board Teachers Union
DEC	District Education Council
DEO	District Education Officer
DMRT	Devadhar Malabar Reconstruction Trust
DPI	Director of Public Instruction
ESLC	Elementary School Leaving Certificate
HRA	House Rent Allowance
KPCC	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
MATU	Malabar Aided Elementary Teachers Union
MER	Madras Education Rules
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of Legislative Council
MSP	Malabar Special Police
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
PSC	Public Service Commission
RAC	Regional Archives, Calicut
SITU	South Indian Teachers Union
SNDP	Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam
SSLC	Secondary School Leaving Certificate
TNA	Tamil Nadu Archives
TPF	Teachers Provident Fund

INTRODUCTION

The present study, 'Political agitations and the Teachers Movement – The case of Malabar 1920-1956' is an attempt to analyse the struggles and agitations of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar against private managers and the government. It traces the role played by a particular professional group, the village teachers in the socio economic transformation of Malabar. This movement which grew as a part of the anti-imperialist movement forms an important chapter in the history of modern Kerala.

Our country has a brilliant tradition of national liberation struggle and trade union movement. The region of Kerala also has played a prominent role in these agitations. Outstanding studies have been made at the national level to analyse the various aspects of these movements. But no serious attempt has been made to prepare an objective account of the various streams of the anti-imperialist movement in Kerala. This may be due to the reluctance on the part of the historians to collect evidences from the grass root level or to the relative backwardness of modern historical scholarship in Kerala. The rich sources available in the village libraries in different parts of this region and the materials in the personal collections of the early activists remain unexplored even today. Hence by utilizing all these evidences a comprehensive study of the different streams of the national liberation struggle in Kerala becomes very necessary.

There had been attempts to study the role played by different religious groups, caste associations and classes in our national movement. How ever no serious attempt has been made to analyse the various aspects of the teachers movement in Malabar. The condition of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar was miserable. They were a section cruelly oppressed and exploited by the private managers as well as the government. The social renaissance and national movement had awakened the teachers. Thus the teachers movement in Malabar grew as a part of the national movement. Early unions were formed during the Civil

Disobedience Movement. But the ideological split in the national movement hastened the efforts of unionisation. They demanded regular payment of salary and security of employment. To get their grievances redressed they adopted various forms of agitations. The management and the government tried to suppress the movement. Soon their movement became a major stream of the anti-imperialist movement. Government forbade teachers politics. But the political pressure compelled the government to change its attitude towards the teachers. The teachers gained the support of all sections of the society and different political parties. They demanded the abolition of the private management system. The teachers also participated in the peasant and workers movements. They opened libraries and reading rooms and acted as the disseminators of ideas in Malabar. They played the most crucial role to integrate all these movements with the anti-imperialist movement in Malabar. They played an important role in the spread of socialist ideas among the people. Thus they prepared the ground favourable for the formation of the communist party in Kerala.

The teachers stood for the issues of the common people during the war period and thus their movement was integrated with popular agitation. The teachers continued their agitation against the managers and the government even after independence. They obtained certain benefits and improved their service conditions. The progressive role played by the teachers in Malabar prompted the first communist government to abolish all the disparity between the government and private school teachers.

Objectives of the study

1. The major objective of the study is to highlight the significance of teachers movement in Malabar. It was one of the most active and organised teachers movement in south India.
2. To trace the rise and growth of primary education and the condition of elementary teachers in Malabar during the early decades of the 20th century

3. To show the process of unionisation among teachers and their methods of propaganda
4. To reveal the methods of agitation adopted by the teachers in their fight against the management and the government.
5. To point out the link between the teachers movement and the national movement in Malabar
6. To give some insight to the contemporary social movements and agitation

Significance of the study:

No serious attempts have been made to study about the elementary teachers of Malabar, their struggles against the managements and government, their involvement in the national movement and above all their role in the socio-political transformation of Malabar. Hence an objective analysis of some aspects of this movement is a desideratum.

The elementary teachers of Malabar actively played the role of leaders, organisers and disseminators of ideas in society. Thus they could emerge as a class of rural intelligentsia in Malabar. Many teachers were attracted to the ideology of nationalism. So their movement grew as a part of the national movement. Though the teachers movement was very active in Malabar, it was not so in Travancore and Cochin. When SITU and Board teachers of Malabar remained relatively passive, the elementary teachers of Malabar came to the forefront of agitations. When all other mass organisation in Malabar faced serious opposition, the elementary teachers obtained the support of different political parties and all sections of society. Many teachers got attracted to left politics and took part in the peasant and trade union movement. They could integrate all these movements with the anti imperialist movement. The facts that prompted them to involve in the national movement and to fight against landlordism and British imperialism are also significant. They opened libraries and reading rooms. They propagated the ideology of socialism and paved the way for the formation of communist party. They were totally committed to

society and took up the issues of the common people along with their own demands. An attempt is made to analyse all these aspects in this study.

Sources of study :

Even though no serious attempt has been made on this topic few references can be cited. *Adhyapaka Prasthanam Utharakeralathil*, (Trivandrum 1978), written by Vallathol Kumara Menon gives a brief account of the teachers movement in Malabar. *Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam* (Trivandrum 1982) edited by P.R. Nambiar is another study on this topic. These works do contain a lot of data related to the teachers movement. But their writings are only their personal experience and not based on official records and documents. The recent book *Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Oru Charithram*, (Trivandrum 2006) by C.Bhaskaran and G.D. Nair is a work chiefly based on the books mentioned earlier. We can also cite various articles by different participants which have got its own limitations. Dr. K.K.N.Kurup's articles and the PhD thesis of Dr. Gopalan Kutty do contain sections of the teachers movement and their involvement in the struggle of other sections of the society. But they do not focus their attention on the problems under discussion.

A large number of records and documents related to the teachers movement in Malabar are made use of, for this study. Several records available in the Tamil Nadu State Archives, Chennai were consulted during the early stage of this study. But of recently most of them have been transferred to the State Archives, Trivandrum. The reference of the teachers agitation in Malabar in the Fortnightly reports were also used for this study. Certain records available in the National Archives and NMML New Delhi, State Archives Trivandrum and Regional Archives Calicut, have also been consulted.

Besides the one mentioned above, the rich data available in the contemporary news papers like *Mathrubhumi* and *Desabhimani* have also been used for the study. In addition, the autobiographical writings and

journals and periodicals like *Adhyapakan*, *Prabhatham*, *Gurukulam*, *Mathrubhumi Weekly* were also made use of for this study. The extensive field survey conducted as a part of this study helped to collect several rare books, pamphlets and valuable copies of early periodicals including *Adhyapakan*, the journal of the teachers union. The present investigator could hand over all these materials to the NMML New Delhi. Above all oral evidences from the leaders of teachers movement like T.C.Narayanan Nambiar, CC. Nair and K.P. Padmanabhan are also used to analyse various aspects of the movement. This study is actually an earnest effort to reconstruct the history of the teachers movement in Malabar.

Approach and Methodology

The present study is both descriptive and analytical. In this work an attempt is made to give a narrative account of the process of the growth and development of the teachers movement in Malabar. At the same time the work tries to analyse how the movement became a part of the anti-imperialist movement in Malabar.

The opening chapter contains a brief account of the tradition of education that existed in Kerala particularly in Malabar. The introduction of grand-in-aid system, the proliferation of aided schools, structure of the existing system of education, schools under different agencies, the salary and qualifications of the teachers and above all the policy of exploitation adopted by the managers and the miserable plight of the teachers are also described in this chapter.

The second chapter deals with the efforts on the part of the teachers their organisational matters, their conferences, the formation of the M.A.T.U, and their demands like monthly salary, security of employment, salary parity with local board teachers and representation in the D.E.C. The teachers opposition to the exploitation of the managers and the corruption of the department, their demand for the abolition of the private management system, teachers response to contemporary political developments, their move towards the left stream are also detailed here.

The third chapter examines the disputes between the teachers and

the managers and the resistance organised by the teachers and common people in different parts of Malabar. The Ottapalam conference, the rise of teachers movement as a major stream of the anti-imperialist movement, the boycott of Gurujana Samajam meetings, the policy of oppression adopted by the government and the intervention of the KPCC and the Malabar committee are also discussed here.

The fourth chapter is an attempt to trace the teachers movement during the war period. The teachers agitation for War Allowance, their attempt to affiliate the union with the Guild, their efforts to face food crisis, famine and epidemics, their attempt to integrate their movement with popular agitations, the strike propaganda of the teachers and the final withdrawal of their decision in the wake of Indian independence are analysed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter deals with the teachers movement in Malabar during the post independence period till the formation of the Kerala state in 1956. The political polarisation of the period and its impact on the teachers, the move against the communist teachers, the teachers demand for the abolition of the private management system and introduction of free and compulsory education, their opposition to the Rajaji scheme, Parulakar report and the report of the Chettiar commission, the union attempt to formulate a policy of education, the measures adopted by the government to ameliorate the grievances of the teachers, the agitations for the D.A after state formation and the implementation of a common salary scale to the teachers by the first communist government are discussed in this chapter.

The summary of the study, conclusion and some observations forms the last chapter. It reveals the feature of the teachers movement in Malabar. The teachers of Malabar played the role of leaders and organisers of the people and thus emerged as a category of rural intelligentsia. The teachers movement in Malabar grew apart of the national movement. The teachers movement was more active in Malabar than in Travancore and Cochin. Here the movement grew as part of the national movement. The teachers obtained the support of different political

party and all sections of society. They were not confined to the limited struggles of the SITU and the board school teachers. They got attracted to left politics, took part in the peasant and the trade union movement and integrated these streams with the anti-imperialist movement in Malabar. They opened libraries and reading rooms, propagated the ideology of socialism and paved the formation of the communist party. They always took up the issues of the common people and integrated their movement with popular agitations. It was their progressive role in society that prompted the communist government to adopt certain remarkable steps to improve the condition of the teachers.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The present state of Kerala was formed in 1956. Till then, it constituted of three separate political entities; Travancore and Cochin were princely states and Malabar was one of the districts of the Madras presidency. The reorganization of the states on linguistic lines led to the integration of these units to form the present state of Kerala.

The advent of the British marked the rise of new approaches and actions in the field of Indian education. But the pre British Kerala has had a long and rich tradition of education. Educational facilities had been quite widespread in every region of this area¹.

During the middle ages, production and dissemination of literate knowledge in Kerala was in the Brahmanic Sanskrit tradition. After initial reading and writing in Malayalam attention was shifted to Sanskrit. Thus began the study of text like *Sidharoopam*, *Sriramodantham*, *Srikrishnavilasam* and then the works of Kalidasa. *Brahmanas*, *Naduvazhi* families and *savarna* temple caste were given this kind of education². The Brahmins had their *Veda Patasalas* and *Sabhamatts* and the rich *Nairs* and temple caste had their own family tutors. The *Nairs* also obtained martial training in their *kalaris* under *Kurups* and *Gurukkals*. Above all there were *Ezhuthupallies* under *Ezhuthachan*. These *Kurups*, *Gurukkals* and *Ezhuthachans* were the main categories of teachers in medieval Kerala³.

The education of the lower castes was confined to reading, writing, arithmetic and rudimentary knowledge of agricultural and meteorological sciences essential for their occupation which was mainly agriculture. They got their education in *Ezhuthupallis* or *Kudipallikutams* under *Nattezhuthachan* or *Asan* who taught them reading writing and arithmetic. *Ezhuthupallies* were meant for all male members of the upper caste household. *Ezhuthupallies* were one teacher schools. Children of various grades were made to sit together and the teacher

¹ P.R. Gopinathan Nair, Universalisation of Primary Education in Kerala , CDS Working paper No. 181 (Trivandrum, 1981) P. 4

² Ananda .E. Wood , Knowledge before printing and after (Delhi 1985) pp. 9,10

³ K.N.Ganesh, Keralathinte Innalekal (Trivandrum,1990) p. 278

worked with each child separately according to the level of their development⁴. The favorite student of the teachers called *Chattambi* had to monitor discipline and to teach the under achievers⁵. The *Kudippallikutams* where children from lower caste and Christians taught were modelled on *Ezhuthupallies* except that the emphasis was made on Malayalam and Tamil. The teachers included *Ezhavas*, *Kaduppottan* and *Panikker* all non *savarnas*⁶. The *Kammalar* caste and the *Ezhavas* learned to read and write from *Kudippallikutams*. These institutions have their origin traced to the very early Buddhist and Jain influences in Kerala.

The education monopolised by the Brahmins gradually filtered down to the lower strata among the *Savarnas*. The powerful *Janmies* who did not like to send their children out, invited teachers to their home and made their '*padippura*' and '*kalappura*' as educational centres⁷. Thus emerged the centres of popular education called *Ezhuthupallies*. Teachers known as *Ezhuthachans* and *Asans* imparted reading, writing and arithmetic and a smattering of astrology to enable simple calculations required for domestic rituals and for determining the timing for agricultural operations⁸. Schools were conducted in open sheds, verandas of buildings or in the house of teachers themselves. Some times schools were held in gardens, sacred enclosures, under the shade of trees and public places. Thus emerged the tradition of mass education⁹. Such Schools did not receive much support from the royalty or the government of the times but were maintained mainly by resources from within the village itself. Teachers received petty emoluments mostly in kind, besides special gifts on auspicious days and at harvest time from parents of his students¹⁰. In Malabar the school masters received a monthly income ranging from one quarter to four rupees from each scholar according to their means. He also got a small remuneration when a scholar left the school¹¹. While *Brahmins* alone got educated in *Vedapadasalas* and *Sabhamatts*, the *Kshathriyas* and *Sudras* got their education in these

⁴ Mannath Padmanabhan, Jeevithasmaranaka (Changanessery,1960) PP. 5,6

⁵ N. Gopinathan Nair, Chattambi Swamikal (Trisuur,1983) p. 9

⁶ Kathleen Gough, 'Literacy in Kerala' in Jack Goody (ed) Literacy in traditional societies (Cambridge,1968) p. 149

⁷ P.R. Nambiar (ed) Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam(Trivandrum, 1982) p.11

⁸ P.K . Michael Tharakan, Socio-Economic factors in Educational Development : The case of 19th Century Travancore CDS Working paper No. 190 (Trivandrum, 1984) p. 9

⁹ N.M. Kuzhiveli, Pracheena Kerala Vidhyabyasam (Trivandrum, 1955) p. 46

¹⁰ P.K . Michael Tharakan, op.cit, p.9

¹¹ P.Radhakrishanan,Caste Discrimination in Indigenous Indian Education : Nature and extent of Education p. 53

Ezhuthupallies which were owned by the powerful among them. These educational efforts really laid the foundation of modern school system.

Education normally started at varying ages from five to seven, usually with *Vidyarambam* or *Vijayadesami* day. The parent took the child to the nearby *Ezhuthupalli* where the teacher (*Asan* or *Ezhuthachan*) received the customary offerings (*Dakshina*) The teacher made the child sit before him and handed to him an *ola* (palm leaf) containing the alphabet. Writing 51 letters of the alphabet on the tongue of the child and after that making the child write the alphabet on rice were in vogue¹². This was followed by *manalezhuthu* where the teacher made the child write the first letter of the alphabet on sand. The writing was done with the ring finger of the right hand¹³. Barthelomeo describes the education in the Eighteenth century Malabar. The children assembled half naked under the coconut tree, placed themselves in rows on the ground and traced out on the sand with the forefinger of the right hand, the elements of their alphabet and then smoothed it with the left, when they wished to trace out other characters. The writing master called *agein* or *Eluttacien* who stationed himself opposite to his people, examined what they have done, pointed out their fault and showed them how to correct them. Initially he attended them standing but when the young pupils acquire some readiness in writing he placed himself cross legged on a tiger's or deer skin or even on a mat made of the leaves of the coconut trees or wild banana which is called *Kaitha* plaited together¹⁴. When they are perfect in dust writing children were made to read simple *stotras* written on *olas*. Then a series of readings would begin. It started with *vakyam* and proceeded to simple Sanskrit text.. Malayalam was taught using '*pathinalu vritham*' and '*irupathinalu vritham*'¹⁵. Emphasis was on reading Sanskrit rather than on writing. After the initial introduction of letters Malayalam was not taught to Brahmin children¹⁶. Similarly arithmetic was not emphasized for *Brahmin* children¹⁷. Dust writing was followed by writing on cadjan as the next stage of instruction. Bartalomeo wrote "When people have made tolerable progress in writing they were admitted to

¹² K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *Kochin Rajya Charithram* (Trissur, 1989) PP 659-60

¹³ K.V. Moosad, *Athma Kadha*, (Kottayam, 1966), p 5

¹⁴ Quoted in Dharmapal, *The Beautiful Tree : Indigenous Indian Education in the 18th century* (NewDelhi,1983)p.252-53

¹⁵ Mannath Padmanabhan, op.cit, p. 5,7

¹⁶ K.V. Moosad, op.cit, p. 18

¹⁷ E.M.S Namboothiripad, *Athmakadha* (Trivandrum, 2002) p. 14

certain school called *Eutupalli* where they began to write on palm leaves (*pana*); which when stitched together and fastened form a *grandha* i.e an Indian book¹⁸. In the absence of printed books or manuscripts teachers resorted to the method of oral dictation. The method of learning resorted was memorizing without understanding. Elementary education also included other forms of knowledge such as elementary calendrical knowledge, astronomy, horoscopy, mensuration and elementary geometrical knowledge¹⁹. It appears that elite *Namboothiries* and members of royal families were not introduced to all these subjects. *Ezhuthupallies* were single teacher schools. Children of various grades were made to sit together and the teacher gave work to each child separately according to the level of their development. The schools were crowded, noisy and ill regulated. Each pupil recites at the top of his voice and the encouragement to voice is evident from the way the parent often compute the energy of the master to the volume of sound coming from the school. This is no exaggeration. One Inspector of education wrote "I have myself heard villagers complain that our government schools lack the swing and energy of the indigenous school²⁰.

Kudippallikutams were really modelled on *Ezhuthupallies*. Children of low caste were taught in these institutions. Here emphasis was more on reading Malayalam and Tamil. The teachers included *Ezhavas*, *Kaduppottans* and *Kalari Panikker*, all non *savarnas*. Along with the alphabet they taught certain *sthothras* and elements of *Jyothisha* and *Ayurveda*. Children of backward class could learn Sanskrit mostly through individual efforts from the broad minded *savarna* teachers²¹.

The nature of the *Ezhuthupallies* very much changed during the sixteenth century. These institutions which gave instruction only to the children of the powerful *naduvazhies* and *janmies* began to admit children of the common people also. *Nairs* who belongs to the lower strata of the *savarna* group got admitted in these institutions. During the age of Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan more and more children of the middle and lower classes went to these institutions²². He opened many such institutions and played a remarkable role in the spread of

¹⁸ Dharmapal, op.cit, p. 256

¹⁹ K.V. Moosad, op.cit, p. 4

²⁰ P.Radhakrishanan, op.cit, p. 110

²¹ M.Sathyaprakash, *Sarasakavi Moolur* (Trivandrum, 1986) p. 36

²² P.K . Michael Tharakan, op.cit, p.10

education. More over the dominance of the Sanskrit language began to decline and Malayalam language came to the forefront. The emergence of a network of these institutions marked the beginning of widespread education in Kerala. While reading, writing, arithmetic and the recitation of Ramayana and Mahabharata was viewed as general education, *Kavya*, *Vyakarana*, *Amaram*, *Jyothisha* and *Vydyya* were considered as higher education in pre colonial Kerala.

After completing elementary education children could go for specialized higher education. It was done on the basis of the parental occupation and was usually in the form of apprenticeship. For intensive training prolonged stay with the guru was prescribed. *Kavya*, *Vyakarana*, *Alankara*, *Tharkka*, *Jyothisha*, *Vydyya* and Martial arts were the important branches of higher education. Higher education was almost entirely vocational. Even Vedic studies in *othupallies* and *sabamatts* were oriented towards making a lively hood as a *vydika*²³. The *gurukulam* run by Kodungallur royal family was a centre of higher education in Kerala.

The widespread increase in the number of *Ezhuthupallies* led to an increase in the number of teachers. Those who got instruction in gurukulam opened by Thunchathu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan later became famous teachers of this region. His institution may be considered as the first teacher training centre of Kerala²⁴. As in his case there were renowned *Ezhuthachan* scholars in different parts of Kerala who had a large number of disciples. They may be considered as the earliest teachers of Kerala.

Vascoda Gama reached Kappad near Calicut in 1498. He was followed by Catholic missionaries who worked mainly among the lower caste with the aim of proselytisation. In order to communicate with the people they found it necessary to know Malayalam as well as Sanskrit. So they produced grammar and dictionaries for both these languages²⁵. They opened seminaries to train priest and also schools which emphasized religious knowledge and prayer.

Protestant missionaries from Europe came and settled in various parts of Kerala in the early decades of the 19th century²⁶. The missionaries of the London

²³ EMS Namboothiripad, op.cit,pp.17-19

²⁴ P.R. Nambiar , op.cit, p. 46

²⁵ J.F. Pallath, *Missionarimarute Sahithya Sevanam* (Kalamassery,1986), p. 76

²⁶ P.R.Gopinadhan Nair, *Education and Economic Change in Kerala* CDS Working paper

mission society worked among the *shonar* and other lower caste in South Travancore. The church mission society concentrated among the Syrian Christians in central and north Travancore and the Basel Evangelical Mission made Malabar their centre of activity. The Christian missionaries were the pioneers of English education in Malabar. But it was more tardy in Malabar than in Travancore or Cochin. It was also confined to the activities of the Basel Evangelical Mission²⁷. It played an important role in starting primary schools in several places in Malabar. The protestant missionaries reached Malabar and made Mangalore their headquarters. They opened the first English school at Kallai (Calicut) in 1848 which later developed in to Malabar Christian College²⁸. In 1858 Herman Gundert established the first English school in North Malabar. Brennan, Master attendant at Tellicherry port founded a school at Tellicherry in 1862²⁹. Generally the missionary activities in Malabar were comparatively limited.

Though the missionaries gave particular attention to the religious subject they never ignored secular subjects altogether. They always emphasized the importance of 'useful' knowledge in education³⁰. Besides, even when they emphasized English education, they did not ignore the teaching of Malayalam and even Sanskrit³¹. This choice must have been the result of their desire to reach as many people as possible with their gospel message. The missionaries also sought the aid of the as yet unused methodology translation and technology of printing which could break the caste and gender barriers in the dissemination of knowledge. The problem of the availability of text book was solved first by the south Indian Christian School Book Society and later by the Travancore Text book committee³². Thus instruction in English, Christianity and useful western knowledge took precedence over indigenous language and culture. Thus the missionaries sowed the seeds of the western system of education and aimed at the introduction of modern colonial culture in Kerala. Since the main purpose of Missionaries activities was proselytisation, their educational effort failed to attract members from the well to do and higher caste sections of the Hindu population.

(Trivandrum, 1978) p. 38

²⁷ P.R.Gopinadhan Nair, *Universalisation....* op.cit p. 4

²⁸ A. Mathew , *A History of Educational Development in Kerala* (New Delhi, 1987), p.74

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ P.K . Michael Tharakan, op.cit, p.25

³¹ P.R.Gopinathan Nair, op.cit, p.11

³² P.K . Michael Tharakan, op.cit, p.27

However the situation began to change gradually when the government gave preferences to those who were educated in English for appointment in government service³³.

Malabar had strong traditional education. Indigenous education was well entrenched in this area. Thus during the early 19th century Malabar had a more widespread network of indigenous schools with larger number of pupils³⁴. Malabar was relatively better off than Cochin and Travancore in the matter of indigenous education at the beginning of 19th century. However by the end of the century Malabar remained where it was. At the same time there was faster growth and more widespread diffusion of education in the princely states. Mass education got neglected in Malabar during the 19th century³⁵.

The educational backwardness of this area was due to a variety of reasons. The British followed a policy of indifference towards the existing tradition of education in Malabar. The district remained a neglect outpost of Madras on which the British government spent little beyond the requirement of law and order³⁶. Thus missionaries became pioneers of English education in Malabar. But their activities were limited and therefore the growth of western education was tardier in Malabar than in other two regions³⁷. Besides even the development of English education was strictly based on infiltration theory which gave more emphasis to higher levels of school and collegiate education than primary education³⁸. More over it catered to the interest of the elitist and urban sections of society. The policy in favour of English education led to the decline of the indigenous education of Malabar and the mass education was completely neglected.

The existence of a tyrannous system of land ownership and tenancy system made the situation worse. The agrarian policy followed by the British reduced the *Moplah* peasantry into perennial harassment at the hands of their land lords resulting in their periodic uprisings³⁹. The ferocity with which these were suppressed and the government attempt to modernize them through education generated an inward looking mentality and indifference to modern education

³³ P.R.Gopinathan Nair, op.cit, p. 11

³⁴ A. Mathew, op.cit, p.62

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.82

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.70

³⁷ P.R.Gopinathan Nair, Universalisation of Primary Education, p. 23

³⁸ *Ibid*, p.23

³⁹ William Logan, Malabar (Madras,1931 Reprint) p.109

among the Muslims⁴⁰. They refused to attend school opened for Hindu's. The oppressive land tenure also created conditions of mass poverty and socio economic stagnation in Malabar. While the land lords among the caste Hindus took care of their educational needs in the English schools established by the missionaries, the vast majority of the population were too poor to afford English education⁴¹. Moreover the Hindus of the higher caste like the *namboothiries* had only contempt towards English which they considered as '*Mlecha Basha*'⁴². Above all, the British government who was unwilling to shoulder the burden of mass education encouraged private agencies to meet the educational requirements of Malabar⁴³.

The British education policy during the 19th century had two results. The destruction of the indigenous system and the encouragement of missionary enterprise resulted in the decline of primary education and the promotion of higher level English education. With the growth of the national movement the demand for national education also came up. The effort to introduce free and compulsory primary education in the native state of Baroda stimulated the demand for free and compulsory primary education through out India. Most of the national leaders made a strong plea for the same⁴⁴. It was after the passing of the government of India act of 1919 that primary education began to receive more serious attention⁴⁵.

In Malabar also the situation was the same. Mass education was relatively neglected in this area till 1920. It was after the Malabar rebellion that the attention of the government was turned towards Malayalam education⁴⁶. Also it was at that time that partial control of central education department was transferred to India under the provision of government of India act of 1919. Now primary education began to receive greater attention than earlier. In Malabar serious efforts were made for the development of elementary education supported by the grant from the Madras government⁴⁷. C.A Innes wrote "increased grant given by the

⁴⁰ A. Mathew, op.cit, p.71

⁴¹ A. Mathew, op.cit, p.83

⁴² P.R.Gopinathan Nair, op.cit p. 84

⁴³ A. Mathew, op.cit, p.71

⁴⁴ P.R.Gopinathan Nair, Education and Economic Change, p.34. Gopala Krishna Gokhale presented a resolution in the imperial legislative council which was rejected. In 1910 he presented the elementary education bill which contained the same idea. But it was also defeated. However it made a great impact among the people.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.35

⁴⁶ P.R.Gopinathan Nair, Universalisation of Primary Education, p. 75

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.75

government since 1919 for elementary education was responsible for the great increase in the number of schools and scholars. Elementary schools were more than double..... the prominence of private agencies was a marked feature in Malabar⁴⁸. Mean while district and Taluk boards were formed and primary schools were started in most of the villages and towns in Malabar⁴⁹. Private enterprise was responsible for 65% of the schools and 33% of them were under local boards⁵⁰. However many among them were *Mopla* schools. Realising that education was the best safeguard against the occurrence of *Mopla* outbreaks, the British adopted several measures to improve the education of the *Moplas*. But they continued to be indifferent to modern education. By 1911 there were 280 public schools for Muslims with 16000 students. *Moplas* refused to attend schools opened for Hindus⁵¹. The number of elementary school for them in 1931 was 1410 and their total strength 102639. There were 87 Muslim Girls school with 4000 students. Night schools were also there for adult *Moplas*.

The depressed communities also did not take to education easily owing to economic and social hindrances. The Muslims and *Cherumans* who form 37% of population in Malabar had only 5 and 1% literacy respectively in 1931⁵². Thus the major beneficiaries of education came from the occupancy tenants, merchants, government servants and land lords⁵³. They managed to peruse higher studies to obtain positions of power and prestige and continued to command social economic and political privileges that remained beyond the reach of tenants at will and the agricultural labourers who were illiterate and poor.

The *Nattezhuthachans* and *Gurukkals* had opened *Ezhuthupallies* and *Kudippallikutams* in their houses and its surroundings. It had really laid the foundation of a system of popular education in Malabar⁵⁴. The *Naduvazhies* and Land loards had also started centres of education. They gave 720 ser paddy and 36 *panams* and appointed teachers in their schools. These teachers never considered themselves as a particular professional group, but did their work as an

⁴⁸ C.A. Innes, Madras District Gazatteers, Madras Malabar (Madras,1951) p.298

⁴⁹ P.R.Gopinathan Nair, op.cit, p. 75

⁵⁰ A. Mathew, op.cit, p.81

⁵¹ Ibid, p.82

⁵² P.R.Gopinathan Nair, op.cit, p. 23

⁵³ Ibid, pp.75,76

⁵⁴ Interview with K.P. Padmanabhan at his residence at Quilandi on 30th March 1993

additional task emphasizing 'diffusion of knowledge a public service'. Majority of them were the accountants (*Kanakkappillamar*) of the *Janmies*

When Malabar was a part of Bombay presidency, educational officers from Bombay had visited schools. These officers who knew only English heard the students reciting *amaram* and *sreekrishna vilasam* and selected the students. He gave an amount to the manager on the basis of $\frac{3}{4}$ rupees for each student each at the spot itself. After meeting other expenses the manager distributed the balance amount to the teachers⁵⁵. At first no qualification was prescribed for the teachers. But it is seen that in 1905 an examination was conducted for them in Kannur and those who passed were given the post of village assistant and teachers.

The Macaulay's plan which emphasized English education based on downward filtration theory refused to introduce mass education in Indian society. The government considered the maintenance of law and order as their basic duty⁵⁶. Therefore the East India company refused to take the full responsibility of education. At that time there were large numbers of educational institutions in England under private management. It was also the period of missionary educational activities in India. Under these circumstances the Wood's Dispatch emphasized the inability of the company alone to take up the whole responsibility of educating every one in India. On the other hand private individuals and agencies were asked to shoulder the responsibility. At the same time government promised to give financial assistance to them. Thus the grant-in-aid system was introduced. The government began to decide the subject and methods of studies in schools. As no educational qualification was fixed for teachers many *Ezhuthachans* and *Gurukkals* became teachers. Schools were asked to maintain attendance register of the students. Once in a year the supervisor visited the school and fixed the percentage of expenditure and it was given to the manager as a lump sum grant. But the government retained the right to stop or reduce the grant and the managers were not bound to maintain any records of expenditure. This was the very essence of the grant in aid system⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ M.T. Kunhiraman Nambiar, *Adhyapakavethanam*, (Kannur,1999) p.5

⁵⁶ Joseph Mundasseey, *Vidhyabyasaparakshobhanavum Athinte Pinnile Sakthikalum*(Trivandrum, 1959),p.3

⁵⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, *Adhyapaka Prasthanam Utharakeralathil*, (Trivandrum, 1978) p. 38

Even after taking political power in their own hands, the British Government continued the same policy and brought all schools in Malabar one by one under the grant-in-aid system⁵⁸. The land lords in Malabar who had to face an economic crisis turned their attention to this field as means of augmenting their income. They also found it as means to maintain and enhance their family prestige⁵⁹. When it was not essential for the teachers to have any particular educational qualification many who knew reading, writing and arithmetic became teachers. But later those who educated in these schools could become teachers there.

The Madras showed no interest in the economic development of the district of Malabar. Agriculture was neglected. Industry made no progress. The peasants were exploited under land lordism. Above all Malabar society was in the grip of caste system and untouchability. It was in this socio economic scenario that new schools were opened in Malabar⁶⁰. Thus the grant-in-aid system stimulated and widened the activities of private agencies in the field of education in Malabar. Naturally the land lords, merchants, middle class farmers, retired government servants and educated young men began to open schools⁶¹. The departmental officers who enjoyed the right to recognize new school prompted middle class farmers and merchants to open more and more schools under their management⁶². The government also found this profitable because when they had to spend Rupees 18 for a student in government school, Rupees 4 was enough in aided elementary schools. Hence the government encouraged the aided elementary school which gave an opportunity for the government to save a large amount⁶³. Thus by the beginning of 20th century majority of the school of Malabar came under the grant-in-aid scheme.

With the growth of the national movement the demand for national education also came up. The efforts to introduce the free and compulsory education in the native state of Baroda added fuel to it. It stimulated the demand for free and compulsory education throughout the country. Most of the national leaders highlighted this demand. Gokhale presented a resolution in the Imperial

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.4

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.5

⁶⁰ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.82

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.82

⁶² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.6

⁶³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.82

Legislative Council. But was rejected.⁶⁴ In 1910 he presented the Elementary education bill highlighting the same demand. It was also defeated. After the First World War, Montague Chelmsford reforms were introduced. It had great impact on education. Through these reforms the British government tried to retain their political power and gave slight provincial autonomy to the Indian states. But all the important portfolios were retained by the British government and the subject which required great economic base were placed under the state government. As a result of these measures the British government could keep itself away from the responsibility of education. At the same time even after getting provincial autonomy the Indians failed to give full control over education. It is to be noted that till 1947 no Indian was appointed as the director of education⁶⁵.

It was after the passing of the government of India act of 1919 that primary education began to receive serious attention. Measures were adopted to regularize all activities in the field of education. The Madras elementary education act was passed in 1920⁶⁶. The government got the right to recognize the school run by private individual and agencies. A grant-in-aid code which contains all aspects of education such as school administration, curriculum, qualification of teachers and departmental inspection was introduced⁶⁷. The schools which functions according to the government rules and directions obtain the right to receive the government grant. The management was expected to supplement this grant by contributing their own fund to pay adequate salary to the teachers⁶⁸. The inspecting officers were given the right to increase or reduce the annual grant to the schools. Moreover the government had the right to stop it for one year or completely to those schools which failed to retain its standard. But no provision was there for ensuring proper payment of salary to the teachers and for their security of tenure. There fore the government and department refused to interfere in the issues relating to the pay appointment and punishment of teachers in aided elementary schools⁶⁹.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp.33,34

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.39

⁶⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.5

⁶⁷ Joseph Mundassey, op.cit, p.4

⁶⁸ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.933,15th April 1936, Tamil Nadu State Achieves, Hereafter TNA

⁶⁹ *Ibid*,

On the basis of Madras Elementary Education Act of 1920, each district of the Madras state began to have an educational council in which the peoples representatives had a majority. Altogether the council had twenty eight members⁷⁰. It had the right to recognize the primary schools, repeal the recognition of unsatisfactory schools and to take ultimate decision over the school grant. Thus to a certain extent it helped to restrict the autocratic measures of the department⁷¹. It also ensured the maintenance of the register of all elementary schools and the preparation of a scheme for the extension of elementary education. But later it was pointed out that these councils failed to discharge the duties assigned to it⁷². Several irregularities in the matter of granting recognition and disbursing aid were noticed. Thus the government decided to abolish the council and their duties were assigned to the education department itself⁷³. The following table indicates the structure of the district education council.

	ELECTED MEMBERS		Ex officio Members
1	Representatives of the District Board	9	District Board President District Collector District Educational Officer
2	Representatives of the Municipal Council	5	
3	Representatives of the Roman Catholics	1	
4	Representatives of the Teacher Managers	2	Nominated members
5	Representatives of the Malabar Mission	1	Muslim representatives Women representative Representative of the depressed class
6	Ex officio members	3	
7	Government nominees	7	Representatives of the Fisheries Dept Representatives of the Cyrian Church

Source: V.R. Nayanar (ed) Malabar Vidyabhyasa Guide (Calicut 1939)

Earlier it was the rich individuals and land lords who opened schools and the grant-in-aid system was introduced to help them. The first world war and the economic crises forced many of them to leave the scene. The unemployment among the educated youth was more in Malabar⁷⁴. It was difficult for many to

⁷⁰ V.R. Nayanar (ed) Malabar Vidyabhyasa Guide (Calicut,1939) p. 14

⁷¹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.87

⁷² South Indian Teacher, July 1937

⁷³ V.R. Nayanar, op.cit

⁷⁴ Ibid

continue their studies after secondary education and they were forced to become teachers in elementary schools⁷⁵. Those who were reluctant to serve under others opened schools in their own place or in the surrounding areas. These schools resembled the old *Ezhuthupallies*. Though many opened schools to improve the general conditions of the villagers, for most of them it was a means of lively hood. Thus they taught students along with other teachers in these schools. Since they were an educated group, they knew how to manage the schools. In spite of it most of them failed in managing their schools satisfactorily. At the same time middle class land lords and merchants opened schools to augment their regular income. This was clear in their memorandum given to the government. They managed to get recognition and school grant by influencing the education council and the department. Their objective was mere profit and they were not interested in the welfare of the students⁷⁶. It is to be noted that the number of aided elementary schools in Malabar increased considerably during 1920's and 30's⁷⁷.

Apart from private individuals, various agencies and institutions also imparted education in Malabar. During 1934-35 about 62 schools in Malabar were under the direct control of the Government. On the basis of the government of India act of 1919, the Madras government formed the district boards in 1920. These elected bodies were given control over the departments such as education and health. Thus many new schools were opened in Malabar. When the taluk boards were organized in 1923 primary schools were placed under its control and all high schools were controlled by the district board itself⁷⁸. Now a large number of single teacher schools were opened in Malabar under the taluk boards. In these schools only one teacher was provided with out considering the number of students⁷⁹. The administrative power of the board was vested in the hands of its president. The board members, village officers, revenue officers, and the prominent personalities of the area had the right to visit and examine the schools at any time. The suggestions recorded by them were to be sent to the president for necessary action⁸⁰. But when the taluk boards were abolished all schools from

⁷⁵ *Sahithya Keralam*, February 1930

⁷⁶ *The Mathrubhoomi*, 19th November 1938

⁷⁷ List of recognized and 'recognised and aided' elementary schools in the district of North and South Malabar during the year 1936-37, Regional Archives, Calicut, Hereafter RAC

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.261-62

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.262

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.263

Kasaragod to Palghat came under the control of the district board. The board had no transfer norms for its teachers. Therefore they had to depend on the favour of the board president, its members and official. The board gave the salaries to the teachers on the basis of the grant received from the government. Whenever the government refused the grant the board was put in great difficulty and the teachers failed to get their salary. As these schools were found more expensive than aided schools, government often preferred to transfer these schools to private managers⁸¹. But later when the members of the Congress and the Congress Socialist got elected to these boards serious attempts were made to ventilate the grievances of the teachers. Thus elementary education in Malabar was conducted by various agencies⁸². The following table indicates the details of schools under various agencies in Malabar during 1930's.

SCHOOLS IN MALABAR						
Number of Schools						
	Boys school			Girls School		
	1934-35	1935-36	1936-37	1934-35	1935-36	1936-37
Government schools including Labour Schools	57	63	62	5	5	5
Board Schools	932	931	925	287	282	279
Municipal Schools	84	83	81	25	26	22
Aided Schools	2299	2346	2364	355	360	351
Unaided Schools	41	23	19	7	2	5

Source: V.R. Nayanar (ed) Malabar Vidyabhyasa Guide (Calicut 1939)

During 1934-35 there were 1219 board schools in Malabar⁸³. Besides these the Kannur, Tellicherry, Kozhikode, Palghat and Fort Cochin municipalities had their own schools. There were 109 such municipal schools in Malabar⁸⁴. The Board and Municipalities had appointed their own supervisors for controlling their institutions. The Devadhar Malabar Reconstruction Trust also had opened their own schools in different parts of Malabar. Above all there were several schools in Malabar under the direct control of the government. However majority of the

⁸¹ Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book 19, Vol W. 10, May 25, 1941

⁸² V.R. Nayanar, op.cit

⁸³ Ibid, p.78

⁸⁴ Ibid, p

schools in the Malabar were the aided elementary schools⁸⁵. Out of 4092 elementary schools 2654 schools were elementary schools under private management⁸⁶.

At the same time there were three types of schools in Malabar – elementary schools, middle school and high school. The schools which offered elementary education from first to eighth standard were called elementary schools in the state of Madras⁸⁷. There were two types in this category. Most of the schools were lower elementary schools, which imparted education up to 5th standard. The schools having 6th to 8th standard were called Higher elementary schools. But some of the higher elementary schools had facilities for 1st to 8th standard. At the same time 6th standard in High school was called First Form. The high school education ended with the matriculation examination in the 6th form. Before the first form the high schools had the five year lower elementary classes also. Thus one had to spend to eleven years to complete high school education. At the same time most of the towns had middle schools which had lower elementary classes and the first three forms of the high schools. The students from these schools got admission to fourth form in high school. But the students from higher elementary schools had to face an entrance examination to get admission in the high School classes. But none of them could pass the test. Even brilliant students got admission only in the third form class. There fore the elementary schools students have to spend twelve to thirteen years to appear for the SSLC Examination⁸⁸. As elementary education was almost free in Malabar, the majority of the students in these schools were the children of poor rural peasants and workers⁸⁹. At the same time, the rich in the village got their children admitted in high school in the cities. Thus elementary education given to the poor villagers was considered as second-rate inferior education by the department and the government. Naturally the limited facilities given to the high school teachers were denied to the teachers in elementary schools. The teachers in high schools had monthly salary regular increment and provident fund benefits. As a result of the efforts made by the SITU they could improve the conditions in the service condition. They also obtained the

⁸⁵ List of recognized and 'recognised and aided' elementary schools in the district of North and South Malabar during the year 1936-37, RAC

⁸⁶ *Ibid*,

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.73

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.75

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.75

right to get written appointment and dismissal orders. Thus they could not be dismissed without a sufficient cause⁹⁰.

At first there was no restriction of qualification for the appointment of teachers⁹¹. But during 1920s the qualification of teachers was made one of the criteria for the assessment of the school grant⁹². Teachers having different educational qualification served in the elementary schools. The teachers who had passed the 5th standard but had no training were called lower untrained teachers. If they had training they were appointed as lower trained teachers. Some among them who passed 8th standard or 3rd form of the high schools were called higher untrained teachers. Among them those who got training were called higher trained teachers. The teachers who passed SSLC but had not completed training were called secondary untrained teachers and those who had training were called secondary trained teachers⁹³. These different categories of teachers received salaries at different rates. The following table shows the difference in their salary.

Teachers In Aided Elementary Schools	Annual salary	
	Trained	Untrained
Lower elementary teachers	Rs 108	Rs 60
Higher elementary teachers	Rs 144	Rs 108
Secondary Teachers	Rs 200	Rs 144

Source: G.O. (Education) Madras No. 933 15th April 1936

During 1930 Malabar witnessed acute unemployment. The decline of the matrilineal system had its own impact on Malabar. The introduction of PSC examination made the situation worse because it was conducted at the will and pleasure of the government. Even people with high educational qualification found it very difficult to enter government service. Thus several young men who came out of high school turned to private management for employment. Even people with SSLC became teachers in lower and higher elementary schools. Thus a large number of people who were affected by the economic crisis became

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.76

⁹¹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, *op.cit*, p.4

⁹² P.R. Nambiar, *op.cit*, p.20

⁹³ *Ibid*, p.79

teachers in aided elementary schools. It also affected the class characters of the teachers⁹⁴.

The Madras government had an education department under the Director of Public Instruction. Under him each district had its own educational officers. But the female education in Malabar, South Karnatic and Nilguries was placed under 6th Circle Inspectress⁹⁵. The district of Malabar had a hierarchy of educational officers⁹⁶. The following table indicates the hierarchy of educational officers in Malabar.

District Educational Officers		
NAME	AREA	HEADQUARTERS
S.Muhammed Abdul Sahib, B.A LT	South Malabar	
C.V.Govindan Nambiar, B.A LT	North Malabar	
Deputy Inspectors (South Malabar)		
NAME	AREA	HEADQUARTERS
K.Govinda Menon, P. Kunhiraman Nair	Palakkad	Palakkad
P.V. Gopalakrishna Iyyer, C.T.Namboothiri, K. Kumaran Ezhuthachan	Valluvanad	Perinthalmanna
V.K. Madhavanunni, P.R. Krishnayyer	Eranad	Manjery
P.C.M. Raja, C.Raman	Ponnani & Cochin	Ponnani

MAPPILA RANGE		
NAME	AREA	HEADQUARTERS
Sayyid Khaja Hussain Sahib, K.V. Muhammed Kunhi	Palakkad	Palakkad
C. Ahammed Unni, R.M. Bavu Sahib, N. Kunhalan Kutty Sahib	Ponnani & Cochin	Ponnani
NORTH MALABAR		
NAME	AREA	HEADQUARTERS
C.K. Nair, Thomas Vataken	Kozhikode	Kozhikode
T.Gopala Tharavanar, P.Narayanan Nambiar, T.V. Ananthakurup, Kunju Menon	Kurumbranad & Wynad	Vatakara
P.K.Ramakrishna Iyyer, U. Deju	Kottayam	Tellicherry
V. Kunhiraman Nair, Kuttappan Nair,	Chirakkal	Kannur

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.83

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.23

⁹⁶ V.R.Nayanar, op.cit . pp. 92,93

K.C. Kumaran		
MAPPILA RANGE		
NAME	AREA	HEADQUARTERS
Muhasin Bin Ahammed Sahib	Kozhikode	Kozhikode
P.Ahammed Sahib	Vatakara	Vatakara
P. Khadar Sherif Sahib, R.M.Sikkendar Sahib, Raman Kutty Panikker	Kannur	Kannur
GIRLS RANGE - Inspectress : Miss D'zousa		
T.P. Lakshmi	Kozhikode	
N.Gouriamma	Tellicherry	
M.P.Kausally Amma	Kannur	
V.V.Lakshmi	Kurumbranad (Vatakara)	
V.V.Lakshmi Kutty	Ponnani (Thirur)	
V.Lakshmi	Palakkad	
Aysha Mayan	Valluvanad (Manjeri)	

Source: V.R. Nayanar (ed) Malabar Vidyabhyasa Guide (Calicut 1939)

There was one District Educational Officer for the whole of Malabar district till the year 1939, when the district was divided in to two educational districts – North Malabar and South Malabar⁹⁷. The North Malabar District Educational Officer was in charge of Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad and Kozhikode taluks of Malabar. At the same time Eranad, Valluvnad, Palghat and Ponnani were under the South Malabar District Educational Officer. Every taluk of the district had Deputy Inspectors of schools for the inspection of elementary schools⁹⁸. Schools were also divided in to Hindu range and Mopla range under the control of Deputy Inspectors. The girls range schools were controlled by sub asst inspectors. The separate schools on the basis of religion served the imperialist purpose and the nationalist criticized it as divisive.

Thus the elementary education in Malabar was conducted by various agencies But the majority among them were the aided elementary schools. In 1934-35 70% of the elementary school 77% of teachers and 61% of students were in the elementary category. No other district in the Madras state had such a larger number of aided elementary school as in Malabar. But it is to be noted that with regard to salary and other service condition there was no uniformity among the

⁹⁷ M.M. Kapoor (et al eds) Educational Administration in Kerala- Structure, Processes and Prospects for the future.(New Delhi, 1994) p. 60

⁹⁸ After the reorganization of the Kerala State in 1956 , the designation of the Deputy Inspector was changed in to Assistant Educational Officer.

teachers working under the different agencies⁹⁹. The teachers in aided elementary school received salaries much lower than those who were in schools under government and local bodies. The following table shows the disparity in the salary rates.

	Teachers In Aided Schools Annual Grant		Teachers In Govt. Schools Monthly Grant		Teachers In Board Schools Monthly Grant	
	Trained	Untrained	Trained	Untrained	Trained	Untrained
Lower elementary teachers	Rs 108	Rs 60	Rs 20-28	No rate fixed	Rs 15-20	No rate fixed
Higher elementary teachers	Rs 144	Rs 108	Rs 23-45	“	Rs 20-30	Rs 15
Secondary Teachers	Rs 200	Rs 144	Rs 30-55	“	Rs 25-45	Rs 20

Source: G.O.(Education) Madras No. 2683 15th December 1936

The government school teachers had job security, leave benefits and favourable working condition. The board school teachers also had better service condition, salaries scale, grades of pay, promotion and leave benefits though not on par with government school teachers¹⁰⁰. A lower trained teacher in a board school got Rs 15 and an increment of ½ rupee for 10 years. At the end he received Rs 20. A secondary trained teacher in a board school got Rs 25 and an increment of Rs 2. Thus at the end he got Rs 45. To a certain extent teachers in municipal schools and DMRT schools also enjoyed the salary and service condition of the board school teachers. But the Teachers in aided elementary

⁹⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.9

¹⁰⁰ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.265

schools had no regular conditions of service and scale of pay. The trained and untrained teachers got only Rs 16 and Rs 9 respectively. They could not dream of a monthly salary. They got their pay as annual grant which was given actually after 14 or 15 months¹⁰¹. Although the working hours had been fixed as 5 hours a day, some of the teachers were forced to work five and a half hours¹⁰². The elementary school teachers had no provision for increment based on service. The newly appointed teachers as well as teachers with long service received the same salary¹⁰³. The aided elementary school teachers having the same qualification as those in local board and municipal school were denied all the privileges concerning status, appointment and leave rules¹⁰⁴. They were often denied even maternity leave. The manager was free to decide the matter according to his mood. Some times when the teacher comes back after maternity leave she could see another person appointed in her place¹⁰⁵. They had no security of tenure. They were the flopan and rolpan kicked from one place to another according to the whims and fancies of the capricious managers¹⁰⁶. The managers were free to punish teachers and to terminate their service at their will without assigning any satisfactory reason or the consent of the department¹⁰⁷. The teachers were not given appointment orders and were dismissed without prior notice¹⁰⁸. There was no provision for appeals to the government. In 1939 an inspector of school said in a Magistrate Court at Kannur that just like a house owner who appointed and dismissed his servants, the managers could appoint and dismiss the teachers. He was not required to give any written order in this regard¹⁰⁹. This incident clearly shows the attitude of the department, the service condition of the aided elementary school teachers of Malabar. Thus while their brethren in the local board and municipal school got satisfactory salary, the aided elementary teachers were getting very low salary throughout the year. They failed to get even the payment received by the masons, carpenters and coolies¹¹⁰. There fore the teachers had to

¹⁰¹ Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book 15, Vol W. 27, September 21, 1937

¹⁰² K. Gopalan Kutty, The National Movement in Malabar, 1930, 47 (The unpublished PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi 1985),p.188.

¹⁰³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.80

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 79,80

¹⁰⁵ Interview with K.P. Padmanabhan at his residence at Quilandi on 30th March 1993

¹⁰⁶ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.423, February 1938, TNA

¹⁰⁷ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.76

¹⁰⁸ K.Gopalan Kutty, op.cit, p.188

¹⁰⁹ P.R. Nambiar, 'Manegarute Veettile Velakkarano', in Kannur Jilla KAPT Union Onnam Varshika Souvenir (Thalipparamba, 1972)

¹¹⁰ The Mathrubhoomi, 8th Mach 1938 and 30th December 1936

fear their creditors. They had to suffer poverty, and they were compelled to seek other means of subsistence. They also found it very difficult to discharge their duties properly¹¹¹. K.N. Ezhuthachan in his short story 'Adhyapakan' clearly depicted the miserable condition of the elementary teachers¹¹².

In 1930s the Governor of Madras in his inaugural address to the legislative assembly said that the basic aim of the education department was the propagation of the primary education and that the government had decided to spend as much as possible to realize this objective¹¹³. But the measures adopted by the government proved that it was not sincere in implementing its policy. While allotting grant no consideration was given to the number of students and teachers in the school. The government showed clear partiality in allotting grant to board school and aided elementary schools. During 1934-35 Madras government allotted Rs 5360768 to aided elementary schools. At the same time Rs 7094625 was given to board and municipal schools. Thus it can be seen that Rs 71 lakhs was allotted to 1924 schools and only 54 lakhs to 2610 aided elementary schools¹¹⁴.

The teaching grant to aided elementary schools were distributed by the district Educational council out of the fund placed at their disposal in accordance with the rules framed under Madras elementary education act¹¹⁵. The deputy inspector made yearly visit to all elementary schools after giving one month notice. Separate officers were in charge of Hindu, Mopla and girl's schools¹¹⁶. S.K. Pottakkad in his story 'Inspection' gives a clear picture of this procedure¹¹⁷. The inspecting officers were the real judges of the aided elementary schools. Therefore all possible measures were adopted by the managers and the teachers to please them¹¹⁸. On the inspection day the teachers visited all the houses of their students to ensure 100% attendance in the school. If they failed excuses like festivals and marriages were cited. The school building was beautifully decorated. Pictures and maps were exhibited in the class room. The photos of the emperor

¹¹¹ Karoor Neelakanda Pillai, Thiranjethu Kathakal, (Kottayam, 1970). Karoor, a well known writer of Kerala depicted the pathetic condition of teachers in his stories

¹¹² Mathrubhoomi Weekly, November 16, 1936

¹¹³ The Mathrubhoomi, 11th April 1938

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ G.O.(Education) Madras, No.933,15th April 1936, TNA

¹¹⁶ The Mathrubhoomi, 20th February 1939

¹¹⁷ The Mathrubhoomi Weekly, 22nd December 1940

¹¹⁸ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.16

and the Queen were garlanded. Mottos like 'Let god protect the king' was written on the walls and windows¹¹⁹. The students would reach the class clean and well dressed. The black boards were cleansed with flowers. The inspectors visited all classes and examined the students. The 5th and 8th standard students were given certificates on that occasion. With the help of the managers the inspectors could give the same to the students of his choice. The school grants were passed based on the report of the inspecting officers. In assessing the amount of school grant the inspecting officers considered mainly the building and equipment and not the academic matters like instruction, organization and discipline. Funds were reduced even when the academic standard of an school was very high. There was a reduction in the salary of teachers or even their dismissal for a fault which was not theirs¹²⁰. The deputy inspectors had the right to withhold the grant. They also enjoyed the right to make 50% increases in the grant. They had the power to withdraw the recognition of the school and to ruin the life of teachers. They used it as a weapon to show their power and authority. Hence in connection with the inspection the managers and teachers were made all arrangements to make these officers happy with best accommodation, oil, palanquin, and grand feast. It was often said that the managers and the teachers feared these officers more than the British Viceroy¹²¹. Two year teaching service was required for a teacher to get selection for training. Even this depended on the recommendation of the inspecting officers. After the completion of the training, he had to put in 18 months of service as a teacher to get a verification certificate from the deputy inspector. If he failed to obtain it within 3 years of the completion of training his training was of no use¹²². This attitude of the inspecting officers towards the teachers was clearly depicted in a story written by K. N.Ezhuthachan¹²³.

The teachers had no right to sit before the inspector. They had to stand till the inspector left the school. The inspectors asked question to the students and scolded the teachers for the mistakes committed by the students¹²⁴. Some of them even had the habit of verifying the knowledge of teachers¹²⁵. The grant cut

¹¹⁹ Thikkodian, Arangu Kanaatha Natan, (Kottayam, 1991) p.99

¹²⁰ K.Gopalan Kutty, op.cit, p.188

¹²¹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.16

¹²² Cherukadu, Muthassi (Trivandrum, 1972) p. 269-71

¹²³ The Mathrubhoomi Weekly, 10th May 1937

¹²⁴ Thikkodiyar, op.cit, p.99

¹²⁵ Ibid

due to the misbehavior of a teacher affected all the teachers in the schools. Teachers were also punished for the mistakes committed by the managers¹²⁶. Sometimes even the annual school grant was cancelled. While the inspecting officers had enormous power the teachers were denied even their basic rights. They had no right to make appeal against grant cut. Moreover when the government failed to give the arrears of the grant, a proportionate cut was introduced. The managers realised from their experience that if they made complaint, the next year grant would be further reduced. So they continued to please the inspecting officers. At the same time the department officers supported the exploitation of the teachers by the management because managers were regarded as the representatives of British administration in Malabar society.

The managers and the aided school teachers had really a master servant relationship¹²⁷. In between government and teachers the managers acted as the land lord between the peasant and the government. The managers were the junior participants of the so called educational land lordism and were the main pillars of British Imperialism in Malabar¹²⁸. The teaching grant that was assigned to the aided schools by the district educational council at the end of the year was in accordance with the rules framed under Madras elementary education act¹²⁹. The amount was uncertain and it was given to the managers. The teachers got salary on the basis of this annual grant. The managers often considered the grant as his private property¹³⁰. They gave a nominal amount to the teachers and argued that they were getting the same because schools were opened by them. So the teachers even felt that they were more happy at the period of *Nattezhuthachan* when they were promoted by nobles and Chieftens¹³¹. The managers became more arrogant at the time of salary disbursement. The moment he received the grant some of the managers would visit his wife house. So the poor teachers had to follow him to the place. The managers used this opportunity to show his power and prestige. At times he refused to pay the amount on the ground that the time was not auspicious. If there was a function in his house such

¹²⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.16

¹²⁷ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.213

¹²⁸ Kittettan, 'Lakshyabodham Annum Innum' in Kannur Jilla KAPT union Onnam Varshika Souvenir (Thalipparamba, 1972)

¹²⁹ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.933,15th April 1936, TNA

¹³⁰ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.423,23rd February 1938, TNA

¹³¹ The Mathrubhoomi Weekly, 16th August 1937

as marriage, *thalikettukalyanam*, death anniversary or pilgrimage the managers will deny the salary of the teachers¹³². The managers who were land lords some times used this opportunity to clear their revenue arrears. Some others who were merchants used the amount for textile and pepper business and tried to clear the arrear in installments¹³³. Thus the managers were using their school as a source of income¹³⁴.

The grant-in-aid as its name implied was intended to supplement the resources of the management and not to cover the entire cost of the staff¹³⁵. The management was expected to supplement the government grant by contributing from their own funds to give adequate salaries to the teachers. But this expectation was seldom realised. Under the grant-in-aid system the managers showed no interest to provide necessary facilities in their schools¹³⁶. He never considered it necessary to have good school buildings. Most of the buildings were often dirty and the walls were often broken. To know the school time teachers were compelled to depend on the sound of trains. There was no provision under the Madras elementary education act for the payment of separate grant to the managers. It was open to management to augment its resources by fee collection subscription or donation. As a result the teachers grant was misappropriated by the managements. The teachers failed to get even the government sanctioned rate of salary. The amount was decided arbitrarily by the managements. A higher trained teacher who had to get Rs 12 would get only 8 or 9 rupees. A higher untrained teacher who had to get Rs 9 was given only 2 or 3 rupees. The balance amount would go to the managers pocket. At the same time they demanded a receipt for the full amount. They often used their cane to get the receipt signed by the teachers¹³⁷. Once a manager even pointed his dagger at the heart of a teacher¹³⁸. Reluctance on the part of a teacher often led to his dismissal. There were also occasions when the whole grant was denied to the school. Then the teachers had to live on the little income from agriculture or in acute poverty. In such circumstances many of the teachers even committed suicide¹³⁹. The famous

¹³² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.4

¹³³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.213

¹³⁴ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 23, 19th September 1938

¹³⁵ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.933,15th April 1936, TNA

¹³⁶ Thikkodiyan, op.cit, p.98-114

¹³⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.32

¹³⁸ The Mathrubhoomi, 2nd June 1935

¹³⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.16

satirist Sanjayan had written a poem depicting the strength and power of annual grant which was the very dream of the elementary school teachers of Malabar¹⁴⁰.

The regular service of a teacher candidate was considered essential for selection to undergo teachers training. The managers found it a golden opportunity to exploit the teachers. They began to appoint inexperienced teachers for very low salary. Thus they could avoid the appointment of experienced teachers who were to be given proper payment. A large number of teachers were compelled to work even without salary. Some of them were even asked to give money to the managers¹⁴¹. Thus the elementary school became a market and the manager its absolute owner.

The managers considered the teachers as their servants. The teachers had to obey what ever they were asked to do. Once a teacher was compelled to collect grass to feed the managers' cattle.¹⁴² The managers even tried to assert the right to decide the marriage alliance of the teachers¹⁴³. The teachers were not given sufficient salary. Fearing court intervention some times the managers signed a contract of appointment. But even this was violated¹⁴⁴. The teachers were not given appointment orders and were dismissed without prior notice. However the department and the government sided with the management. The traditional policy of the government had been to view the service condition of teachers as a contract between teachers and management. The department on the other hand made it clear that unless the government substantially increased the grant-in-aid, they could not dictate the management on pay, leave benefit etc¹⁴⁵. Thus the official reply to the teachers complaint was 'regret for not interfering'. Usually no complaints were made regarding the non-payment of the salary or irregularities in the payments as the government resorted to the cutting of grant instead of enquiring in to the matter when ever a complaint was made¹⁴⁶. Moreover the district educational Council was not expected to interfere in the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ The Mathrubhoomi, 30th December 1936

¹⁴² Interview with K.P. Padmanabhan at his residence at Quilandi on 30th March 1993

¹⁴³ Interview with C.C. Nair at his residence at Badagara on 25th March 1993

¹⁴⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.213

¹⁴⁵ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2471, October 1938, TNA

¹⁴⁶ K.Gopalan Kutty, op.cit, p.188

irregular payment of salaries to teachers. It was left to the teachers to compel the manager to pay the amount by threatening to leave the school¹⁴⁷.

As a result of such a condition new rules were found necessary. Questions were raised in the Madras legislative assembly regarding pay and security of tenure of elementary school teachers¹⁴⁸. It was demanded that provision should be incorporated in the MER for empowering the government to frame rules relating to salary conditions of service, leave, termination, dismissal and appeal. The teachers wanted to prevent the managers from punishing them without proper reason or without dispensing with their service without the prior knowledge and sanction of the department. They demanded monthly salary directly from the government and the right to plead their case.

The aided elementary school teachers of Malabar had participated in the national movement and the movement against untouchability. Mostly belonging to the peasant class and exploited just like the workers, the teachers became interested in the peasant movement and the industrial workers movement¹⁴⁹. Thus they had intimate connection with the rural life of Malabar. A village teacher got plenty of opportunity to meet the common people and to know what they wanted. They used to visit the students at their home and talk to their parents who were mostly peasants and workers. They helped the parents to correspond with their relatives who were working outside. It was this group of village teachers who read *Krishnapattu*, *Bhagavatha* and *Ramayana* to the local people¹⁵⁰. They realised that a good teacher could become the leader of the people¹⁵¹. Some of the teachers were the tenants of managers who were also land lords. Thus the teachers could establish strong sentimental attachment with the ordinary people in the Malabar. This close association with the people enabled them to pursue the grievances of the peasants and get involved in the peasant movements¹⁵².

Many of the teachers were attracted towards the national movements when they were students¹⁵³. With the beginning of the civil disobedience movement, a large number of teachers entered the arena of the national movement. Many of

¹⁴⁷ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2007,September 1936, TNA

¹⁴⁸ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2285,10th January 1937, TNA

¹⁴⁹ A.K.Gopalan, *Kerala Past and Present* , (London 1959) p.51

¹⁵⁰ Interview with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28 March 1993

¹⁵¹ A.K.Gopalan, *Ente Jeevitha Kadha*, (Trivandrum, 1985) p.13

¹⁵² K.Gopalan Kutty, *op.cit*, p.188

¹⁵³ P.R. Nambiar, *op.cit*, p.83

them participated in the Swadesi campaign. They actively participated in the propagation of Khadi and Charkka and also in the toddy shop picketing. They opened libraries and reading rooms in the rural areas of Malabar. They read the national dailies to the common people. They encouraged the students who wore khadi and Gandhi cap and tried to make them strong anti- imperialist. Students who sang national songs and read news papers were praised in the class rooms¹⁵⁴. Mottos on hunger and disunity were written on the black boards; interpreting these mottos teachers tried to rouse nationalist sentiments among the students¹⁵⁵. At the same time they took part in the movement against untouchability. Public feast were organized. Dalit students were admitted in the school. Teachers organized agitations to establish the right of the harijans to walk through the public roads. They used to attend marriages of the backward class. Above all they wrote skits that under scored social injustice and got them staged. Thus they learned from their experience that a teacher who lived in the rural areas could become the leader of the people¹⁵⁶. During the early decades of the 19th century the aided elementary school teachers of Malabar were leading a miserable life. They got very low salary based on annual grant. That too was not properly paid. They had no security of employment. They were not given appointment orders and were dismissed without prior notice. At the same time they could establish intimate rapport with the rural life of Malabar which enabled them to perceive the grievances of the people. Thus the teachers slowly moved towards the ideology of Nationalism. Their experience in the national movement and movement against untouchability generated a new sprit in the minds of the teachers. It helped them to perceive their own deplorable condition and to develop a hope to redress their grievances through organization and agitations.

In the following chapters the teachers efforts to form union and their involvements in other political agitations would be taken up.

¹⁵⁴ A.K.Gopalan, op.cit, p.15

¹⁵⁵ Interview with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28 March 1993

¹⁵⁶ A.K.Gopalan, op.cit, p.13

CHAPTER TWO

EFFORTS AT UNIONISATION

During 1930's Malabar became the centre stage of agitations. The Sree Narayana movement and the freedom struggle under Mahatma Gandhi had awakened the educated youth especially the village teachers of Malabar. The cruelty of the caste system and untouchability confronted by them and the message of Sree Narayana Guru had its own impact on them. The elementary school teachers were also attracted towards the ideology of nationalism¹. Many of them participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The reports of the political agitations under Indian National Congress, the movements against untouchability and landlordism generated a new spirit among the teachers. It created a stir among teachers². They could also see that various sections of the people were organizing themselves and were on the path of agitations. The aided elementary school teachers were the 'subaltern' class in the teaching community of Malabar. Their salary was extremely deplorable. Only those who did not get even the post of police constables or peons became teachers in elementary schools³. Hence it was demanded that the salary sanctioned by the local boards should be given to the aided teachers also⁴. The gains of unionisation in the postal department were highlighted and the teachers were advised to form their own union⁵. These teachers who used to teach the maxims that 'Unity is strength' to their kids day by day realized that only through union could their grievances be redressed. Thus they began to think of forming their own associations.

It was in 1930's that the Aided Elementary school teachers started their efforts at unionization in Malabar. The Teacher Managers of the area had already formed their own association. Through their meetings and conferences, they used to ventilate their grievances before the Government⁶. At that time a demand was made to incorporate the aided elementary school teachers also in their

¹ P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar, 'Vittuveezchayillatha Samara Dheeran' in P.R. Smaranika, P.R. Anusmarana Samithi (Calicut, 1988)

² Interview with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28 March 1993

³ Sahithya Keralam, February, 1930

⁴ Gurukulam, November, 1924

⁵ Ibid, December, 1924

⁶ The Mathrubhumi, April 3, 1924, January 25, 1927 and December 17, 1927

associations⁷. It became a topic of discussion among teachers. But the demand was rejected as there was no provision for the same in the Educational Act of 1920⁸. Consequently the teachers of Koothuparamba began to think of forming their own union⁹. Thus a meeting was convened there under the leadership of K. Krishnan Nambiar and the North Malayalam District Teachers Association was formed¹⁰. He demanded the regular payment of salary to the teachers and their security of tenure. Resolutions were passed in this meeting on issues such as representation of teachers in the Legislative Assembly and District Educational Council, increase in teaching grant, quarterly grant, P.F benefits to all teachers, the system of transfer certificate, service register and the formation of an '*Aikya Nanaya Sangham*'. Teachers meetings were convened at several places in Kottayam Taluk and representations and telegrams to the department and the Government were sent¹¹. The aided school teachers conference held at Thiruvangad was attended by more than 500 teachers. It emphasized the necessity of teachers union and appealed for the formation of an All Malabar Aided School Teachers association¹².

During this period people of Manappuram area of south Malabar were suffering from all sorts of caste violence and exploitation .The village teachers of this area, inspired by the ideas of Sree Narayana Guru came forward to fight against this injustice and exploitation. They also felt the need for organizing themselves and made a strong campaign among the teachers. It actually prepared the ground for the formation of the first union of aided school teachers of South Malabar. Here V.K.Kunhimamu, an elementary school teacher convened a meeting of teachers on 16 November 1931¹³. It was attended by 26 teachers. Soon with the help of teachers like M.S.Nair, M.Achuthan Nair, P. Padmanabhan Nair and T.V. Narayanan Nair, the Manappuram Aided Elementary School teachers union was formed. This organization later developed into the Ponnani Taluk Aided Elementary School Teachers Union.

⁷ *Ibid*, August 29, 1929

⁸ *Ibid*, October 19, 1929

⁹ *Ibid*, August 29, 1929

¹⁰ *Ibid*, February 1, 1930

¹¹ *Ibid*, May 27, 1931

¹² *Ibid*, June 28, 1931

¹³ *Adhyapakan*, October 1955

The political conference held at Payyannur in 1929 under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru really inspired the people of North Malabar. It had great impact on teachers as well as the students. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 further strengthened their national fervour. Several teachers had participated in the Satyagraha movement. Most of them who took part in the salt Satyagraha *jatha* under K.Kelappan were teachers¹⁴. Many students gave up their education to participate in the movement. Several others joined the movement along with their studies. The acute unemployment among the educated classes offered emissaries of Civil Disobedience a wide field of recruitment¹⁵. When the movement was withdrawn, some of them remained in the main stream of political life. But majority of them became aided elementary school teachers.

The Madras Education Act of 1929 led to an increase in the number of aided elementary schools in Malabar. New Girls Schools and Mappila Schools were opened near the existing ones even in rural areas. After the rebellion of 1921 several schools were opened by the D.M.R.T in Malabar¹⁶. Now the educated youth having experience in political activity viewed aided schools as their avenue of employment because their chance of getting appointment in Government service was very little. The national movement criticized the British education policy as one protecting the British capitalist interest and demanded thorough changes. Those who involved in this agitation later became teachers¹⁷. Thus many of them who had connection with the national movement became aided elementary school teachers. They also began to feel the need of a union among themselves. The conference of the SITU held at Palghat, the union rules adopted by it and its decision to celebrate an education week must have influenced the teachers¹⁸. The first conference of the All Travancore Private School Teachers union held at Mavelikkara on 28th December 1933 and its resolutions highlighting the teachers demand for increased salary and security of employment must also have influenced the teachers¹⁹. In 1932 A.K.Gopalan convened some teachers and organized a teachers union at Calicut. It could

¹⁴ The Mathrubhumi, April 16, 1930

¹⁵ File No. 5-81/ 32 Home Political, C.D.M Madras, National Archives of India, New Delhi, Hereafter NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁶ T.M.Vijayan, The DMRT and its foundation in Malabar in Dr.V.Kunhali (ed) Kerala Society Historical Perceptions (Calicut, 2002) p. 137

¹⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, Adhyapaka Prasthanam Uthara Keralathil (Trivandrum, 1976) p. 8

¹⁸ South Indian Teacher, September, 1931

¹⁹ No. D. Dis 648/34 Education Dept. Dated 30-05-34 State Archives, Trivandrum

convene one or two meeting of the teachers. Some of the elementary school teachers actively participated in the political conference held at Vatakara. Here Nariman in his speech at the conference emphasized the role of peasants workers and teachers in the national movement. The efforts at unionization among teachers initiated by A.K. Gopalan actually got inspiration from this statement²⁰.

By that time the board school teachers had their own associations in almost all taluks of Malabar. The municipal teachers also had their own unions. Now a desire arose to unite all these under a district association²¹. In this contexts V.Ramunni wrote an article in Mathrubhumi drawing the attention of all to the grievances of aided elementary school teachers. He wrote “now it is necessary to remember the condition of teachers under private management who are the ‘harijans’ of the teaching community. Compared to those in other services, the condition of the aided teachers are more deplorable. These teachers who are living in poverty are loosing their spirit of freedom under private managers”²². More over he called upon the teachers for an All Malabar Teachers Union comprising all board, municipal and aided school teachers²³. But teachers of Malabar working under different agencies such as board municipality and private management had different services conditions and grievances. Therefore it was pointed out that each section should organize themselves to form their taluk and district association. Only then, if necessary an All Malabar Teachers union was to be established²⁴.

In this backdrop V. Ramunni again wrote, “The condition of aided elementary teachers are more deplorable than the teachers under the local board and municipalities. The management is trying to reduce our salary every year. The local board and municipal teachers have peons and scavengers. But we are our own peons and scavengers. As old age relief they have PF benefits but we have only providence. They can’t be dismissed without sufficient reasons. For us it is not necessary. They have their own association to ventilate their grievances but we have none²⁵”. Therefore he asked the union of the municipal and board

²⁰ Adhyapaka Lokam Visheshalprathi (Kannur, 1982)

²¹ The Mathrubhumi, October 21,1933 & October 27,1933

²² Ibid,October 27,1933

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid, November 9, 1933

²⁵ Ibid, November 2, 1933

teachers to organize agitation to redress the grievances of aided elementary school teachers. Hence he called for an All Malabar Teachers conference to think in this direction. While the board and municipal teachers had their unions, the aided teachers whose life was more deplorable than others began to feel the necessity of their own union²⁶. They never wanted the government to say that they were unaware that the managers were exploiting the teachers²⁷. Thus the demand for an All Malabar Teachers Union was emphasized.

The national movement had profound impact among the student community of Malabar. During the period between 1932-34 O.V Govindan Nambiar, P.M Kunhiraman Nambiar, N. V Kunhikanan Nair, K.P Kunhikannan Nair and C.K. Panikkar were students of Tellicherry training school. They were residing at Bharati Vilasam hotel, Tellicherry. When Gandhiji visited Tellicherry they could give an amount to his harijan fund as the donation of students. They could also establish intimate contact with political leaders like K. Damodaran, Chandroth Kunhiraman Nambiar, C.H. Kanaran and Nettur P Damodaran. At that time they were very much moved by an incident that took place at Chirakkal Taluk. Here an elementary school teacher gave a mild punishment to a student who happened to be the son of a local landlord. Now the teacher was called and forced to observe 'etham' before his student²⁸. This incident shocked the teacher students of North Malabar. Thus the students of Tellicherry training school decided to form an association of teachers as soon as their training was over²⁹.

FORMATION OF UNION

²⁶ Ibid, November 9, 1933

²⁷ Ibid, November 28, 1933

²⁸ A mode of punishment given either by parent or teachers for not obeying them or for failure in studies or competition, bowing in a peculiar way with hands holding the ears

²⁹ Adhyapaka Lokam Visheshalprathi, op.cit

The withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the formation of Kerala congress socialist party and the subsequent rise of peasant and trade union movement made the circumstances favourable for unionisation. Many of the teachers who had an agrarian background were harassed by the school managers, most of whom were also landlords. It was this condition that inclined the teachers to take an active part in peasant movements. The failure of Civil Disobedience Movement led many teachers to search for alternatives and this led them towards the ideology of socialism and their efforts at unionization became more active. Chirakkal Taluk was more politically conscious than the other taluks of Malabar³⁰. O.V. Govindan Nambiar a teacher from the region wrote several articles in Al-Ameen and Mathrubhumi emphasizing the necessity of a teachers union³¹. He explained the conditions of school education and the deplorable condition of the elementary school teachers of Malabar. He wrote “Teachers should awake from their slumber. Remember freedom is our birth right don’t suppress the sprit of freedom. Let’s bear the sorrow that come from our freedom of opinion, let us live as human beings in our motherland³². He continued his propaganda for the unionization of the teachers. He wrote “The managers opened schools for the education of the public. Government assisted them by giving grant. It was to be supplemented by the contributions of the managers so that the teachers would get sufficient salary. This was the basis of the establishment of aided school system. But in course of time the managers deviated from their sacred aim and began to use their institution for their selfish motives. Schools were viewed as their private property and was incorporated in their will or given as gift or “*theeru*” to others. They appropriated part of the government grant and distributed only the balance amount to the teachers based on their qualification³³. O.V. Govindan Nambiar made it clear that It was the duty of the District Educational Council to save the teachers from the miseries. The appointment and dismissal of teachers should be made only with the permission of the department. They were to be given the right to submit the receipt of their salary and to inform their grievances directly to the authorities. The representation for the teachers in the Educational Council was also demanded³⁴.

³⁰ P.R. Nambiar, (ed) Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam (Trivandrum, 1982) p. 213

³¹ Ibid, p. 214

³² The Mathrubhumi, August 26, 1934

³³ Ibid, September 8 ,1934

³⁴ Ibidi, September 8 ,1934

The grievances alone would not lead to unionization among different sections of the people. There should be confidence that their grievances could be redressed through organization and union. The anti-caste movement, anti-imperialist movement and anti-landlord movement generated this spirit among the village teachers of Malabar³⁵. The propaganda made by O.V.Govindan Nambiar had favorable response from teachers. It prepared the way for the formation of a teachers union in Chirakkal Taluk³⁶. A teachers meeting was convened on 23rd August in 1934 at Kalliassery south elementary school. This meeting was attended by 13 elementary school teachers including K.V.Narayanan Nambiar, C.K.Panikar, K.V Krishnan master, P.Kumaran and P.Yesoda. It formed an association called 'Aided School Teachers Union' with O.V.Govindan Nambiar as the first president³⁷. Shortly another meeting was held at Cherukunnu under P.M.Kunchiraman Nambiar, K.Kunhikannan Nambiar and Sree Govindan Nambiar, a teacher manager of Eripuram Higher elementary school. In the next month teachers meeting were convened at Karivallur and Payyanur under K.P.kunhikannan Nambiar and N.P Kunhikrishan Nair. Soon meetings were convened and unions were formed at several places like Azhikode, Kadachira, Chovva and Kannadiparamb. All these meetings were attended only by 10 or 15 elementary school teachers. But all of them were either the activists of the freedom movement or had loyalty to the national movement³⁸

One of the early teachers union activist, T.C. Narayanan Nambiar wrote an article 'education and nationalism' in the Mathrubhumi daily. He wrote 'our education does not reflect what is happening in our country. It actually destroys the feeling of nationalism. It narrates how England emerged from the ocean by God's grace and the achievements of India under the British rule. It imparts a distorted history which depicts Sivaji as a mountain rat and the first war of Indian independence as a mutiny of sepoy and the Indian national congress as an organization of traitors³⁹. Emphasizing the examples of Germany, Japan and Italy he argued that the aim of education should be to promote nationalism⁴⁰.

³⁵ P.R. Nambiar, Op.cit, p.81

³⁶ O.V.Govindan nambiar, 'Njan Ormikkunnu', In Kannur Jilla KAPT Union Onnam Varshika Souvenir (Thalipparambu , 1972)

³⁷ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.214

³⁸ Adhyapaka Lokam, op.cit

³⁹ The Mathrubhumi, November 22, 1934

⁴⁰ Ibid

By that time teachers union were formed in almost all teachers association centres of Chirakkal taluk. Attempts were made to unite all these branches under taluk teachers union. The teachers meeting held at Cherukunnu under P. Kunhikannan Nambiar took initiative for the same⁴¹. Thus arose a taluk union leadership under O.V. Govindan Nambiar and P.M. Kunhraman Nambiar. It consisted of K. Govindan Nambiar (Karivallur) N.P. Kunhikannan Nair (Payyanur) M.K. Govindan Nambiar (Madayi) T.C. Narayanan Nambiar and Pola Kumaran (Kannadi Paramba) C.K. Panikkar (Thaliparamba) K. Raman (Edakkad) M.V Bhargavan and M.V Anandan (Chovva) and P.Kunhikkannan Nambiar (Cherukunnu)⁴². The taluk union had certain objectives

1. Redress the grievances of the aided schoolteachers
2. Improve their financial condition of those who were suffering from poverty than the peasantry
3. Attain the deserving position for teachers
4. Revive the lost feeling of self respect, self reliance and love of freedom among the teachers
5. Make education beneficial for the progress of the society
6. Create an atmosphere for the authorities to redress the grievances of teachers amicably
7. Mobilize public support and corporation for their efforts
8. Unite all teachers of Kerala by organizing an all Kerala independent teachers union⁴³.

Kannur was chosen as the head quarters of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union. The meeting also decided to convene a taluk teachers conference at Kannur on 16th December 1934. Decision was also taken to prepare a constitution to be presented in the conference for approval. A fund was raised in the meeting for the activities of union and also for the proposed conference. The additional amount would be raised by making an appeal to the people. Above all it was decided to consult other taluk unions to organize a joint conference of teachers⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Ibid, December 2, 1934

⁴² Adhyapaka Lokam, op.cit

⁴³ The Mathrubhumi, December 2, 1934

⁴⁴ Ibid, December 2, 1934

These efforts of unionization of teachers got all necessary help and pieces of advice from the congress socialist party. At the same time the leaders never attended the public meetings and conferences of the teachers⁴⁵.

The first conference of the Chirakkal taluk was held on 16th December 1934 at Ananda Mandiram Hall, Kannur⁴⁶. More than 500 teachers participated in the meeting, which was presided over by K.Chathu Achan, Dept of History, Govt Brennan College, Tellicherry. Pointing to Jesus Christ and Gandhi he asked the teachers to live for others. At the same time he emphasized the relevance of union in the present day world. O.V.Govindan Nambiar welcomed the audience. He pointed out that the condition of the aided teachers, the depressed class of the teaching community, was worse than the life of the peasants. He narrated all the grievances of the teachers faced from the managers. Considering the social status and salary scale he argued that they were getting less salary than kolkaran and peon. Quoting Surendranath Banarji he reminded that an ideal teacher should have a higher respectable position than the rulers in society. He said "Until we unite and work to regain our right we will continue to suffer. He urged them to join the union without fearing managers and Deputy inspectors. He wanted this union to become an ideal All Kerala Association. P.K. Koru gave a speech on "Teachers and their Duties"⁴⁷. It was in this conference that the Chirakkal Taluk Teachers union formally came in to existence⁴⁸. The conference passed the following resolutions.

1. To appeal to the teachers of Malabar to make this union the association of all teachers of Malabar.
2. To request the authorities to give grants quarterly instead of an annual grant.
3. To request the education department, educational council and the Legislative assembly to redress the grievances of teacher.

⁴⁵ Adhyapaka Lokam, op.cit

⁴⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.214

⁴⁷ The Mathrubhumi, December 21, 1934

⁴⁸ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.214 . Adv. T. Naryayanan Nambiar was elected president of the union, O.V.Govindan nambiar (Vice Priesident , P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar (Secretary) and T.C. Naryananan Nambiar (Joint Secretary) were the other office bearers of the Union. A 15 member taluk committee was also constituted.

4. To request the managers to give the actual pay allowed by the council till there is an increase in salary.
5. To express their protest on the suspension of teachers by the management with out sufficient reason and prior notice and to invite the attention of the authorities in this matter.
6. To request the authorities to give aided teachers due representation in the educational council⁴⁹.

The teachers of Chirakkal taluk tried to consult the teachers of Kottayam and Kurumbranad taluk to convene a North Malabar teachers conference. Efforts were also made to co-operate with the teachers of South Malabar to form an all Malabar teachers union⁵⁰.

The teachers of Kottayam taluk were not behind in their efforts at unionization. During 1930-31 teachers meetings were convened at several places like Koothuparamba and Thiruvangad. These meetings emphasized the necessity of a union among teachers and sent telegrams and petitions to the concerned authorities highlighting the grievances of aided elementary school teachers⁵¹. Resolutions were also passed to form an All Malabar Teachers Association⁵². M.N. Nambiar convinced every one the grievances of elementary school teachers and the necessity of a union⁵³. He advocated for it. He wrote "The managers, teacher managers and the teachers under Board and Municipalities have their own association. Therefore a union which is strong enough to redress the diverse grievances of the aided elementary school teachers should be formed immediately. Teachers of 30 or 40 schools should form a union. All such unions should form a taluk union and these taluk unions in turn should form a district union. Now the aided teachers had no representation in the district education council. Majority of its members were Advocates, Land lords and Merchants who were not aware of the problems of teachers. The teachers had no one to ventilate their grievances to the concerned authorities and responsible institutions. Therefore urgent steps must be taken to organize a union⁵⁴.

⁴⁹ The Mathrubhumi, December 21, 1939

⁵⁰ Ibid, January 14, 1935

⁵¹ Ibid, February 1, 1930 & June 28, 1931

⁵² Ibid, June 28, 1931

⁵³ Ibid, November 9, 1933

⁵⁴ Ibid, September 28, 1934

A teachers meeting held at Chokli discussed the grievances of the teachers and emphasized the necessity of the union. Here an aided school teachers union was formed⁵⁵. An aided school teachers conference was held at Thiruvangad on 3rd November 1934. This meeting attended by teachers from different ranges of Kottayam taluk adopted the following resolutions. This conference expressed its regret on the continuous grievances experienced by the teachers of Malabar. This conference opined that a strong organization was necessary to redress the grievances of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar. This conference requested the teachers to form taluk unions in all the taluks of Malabar and also decided to form Kottayam Taluk Aided Teachers Union in this conference itself. The conference called upon the members of the unions already formed in the taluk to be a part of the taluk union and to form new branches union wherever necessary. It was also decided to make all aided elementary teachers of Kottayam taluk as members of the teachers union. The members were to remit two annas as membership fee. An executive committee of 27 members with T.N. Chathu of Punnol Higher Elementary School as convener was formed. And it was authorized to prepare the bylaw of the union and to present the same in the next conference⁵⁶. Thus the Kottayam taluk aided Elementary School Teachers Union was formed with Kottiyath Krishnan as the president and T.N.Chathu and P. Ummer Kutty as Joint secretaries. Kottiyath Krishnan was a strong critic of caste system and untouchability. T.N. Chathu on behalf of the union tried his best to draw the attention of the government and the public leader to the miserable condition of the teachers of Malabar. He wrote in Mathrubhumi 'Teachers belong to the working class. They should be united as of the flowers on the string'⁵⁷.

An elementary school teachers meeting held at Koothuparamba was attended by about 100 teachers. Here a branch of the union with nine members was constituted. Another meeting was held at Nettur where T.N.Chathu gave a speech on Teachers organization. Here also a branch of the union with 14 members was formed⁵⁸. Thus union of teachers spread rapidly through out the

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, October 20, 1934

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, November 6, 1934

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, November 24, 1934

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, December 13, 1934

taluk⁵⁹. T.N. Chathu, K.P.K. Krishnan, K.M. Karunakaran Nair, K.K. Velayudhan Adiyodi, C.C Sankaran and Smt. Achai were the early leaders of the taluk⁶⁰.

There were efforts of unionization in Kurumbranad taluk also. During 1933, Fredrik, a teacher of BEM High School Vatakara, pointed out the grievances of the elementary school teachers and emphasized the need for a union for them⁶¹. T.Chathumaster an ardent disciple of Sree Narayana Guru and an activist in the anti-untouchability and tenancy movement gave leadership to the early union activities in Kurumbranad taluk⁶². He had no connection with congress and the national movement. He was an efficient teacher and organizer and so he had much influence among the teachers. Initially he was a high school teacher. But he was expelled from that post since he criticised the management. Later he took up the post of a primary teacher and hence he was looked with respect and admiration by one and all⁶³. It was under his leadership that the union of the teachers was formed at Vatakara. It was in November 1934 that the Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union was formed⁶⁴. T.Chathu Master was elected president of the union. Here an annual subscription of one rupee was collected from the members. Thus 41 teachers paid one rupee as annual subscription and became members of the union⁶⁵. Unlike other unions this union was named as Malabar Aided Elementary School Teachers Union⁶⁶. P.R Nambiar, K.P. Padmanabhan, C.C Nair, K. Unnikidave and K.G. Kidav were some of the early leaders of the Kurumbranad taluk teachers union. It is to be noted that K.Kelappan the eminent congress leader of Malabar was the founder president of one of the branch union of Kurumbranad taluk⁶⁷. P.R. Nambiar the secretary of Vatakara centre Aided School Teachers Union took initiative to convene the first conference of the Kurumbranad taluk teacher union⁶⁸. It was held at Vatakara North Higher Elementary School on 3rd February 1935. The Govt training school teacher Ramanatha Ayyar presided over the meeting. The meeting discussed the petition

⁵⁹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.215

⁶⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.17

⁶¹ C.C. Nair, 'Thirinju Nokkumbol', In Kannur Jilla KAPT Union Onnam Varshika Souvenir (Thalipparambu , 1972)

⁶² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.18

⁶³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.88

⁶⁴ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.18

⁶⁵ C.C. Nair, op.cit

⁶⁶ Interview with C.C. Nair at his residence at Badagara on 25th March 1993

⁶⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.18

⁶⁸ The Mathrubhumi, January 17, 1935

to be submitted to the deputy director and formulated certain rules for the union. The executive members for the year were elected and thus the Kurumbranad taluk Aided Teachers Union formally came into being⁶⁹.

The aided elementary school teachers of Valluvanad also began their efforts at unionization. On September 15 1934, after the meeting of the teachers association, the teachers of Kulukallur assembled under S. Naraya Ayyar. They were convinced that only through the union could their grievances like the circulars against them, low salary etc be solved.. Thus a union of the Aided Elementary School Teachers was formed with Attur Devesha Pisharati as president and K.P Sankunni Menon as Secretary. Here 31 teachers joined the union⁷⁰. Before long the teachers of Vallpuzha centre assembled under C. Krishnan Ezhuthachan to discuss their grievances. A committee of five members under P. Sekhara Warier was formed and it was advised to consult the unions already constituted in the taluk⁷¹. Thus a meeting of the Valluvanad teachers was held at Ottapalam mission School. K. Krishnan Nair who spoke on the occasion pointed out the importance of union. Here the Valluvanad taluk aided teachers union was formed and resolutions for the redressal of teachers grievances were passed⁷². Soon efforts were made to organize unions in all teachers association of Valluvanad⁷³.

FORMATION OF AN ALL MALABAR TEACHERS UNION

By that time the activities of the aided teachers union spread all over Malabar. In this backdrop the activists of the teachers union of Kottayam taluk who were already awakened by the national movement and movement against untouchability took initiative to form an All Malabar Teachers union⁷⁴. Under their leadership a meeting of the teachers was convened at Tellicherry Chaliya School

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, February 12, 1935

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, September 20, 1934

⁷¹ *Ibid*, November 20, 1934

⁷² *Ibid*, January 16, 1935

⁷³ *Ibid*, January 22, 1935

⁷⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.85

on January 13th 1935. This meeting was presided over by O.V.Govindan Nambiar. His idea was to hold an All Malabar teachers conference⁷⁵.

Due to financial stringencies, it was difficult for leaders to go every where for propagation. Therefore the union activists were asked to inform the details of the conference in all the meetings of teachers association. An appeal was made to form unions at all places and teachers were asked to join it. They were also asked to provide the address of active teachers and secretaries of teachers associations for sending pamphlets of propaganda⁷⁶. Teachers of those areas where there was no union were also invited. More over teachers were asked to send resolutions that were to be presented at the conference without delay⁷⁷. The municipal teachers of Tellicherry promised all help and assistance to make the conference a great success⁷⁸.

It was decided to hold the conference at the Town hall near Tellicherry railway station on 17th February. Volunteers were advised to reach the venue on 16th evening itself. Their captain Ummer Kutty was directed to assign work to them⁷⁹. The informal meeting of the subject committee held on the 16th evening sorted out the resolutions received from different parts of Malabar after long hours of discussion. Pamphlets containing the details of the conference were sent to teachers. Bundles of invitation letters were also sent to be distributed among the teachers⁸⁰.

Thus the first all Malabar teachers conference was held at Tellicherry town Hall 17 February 1935. About 100 delegates from all parts of Malabar attended the conference, the majority coming from Chirakkal, Kottayam and Kurumbranad taluks. Many lady teachers also attended. Public leaders, members of the educational council and educational officers like K.T.Chandu Nambiar, T.Narayanan Nambiar, V.Raghavan, V.Kunhiraman Nair were present in the conference. Many of the delegates were teachers who were involved in the national movement. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar who was just released from the Central Jail was one among them. Many others came with their experiences in

⁷⁵ The Mathrubhumi, January 18, 1935

⁷⁶ Ibid, February 5, 1935

⁷⁷ Ibid, February 9, 1935

⁷⁸ Ibid, February 7,15, 1935

⁷⁹ Ibid, February 12,1935

⁸⁰ Ibid, February14, 1935

movements against untouchability and land lordism. There were also British loyalists⁸¹.

Kottiath Krishnan received K.P. Raman Menon, the president of the conference, at the railway station and took him to the town hall. The meeting began with the national song. Kottiath Krishnan made the welcome speech. He pointed out the misuse of public fund in the field of education because of the increase of schools under different agencies and also because of separate schools for Muslims and girls. He emphasized co education and argued that all children of a village must be taught in common schools. He narrated the miserable conditions of the aided school teachers. He said 'the present day teachers are not respected and honoured; he is considered neither a human being nor an animal. Even the scavenger of the finance minister is getting more than the elementary school teacher. Government should spend some more to make their home happy⁸². He asked the government to take necessary steps to ensure proper payment of salary, security of tenure and their representation in the district education council.

K.P. Raman Menon in his presidential address highlighted the miserable conditions and how they were exploited by their managers. He pointed out how Madras government was neglecting Malabar by spending very little in this area⁸³. At the same time he promised to do all he can to get the grievances of the teachers redressed. The conference passed resolutions demanding department consent to the appointment and dismissal of teachers, quarterly grant, parity with local board teachers, 25% representation for teachers in the District Educational Council, free compulsory education etc⁸⁴.

The Tellicherry conference opened a new chapter in the history of the aided Elementary school teachers movement in Malabar. The resolution passed in the conference showed the growing nationalist consciousness among the Malabar teachers. The teachers who attended the conference had heard about the teachers agitation at Wardha through new papers. Hence one of the resolutions in the conference supported this agitation and asked the government to accept their

⁸¹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.86

⁸² The Mathrubhumi, February 20,1935

⁸³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.86

⁸⁴ The Mathrubhumi, February 20, 1935 See Appendix I

demands. It clearly showed that the teachers of Malabar were aware that they would also be forced to do the same in future. Another resolution passed in the conference also reflected the general awareness of the teachers. As per the education Act of 1920, education council with a majority of peoples representatives were constituted in all districts. It had the right to recognize private schools, withdraw the recognition of inefficient schools and ultimately to decide the school grant. It could restrict the bureaucratic hegemony to a certain extent. But the government turned against it. Actually it was an attempt to suspend the council altogether. The new papers highlighted this issue and the teachers were aware of its consequences. Hence another resolution passed in the conference protested against the attempt to repeal the right of the district education council to elect their president and to nominate him directly by the government and also demanded to make the council more democratic. This resolution clearly revealed the democratic aspiration of the teachers and their vision of a democratic India⁸⁵.

The conference of the teachers union held at Tellicherry attracted public attention. Higher pay scale, regular payment of salary and security of tenure were the important demands raised by the union. It got popular support. The union spread in other parts of Malabar too. All teachers who signed an oath and contributed two annas as membership fee and two annas as admission fee could become the members of the union⁸⁶. The conference tried to bring all teachers together and also to get the support of all sections of society.

The executive committee began sincere efforts to form a district union. Thus the taluk unions were asked to send five representatives to the district union. In taluks where there was no union, teachers were asked to form their own union and to elect their representatives at the earliest⁸⁷. Teachers of Eranad, Palakkad and Wayanad were advised to become more active⁸⁸.

After the conference at Tellicherry the union activities became more vigorous in south Malabar. Teachers meetings were organized in several places⁸⁹.

⁸⁵ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.87

⁸⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.18

⁸⁷ The Mathrubhumi, October 26, 1935

⁸⁸ Ibid, November 12, 1935

⁸⁹ Ibid, February 22 1935

Meetings were convened to protest against the reduction of teaching grant⁹⁰. The early unionization activities were actually facilitated by *Gurujana Samajam* meetings. These meetings were convened compulsorily by the department once in any one of the Saturdays of every month to update the knowledge of the teachers and also to inform the decision of the department and the government. The aided elementary school teachers used to meet separately after these meetings and units of the aided elementary school teachers union were formed at several places⁹¹. Capable teachers were selected from the teachers association centres and they were given charge of 10 or 15 schools to do the propaganda work⁹². Thus the teachers union activities spread widely and rapidly through out Malabar.

Teachers like M.S Nair, V.K.Velukutty master and P. Padmanabhan Nair took the initiative to convene the first conference of Manappuram aided teachers union⁹³. The reception committee meeting organized a general body with representatives from all the branch unions. K.Kelappan and Joseph Mundasery were invited to attend the conference⁹⁴. The conference was held on 19th April 1935 in a *panthal* which was built in the Valappad, Pallipuram GDM School ground for the anniversary of the Sree Narayana Guru Smaraka Samajam⁹⁵. V.P. Narayanan Nambiar (MLC) presided over the meeting. In the presidential address he said "Teachers are in the midst of the '*panchangni*' of Managers, Government, Department, council and the public. Union is inevitable to redress your grievances....Here education is made a business. 50% of the teaching grant is appropriated by the managers. If you stand united it will not be possible⁹⁶". Hence he demanded increase in their salary, monthly payment and representation of teachers in the education council. The conference also passed the resolutions demanding clear provision for appointment and dismissal, government scale salary, representation in the education council and also to bring different teachers union under an All Malabar Aided Teachers Association.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, April 13,1935

⁹¹ K.Gopalan Kutty, *The National Movement in Malabar, 1930-47* (Unpublished Phd Thesis , Jawaharlal Nehru University, (New Delhi, 1985), p. 191,192

⁹² *The Mathrubhumi*, May 21, 1935

⁹³ *Ibid*, April 12,13, 1935

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, April 17, 1935

⁹⁵ *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Book 13, Vol W.7, April 29, 1935

⁹⁶ *The Mathrubhumi*, April 25, 1935

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, April 23, 1935

The Manappuram aided school teachers union was active only in the south of Chettuvali. But they tried to extend their activities with a view to form an all Malabar aided school teachers Union.⁹⁸ Attempts were also made to organize union in the south of the taluk under Vanneri Teachers Association.⁹⁹

The elementary teachers of all taluks of Malabar had responded to the steps taken by the union leadership. But the union activities in Eranad taluk were very slow. P.R. Nambiar called upon the teachers of the area to wakeup. He required the address of teachers who were ready to work so that he could send the pamphlets of the proposed conference¹⁰⁰. It had the desired result. K.P. Narayanan Nair near Manjeri promised to extend union work in Eranad Taluk. Teachers were told to collect pamphlets and admission tickets of the conference from him¹⁰¹. Now many teachers began to take interest in union activities. P. Gopalan Nair of Kodangad aided Mappila School, Kondotti wrote "Teachers of Eranad are sleeping. They don't know what is happening around the world. A teacher should be a *Karmayogi* interested in public service and should emphasize truth and stand for justice. Managers torture the teachers mercilessly. We have no sense of unity. Our grievances could be redressed through union¹⁰². So he asked the teachers to form unions in all teacher association centres with a view to organize a taluk teachers union¹⁰³. Thus the teachers of Eranad also began their own efforts at unionization.

The teachers union activities got stimulated in Kozhikode taluk also. The teachers meeting held at Kunnamangalam thought about the formation of a Taluk union¹⁰⁴. Another teachers meeting was held at Panniyankara Sankara Vilasam Hindu aided school. Here A.K.Gopalan made a speech and highlighted the necessity of the Teachers union. A committee of nine members was constituted to form a union¹⁰⁵. By that time only two branches were formed in Kozhikode. K.Gopalan Nair of Bepyore made sincere efforts to form a taluk union. He called up on the teachers to form more unions in the taluk¹⁰⁶. P.Appu of Bepyore asked

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, May 9, 1935

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, September 5, 1935

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, March 5, 1936

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, March 17, 1936

¹⁰² *Ibid*, April 4, 1936

¹⁰³ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, March 20, 1936

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, November 29, 1935

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, December 21, 1935

the teachers to form their union through Teachers association centres and also to convene a taluk conference at the earliest¹⁰⁷. The Teachers meeting held at Panniyankara decided to strengthen their union to redress their grievances. It passed resolutions demanding the scale of board School Teachers, direct payment of teaching grant and P.F benefit for teachers. The meeting selected 6 members including the secretary for the proposed district conference at Vatakara¹⁰⁸.

The union activities continued to be active in Kottayam taluk. K.M Karunakaran Nair was the Secretary of the union¹⁰⁹. It was decided to hold the taluk conference on 9th June 1935 at Thiruvangad municipal Girls Higher elementary school¹¹⁰. Representatives from all branches attended the conference which was presided by V.P.Narayanan Nambiar. On this occasion K.Kelappan gave a speech on 'grant-in-aid school' in which he narrated the deplorable condition of Teachers and criticized the managers. He asked the Government to give the grant directly to the teachers and congratulated the teachers for the formation of the union¹¹¹. Another Teachers meeting was held at Kathirur where P.V. Madhavan Nair gave a talk on 'The importance of union'. Here A.K.Gopalan said 'Majority of the aided school Teachers of Kerala had no national pride. They are not active and energetic. If they don't get the deserving remuneration, even after working for a whole year, then they themselves should be blamed for it. It is because of their inability. But all these grievances can be redressed through a powerful union and a strong agitation¹¹². Here one of the teachers invited the attention of the audience to an incident and requested the union to interfere. It was reported that an elementary school manager at Ponniam compelled the teachers to sign the acquittance with out giving their remuneration. Those who refused were not given school register and were sacked. It led to a heated discussion. But finally it was decided to launch strong agitation against such managements. A resolution was also passed asking teachers not to sign the acquittance for an amount not actually received¹¹³. A.K.Gopalan made an enquiry

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, February 6, 1936

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, March 8, 1936

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, May 1, 1935

¹¹⁰ Ibid, June, 1935

¹¹¹ Ibid, June 12, 1935

¹¹² Ibid, September 5, 1935

¹¹³ Ibid

on the Teachers-Manager dispute in Kottayam taluk. He wrote an article in Mathrubhumi and pointed out that the condition of the teachers and managers were equally deplorable. He wrote "There are managers who run schools as business concerns. But some of them run schools properly but face difficulties due to the government stand..... If the managers and teachers join hands their grievances can be redressed. Both of them should work together for obtaining more government grant"¹¹⁴. At the same time he criticized the managers policy of trade as dangerous and emphasized the importance of the unity among teachers. He further wrote 'As long as there are teachers who are ready to work for a low amount, teachers can't solve their grievances. Strengthen their union by enlisting the cooperation of the managers. When teachers unite nobody would oppose it'¹¹⁵.

M.S. Sreshta and some other members decided to present a resolution in the Madras Legislative council to increase financial assistance to aided schools so as to raise them to the level of Local Board Schools. With a view to bring the matter to the attention of the government and the public, teachers were asked to convene meetings all over Malabar and to pass resolutions highlighting the same¹¹⁶. The Teachers union meetings held at Koothuparamba demanded an increase in the salary of aided teachers to that of municipal and local board teachers. It congratulated M.S.Sreshta on his proposed resolution. It also appealed the members of the legislative council to pass the resolution and the government to enforce the same¹¹⁷. The meeting of the Kottayam taluk aided Teachers union held on 1st February at Thiruvangad Girls School decided to observe a 'Grant Week' from 15 to 21st February. In this effect the following resolution was passed "For requesting the Madras Government to increase the salary scale of Aided elementary teachers to that of teachers under local boards , a week from February 15 to 21 1936 should be observed as a 'Grant Week' in all places of Malabar by convening meetings and passing resolutions"¹¹⁸. In a teachers meeting held at Tellicherry, on 4th February 1936, Chandroth Kunhiraman Nambiar viewed the aided schools as mere business concerns and pointed out the corruption and malpractices in the field of elementary education. He further said,

¹¹⁴ Ibid, September 6, 1935

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Ibid, October 5, 1935

¹¹⁷ Ibid, October 23, 1935

¹¹⁸ Ibid, February 4, 1936

“The educated section who work and starve and bear the scolding of the creditors are the elementary school teachers. Teachers should bring their grievances to the attention of the public. The agitations of the teachers and managers should be echoed in the ears of the authorities. It should open their closed eyes. As an initial step the elementary school teachers of Malabar were to observe a week as ‘Grant Week’¹¹⁹. As a part of the ‘grant varam’ a public meeting was held at Tellicherry town hall on 15th February 1936. P.M.Thangal (MLA) who presided over the meeting promised to bring the grievances of the teachers to the notice of the government. Dr. T.V.Narayanan Nair presented the following resolution: This meeting of the Tellicherry citizens requests the Madras government to raise the salary scale of the aided teachers of Malabar to the scale of teachers under local boards¹²⁰. The resolution was passed and the copy of the same was sent to the education minister, Director of Education and also to K.P Raman Menon, the first president of the Malabar Aided Teachers Union¹²¹.

T.C. Narayanan Nambiar wrote an article in Mathrubhumi entitled ‘The grievances of the aided school teachers’. It made the union activities more active in Chirakkal taluk. He wrote ‘The progress of a country depended on its schools which moulds the little kids to proper citizens. It is true that in Malabar it is done by the Grant Schools. Thus the poor elementary school teachers are those who dedicate their life for the country. For the upliftment of Malabar, the grievances of the teachers are to be redressed. For any national reconstruction elementary schools can be used as a powerful tool¹²². He clearly explained the grievances faced by the teachers of Malabar and wrote ‘What we hear from the schools of Malabar is the cry of poverty and helplessness. Hunger in schools means the nation is not fit and healthy.... The managers who are the capitalist refuse to give even a small part of the grant to the teachers who are their workers. They are behaving like the proprietors of the soda shops¹²³. Hence he asked the teachers all over Malabar to be more active in their effort at unionization. Above all he tried to bring the attention of the union leaders to the tug of war going on between managers and teachers in different parts of Chirakkal taluk.

¹¹⁹ ibid, February 5, 1936

¹²⁰ ibid, February 18, 1936

¹²¹ ibid

¹²² ibid, June 27, 1935

¹²³ ibid

In this backdrop a taluk committee meeting was held at Kannur under the presidentship of O.V.Govindan Nambiar. It evaluated the union activities in the taluk and realised that the branches were not organized properly and teachers are not made aware of the necessity of the union. Hence a committee was formed and T.C Narayanan Nambiar was appointed the propaganda officer. The union office was shifted to Gouthama Lodge Kannur and it was decided to meet monthly once on every 4th Sunday¹²⁴. Accordingly efforts were made to form branches all over the taluk and also to raise a union fund. Above all decision was made to organize propaganda for a taluk conference¹²⁵. Appeals to make the union more active continued to be raised. One of the teachers wrote 'To attain an ideal atmosphere for elementary education the capitalist fort of the private management should be destroyed; the poverty of the teachers should be eradicated by raising their salary¹²⁶. A.K.Gopalan visited several schools in Chirakkal Taluk and wrote an article in Mathrubhumi, "School trade in Chirakkal Taluk". He clearly brought out the corruption and malpractices that existed in elementary schools and pointed out the grievances of the teachers. At the same time he said "The majority of the elementary schools teachers are slaves and that is an obstacle to the progress of the country. They have no national pride, patriotism or the desire to acquire more knowledge. They have no courage or sense of unity. The presence of such teachers leads to the success of managers who are traders. All such things will end if the teachers unite¹²⁷.

As required by the MATU the Chirakkal taluk union selected five members – O.V.Govindan Nambiar, P.M. Kunchiraman Nambiar, T.C. Narayanan Nambiar, M. Bhargavan and M. Kunhambu – to the district committee. It was also decided to collect an amount not less than five rupees from each branch of the taluk¹²⁸. Moreover it was decided to organize the conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union on 8th December 1935¹²⁹. Thus the second conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union was held on December 8 in the Edward memorial town hall, Kannur. R.M. Palatt, the District Board president presided over the meeting. More than 600 teachers attended the conference. The meeting began

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, July 3, 1935

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, August 2, 1935

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, August 4, 1935

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, August 21, 1935

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, November 23, 1935

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, November 30, 1935

with Vande Mataram and passed resolutions demanding salary scale of local board teachers, monthly payment, salary contract between teachers and managers, union interference in salary dispute and representation in the district education council. T. Narayanan Nambiar, T.C Narayanan Nambiar and K.Raman were elected as the new office bearers of the union¹³⁰.

Aided elementary teachers were asked to pass resolutions demanding regular and proper payment of salary in their branch meetings and to intimate the same to the district education officer and the president of the District Education Council. A model of the resolution was also published. "We the poor elementary School teachers who had dedicated our life on the scaffold of the nation for the spread of education are now leading a life of poverty and misery. We are given a very low salary. Due to the deduction we are not even getting this meagre amount in time. This cruelty of the authorities towards these '*Daridranarayanans*' is deplorable. Therefore this year grant may be distributed to the managers without any deduction by the end of March itself so as to reduce our grievances¹³¹.

In the meeting of the Chirakkal taluk Teachers union held at Goutama Lodge on 23rd February 1936, it was decided to observe a 'Grant week' from 8th to 14th of March 1936¹³². The meeting also decided to organize a Teachers *Jatha* in the month of May.

To celebrate the 'Grant week' a public meeting was convened at Kalliassery North Girls School. K.P.R.Gopalan who presided over the meeting emphasized the necessity of the Teachers union. K.A Keraleeyan and O.V.Govindan Nambiar also spoke on the occasion. The meeting passed the following resolutions.

1. To sanction the same pay scale of Government school Teachers to the aided elementary school teachers
2. Invite the attention of the government to the proceedings of the director of Education Cochin and request them to take steps to redress the grievances of the elementary teachers of Malabar.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, December 12, 1935

¹³¹ *Ibid*, February 5, 1936

¹³² *Ibid*, February 27, 1936. It was also decided to organize propagandas in areas like Cherukunnu, Pazhayangadi, Payyannur, Karivellur, Taliparamba and Cherula.

3. Accept the demands of Jogendra Chandra Chatterji who is observing fast unto death for the last 100 days in the Lucknow Jail and save his life¹³³.

The executive meeting of the Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers union was held under T. Chathu. The following five members – K.Govindan Kidav, P. Kunhikannakurup, P. Ramar Kurup. A.G.Sivarama Krishna Ayyar and P. Ramunni Nambiar - were elected as representatives to the District Union. A decision was taken to convene a meeting representing Malabar teachers on 11-01-36 to form an executive committee to conduct the conference. It was decided to hold the conference on 3rd and 4th of April 1936.

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF MATU

The second conference of the Malabar Aided Teachers Union was held on 4th April 1936 in a decorated panthal near Government Training School Vatakara. More than 2000 people including Teachers from 9 taluks and prominent personalities of the area attended the conference. V.P. Narayanan Nambiar in his inaugural address said “A major part of the Grant given to the Teachers for their work is actually swallowed by the managers and only the balance amount is distributed among the teachers. The poor teachers work and the cruel managers receive the remuneration. What an injustice! Why should you meekly request to the manager for salary? It is to be opposed through your organization. Even illiterate workers who had no education could defend against the injustice of their managers through their organization. So the only solution for your grievance is union¹³⁴”. He also supported the teachers demand for an increase in salary and representation to District Education Council. M.S. Sreshta in his presidential address pointed out the grievances of the teachers, the policy of indifference adopted by the government and the necessity of an organized agitation. The teachers from Chirakkal taluk staged a skit ‘*Grant Varatte*’ (Let the grant come) depicting the deplorable condition of the elementary school teachers of Malabar¹³⁵.

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Ibid, April 7, 1936

¹³⁵ O.V.Govindan Nambiar, Grant Varatte (Kannur, 1936) O.V.Govindan Nambiar wrote this skit at the request of MATU. After much rehearsal the Chirakkal taluk teachers union activists staged it at the Badagara conference. The motive of the skit was made clear by the author “The teachers were not paid enough, the payment was irregular, no security of employment nor were they respected or given a position in the society. One can not imagine the height of torment and insult they received and so the youth considered this divine job a curse. No organisation came forward to help them. The public and the authorities turned a deaf ear. Hence I am trying to picturise their grief”. The vivid description of Kittu Kurup a manager who make a lively hood through school

On the second day of the conference the meeting which continued under M.S. Sreshta passed the rules formulated for the new District Committee and prepared the constitution of the union.¹³⁶ A 15 member District executive committee representing 9 taluks of Malabar was also constituted. There after about 44 resolutions were presented. The most important among them demanded salary parity with local board teachers, monthly grant remittance of an amount for one year school expense by the managers, compulsory PF, representation in the district education council and a common syllabus for higher elementary schools¹³⁷.

At that time trade union movement was very active in Malabar. The trade unions could organize successful strikes to achieve their demands in different parts of the district. It had a profound impact on the teachers of Malabar. Therefore in the Vatakara conference T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and K.P.Krishanan presented a resolution for organizing a strike to obtain the demands of the elementary school teachers¹³⁸. The resolution got support from a considerable number of teachers. But P.R Nambiar and P.M Kunhiraman Nambiar opposed the resolution on the ground that it would be suicidal to involve in a strike before completing the organizational work of the union¹³⁹. It led to a heated discussion in the meeting. Finally the resolution was withdrawn and it was decided to strengthen the union before organizing strikes. The active discussions that took place in the conference reflected the new consciousness among the teachers generated by the growth of the trade union movement and agitations.

It was in this conference that early leadership of MATU emerged. Thus MATU was formally formed in this conference. A 15 member executive with P.R Nambiar as convener was constituted¹⁴⁰.

Mean while the MATU directed the district executive members to give leadership to form unions all over Malabar. The taluk unions were advised to

management, Chandu Master an elementary teacher who pours out his heart and tears in front of his debtors, Othenan Master who questions the manager for misappropriation of grant, school inspection and the teachers association meeting etc clearly portray the miserable life of aided teachers. The play made a deep impact on the people. Many who were interviewed remembered this play. This included even those who were not teachers.

¹³⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.88

¹³⁷ The Mathrubhumi, April 8, 1936 . See Appendix II

¹³⁸ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.19

¹³⁹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.88

¹⁴⁰ The Mathrubhumi, May 20, 1936. P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar, Chirakkal (President) M.N. Pisharati, Kozhikode (Vice president) K.M. Karunakaran Nair Kottayam and P. Ramunni Nambiar Kurumbranad (Joint Secretaries) and P. Ramar Kurup Kurumbranad (Treasurer).

organize propaganda committees and to send 5 representatives to the district committee. It was also decided that the union office would be located at Vatakara. It decided to take up the issues of dismissal of teachers by the managers. It authorized M.S Sreshta to submit the resolutions of the Vatakara conference to the Governor of Madras., the education minister and the Director of Education. The union protested against the council for reducing the grant of 1935-36 and decided to send a delegation to the DEO and the president of the district education council.

In this backdrop MATU thought about submitting a memorandum to R.M Stathan, the Director of Education during his visit to Malabar¹⁴¹. The MATU meeting held at Thiruvangad requested the Director to receive a union delegation at Tellicherry. A committee was constituted for the same. The meeting also requested the District Educational Council to distribute the grant with out delay and to stop the practice of withholding salary in times of management disputes¹⁴². The Director agreed to meet the teachers delegation. Accordingly, the union delegation consisting of T. Narayanan Nambiar, P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar, P.R. Nambiar, T.C Narayanan Nambiar and K.M Karunakaran Nair met the Director and submitted their memorandum at Tellicherry¹⁴³. R.M. Stathan was a strong activist of national union of teachers in Britain. Hence it was with much sympathy that he welcomed the delegation of teachers¹⁴⁴. Consequently he gave a favourable reply to the union leaders. He promised to consider their demands of proper payment of salary, implementation of PF benefits, representation in the district Education Council and the making of 8th standard examination a government examination. He also reminded them that order has already been issued for the introduction of TC system and promised to give necessary direction to the inspectors to inform them before hand the annual examinations in all schools¹⁴⁵. Here it is to be noted that it was for the first time that the teachers of Malabar got an opportunity to present their grievance before a director on equal terms. It created a slight change in the attitude of the department officers. They began to discuss the grievances of the teachers with the union leaders¹⁴⁶. It gave a shot in the arm for

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, August 12, 1936

¹⁴² *Ibid*, August 20, 1936

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, September 24, 1936

¹⁴⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.89

¹⁴⁵ *The Mathrubhumi*, September 24, 1936

¹⁴⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.89

union activities in Malabar. The union leadership repeatedly reminded the teachers to be united and to join the union to get their grievances redressed¹⁴⁷.

After the Vatakara conference the teachers union became more active all over Malabar. The teachers of Ponnani taluk continued their efforts at unionization. Appeals were made to form unions in all teachers association centres. A conference was held on November 7th at Engadiyur Sree Narayana Vilasam Higher Elementary School. The meeting was presided over by K. Raman Menon. The conference passed resolutions demanding salary parity with local board teachers, appointment and dismissal of teachers with department consent, representation of teachers in education council, copy of annual examination report to the schools, compulsory education and common curriculum for elementary schools¹⁴⁸.

The cut in the teaching grant for the year 1935-36 had awakened the elementary teachers of Kurumbranad taluk. The union activities spread rapidly all over the taluk. It was decided to hold their taluk conference at Quilandi¹⁴⁹. Thus the second anniversary of the Kurumbranad teachers union was held at Madathil Higher Elementary school on May 9, 1936. Manomohana Menon presided over the meeting. T. Narayanan Nambiar gave a talk on 'Grievances of Teachers'. The conference passed resolutions demanding the redressal of teachers grievances like non payment of salary and arbitrary dismissal, prior information regarding annual examination and assurance of grand in aid with out cut before school recognition¹⁵⁰.

The teachers union continued to be active in Kottayam taluk also. Their taluk conference of the year was held at Kuthuparamba on 28 November 1936. C.Chathu in his welcome speech explained the grievances of the teachers and pointed out the defects in the spread of elementary education and also the dangers of communal schools. K. Gopalan Nambiar (District Board Member) in his presidential address said "Is there any court where there are complaints regarding the non payment of salary to the teachers. Schools are viewed by the managers as their private property. It is a crime to maintain schools as business concern"¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁷ The Mathrubhumi, September 25, 1936

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, November 12, 1936

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, April 30, 1936

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, May 14, 1936

¹⁵¹ Ibid, December 3, 1936

The conference passed resolutions highlighting all the major demands of the teachers and congratulated Maharaja of Travancore for the Temple Entry proclamation¹⁵².

Efforts were made to revitalize the union activities in Kozhikode taluk. Here. V.T Achutan Nair asked the efficient teachers of two teacher association centres in the city to take initiative to form a taluk committee. He wrote "The scavengers and toddy tapers had their own organization. Among the teachers the Board School and Municipal School Teachers had formed their associations. Aided School Teachers of other taluks have their own unions. But the aided teachers of our taluk have no union¹⁵³. Now M.N Pisharoti informed that as per the direction of the MATU, the Kozhikode taluk aided teachers union conference will be held in the last week of December at Calicut. Thus the conference was held at Training School Calicut. M.K. VeeraRaghava Ayyar, Principal of the training school in his presidential address asked the teachers to join together and to organise public meetings in different areas to acquire popular support. K.K. Poduval who welcomed the audience explained the helplessness of the aided school teachers. The conference elected a 25 member executive committee and seven resolutions were passed¹⁵⁴.

The teachers of Valluvanad actively continued their efforts at unionization. The first anniversary of the Valluvanad Taluk Teachers union was held at BEM Higher Elementary school, Ottapalam on November 28 1936. Dr. A.R. Menon in his presidential address compared the condition of teachers of Cochin and Malabar. He said "The teachers of cochin get a minimum salary of Rs 15 .They can't be dismissed with out the consent of the Department. But here teachers are facing several grievances. Join together, build unions and organize agitations"¹⁵⁵. He also asked the teachers to publish a journal for the same. M.P. Govinda Menon in his inaugural address reminded the teachers that their grievances could be redressed only through unions. The conference passed the following resolutions¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵² ibid

¹⁵³ ibid, December 10, 1936

¹⁵⁴ ibid, December 24, 1936

¹⁵⁵ ibid, December 4, 1936

¹⁵⁶ ibid, December 4, 1936

1. The dismissal of teachers only with the consent of the department and also with the provision of subsistence allowance
2. 25% of representation for teachers in the district Education council
3. Make 8th Standard examination a Government examination
4. Abolish all communal schools at the earliest.
5. Send reports and reviews of the examination to the superiors only with remarks of the head masters
6. Protest against the attempt to prevent teachers from participating in debates other than educational topics
7. Raise the salary of teachers to the level of local board teachers and give it directly to the teachers every month.
8. Revise the amount of stipend given to teacher students.

The conference constituted a taluk committee consisting of P. Sekhara Warier (President) P. Narayanan Nair and C.V Krishanan Ezhuthachan (Secretaries).¹⁵⁷

A conference of Chirakkal taluk aided teachers union was held at Town Hall on 22-09-1936. More than 900 teachers, both male and female, attended the meeting. R.M. Statham, in his presidential speech, promised to improve elementary education and advised the teachers to mobilize public opinion in favour of compulsory education. He promised to consider all the demands of the teachers including the proper payment of teaching grant. At the same time he reminded the teachers to give proper attention to students and education¹⁵⁸. Thus the teaching grant to higher trained teachers and secondary trained teachers was enhanced from Rs 144 to 156 and Rs 200 to 212 respectively¹⁵⁹. The government also promised to increase the pay and to improve the service conditions of aided school teachers to those of local board teachers¹⁶⁰.

The teachers union activities spread all over Malabar and it attracted public attention. The disputes between managers and teachers on salary issue arose at

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, September 25, 1936

¹⁵⁹ G.O.(Education) Madras, No 2683,15th December 1936

¹⁶⁰ G.O.(Education) Madras, No 2611,8th December 1936

several places. Teachers demands began to get greater support. Now the managers turned openly against the teachers. Thus some of the teachers of Kuthiravattam Higher elementary school were dismissed. The MATU demanded urgent official interference¹⁶¹. With a view to bring the attention of the Government and the District Educational Council on the teachers grievances Mathrubhumi wrote an editorial on 14th March 1937. It pointed out that the proposed resolution in the District Educational Council to stop the grant of managers who refuse salary to their teachers will not be a proper solution to their problem. It asked for the abolition of the system of allotting grant to the managers but to give the same directly to the teachers¹⁶². It was during the month of April that the teachers usually get their annual teaching grant. It was at the same period that the teachers came out of their training institutions. The managers made use of this opportunity to dismiss teachers in service and to appoint new teachers for a lower salary¹⁶³.

Meanwhile a meeting of the District Education council under R.M Pallatt passed a resolution for withholding the grant of Managers who refuse full amount of Salary to their teachers¹⁶⁴. O.V.Govindan Nambiar congratulated V. Sankara Narayana Menon who presented the resolution in the council. It was hailed as the result of the efforts made by the teachers for the last three years. But he argued that withholding teaching grant will affect the managers. But the teachers will have to suffer more. Therefore he demanded the payment of grant directly to the teachers. He said "The management system is not for the progress of the country. But only to create dangers. Until all schools are made under a common institution through legislation, education will continue to decline¹⁶⁵.

UNIONISATION: THE SECOND PHASE

The first phase of unionisation is over by 1937. The second phase begins with the declaration of the congress to participate in the election in 1937. But unionisation did not put an end to the difficulties of the teachers. They continued

¹⁶¹ The Mathrubhumi, November 27, 1936

¹⁶² Ibid, March 14, 1937

¹⁶³ Ibid, March 25, 1937

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, March 24, 1937

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, March 27, 1937

to be dismissed in different parts of Malabar. R. Manikkam of Palayad Girls school, Tellicherry was dismissed for refusing to sign an agreement for a low salary¹⁶⁶. The remaining teachers of the school were asked to organize strong propaganda and the new teachers were advised not to accept the post of the dismissed teachers¹⁶⁷. At the same time the union leaders could understand the difficulties faced by the managers in running their schools. The union did not adopt a confrontationist policy¹⁶⁸.

However many managers continued to refuse salary to the teachers. Some of them were reluctant to give the full amount but the teachers were forced to sign the acquittance for an amount not received. The union leaders called up on the teachers not to do so. They were advised to give complaints to the deputy inspector, DEO, 6th Circle Inspection and also the president of the district education council¹⁶⁹. This policy of the managers reached its climax when K.P. Padmanabhan, Madathil Higher Elementary School, Quilandi was dismissed by the manager¹⁷⁰.

This policy adopted by the managers made the union more active in various taluks of Malabar. The union could interfere in some of these issues and compelled the managers to give actual salary to the teachers¹⁷¹. By July 1937 the union could settle disputes in 19 schools. As the most important aspect of regular payment of the salary of teachers revolved around the grant, a 'grant varam' (week) was to be observed. Thus the MATU executive meeting held at Badagara on 2nd January 1937 decided to observe Grant varam during January and February all over Malabar¹⁷². In this context, P.R. Nambiar wrote an article in Mathrubhumi with the title 'Grant Varam'¹⁷³ Here he pointed out the miserable condition of the teachers and the irresponsible policy of the department. So he

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, March 20, 1937

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, April 9, 1937

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, May 14, 1937 See Articles by O.V.Govindan Nambiar which has a conciliatory tone

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, May 22, 1937

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, July 16,18, 1937. The unemployment among the trained teachers was increasing. Besides, as teaching experience was made compulsory for training selection, untrained teachers were ready to work even without salary or for a very small amount given by the managers. Moreover they had to sign for an amount they did not get which lead to irregular payment of salary misappropriation of teaching grant and the dismissal of teachers.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, May 28, 1937

¹⁷² *Ibid*, January 6, 1937

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, January 29, 1937

wanted the teachers to bring the following three points to the attention of the government.

1. Distribute the annual teaching grant (1936-37) without any prorata cut to all schools by the end of March
2. Give up the practice of distributing annual or half yearly grant and make provisions to give the same monthly without any cut.
3. Make provision to ensure actual grant to the teachers and also to take action against the managers who refuse to give salary to the teachers

All the teachers were asked to pass resolutions highlighting these points in the meetings of the teachers union, teachers association or public meetings convened as a part of grant Week to be celebrated in February all over Malabar. Public meetings were organized as a part of the Grant Week at several places like Payyannur, Talipparamba, Kalliasseri and Cherukunu. These meetings passed resolutions highlighting the grievances of the teachers¹⁷⁴.

K.K. Poduval, the secretary of the MATU, also called upon the teachers to observe 'Grand Week' through out Malabar and to explain their grievances to the public. While getting salary they were advised not to accept pronote and to give receipt only for the amount they received. If there were any difficulties they were to inform it to the union¹⁷⁵. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar wrote an article in Mathrubhumi to highlight once again the evil practices related to the payment of salary¹⁷⁶. The 'grant varam' was successfully observed in Chirakkal taluk. Public meeting held at places like Payyannur, Thalipparamb and Cherukunnu passed resolutions to highlight the teachers grievances¹⁷⁷. As per the district union circular, the Kurumbranad taluk union executive meeting held under K. Unnikidav asked all the branches of the union to observe the grant week¹⁷⁸. Active preparations were made at several places like Kuttiadi and Vattoli to make the day a great success¹⁷⁹. Certain branches of the Kottayam taluk union also thought about observing a 'Grant Week' Thus the Taluk union decided to observe a Grant Week from 6 to 13th of March. Teachers were asked to organize public meetings

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, February 20, 1937

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, February 25, 1937

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, March 7, 1937

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, February 20, March 2,9, 1937

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, January 23, 1937

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, February 19, 1937

to highlight their grievances¹⁸⁰. Such meetings were held at several places in the taluk and its resolutions were sent to the Minister and Director of Education¹⁸¹. In a public meeting held at Thiruvangad, Advocate T. Narayanan Nambiar in his presidential address said “The problem of aided teachers can be solved only when the management system is abolished and free and compulsory education is introduced under Government supervision.” He advised the teachers to strengthen their union and to make use of the opportunity when the leaders who are aware of their grievances got elected to the Madras Legislative Council. Then the resolution proposed by the district union demanding monthly salary without cut, action against managers who refuse salary to the teachers and the current year grant before 31st March was unanimously adopted¹⁸². Efforts were made to observe grant Week in Kozhikode taluk also¹⁸³. It was decided to begin the same on 6th March 1937.

Though unionisation was vigorous in North Malabar, the same could not be said about South Malabar. The efforts of unionisation in Eranad Taluk were comparatively weak. P.R. Nambiar repeatedly asked the teacher to awake and form their own unions. A teachers meeting was held on 16th January 1937 at Mannur Higher Elementary School¹⁸⁴. This meeting presided over by M.N. Pisharoti was attended by a large number of teachers. Here the Eranad taluk aided teachers union was formed. A.K.Gopalan Nair was the president and P.Krishnan Nair was elected secretary of the Union¹⁸⁵.

The teachers union activities gained strength in Ponnani taluk. The union activists were asked to visit several places in the taluk to organise branch unions. M.S Nair called up on the teachers to become members by taking 2 *annas* membership and 2 *annas* admission fee and to strengthen the union. They were also asked to contribute liberally to enable the taluk union to give its share to district union registration fund and for the 3rd district conference¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, March 6, 1937

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, March 9, 1937

¹⁸² *Ibid*, March 14, 1937

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, March 5, 1937

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, January 10, 1937

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, January 20, 1937

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, April 29, 1937

The Valluvanad teachers union work was conducted well. P.S.Varier asked teachers to demand full salary and to be the members of the Teachers union¹⁸⁷.

The efforts at unionization in Palakkad were very slow. Several times the union leaders asked the teachers to elect their representatives to the district union¹⁸⁸. By February 1937 all taluks except Palakkad formed their own union and elected their representatives to the district union. Hence the teachers of Palakkad were once again asked to move in this direction¹⁸⁹.

The condition of aided elementary teachers of Wayanad was more miserable. However they failed to develop an awareness of the same. While the efforts of unionisation were actively going on in other taluks, there were no such activities in Wayanad. But P. Narayanan Nambeesan, the Head master of Vellamunda Higher Elementary School convened a meeting of aided teachers on 16-01-37 at Manandavadi CMS School. This meeting under J.J. Joseph (Supervisor of CMS School) was expected to form the Wayanad taluk Teachers union. P.R. Nambiar called upon the teachers to make their efforts successful¹⁹⁰.

THIRD CONFERENCE OF MATU

The third conference was held in Zamorin's Guruvayurappan Hall, Calicut on 29th May 1937. More than 300 teachers including several lady teachers from different parts of Malabar attended the meeting. Many important personalities like Kattilasserri Muhammed Musaliar (Dt. Board vice president) E. Kannan (MLA) , A.V Kuttimalu Amma (MLA) , K.E. Sarada and Thomas also participated. V. Ramunni in his welcome speech explained the existing condition of elementary school and the grievances of the teachers of Malabar and demanded proper and regular payment of salary, scrutiny of tenure and representation for teacher in the District Educational Council. C.J Varkey made a presidential address¹⁹¹. He touched on all aspects of elementary education and made certain suggestion including a five year plan for compulsory education, increased grant and proper payment of salary to the teachers, ensured security of tenure and 8th standard public examination, vocational training to students, recognition of schools as

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, April 9, 1937

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, January 29, 1937

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, February 21, 1937

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, January 13, 1937

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, May 30, 1937

centres of rural upliftment and the reorganization of the District Educational Council. He asked the managers not to use the money given to 'purchase chalks for purchasing chocolates'¹⁹².

The conference passed resolution denouncing the evil practices followed by the managers and demanded abolishment of the private management system.¹⁹³ The conference authorized the president to send the resolution to the authorities and it was decided to organize the next conference in Valluvanad taluk.

Here it is to be noted that the union deputation which met the Education Director at Tellicherry had succeeded in getting his assurance for the redress of their grievances. Thus salary registers were made compulsory in all elementary schools and oral instructions were given to the department officers to prevent unnecessary dismissals¹⁹⁴. A resolution was presented in the Madras Legislative council for increasing the salary of the Malabar teachers – Even though it was defeated the grievances of the Malabar teachers became a topic of discussion in the official circle¹⁹⁵. The education director R.M. Statham submitted to the government his recommendations. On the basis of his recommendation, the government sanctioned certain concessions to the teachers including increase in their salary scale. This was viewed as a great achievement and the teachers realised the importance of the union and began to consider it as their own organisation.

At that time the manager used to appoint a large number of untrained teachers in elementary schools because it gave them an opportunity to appropriate their salary. Besides the appointment of at least one secondary trained teacher was made compulsory for getting recognition to higher elementary schools. As there was scarcity of trained teachers, some of the managers used to give an increased amount to them taking the same from the untrained teachers¹⁹⁶. The union fought against this injustice also. Moreover the annual examination gave an opportunity for the inspecting officers to obtain bribery. Therefore the

¹⁹² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.23

¹⁹³ The Mathrubhumi, June 1, 1937 See appendix III

¹⁹⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.89

¹⁹⁵ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.21

¹⁹⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.82

union demanded that the ESLC examination be made a government examination¹⁹⁷.

On their part the managers also made their association active and passed resolutions emphasizing that it was their right to appoint and dismiss teachers in elementary school. Their association gave instruction to its members to dismiss the activists of the teachers union. The department officials supported such efforts because they did not like the unions demand for making ESLC a public examination.

The government wanted to improve the service conditions and these were explained by R.M.Statham the Director of Education in the teachers meeting at Tellicherry. He said "In future all teachers of recognized aided schools will be given a Teaching License. It will clearly show the conditions on which the teachers are appointed, whether temporary or permanent, the period of appointment and the salary promised by the manager. It would be signed by the manager and counter signed by the department. The problem of security of tenure, delay in getting salary, cut in the teaching grant, all these complaints levelled against the managers can be rectified by these rules"¹⁹⁸.

After the 3rd conference of the teachers union, R.M Statham the Director of Education, visited Malabar and reminded the teachers of the measures already taken by the government to improve their condition. He pointed out the increase of salary to the higher elementary and secondary trained teachers and the exemption of efficient schools from the prorata cut. He promised to improve the service conditions of the teachers by introducing a teachers license. Above all it was declared that the recognition of schools of managers who refuse or reduce the salary of teachers will be repealed¹⁹⁹.

The Government decided to convene conferences to know the public opinion on education reforms²⁰⁰. C.J. varkey, Parliamentary secretary, education department came to Malabar and held discussion with public leaders like K.Kelappan, Muhammad Abdurahiman, Kozhipurath Madhava Menon, V.R.

¹⁹⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.23

¹⁹⁸ The Mathrubhumi, June 6, 1937

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, June 8, 1937

²⁰⁰ Ibid, August 20, 1937

Nayanar and K.S. Rama Swami Ayyar²⁰¹. He also accepted the memorandum given by the teachers union and discussed the points with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar²⁰². The teachers union gave their own suggestion to the government²⁰³. Above all the union submitted a memorandum to the prime Minister at Calicut requesting to implement the measures related to the salary and security of tenure of teachers stated in the communiqué of December 8th 1936²⁰⁴.

Thus the union could bring the grievances of the teachers to the attention of the authorities and the public. The union appreciated the favourable policy adopted by the authority particularly the statement made by the Director. Inspired by the union, teachers began to move against the corruption and malpractice of the managers in elementary schools. Now the managers were very much antagonized and a large number of union activists were dismissed. The union requested the authorities to take steps to prevent the same and to give a warning to the managers²⁰⁵. But the managers continued to dismiss teachers union activists who questioned their malpractices in the payment of salary and attendance registers. Some of the teachers felt that their grievances could be redressed only by abolishing the aided system. Therefore some among them formed a radical teachers union in Kottayam taluk. Teachers like K. Krishanan and Chathoth Kanari made propaganda for its conference²⁰⁶. Thus the Kottayam taluk radical teachers conference was held at R.C Amala Higher elementary school Pinarayi on October 24th 1937²⁰⁷. Representatives from different parts of the taluk participated in it. T.C. Govindan Nair in his welcome speech said that the managers were not giving the increased grant to the teachers. He viewed the official attempt to distribute salary through Head masters as a futile attempt because most of them are actually managers. A.K.Gopalan in his inaugural address said “many requests have been sent and several representation have been submitted. But the grievances of the teachers are yet to be readdressed.... Aided school teachers are suffering from many difficulties. The highhandedness is supported by the government. When there is conflict between the capitalist and

²⁰¹ Ibid, August 25, 1937

²⁰² Ibid, August 27, 1937

²⁰³ Ibid, September 7, 1937

²⁰⁴ Ibid, October 23, 1937. (Chief Ministers were known Prime Ministers in those days)

²⁰⁵ Ibid, July 11, 1937

²⁰⁶ Ibid, October 17, 1937

²⁰⁷ Ibid, October 29, 1937

the workers, the government will be on the side of capitalist. Therefore to get your grievances redressed, you will have to fight against an imperialist power..... Your strike resolution presented in the Vatakara conference had really frightened the department. It is also the reason for the present awakening. Public support is inevitable for the success of our agitation. Don't forget that this is the first and important duty of this organization²⁰⁸.

The congress emerged victorious in the election of 1937. However C.Rajagopalachari rejected the request to form the government. As the congress refused to form a ministry, an interim government under K.V. Reddy was formed in Madras. The official declaration emphasizing teachers security of tenure was issued at that time. Later the congress decided to form a government and this was welcomed by the teachers union. They expected educational progress under the congress ministry. But the policy of the government disappointed the teachers.

The Teachers union continued to raise their demands to redress the grievances of the teachers. They advised the teachers to sign only for the received amount. They requested the government to demand a bond of security from the managers who wish to open new schools. It was during this period that the peasants demanded the abolition of land lordism and the workers the abolition of capitalism. The teachers demanded the abolition of private management system.

It was in this backdrop, that the first teachers union council was held at Calicut in July 1938²⁰⁹. It had representatives from all taluks. It passed resolution demanding the abolition of private management system and asked the teachers not to sign for an amount they had not received. From this meeting a new union leadership emerged. V.Ramunni (President), P.S.Varier (Vice President) P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar (Secretary), T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and V.Krishanan Menon (Joint Secretaries) and P.R. Nambiar (Treasurer). All shades of opinion were well represented in the new leadership. P.S. Varier was a rightwing congress man, while .V.Ramuni and T.C.Narayanan Nambiar were active congress socialist. At the same time P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar and P.R. Nambiar acted as the link

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, October 29, 1937

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, July 23, 1938

between these two groups. The new leadership decided to formulate programmes and to enforce the same purely on trade union lines.

The teachers were given proper guidelines for their union work²¹⁰. The branch union should have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 15 members. The union members should discuss and implement all the programmes of the union – The union should not be used merely to settle grant disputes. The political differences among the teachers should not effect the smooth functioning of the union. The union members were advised to open reading rooms and adult education centres to create rapport with the people. They were to read and discuss the articles published in the union journals. They were also advised to collect the articles related to teachers and education published in other journals and to discuss it in the branch meetings. Above all the branch unions were advised to take up all the issue like grant cut, salary arrears and dismissal of teachers. During the early years of unionisation, most of the teachers favoured the union. But they were reluctant to be the members of the union, since they were fearful of its consequences. Hence teacher *jathas* were organised. All efforts to obstruct the same were bravely resisted. As a result teachers began to rally behind the union²¹¹.

TEACHERS AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Malabar aided school teachers movement grew as a part of the national movement²¹². In the assembly election of 1937, the union called up on the teachers to vote for the congress candidate. P.R. Nambiar wrote an article in *Mathrubhumi* with the title 'Aided Teachers and the election'. He wrote "Though the teachers are poor people who work and starve, this is a golden opportunity for the aided elementary teachers of Malabar to show the world that they are Indians with self respect. Let the country understand that these teachers who had long been in miseries have awakened today. Let the people realize that the teachers who are responsible to produce smart and active future citizens have full sense of duty"²¹³ Then he explained the poverty of the students and their parents around the school and argued that teachers are the one who see the real poverty of the

²¹⁰ *Adhyapakan*, October, 1939

²¹¹ *Kannur Jilla APT Union, Dwithiya Varshika Sammelana Souvenir* (Mattannur, 1961)

²¹² Vallathol Kumara Menon, *op.cit*, p.21

²¹³ *The Mathrubhumi*, February 16, 1937

land. He stated that “those who experienced poverty develop compassion towards poor people. Only those could redress the grievances of the people. To make the future of aided teachers happy, it was necessary to redress the grievances of the students and parents. Hence only a programme which was capable of eradicating starvation, poverty and unemployment in India for ever could help..... Therefore it is the duty of the teachers to support the congress which is trying to achieve the same²¹⁴.

The teachers were asked to vote in favour of the Indian national congress in the 1937 election. It was considered the duty of the teachers to vote for congress which was trying to eradicate poverty. Thus the congress got great victory in the election. The members of the teachers union worked for the victory of the congress candidate and later the union passed resolution congratulating the congress in winning the election²¹⁵. In July 1937 Rajaji formed a new government. The formation of a congress ministry in Madras gave an impetus to the organizational activities and in 1937 there were renewed attempts at the formation of units of union in many places²¹⁶. The teachers expected a favourable move from the new popular government. The union activists believed that the new government would control the managers and take proper measures to provide security of tenure to the teachers. But the policy of the government was not as expected. The aided elementary school teachers of Malabar were very active in the social, cultural and political life of Malabar. Thus they could establish intimate contact with the people. It was at that time a progressive group emerged within the congress. Rajaji could not tolerate the growth of leftist ideas within the congress. He fought against it. However the socialist ideas got great popularity and the young generation accepted the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. As Malabar, having better literacy and political awareness had to face acute unemployment, this change was more visible in this area²¹⁷. The growth of leftist trend in Malabar congress was ascribed to the aided elementary teachers. Hence Rajaji did not want the teachers involve in the socio political and cultural activities in Malabar. He could not approve the direct contact of the teachers with the mass. Therefore he began to feel that it is necessary to prevent the political activities of

²¹⁴ *Ibid*

²¹⁵ K.Gopalan Kutty, *op.cit*, p.199

²¹⁶ *Ibid*

²¹⁷ P.R. Nambiar, *op.cit*, p.91

the teachers of Malabar. The statement made by the Education Minister, Dr. Subbarayan at Quilandi on November 28 1937, that the teachers should not participate in political affairs was a clear indication of this move²¹⁸.

In this chapter we have concentrated only on efforts at unionization and the related organizational matters. Agitational issues are mentioned only briefly. However the agitational programme is taken up in the next chapter.

²¹⁸ Vallathol Kumara Menon, *op.cit*, p.24

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS AGITATION – 1936 – 1940

The teachers union went through intense agitations. Their popular resistance against arbitrary dismissal in different parts of the district actually made it an organized movement. When the union gradually strengthened and spread all over Malabar, the managers along with the department attempted to crush the union activities. At the same time the teachers along with their organizational work to strengthen their union got actively involved in the social, political and cultural life of Malabar. They opened reading rooms, arranged night classes, established close contact with the peasants and workers and also tried to mobilize them under their class organizations¹. Thus the common people began to consider the teachers as their friend and guide in the villages. Consequently the slogan 'Teacher–people unity' began to be heard in the processions organized by the teachers. It proved to be a great support to their agitation against the private management. The teachers had been demanding their security of employment from the very beginning of the movement and they viewed it as their right. Hence the union decided to resist all arbitrary dismissals without prior notice and proper reasons. Now the managers realized that the teachers union was posing a real threat and challenge to their vested interest. So the managers with the support of the department began their attack on the leaders of the teacher's union².

The resistance launched at Kannadiparamb Higher Elementary School in Chirakkal taluk actually marked the beginning of the direct agitation of teachers in Malabar. It was a warning to the private management as well as to the department. The reports and articles published in the newspaper of this event brought the teachers grievances to the attention of the department and the public. K.Raman Nambiar was the manager of the school. He never gave the salary to his teachers properly. Those who demanded it were often dismissed. The news of such incidents was reported in the newspapers. The department asked for an

¹ Adhyapakan, October, 1939

² V.V. Dakshinamoorthi, 'Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam' In Chinda Rajatha Jubilee Pathippu, (Trivandrum, 1988)

explanation, but did not take any action against the manager³. The same thing occurred in July 1937. M.P.Krishnan Nair one of the teachers in the school refused to sign the acquittance with out getting his salary⁴. Hence he was dismissed. The news of this episode also appeared in the newspaper. But the department continued their old policy of seeking explanation and kept away from such disputes. Moreover many teachers had already been dismissed from this school on flimsy grounds.

At that time T.C.Narayanan Nambiar was the headmaster of the school. He was an excellent teacher loved and respected by the students, teachers and the public. He was the president of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union and also the joint secretary of the M.A.T.U. Moreover he was a peasant activist and a leader of the National Movement. He too had to get arrears of the salary from the manager. Now the manager also refused to distribute the half yearly grant sanctioned to the teachers. They reminded him of the same again and again. The headmaster also made the manager aware of the seriousness of the issue. But the manager wished to dismiss the teachers. To make their dismissal easy, he decided to dismiss the headmaster first. Thus on 7th December 1936, the manager gave him a dismissal order and asked him to go out of the school. But Nambiar refused to obey the order. Expecting the same, the manager had already requested the police to intervene. But before the constable could reach the place, the headmaster started the classes prior to the stipulated time. His brother who was the *Adhikari* of the area gave the manager help and guidance. Now the constable was asked to expel the teacher out of the school⁵. But the headmaster refused to go. He said that they could take only his dead body out of the school. He also argued that as the classes had already been started it shouldn't be disturbed till 4 o'clock in the evening. Nobody should enter the school without his permission and allowed himself to be arrested after the school hours. Thus the police had to wait till the evening.

Meanwhile slips were sent and the news of the dismissal spread to the neighboring areas. Messengers on bicycle took the news to several areas. A large number of people rushed to the school crying 'We want our headmaster'⁶. His

³ The Mathrubhumi, December 17, 1936

⁴ Ibid, July 14, July 29, 1936

⁵ Ibid, December 17, 1936

⁶ Ibid, December 13, 1936

colleagues and parents of the students rallied behind him. The union leaders like P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, Palakkal Anandan Nambiar and O.V.Govindan Nambiar reached the place. The teachers unions under P. M. Kunhiraman Nambiar led the agitation. Meanwhile the police constable advised the manager to settle the issue. The compromise talk went on till late and it was decided that they would resume the talk. But as the headmaster was not allowed to close the school, both the parties had to remain in the school itself. Meanwhile the constable was called back and the discussion went on in the next morning also. By the evening *jatha* of teachers, peasants and workers and common people reached the place. The manager who was very much alarmed at the unity of the teachers and the fury of the people decided to settle the issue amicably. He apologized before the union leaders and the public for his mistakes. He repealed his order and agreed to give the arrears of the salary to the teachers by January 1937⁷. Thus the first agitation of the teachers proved to be a great success.

The Kannadiparamb agitation proved the growing strength of the teachers union. The union in its statement published in Mathrubhumi reminded the teachers "Union is our strength; service is our motto"⁸. The success of this agitation was actually due to the support and cooperation rendered by the common people. This was highlighted by Keraleeyan who wrote a song stating that the teachers security of tenure was to be ensured not by the government and the department but by the common people⁹. Thus it gave the slogan of Teacher-people unity to the Teachers Movement. Now the teachers became aware of the real importance of popular support for their agitations. At the same time the presence of the police in this agitation showed that the Government was on the side of the management. Thus the teachers as well as the people realized that their agitation for security of tenure was a political one¹⁰. This victory was also a warning against the managers association and the department.

In the teachers conference held at Calicut in May 1937 a resolution had been passed urging the working committee to organize strikes where ever they were deemed necessary¹¹. However Malabar D.E.O wrote 'Elementary schools at

⁷ *Ibid*, December 17, 1936

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ Desabhimani 40th Birth day special, (Calicut, February,1987)

¹⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, *Adhyapaka Prasthanam Utharakeralathil*, (Trivandrum, 1978) p.27

¹¹ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952,25th April 1938, TNA

various centres particularly from north Malabar are occupied more with agitation against the management and the department than discharging their duties'. Teachers are found organising *Jathas* and going about from place to place shouting slogans and trying to enlist public sympathy towards their cause¹². The managers began to oppress the teachers and adopted collective efforts to suppress their organisation¹³. At the same time, the teachers of Malabar who expected much from the congress government in Madras, now realized that Rajaji was actually giving instructions to the Dept officers to render all help and assistance to the managers to suppress the organization of the teachers¹⁴.

The managers could not tolerate the activities of the teacher's union. Most of them wanted to keep the teachers as their servants. Some of them even made the teachers do their personal works. Sankaran Master, the manager of Madathil Higher Elementary school used his teachers to collect grass to feed his cattle, to purchase provisions for his house or to bring '*vannathimattu*' for the women members of his family¹⁵. On 30th September 1937, K.P.Padmanabhan, one of the Assistant teachers in his school was dismissed. K.P. Padmanabhan was a secondary trained teacher having three years of experience. He was also an efficient teacher who was very much loved and respected by his students, colleagues and the public. The manager has no personal complaints against him. He had not been warned even once. However he was given the dismissal order at 3.30 pm and was asked to clear out by four in the evening¹⁶. It was stated that K.P.Padmanabhan had not completed his S.S.L.C. even after a period of three year. Secondly the inspection remarks on him were not satisfactory. Thirdly the strength of class attendance had not improved. These were the reasons that the manager gave for dismissing the teacher¹⁷. He was dismissed with out giving the arrears of his salary.

It was the period of active unionization of teachers all over Malabar. Efforts were also made to form a unit of the Teachers union at Quilandy. K.P. Padmanabhan was elected president of this union .There fore the department also

¹² Ibid

¹³ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 13, July 4, 1938

¹⁴ P.R. Nambiar, 'Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodatuthu' In Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi, (Quilon,1975)

¹⁵ Interview with K.P. Padmanabhan at his residence in Quilandi on 30th March 1993

¹⁶ The Mathrubhumi, October 8, 1937

¹⁷ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952,25th August 1936, TNA

wanted to dismiss him. It was argued that he was dismissed because he was an office bearer of the union. But this argument was not fully accepted because the manager had allowed the union meeting to be held in his own school building¹⁸. Anyhow it is to be noted that the teacher was dismissed as soon as he was elected president of the teachers union. No doubt, the encouragement given by the Managers Association and the department played a prominent role in this dismissal.

The M.A.T.U decided to take up the issue and asked the manager to reinstate the teacher. The attempt made by P.R.Nambiar to settle the issue failed. Meanwhile a protest meeting of the parents and the public was held at mission school hall, Quilandy. Here P.R.Nambiar requested the support of the parents and the public and a five member committee under E. Kunhikannan Nair (a nationalist and a noted advocate) was constituted to settle the issue¹⁹. The committee made sincere efforts to solve the problem. But it failed to obtain a favorable response. Hence there was a suggestion to open a new school, if necessary²⁰. On 7th October 1937 five teachers of the school gave an ultimatum to the manager asking him to repeal the dismissal order. But the manager refused to do so. Then they left the school²¹. At the same time the managers argued that it was their right to appoint and dismiss the teachers and also to fix their salary. They protested against the steps adopted by the teachers of Madathil school and decided to support the manager to run the school²².

A meeting of the teachers to protest against this was held at Quilandy on October 13th 1937. Teachers *jatha* from Vatakara, Perambra, Arikkulam, Chemanchery and Viyyur reached the meeting place. C.K.Govindan Nair, the congress leader and a member of the legislative assembly presided over the meeting. Here P.R.Nambiar explained the grievances of the teachers and pointed out the crisis at Madathil school. The resolutions passed in the meeting protested the policy of the manager, congratulated the fellow teachers who left the school, appealed to the union to raise the relief fund to help these teachers and also

¹⁸ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952,25th August 1936, TNA

¹⁹ The Mathrubhumi, October 7, 1937

²⁰ Ibid, October 16, 1937

²¹ Ibid, October 9, 1937

²² Ibid, October 7, 1937

asked the new teachers not to join in the school²³. In spite of all these developments, the manager refused to change his attitude. The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union submitted a memorandum to Rajagopalachari to highlight the seriousness of the situation²⁴. After protracted discussions, it was decided to restore the statusquo. The Manager informed that he would declare the same in a parents meeting that was to be held on 15.10.37. But later he changed his mind and refused to attend the meeting²⁵.

Consequently a public meeting was convened at Quilandy on October 17,1937. Here E.Kunhikannan Nair and C.K.Govindan Nair explained the efforts already taken to settle the issue and criticised the arrogant policy of the management. The parents of Quilandy had induced the union to start a rival school. Hence C.K.Govindan Nair presented the suggestion to open a new school. In spite of the opposition made by K.Manomohana Menon a seven member committee under E. Kunhikkannan Nair was constituted for the same²⁶.

The MATU decided to observe October 31, 1937 as a sympathy day to express protest against the policy of the management. The district union also issued a pamphlet entitled "*Teachermar Orungiyirikkanam*' (Teachers be ready)²⁷. Attempts were made to observe the day in different parts of the district. As a part of it teachers were asked to organize public meetings at union centres and in places where there was no union to organize the same, it was to be convened with the support the people. Here the teachers were to explain the grievances of the teachers, to point out how the managers were misusing the government grant, to pass resolutions on these points and send the copies of the same to the authorities²⁸.

Efforts were made to observe the Sympathy Day at several places like Orkatteri, Eramala, Kunnummakara, Azhiyur, Chombala, Uralungal, Vellikulangara and Iringannur in Kurumbranad taluk. M.R.Narayana Kurup, the president of the teachers union of Orkatteri branch gave the necessary direction. It was decided to organize public meeting in all these places to bring the teachers

²³ Ibid, October 19, 1937

²⁴ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952,25th April 1938, TNA

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ The Mathrubhumi, October 20, 1937

²⁷ Ibid, October 23, 1937

²⁸ Ibid, October 24, 1937

grievances to the attention of the public and also to pass resolutions on the Madathil school issue. *Jathas* were also arranged to the meeting places²⁹. Efforts were also made at Tellicherry and Kannur to organize public meetings in connection with the 'Sympathy Day' celebrations³⁰. As the General secretary of the MATU, P.R. Nambiar gave effective leadership to this agitation. It was not approved by the department. Hence based on an official remark he was dismissed from service. This dismissal actually strengthened the teachers agitation at Quilandy.

The Sympathy Day highlighting the Madathil school agitation was observed all over Malabar. Public meetings were held at several places like, Vatakara, Quilandi, Chombala, Uralungal, Vellikulangara, Eramala, Iringannur, Vallikkad, Narippatta, Mannur, Chaliyam, Atholi, Ramanattukara, Perinthalmanna, Kondotti, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Ponnani, Perumpetappu, Tripreyaar, Kattur, Vallapuzha, Tripangode, Chavakkad, Perinjanam, Matilakam, Tellicherry, Chokli, Panur, Kannur, Pazhayangadi, Azheekode and Karivellur³¹. Thus a large number of meetings were held through out Malabar in which sympathy Day resolutions were passed. It protested against the manager and congratulated the teachers who had resigned their post. The dismissal of P.R. Nambiar and the involvement of the department in it was also criticised. A separate *jatha* organized by the radical teachers union reached the meeting place at Tellicherry. In certain places the meetings were organized by the area congress committees. There were also instances of teachers meetings at congress offices. The meeting at Quilandy was presided over by P.K. Kunhisankara Menon, the president of the District Educational Council. A grand procession of teachers with tricolor flag reached the meeting place. In this meeting Madhuravanam Krishnakurup declared "This is the Kurukshetra. The fight here is between Dharma and Adharama and Dharma will win³². In the public meeting held at Karivellur P.R. Nambiar criticised the policy of the management and the department. He said "If any body thinks that they can destroy the union by dismissing a district union secretary, then it is mere foolishness"³³.

²⁹ *Ibid*, October 24, 1937

³⁰ *Ibid*, October 29, 31, 1937

³¹ *Ibid*, November 5,6, 1937

³² Thikkodiyan, *Arang Kanaatha Natan*, (Kottayam, 1991) , p. 118

³³ *The Mathrubhumi*, November 6, 1937

At the same time the managers decided not to appoint the dismissed teachers and those who had resigned from their schools³⁴. The managers conference held at Quilandy protested against the propaganda made by public leaders against them. It also criticised the biased policy adopted by certain news papers. But P.K. Kunhisankara Menon in his presidential address reminded the managers of the consequences of their policy of discarding public opinion³⁵.

In this backdrop, the manager decided to settle the issue. Thus a meeting of the parents was convened on November 7th 1937. After a heated discussion it was decided to reinstate the teachers on certain conditions and the president was authorized to inform the same to the president of the District Educational Council³⁶. However the teachers union *Jathas* and meetings continued to highlight the issues involved in the Madathil School agitation and protested against unnecessary dismissal.

Meanwhile the committee under E.Kunhikkannan Nair had opened a rival school (Panthalayani) in the near by Mission School building. They persuaded the manager of Chaliya elementary school situated near Madathil school to apply for transfer of locality to the mission school³⁷. The new committee had taken over the management of Chaliya school which was run by V. Komappan. Eight teachers of Madathil school including the Head master K.P.Padmanabhan joined the new school. The department threat of suspension of certificate was neglected. The teachers warned the government that action against them would make the situation worse³⁸. It was the first rival school opened by the teachers union³⁹. Public meetings were held through out Malabar requesting the department to recognize the new school⁴⁰. Most of the congressmen agreed to their demand. Every body who visited the school realized that the school was being run properly. But the DEO and the Deputy inspector were on the side of the manager. K.P.R Gopalan presented a resolution in the District Educational Council demanding an enquiry in to Madathil School crisis and to stop its grant. But it failed. His resolution calling for the Government to take over the elementary schools and the granting of

³⁴ *Ibid*, October 30, 1937

³⁵ *Ibid*, November 5, 1937

³⁶ *Ibid*, November 10,18, 1937

³⁷ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952, 25th April 1938, TNA

³⁸ *The Mathrubhumi*, March 24, 1937

³⁹ P.R. Smaranika, P.R. Anusmarana Samithi (Calicut, 1988)

⁴⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.29

security of tenure to teachers met with opposition in the council⁴¹. However the teachers union tried its best to obtain recognition for the rival school. Teachers from different parts of the district gave financial assistance to the new school. Here the teachers maintained their school for one year even by suffering starvation. They could face all these difficulties because they were aware that they were fighting for the existence of the union and for their security of tenure⁴².

The congress ministry was there in Madras at that time. The K.P.C.C under Muhammed Abdurahiman and EMS Namboothiripad was in favour of the teachers agitation⁴³. According to the rule, the District Educational Council had to recognize the school. P.K. Kunhisankara Menon, the president of the council and a congress leader considered the teachers agitation as just and genuine. Moreover Dr.Subharayan, the minister of education, visited the school and attended a teachers conference there. However the department officers expressed their opposition in strong words. They threatened the District Educational Council that recognition given to a rival school would lead to more such demands in the future. But K. Kelppan and K.P.R.Gopalan made the council aware of the necessity of giving recognition to the new school⁴⁴. R.M. Statham, the Director of Education visited the school and made enquiries on the Madathil school crisis⁴⁵. At last, for the first time in the history of the Madras state, a rival school was given recognition⁴⁶. It was a severe blow to the managers association.

The Madathil school lost support of the parents and the public. Even then the manager continued to refuse salary to his teachers. Naturally the District Educational Council had to seek explanation for the same and gradually the school began to decline. Thus the teachers agitation against unjust dismissal demanding their security of tenure became successful due to the support rendered by the parents and the public. It could gain popular support in Malabar. The agitation gave a new impetus to the teachers movement. It revealed that the union had the strength to resist the arrogance of the managers. It inculcated a new spirit of self confidence among the union activist⁴⁷. It made the teachers more

⁴¹ The Mathrubhumi, December 8, 1937

⁴² P.R. Nambiar, (ed) Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam (Trivandrum, 1982) p. 94

⁴³ Ibid, p. 94

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ The Mathrubhumi, February 20, 1938

⁴⁶ Ibid, May 27, 1938

⁴⁷ P.R. Smaranika, P.R. Anusmarana Samithi (Calicut, 1988)

aware of the importance of organizing union activities along with the common people. The teachers resistance against unjust dismissal continued at various places in different parts of Malabar.

The next centre of this agitation was Cheenamveed Higher Elementary School near Vatakara. P.R. Nambiar was the Head master of the School. He was a congress activist and also the General Secretary of the MATU. In fact he was residing with K.P. Padmanabhan for two months to lead the struggle.⁴⁸ The department could not tolerate the same. The DEO Mohammad sahib did not approve of his involvement in the teachers agitation. He visited the school in the Head master's absence and made a remark in the visitors book that "The Head Master of the school P.Ramunni Nambiar is out to upset order and discipline in schools run under private management on the ground that he happens to be the secretary of the MATU"⁴⁹ Hence the manager was advised to expel the teacher from the school. On the basis of this note, on October 25th 1937, P.R Nambiar was dismissed from his school. Since he was on leave he got the notice only on 27th October 1937 by registered post⁵⁰. It was for the first time that the department openly interfered with the object of dismissing teachers involved in the union activities. The teachers already had the complaint that responsible officers without understanding the problems of the teachers danced to the tunes of the managers and helped them in suppressing the union⁵¹.

The dismissal of P.R. Nambiar infuriated the teachers as well as the common people. The public took up the issue⁵². On 29th October 1937, some of the parents came to the school and held a meeting along with the teachers and students. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar advised the students to remain calm and quiet. The Puthuppanam congress committee and the association of the unemployed also reached the school and made detailed enquires.⁵³ The sympathy day public meeting held in different parts of the district highlighted this issue also. The parents authorized Advocate T.Gopalan and Advocate K.A Vasudevan to meet R. Sankaran Nambiar. But they failed to get a favourable

⁴⁸ K.P. Padmanabhan, 'Adhythe Rival School' in P.R. Smaranika (Calicut, 1988)

⁴⁹ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.451, 23rd February 1938, TNA

⁵⁰ The Mathrubhumi, October 30, 1937

⁵¹ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952,25th April 1938, TNA

⁵² P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

⁵³ The Mathrubhumi, November 5, 1937

reply⁵⁴. The colleagues of P.R Nambiar requested the manager to repeat his order and to reinstate the teacher. It was also rejected. Then four teachers of the school decided to boycott the school⁵⁵. Parents and the people made several attempts on their own initiative to make the manager correct his mistakes. But failed.⁵⁶ On 12th November 1937, a public meeting was convened near the school. The Puthuppanam congress committee and the association of the unemployed presented their reports. The meeting asked the manager and the DEO to reinstate the teacher. Here a committee was constituted to prepare a representation to be submitted to the manager and the DEO. A delegation of lawyers consisting of V.K Raman Menon, T. Gopalan and K.A Vasudevan was authorized to meet the DEO. Above all steps were taken to send a mass petition of the parents to the manager and the department⁵⁷. But the manager remained obstinate and made the situation worse. Thus on November 22nd 1937 four other teachers of the school were dismissed with out clearing their salary arrears. Two of them were teachers with more than seven years of service. Two police constables were posted in front of the school. As the dismissed teachers were not allowed to address their students they had to bid farewell through mere gestures. The students wore black badges in protest and were really weeping in the class⁵⁸. This incident made the parents more agitated and many of them refused to sent their children to the school. Students began to attend the class wearing black badges and some of them were dismissed⁵⁹. Now the issue grew worse. J.F Thadayas the Vice president of the District Educational Council visited the school and found that the number of students had decreased from 352 to 147⁶⁰. The attitude of the students and the parents revealed how much P.R Nambiar was loved and respected by them⁶¹. Here it is to be noted that congress and Athmavidya Sangam were very active in this area during that period. These progressive elements rallied behind the teachers.

⁵⁴ Ibid, November 13, 1937

⁵⁵ K.K. Damodaran, 'Pirichuvittavar Keezhatangi' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988) They were E. Gopala Kurup, K.Gopalakurup, Vazhayil Kunchakkan and Pakkayil Gopalan

⁵⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon , Adhyapakarute Adhyapakan in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

⁵⁷ The Mathrubhumi, November 17, 1937

⁵⁸ Ibid, November 25, 1937

⁵⁹ Ibid, November 27, 1937

⁶⁰ Ibid, December 2, 1937

⁶¹ Dr. A. Padmanabha Kuruppu, 'Priyappetta Ramunniattan' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

A public meeting was held at Karimbanapalam on December 2, 1937. The Puduppanam congress committee president K.P.Govindan narrated the attempts already made to settle the issue and the uncompromising attitude adopted by the managers. A committee under C.K.Govindan Nair was authorized to meet the manager⁶². But the manager replied arrogantly that he had no time to meet them till December 28, 1937⁶³. Now the Puduppanam village congress committee organized a meeting of protest in front of the school. A resolution criticizing the policy of the manager who refused to see even the members of the Legislative Assembly was passed⁶⁴.

The parents and the students again requested the manager to reinstate the teacher. 140 parents signed a petition in this regard⁶⁵. But the manager and the authorities refused to respond to the petition signed by majority of the parents. The parents delegation under C.K. Govindan Nair met the manager at the residence of Rairu Kurup, the president of the managers association. Even then the manager was not ready for a compromise⁶⁶. An eleven member committee consisting of the leading citizens of the area was constituted to convene a public meeting. This committee once again tried to meet the manager. But failed.⁶⁷ Now the issue was left to a 3 member committee consisting of the Tahsildar, Deputy Inspector and Advocate T.Gopalan⁶⁸. But the deputy inspector refused to cooperate with it and efforts were made to open a new school⁶⁹.

At the same time the managers association gave all support to the manager. It wanted to prove that the manager had every right to dismiss even the leaders of the union⁷⁰.

A public meeting was held on 16th February 1938 under M.P Damodaran at the new school building. The construction work had already begun. The meeting formed a 10 member committee to open the school and requested the government to make an open enquiry on the issue⁷¹. The materials for the construction of the

⁶² The Mathrubhumi, November 28, 1937

⁶³ Ibid, December 2, 1937

⁶⁴ Ibid, December 4, 1937

⁶⁵ Ibid, January 2, 1938

⁶⁶ Ibid, December 7, 1937

⁶⁷ Ibid, December 12, 1937

⁶⁸ Ibid, December 19, 1937

⁶⁹ Ibid, December 4, 1937

⁷⁰ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.95

⁷¹ The Mathrubhumi, January 19, February 20, 1938

new school were supplied by the public⁷². Even at this stage P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar met the manager and the president of their association. But failed to obtain a favourable response. Thus on march 4th 1938 the rival school was opened by Kozhipurath Madhava Menon.⁷³ P.R Nambiar and four other teachers of the school along with M.K.Raman Master joined the new school⁷⁴. The teachers of Vatakara branch union requested the government to recognize the Puthuppanam National Hindi school as a model school of the Wardha Scheme⁷⁵.

The teachers demand for security of tenure had a profound impact in the political circle. While the managers association stood behind the management, the public opinion turned in favour of the teachers agitation. The congress MLA's of Malabar and the congress members in the district board supported the teachers. More over, then the congress ministry was in Madras. C.J.Varkey, the Minister of Education had the impression that P.R Nambiar was dismissed because he happened to be the secretary of the MATU. He also believed that the then DEO had a hand in the matter. Hence he asked the director to make a thorough investigation in this case⁷⁶. Thus R.S Statham the director of education visited the Cheenamveedu Higher elementary school and examined the records. He talked to the manager who was called to the office of the deputy director⁷⁷. P.R. Nambiar also met him and explained all aspects of the issue⁷⁸. In this backdrop, the manager agreed for a compromise. P.R Nambiar and his colleagues were reinstated. Consequently the national Hindi school opened as a rival school was closed⁷⁹. Mean while on the basis of the director's report the government declared that the action of the manager was hasty and arbitrary and requested the District Educational Council to take this circumstance in to consideration in the assignment of teaching grant to the school⁸⁰. Thus the government gave a warning to the manager and issued orders to reduce the grant for the school. But as the teachers were already reinstated the order was withdrawn⁸¹. This agitation was a severe blow to the management's attitude over

⁷² K.K.Damaodaran, op.cit

⁷³ The Mathrubhumi, March 8, 1938

⁷⁴ K.K.Damodaran , op.cit

⁷⁵ The Mathrubhumi, March 24, 1938

⁷⁶ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.451,23th February 1938, TNA

⁷⁷ The Mathrubhumi, February 22, 1938

⁷⁸ Ibid, February 25, 1938

⁷⁹ Ibid, May 20, 1938

⁸⁰ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.1436, 23rd June 1938, TNA

⁸¹ The Mathrubhumi, August 4, 1938

the right of dismissal. For the first time in the history of aided elementary school teachers the government interfered in the question of teachers dismissal. In fact, it was the greatest achievement of this agitation. The teachers became more confident in their right against the management and the department. At the same time they realized the importance of popular support in their agitation.

Another stage of teachers agitation was opened in the Chirakkal taluk. The managers of Malabar used to dismiss teachers who had participated in the national movement⁸². The same incident was repeated in St. Antony's higher elementary school, Thayyil, Kannur. Here teachers like M.V. Anandan, K.P. Karuvan, M.P. Achuthan and M. Kunhikrishnan were congress men who participated in Khadi propagation, toddy shop picketing and other activities⁸³. M.V. Anandan was the treasurer of Chirakkal taluk teachers union. As a congress man he was elected to the Kannur municipality⁸⁴ and from there to the district education council. As a part of the management policy, on October 31st memo was given to those teachers stating that their appointment was made temporary and their salary was reduced. M.V. Anandan who was the first assistant having 5 year experience was demoted and an untrained junior teacher was posted in his place. So they did not accept the memo and they asked for an explanation. Since the teachers refused to accept the memo, they were suspended from service on 1-11-38⁸⁵. A telegram explaining these developments was sent immediately to the secretary of the district teachers union. P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar and PR Nambiar rushed to the school to give necessary directions to the teachers⁸⁶.

On November 7th 1938, a parents meeting was held in the grounds in front of Thayyil baby care centre. K.P. Karuvan narrated the incident and argued that they rejected the memo and an explanation was requested because the allegations levelled against them were vague and cooked up. The resolution of the meeting regretted the suspension of the teachers and requested the manager to repeal all his measures unconditionally. A committee consisting of K. Ramunni, Tharammal Krishanan, Kottiyamkandi Puthukudi Bappu, K.P. Achuthan and V.

⁸² Wardha Model UP School Suvarna Jubilee Souvenir (Kannur, 1990)

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ The Mathrubhumi, November 4, 1938 & Kannur Jilla KAPT Union Onnamvarshika Souvenir (Thalipparamba, 1972)

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar, 'Vittuveezchayillatha Samara Dheeran' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

Keshava Kammath, M. Vasudeva Kammath and M.C Kunhiraman was constituted. It was authorized to meet the manager and the department and to take necessary steps with constitution of the hajar committee⁸⁷. The union leaders like OV.Govindan Nambiar, T.C Narayanan Nambiar and Palakkal Anandan Nambiar met the head master as well as the manager. However, for rejecting the memo and for propagandising against the manager and the school three teachers were dismissed from the school. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, P.R Nambiar and T.C Narayanan Nambiar met the manager J.A. Fernandes, but failed to get a favourable response⁸⁸. The efforts made by the committee of the parents and the school attendance committee also failed. The teachers argued that they did not show any disrespect to the manager and had not made any propaganda against the school. They also sent a registered notice to the manager J.A.Fernandas stating that for dismissing them the manager would be responsible for their defamation and all financial loss in the future⁸⁹. The attendance committee and the dismissed teachers sent representation to the director of education, divisional officer, DEO and the Chirakkal taluk Deputy Inspector⁹⁰.

The Chirakkal taluk teachers union executive met at Kalliasseri Yuvajana Vayanasala and protested against the policy of the manager. At the same time it congratulated the institutions supporting the teachers, and decided to convene an urgent meeting of the teachers to discuss the issue⁹¹. The committee once again met the manager. But he was not ready for a compromise and the same was informed in writing. Thus another public meeting was held on November 27th 1938. K.P.Ragahavan Nair (BA, BL), the secretary of the Tellicherry Municipal congress committee presided over the meeting. He reminded the manager of the dangers involved in opposing public opinion. The meeting passed the following resolutions.

1. To protest against the policy of the manager.
2. Inform the manager and the authorities that if the action taken against the teachers were not repealed unconditionally before 15th

⁸⁷ The Mathrubhumi, November 10, 1938

⁸⁸ Ibid, November 11, 1938

⁸⁹ Ibid, November 17, 1938

⁹⁰ Ibid, November 24, 1938

⁹¹ Ibid, November 27, 1938

December, the parents would be forced to follow non cooperation against the school.

3. Make an enquiry on the issue and requested the director and the government to interfere so as to settle the issue⁹²

A special conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union was held on 3rd December 1938 in the grounds in front of the Thayyil Baby Care Centre. P.R. Nambiar and T.C Narayanan Nambiar spoke on the occasion and emphasized the necessity of abolishing the management system as well as British imperialism which prevented the progress of elementary education. There after the teachers union council was held under O.V.Govindan Nambiar at Rammohan Reading room. Here Palakkal Anandan Nambiar presented the resolution condemning the unjust dismissal of teachers⁹³. V.Ramunni in his presidential address highlighted the policy of oppression adopted by the managers and the anti union approach of the inspecting officers and also emphasized the abolition of the private management system as well as British imperialism⁹⁴.

Even at this stage, the manager was not ready to cancel his order. Thus it was decided to open a rival school. At that time the union had been demanding the reorganization of elementary education based on the Wardha scheme. Moreover M.V. Anandan was a congress activist. Therefore it was decided that the instruction in the new school would be based on the new scheme. Thus the rival school was named Wardha Model school. The new school was inaugurated by Swami Ananda Tirta in January 1939⁹⁵. This school having 300 students and 13 teachers was run by a committee. However the resignation of Rajagoapalachari Ministry and the introduction of Governors rule made the circumstances favourable to the old school. Hence the teachers suffered much to retain the new school. However the public gave all assistance to them. The parents and the people made public collection to give the salary of the teachers. Their interest was actually due to their loyalty towards national movement. Even then the school had to wait till 1946 to get its recognition. From this experience

⁹² Ibid, December 1, 1938

⁹³ Ibid, December 6, 1938

⁹⁴ Ibid, December 13, 1938

⁹⁵ Ibid, July 29, 1939

the teachers union leaders realized that their agitations would be more successful and could achieve their objective more quickly under a popular government⁹⁶.

Another stage of teachers agitation was in Ponnani taluk. E. Moideen Kutty the manager of Cherulal and Parakkal schools near Kalpakancheri in Ponnani taluk was a cruel oppressor of teachers. He compelled his teachers to sign the acquittance register with out giving their salary. But the teachers refused and demanded their full salary. The manager got angry and the teachers were dismissed. The manager soon called the teachers to his room and two of them were beaten up with a cane⁹⁷. The head master remained a silent spectator. This incident rocked Malabar. Ponnani was a Muslim dominated area. There were no adequate transport facilities to reach the place. The manager was a very influential person in the locality and those who opposed him found it difficult to get even food⁹⁸. The union was not very active in this area. Above all due to the influence of the manager, the department remained silent on the issue. How ever the union leaders like T.C.N Nambiar rushed to the place and took up the case⁹⁹. Soon a petition was filed at Kalpakanchery police station and the union organized a strong agitation in this area. A meeting of the teachers of Edakkulam branch union passed a protest resolution criticizing the action taken against the seven teachers of Cherulal and Parakkal schools. It also asked all other teachers to submit their resignation¹⁰⁰. The MATU constituted a committee consisting of N.Poker, P.S.Varier and V.Kunhikrishna Menon to make an enquiry in this issue¹⁰¹. Mean while the police rejected the petition filed by the teachers on the ground that there was no evidence for the same. Under these circumstances, as per the direction of the MATU a joint conference of the teachers of Edakkulam, Alathiyur, Tirur and Kalpakanchery was convened on 15th January 1939¹⁰². The conference passed resolution protesting against the action of the management and the policy adopted by the police department. The manager tried to bribe the union leaders and asked them not to create further problems. But he was reminded that all of them were union activist with a sense of dignity¹⁰³. The manager was severely

⁹⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.96

⁹⁷ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24,1938 & The Mathrubhumi, October 14, 1938

⁹⁸ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.32

⁹⁹ T.C. Narayanan Nambiar. 'Polinjupoya Ujjualatharam' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

¹⁰⁰ The Mathrubhumi, October 18, 1938

¹⁰¹ Prabhatham, Volume 32 , November 21 1938 & The Mathrubhumi, November 15, 1938

¹⁰² The Mathrubhumi, January 20, 1939

¹⁰³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.22

criticised and finally he apologized and agreed to give full salary to the teachers. The common people congratulated the union leaders who dared to question the autocratic policies followed by the manager¹⁰⁴. Since this episode, teachers union began to gain strength in Ponnani taluk.

The policy adopted by the department in the teachers agitation made the managers more stubborn. At the same time the teachers gained the courage and self-confidence to demand their actual salary. It led to salary disputes and dismissal of teachers all over the district.

P.M. Kunhiraman, the manager of Parassinikkadav Higher Elementary School, refused to distribute the salary of the teachers even after getting the half yearly grant. But the teachers demanded the arrears of their salary. Consequently K. Kumaran, one of the teachers in the school was dismissed and five others were given notice¹⁰⁵. The teachers union at once took up the issue and decided to organize agitation against the manager¹⁰⁶. A parents meeting was convened on 24-2-38. This meeting presided over by P. Othenan Nambiar protested against the policy of the management. Mean while Pothery Madhavan, MLA met the manager and discussed the issue. As a result the manager promised to clear the arrear of the salary on the condition that the teachers should leave the school on that day¹⁰⁷. But the promise was violated and four teachers of the school were forced to discontinue their service in the school. At a conference held at Kalliassery T.C.Narayanan Nambiar congratulated these teachers and viewed the crises as a conspiracy of the private management system to crush the union¹⁰⁸.

The Chirakkal taluk teachers conference held at Kalliassery under M.P. Damodaran congratulated the teachers and promised all help to them. At the same time the remaining teachers were asked to stop their service in the school. The Chirakkal taluk congress committee also promised their help¹⁰⁹. P.R. Nambiar severely criticised the managers policy and described it as the death sign of the school business system which was sucking the life blood of the teaching

¹⁰⁴ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.32

¹⁰⁵ The Mathrubhumi, January 23, 1938

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, February 11, 1938

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, February 27, 1938

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, May 27, 1938

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, May 31, 1938

community¹¹⁰. He also attacked the passive policy adopted by the department in this case. Under this circumstance, with an intention of attracting the attention of the government and the public, it was decided to observe a 'Parassinikkadav Day' all over Malabar. Thus MATU observed the day on 25th June 1938 to express their protest. The public meetings convened on the day at places like Kalliasseri, Chirakkal, Azheekode, Cherukunnu, Katirur, Mayyazhi, Nadapuram, Kollam and Vallapuzha highlighted the arrogant policy of the manager¹¹¹. At the same time Chirakkal taluk teacher union criticised the steps taken by the MLA, District Educational Council and the department in this issue. Moreover the union decided to give notice to the rest of the teachers asking them to discontinue in the school or other wise they would take action against them¹¹². Thus the union could bring the issue to the attention of the people, public leaders and to congress expecting necessary action. A Parassinikkadav Day was also observed all over Malabar highlighting the corrupt practices prevailed in the school. But the managers remained obstinate and refused to give arrears of the salary to the teachers. Now the union realised that the District Educational Council was following a policy favourable to the managers¹¹³. The taluk teachers union protested against such a policy and decided to strengthen their agitation. But the managers association meetings protested against the encouragement given by the government to the rival school and the delay in the payment of school grant¹¹⁴.

All these agitations proved that the department was on the side of the management. It was made more clear by the Pallikkara Girls Higher elementary school crisis which attracted the attention of the teachers as well as the public. Here due to certain bad practices of the manager, people boycotted the school. They opened a new school and many teachers came to serve there¹¹⁵. At the same time about 200 parents sent a petition to the authorities asking them to take necessary actions. C.K.Govindan Nair and K.P.R.Gopan visited the school and found only very few students there¹¹⁶. The sub Assistant Inspectors and the president of the District Educational Council also reached the place and

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, June 24, 1938

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, June 30, 1938

¹¹² *Ibid*, July 27, 1938

¹¹³ *Ibid*, August 20, 1938

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, September 4, 1938

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, September 3, 24, 1937

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, October 24, 1937

understood the worse situation of the school¹¹⁷. Thus it was decided to withhold the grant and also to reconsider the recognition of the school. V.Sankara Narayana Menon, J.F.Thadayas, K.Kelappan and K.P.R Gopalan supported this move. On the other hand the DEO threatened to take action against the teachers who encouraged the students to join in the new school¹¹⁸. But the new school inspectress who visited the school advised them to give some more time for the manager¹¹⁹. Based on her note the council postponed its decision. It clearly showed that a democratic body was used as a mere tool in the hands of the department officers, and the maintenance of the school had become the birth right of the manager. It also showed how recommendation and lobbying can make a public opinion ineffective. P.R. Nambiar met the president and criticised the policy of the council. He argued that the school never deserved the continuation of its recognition and sent telegrams to the director to give instructions in this regard¹²⁰. Soon a public meeting was held near the school. It demanded necessary action at the earliest. Here P.R Nambiar argued that it was the support given by the department that encouraged the manager to neglect public opinion¹²¹. At the same time the policy adopted by the school inspectress was criticised in teachers union meetings. On 16th September 1938, the 6th circle inspectress visited the place and found the school closed. So she went to the new school. Mean while attempts were made to collect students from the neighboring areas. Two bullock carts full of students reached the place and they were provided food in the school. Complaints were also raised of kidnapping students from other schools. This biased inspection created much dissatisfaction among the people¹²². Teachers union meeting in different parts of Malabar expressed strong protest against the policy of the 6th circle inspectress and requested the government and the director to take immediate action¹²³. A public meeting convened by the congress committee at Patiam criticised the policy adopted by the department¹²⁴. K.Kelappan who visited the school on 26-09-38 realised that the inspection was

¹¹⁷ ibid, January 12,26, 1938

¹¹⁸ ibid, February 4, 1938

¹¹⁹ ibid, March 25, 1938

¹²⁰ ibid, July 31, 1938

¹²¹ ibid, August 4, 1938

¹²² ibid, September 18, 1938

¹²³ ibid, September 23,28, 1938

¹²⁴ ibid, September 29, 1938

actually a farce¹²⁵. Under these circumstances V. Sankara Narayana Menon presented a resolution in the District Educational Council to withdraw the grant and the recognition given to the school. When K.P.R Gopalan supported it K.S.Ramaswami Ayyar, the DEO and the school inspectress and others opposed the same. However the resolution was passed¹²⁶. Thus the Grant and recognition of the school were withdrawn.

Kunnaru School near Payyanur was the next centre of teachers agitation. Here the teachers resistance had its own significance because it was purely 'political'. By that time the union activities and the teachers agitation gave the impression that the Malabar teachers were leading to left wing politics. Many Congress Socialists were elected leaders of the teachers union. The director of education expressed anxiety over this. He wrote 'The elementary school teachers of Malabar, in large numbers are joining hands in disseminating ideas against government, landlords, education department and the management. The activities of the unrecognized MATU, to a certain extent have been most undesirable. They are neglecting their duties and are interested only in spreading anti-government and communistic views¹²⁷. Rajaji was not at all satisfied with this sort of development. He realized that this advise to the teachers 'not to enter politics' proved to be futile. On the other hand many of them were getting elected to congress committees and local self government institutions. So Rajaji wanted to prevent such trend among the teachers. Thus the government issued the order No 1280 and the same was published in the Gazette on 11th July 1939. It forbade the teachers from participating in political activities or in election to the legislature or local self government institutions. On violation of the same the DPI could direct the manager to dismiss those teachers. Other wise the grant of such schools would be withdrawn¹²⁸. The teachers never expected such a proclamation from a congress government. They were much disturbed because they were denied a privilege enjoyed by them even under the British.

This order was enforced first at Kunnaru School near Payyanur. V. Kunhirmann Nair, the manager of this school usually denied salary to his teachers.

¹²⁵ ibid

¹²⁶ ibid, October 5, 1938

¹²⁷ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.1280,6th June 1939, TNA

¹²⁸ The Mathrubhumi, August 16, 1938 & S.K. Pottakkad (et al ed) Muhammed Abdurahiman (Calicut, 1978) pp. 536, 37

But V.V.Sankaran Marar and K.V.Chindan, two teachers of this school demanded the arrears of their salary. The manager refused to concede and the teachers resigned from service. But very soon they withdrew their resignation and the matter was informed to the manager as well as the department. The manager who could not accept the same sought police help and got the teachers arrested while they were taking classes in the school¹²⁹. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar met the police officer and argued that actually the manager forced the teachers to resign. But he was told that even if they had not resigned they would have been dismissed by him on the basis of the bad remarks on them made by the deputy inspector¹³⁰. The manager himself had certain complaint against V.V.Sankara Marar. He had refused to sign receipt for unreceived salary¹³¹. He was also an active member of the local congress committee¹³². Therefore the manager emphasized the new government order and declared his activities illegal. Thus he was making use of an opportunity while using the remarks of the inspecting officer. And he was dismissed from the school.

A public meeting was convened at the place. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and K.V. Narayananan Nambiar explained the issues involved in this agitation. The meeting criticised the policy of the manager and protested against the policy of expelling the teachers using force. A committee was also constituted to open a rival school¹³³.

The teachers conference held at Payyanur passed resolutions protesting the policy of the manager and formed a five member committee to assist the proposed rival school. The Payyanur village congress committee supported all these efforts¹³⁴. The anniversary meeting of the teachers union held at Kadachira highlighted the teachers agitation at Kunnaru and asked the teachers to organize a strong agitation against the government order to retain their rights¹³⁵.

The Kunnaru school episode produced profound impact in the political circle. The Chirakkal taluk Karshaka Sangam passed a resolution supporting these teachers agitations. It said "This committee knows that the aided teachers

¹²⁹ The Mathrubhumi, June 16, August 17, 1939

¹³⁰ Ibid, June 18, 1938

¹³¹ P.R. Nambiar, 'Manegarude Veettile Velakkarano' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ The Mathrubhumi, July 7, 1939

¹³⁴ Ibid, July 27, 1939

¹³⁵ Ibid, August 17, 1939

of the taluk are being oppressed both by the department and the managers. This meeting views with anxiety all these issues especially the crisis at Kunnaru school. The defective policy of the authorities, their undesirable approach and their reluctance to implement the new education rules actually prevents the progress of elementary education. In this situation the poor peasants of this taluk expressed their sympathy to the teachers and requested the KPCC and the ministry to settle these issues urgently”¹³⁶

At the same time there was wide spread protest against the government order which actually led to the teachers agitation at Kunnaru. Not only the teachers but even the peasants came forward to oppose the order. In another resolution the Chirakkal taluk Karshak Sangam found the order issued by the Madras Congress Ministry preventing aided school teachers from joining congress and other political organizations and also from participating in election as highly objectionable. The Madras Congress Ministry was asked to repeal this order¹³⁷. Peasants in other parts of Malabar protested against the order¹³⁸. Students conference and youth associations criticised this order against the teachers¹³⁹. The Kannur municipal council requested the government to repeal the order¹⁴⁰. Congress committees in different parts of Malabar requested the KPCC and the AICC to advise the Madras ministry to repeal the order¹⁴¹. The KPCC under Muhammed Abdurahiman and EMS Namboothiripad expressed strong protest and demanded the repeal of the order¹⁴². Congress interfered in the issue. At last the order was amended and the teachers were allowed to take primary membership in Indian National Congress¹⁴³. The dominance of the leftists of the KPCC actually prompted the government to make such an amendment. Mean while the manager had filed a tress pass case against V.V Sankaran Marar and K.V.Chindan¹⁴⁴. The Chirakkal taluk teachers union took up the case. The trial clearly showed the attitude of the department towards the teachers¹⁴⁵. The deputy inspector stated in the court that a manager could dismiss the teachers as a house owner appointed

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, August 16, 1939

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, August 16, 1939

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, August 19, 1939

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, August 22, September 3, 1939

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, August 24, 1939

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, August 16, 1939

¹⁴² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.31

¹⁴³ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁴ *The Mathrubhumi*, October 25, 1939

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, October 6, 1939

and dismissed his servants. He was not required to have any written order in this regard¹⁴⁶. Thus the two accused teachers were punished¹⁴⁷. Consequently the new school named Desabandhu Vidhyalaya was formally inaugurated on December 1st 1939¹⁴⁸. The statement of the deputy inspector emboldened the managers and T.C. Narayanan Nambiar was asked to resign from the congress by the employer¹⁴⁹. The teachers agitation at Kunnaru attracted many teachers towards left wing politics and socialism. Against such harassment the teachers raised the slogan "Teaching is national service and national service is the aim of life"¹⁵⁰

The growth and spread of the teachers union prompted the managers to dismiss its activists all over Malabar. The manager of Karimbuzha elementary school was a land lord as well as the local chief of the area. Three teachers of this school under Kongasseri Krishanan began to participate in the activities of the teachers union .The manager Ramayyar who could not tolerate it dismissed these teachers. The teachers and the common people protested against the policy of the manager and opened a rival school. The teachers meeting held at Ottappalam as a part of the Valluvanad teachers propaganda *jatha* passed resolution criticizing the policy of the manager. In this meeting, Raman Nair one of the dismissed teacher explained the episode in detail¹⁵¹. Thus a committee was constituted to settle the issue. In spite of the popular support the rival school failed to get the necessary recognition and had to be closed. Kongasseri Krishnan later became a communist leader.

Another instance of teachers dismissal took place at Chalil, Kannoorkara school in Kurumbranad taluk. Here T.Chathu an untrained teacher demanded his full salary. Then the manager tried to dismiss the teacher without giving proper notice¹⁵². The constable arranged by him asked the teacher to leave the school. The teacher informed the issue to the deputy director, the president of the District Educational Council and the MLA. A complaint was also lodged against the police

¹⁴⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.59

¹⁴⁷ The Mathrubhumi, November 28, 1939

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, December 13, 1938

¹⁴⁹ K. Gopalan Kutty, The National Movement in Malabar, 1930, 47 (The unpublished Phd Thesis , Jawaharlal Nehru University, (New Delhi, 1985) p. 200

¹⁵⁰ Interview with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28 March 1993

¹⁵¹ The Mathrubhumi, October 7, 1938

¹⁵² Ibid, August 5, 1938

constable who threatened to use force to expel the teacher out of the school. The police department made enquiry and took statements from the manager, teachers and also from M.V Kannan, the president of the Panchayath Board¹⁵³.

Onchiyam village congress committee convened a public meeting at Kannookkara¹⁵⁴. K.A. Damodaran presided over the meeting. The district union secretary of the teachers union emphasized the necessity of union interference in the issue. Thus a 6 member committee constituted under M.Kunkan Panikkar was authorized to take necessary step to settle the issue. A joint conference of the teachers of Chombala, Edachery, Iringannur and Vallikkad held at Vallikkad passed a resolution protesting the policy of the manager¹⁵⁵.

The Kurumbranad taluk managers union took up the issue and discussed the matter with the manager as well as the union leaders. Thus it was decided to settle the issue¹⁵⁶. The union representative Krishna Kurup agreed to inform the same at a parents meeting in the school. Thus the manager agreed for a compromise and accepted the demands of the teachers.

It was the union activities of the teachers that actually led to the dismissal of teachers all over Malabar. Some of the teachers of Kuthiravattam Ganapathy Higher elementary school under Malabar education society were dismissed. P.R. Nambiar requested the department to take necessary action in this regard. But it was pointed out that these teachers were dismissed for acting against the society and their arrears of salary had already been cleared¹⁵⁷. Actually they were dismissed for supporting the old management¹⁵⁸. The manager of Kuttipuram school dismissed P. Anandan and a memo was given to three other teachers of the School¹⁵⁹. At Palayad Miss Manikkam was dismissed. But due to the union interference she was reinstated¹⁶⁰.

The teachers of Cherumoth Meppila Higher elementary school in Kurumbranad taluk were refused their salary. They sent complaints. Consequently three teachers were dismissed. The teachers union interfered in

¹⁵³ ibid, August 28, 1938

¹⁵⁴ ibid, August 12, 1938

¹⁵⁵ ibid, August 17, 1938

¹⁵⁶ ibid, September 16, 1938

¹⁵⁷ ibid, December 4, November 27, 1936

¹⁵⁸ ibid, December 10, 1936

¹⁵⁹ ibid, January 14, 1937

¹⁶⁰ ibid, May 2, 1937

this issue¹⁶¹. By that time the Chirakkal taluk teachers union had settled more than 19 cases and constituted a committee to settle the issue at Chaliyam School at Karivellur¹⁶². The Head master of Avala North Mappila school was rebuked openly by the Deputy inspector. The teachers union expressed strong protest against the same¹⁶³. The head master of Trikkotur Girls school was suspended. The Payyoli teachers union demanded immediate enquiry¹⁶⁴. K. Unni Adiyodi was dismissed in Kurumbranad taluk. Karayi Othenan was dismissed in Kottayam taluk. The union authorized the taluk secretaries to make enquires and to take proper action. The MATU also decided to prepare a statistics of the teachers dismissed in different parts of the district¹⁶⁵. There were some other instances of teachers oppression in Kottayam taluk. One manager came with goondas and forced a teacher to sign the acquittance. At another place a mistress who refused to sign false acquittance was dismissed¹⁶⁶. The manager of Cherural and Parakkal schools in Ponnani assaulted the teachers who refused to sign for a higher amount¹⁶⁷. Salary disputes led to the dismissal of teachers at Naravoor and Nannammukku schools also¹⁶⁸. The head master of Vengara Mappila school was dismissed without notice¹⁶⁹. Two teachers of Puzhathi East School were dismissed without sufficient reasons¹⁷⁰. At Parichakam School in Ponnani taluk the manager seized the union membership book and tore it to pieces¹⁷¹. Two teachers, R. Kunhirama Panikkar and A.C Chandu Kutty Nambiar were dismissed. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar rushed to the place and the union took up the issue. Finally Karappan, the managers of the school reinstated the teachers¹⁷². The manager of Kudakkad aided boys school refused salary to his teachers. The Parapanangadi teachers union formed a committee to make enquiry of it¹⁷³. At Kottkatappuram School in Kurumbranad taluk M.V.Chathu was assaulted and dismissed by the manager. The taluk union

¹⁶¹ Ibid, June 10, 1937

¹⁶² Ibid, June 30, 1937

¹⁶³ Ibid, September 15,19, 1937

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, September 19, 1937

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, January 6, 1937

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, July 18, 1937

¹⁶⁷ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24,1938

¹⁶⁸ The Mathrubhumi, August 19, 1938

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, October 6, 1938

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, November 19, 1938

¹⁷¹ Ibid, December 18, 1938

¹⁷² Ibid, February 26, 1938

¹⁷³ Ibid, May 29, 1937

president made enquiry on it. The MATU constituted a committee to take proper action against the manager¹⁷⁴.

The management of Hidayathul Islam school reduced the salary of their teachers. They made complaints to the union¹⁷⁵. Thus Kongattil Parameswara Menon was dismissed. The Kozhikode taluk teachers union formed a committee to make an enquiry. It discussed the issue with the management¹⁷⁶. But failed. The urgent conference of the teachers held at Calicut town hall criticised the department for the policy of deliberate silence in this case¹⁷⁷. T. Sekharan the head master of Athamabodhini Higher elementary school, Elathur and the President of the taluk union was dismissed. The union expressed its strong protest¹⁷⁸. The teachers of Saraswathy Vilasam school in south Malabar demanded their full salary. The manager Kunhambu dismissed the union leaders. K.V.Govindan Kutty Nair, P.V. Sekhara Kurup and C. Madhava Menon.¹⁷⁹ The manager adopted an oppressive policy towards P.V. Kunhikrishnan, K.Narayanapanikker and K.Gopalan. Eranad taluk teachers union protested and formed a committee to make enquiries¹⁸⁰. The manager of Edayur Hindu elementary school Valanchery suspended K. Balakrishnan Ezhuthachan from his school. The other teachers protested and refused to sign the attendance register. At the same time the manager opposed the union interference¹⁸¹. The Valanchery teachers union convened a public meeting near the school to invite public attention. V. Padmanabha Menon in his presidential address narrated the grievances of the teachers under private management system. The meeting passed resolution against the policy of the manager and sympathised with the suspended teachers¹⁸². At the same time another meeting convened by the parents, advised the manager to dismiss these teachers¹⁸³. At Annoor school near Payyanur, Kanapoduval was dismissed. The Payyanur teachers union convened a public meeting. The union leaders O.V.Govindan Nambiar, C.K Panikker and the KPCC

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, September 10, 1938

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, September 1, 1938

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, September 6, 1938

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, December 13, 1938

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, 'Adhyapakarute Adhyapakan' in *P.R. Smaranika*, (Calicut, 1988)

¹⁸⁰ *The Mathrubhumi*, November 19, 1937

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, January 13, 1939

¹⁸² *Ibid*, January 14, 1939

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, January 19, 1939

member A.V Kunhambu spoke on this occasion¹⁸⁴. The manager of Valayam Cherumoth School dismissed P. Sankaran from his school. A parents meeting was convened and a committee was authorized to meet the manager. But he was not ready to reinstate the teacher even though the school recognition was repealed¹⁸⁵. At Melady Hindu elementary school, N.K. Kunhiraman was dismissed. The attempt made by P.R. Nambiar to settle the issue failed¹⁸⁶. The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union meeting protested against the policy of the manager¹⁸⁷. The manager of Velikad school near Ezhakkad kicked out a teacher while he was teaching in the class room. The union took up the case and the manager was forced to resign his post¹⁸⁸. K. Ambukutty was dismissed from Patiyam Girls Higher elementary school. A public meeting was held and a resolution criticizing the policy of the manager was passed. At last P.R Nambiar and other union leaders met the manager and settled the issue¹⁸⁹. Another teacher was dismissed at Cheleri elementary school near Kanndiparamb. The Chirakkal taluk teachers union passed resolution criticizing the dismissal and the attitude of the manager who refused to meet the union leaders as well as public leaders. The passive policy adopted by the department was also criticised¹⁹⁰. The manager of Mamiyur Aided Mappila school dismissed a teacher from his school. Soon a rival school was opened near the school. The Chavakkad aided teachers union convened a public meeting to explain the background of the issue and protested against the policy of the manager. Finally, the manager agreed to reinstate the teacher¹⁹¹.

The managers feared the enactment of laws granting fixity to the teachers. So they continued to dismiss teachers arbitrarily. At that time, V.Ramunni the president of the MATU was the head master of Kuthiravattam higher elementary school. The management and the department hatched conspiracies to shatter the unity among the teachers. They started making moves against them by using a provision in the Madras elementary education rules stipulating that teachers

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, February 11, 1939

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid* February 11, 1939

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, March 8, 1939

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, March 15, 1939

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, March 11, 1939

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, April 19, July 19, 1939

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, June 2, 1939

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, June 30, August 8, 1939

should not be members of unrecognized unions¹⁹². Meanwhile the north Malabar DEO declared that the MATU was not a recognized union. On this basis Sarvothama Rao, the manager of the school gave memo to Ramunni and asked him to resign the president ship of the union. He was ordered to retain only one post either that of the head master or the president of the union. It was viewed as an attempt to crush the union. The teachers conference held at Calicut town hall demanded that immediate attention of the Government in this matter¹⁹³. But on 16th December 1938, when Ramunni came to rejoin duty after leave, he was dismissed from service¹⁹⁴. The teachers union organized a strong agitation in response to this. The demand for security of tenure became very intensive. The union took measures to get it registered and the demand for recognition was raised. The teachers conference at Ottappalam passed resolution against the dismissal and demanded the recognition of the union¹⁹⁵. The issue was also raised in the Madras legislative assembly¹⁹⁶. The all Malabar peasant conference held at Chevayur passed resolution supporting the teachers. It observed “This conference view with anxiety the oppressive policy adopted by the department even under a congress ministry against MATU which is an anti-imperialist movement aimed at the abolition of the private management system for the progress of elementary education”¹⁹⁷. The peasants declared their support to the elementary school teachers and requested the government to accept their urgent demands by recognizing their union. But as the right wing leaders of the congress were on the side of the management, the Madras government refused to do any thing against the oppression¹⁹⁸.

When it was realized that the union could achieve certain gains through organized agitations, a large number of teachers including teacher managers began to join the union. It made the union active all over Malabar. At the same time efforts were also made to strengthen the union. The MATU sent membership receipt books to the union and directed to admit members by collecting membership fee. Taluk unions were advised to form propaganda committee and

¹⁹² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.35

¹⁹³ The Mathrubhumi, December 13, 1938

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, December 18, 1938

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, January 3, 1939

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, March 30, 1939

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, December 21, 1938

¹⁹⁸ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.99

the district union leaders were advised to open unions in places where there was no union at all¹⁹⁹. C.K.Panikker emphasized the presence of permanent activist in each taluk and the rapport between the union activist and the people²⁰⁰. The activists who failed to attend the union meeting were replaced by other²⁰¹. The demand for propaganda for unionization was highlighted again and the union settled several dispute between the teachers and the managers²⁰². The union organized propaganda *jatha* to form new branches and to raise a union fund to help teachers²⁰³. Its members were asked to wear Gandhi caps and also to bear their personal expenses²⁰⁴. They visited schools and organized public meetings where grievances of the teachers, defects of the management system, the policy of the department and the duty of the parents were highlighted²⁰⁵. People including poor peasants and workers gave their share to the union fund. Efforts were also made to reorganize the branch unions. Initially, only those teachers who signed the pledge to accept the directions of the union and were ready to make any sacrifice for the same was given membership. But many of the teachers were yet to join the union. The union activities were found inactive in some taluks. At several places branches had not been opened. The organizational defect was the reason cited for it²⁰⁶. Earlier branches were opened with teachers association as its centre. It led to the emergence of unions on religious and gender line²⁰⁷. As it created much difficulty for the union work it decided to give up this practice and to reorganize the branches²⁰⁸. They knew that it was better to form a union with 30 schools with a Higher Elementary School as its centre²⁰⁹. Each branch was to elect their representatives to the taluk union on the basis of one for 30 members and the taluk unions were to elect 10 representatives to the district council²¹⁰. The branch unions were advised to convene their annual meeting to gain popular support²¹¹. It was decided to collect 4 annas as annual subscription; 20% of the

¹⁹⁹ The Mathrubhumi, May 20, 1936

²⁰⁰ Ibid, December 12, 1936

²⁰¹ Ibid, January 7, 1937

²⁰² Ibid, March 25, June 30, 1937

²⁰³ Ibid, November 10, 13,14, 1937

²⁰⁴ Ibid, November 6, 1937

²⁰⁵ Ibid, November 17, 1937

²⁰⁶ Ibid, June 2, 1938

²⁰⁷ Ibid, February 1, 1938

²⁰⁸ Ibid

²⁰⁹ Ibid, April 3, 1938

²¹⁰ Ibid, January 20, 1937

²¹¹ Ibid, June 38, 1938

same should go to the district union, 40% to the taluk union and the remaining 40% to the branches. The union fund was divided on the following lines, 50% to the district union, 25% to the taluk union and 25% to the branch unions²¹². As per the direction of the taluk union, efforts were made to open taluk union offices²¹³. Taluks were often divided in to several Farcas²¹⁴. In Chirakkal taluk efforts were also made to open branch offices²¹⁵. The district union office was located in north Malabar. Therefore the union activities often failed to reach the southern part of the district. Hence the union activities in the south Malabar when compared to the one in north Malabar were slow²¹⁶. Hence propaganda *jatha* were organized to make the union more active and also to collect subscription for the journal of the union²¹⁷. The lack of clear evidence often helped the inspecting officer to escape from charges of malpractices levelled against them. Therefore it was decided to organize vigilance committee in all taluks²¹⁸. Efforts were also made to arrange refresher course to train the union activists. The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union decided to open these centres at Payyoli and Villiappally²¹⁹. The MATU decided to open centres for refresher course in all taluks to provide training to at least 50 activists in each of these centres²²⁰.

The security of tenure and the cruel exploitation behind the grant-in-aid system were the main problems faced by the teachers. Therefore when the workers demanded the abolition of capitalism; and peasants, the abolition of landlordism, the teachers wanted to put an end to private management system²²¹. At the same time all these groups were fighting against British imperialism²²².

Mean while a great teachers conference was held at Tellicherry town hall on 27th November 1937. Teachers from different part of the taluk attended the meeting. A teachers *Jatha* from Vatakkumbad came to the place with placards in their hands and shouting slogans like “Abolish private management system” and “teachers are ready for a strike”. These slogans were also written on the walls of

²¹² *Ibid*, July 23 1938

²¹³ *Ibid*, July 31, 1938

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, July 31, 1938

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, July 7, 1939

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, June 2, 1938

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, July 15, 1939

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, August 19, 1938

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, November 10, 1939

²²⁰ *Ibid*, November 22, 1939

²²¹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.22

²²² Cherukad, *Jeevithapatha* (Trivandrum, 1977), p.241

the town hall in bold letters. Dr. Subarayan, the Minister of Education who participated in the meeting vehemently criticised these slogans and called up on the youngsters to keep away from it²²³.

The fourth annual conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union passed a strike resolution and advised district union to take necessary steps for the same²²⁴. The third annual conference of the Kottayam taluk teachers union reminded the members of the policy adopted by the management and the department and asked the union to prepare for a strike²²⁵. The same demands were raised and the teachers were asked to get ready for a strike in the fourth annual conference of Kurumbranad taluk teachers union²²⁶, the second annual conference of Ponnani taluk teachers union²²⁷ and the Kozhikode taluk teachers union conference²²⁸. The teachers union demands were endorsed by the KPCC and a resolution for the abolition of private management system and the take over of the elementary schools by the government was passed in a meeting²²⁹. The Kerala state political conference held at Calicut also passed a similar resolution²³⁰. The North Malabar political conference passed the same resolution and appealed the people to give all help and co-operation to the proposed strike of the teachers²³¹. The resolutions demanding the abolition of private management system were passed in various political conferences in different parts of Malabar²³².

The second conference of the Chirakkal taluk Karshaka Sangam held at Kattambally, advised its branches to give all help to the teachers agitations. It demanded the abolition of private management system and the take over of schools by the government. It offered all help to the teachers in the event of a strike in Malabar²³³.

²²³ The Mathrubhumi, December 1, 1937 & Mathrubhumi Weekly, January 31, 1938

²²⁴ Ibid, January 11, 1938

²²⁵ Ibid, January 25, 1938

²²⁶ Ibid, February 16, 1938 & Mathrubhumi Weekly February 21, 1938

²²⁷ Ibid, February 17, 1938

²²⁸ Mathrubhumi Weekly April 4, 1938

²²⁹ The Mathrubhumi, February 9, 1938

²³⁰ Ibid, April 27, 1938

²³¹ Ibid, May 18, 1938

²³² Ibid, May 19, June 8, June 24, 1938

²³³ Ibid, May 10, 1938

Under these circumstances the Madras government decided to take certain measures to improve the condition of elementary school teachers. The teachers union had presented a memorandum to the prime minister of Madras on 16th October 1937. Thus direction was given to draft amendments to the rules under Madras Elementary Education Act to improve in certain respects the condition of service of teachers in aided elementary schools²³⁴. The draft amendment was published in February 1938 which contained the provision of teaching license to all elementary school teachers²³⁵. It aimed to control the management and also to ensure the security of tenure and proper payment of salary to the teachers²³⁶. Accordingly each teacher was to get a license from the concerned DEO. The amount of teachers salary and the period of appointment were to be recorded in it. It should be examined and signed by the deputy inspector. There should be no deduction from the teachers salary except fine. Even the same should be recorded in the fine register. If the non payment of salary was reported by the deputy inspectors, the grant of such schools could be withheld. The managers were instructed to disburse 90% of the grant to the teachers and were allowed to retain 10% for the management expenditure²³⁷.

But these measures were criticised as unsatisfactory by the teachers. It was argued that the new system will not have the desired result. The undue importance given to the License was considered detrimental to the interest of the teachers²³⁸. As the managers had the right to decide the period of appointment, it will not ensure the security of tenure for teachers. The new amendment had no effective control over the managers freedom to appoint and dismiss teachers²³⁹. When the recognition of an school was repealed for non payment of salary, it actually hurt the teachers²⁴⁰. While the managers were given the right to impose fines, the teachers were not given the right to make appeals. Moreover those who were not liked by the DEO would not get the proposed license²⁴¹. Above all there was no provision for the increase in salary or its direct payment to the teachers. Hence the decision to introduce teachers license met with strong opposition from

²³⁴ G.O.(Education) Madras, No 2449,20th October 1937

²³⁵ G.O.(Education) Madras, No 423,21st February 1938

²³⁶ The Mathrubhumi, March 9, 1938

²³⁷ Ibid, March 4, 1938

²³⁸ Ibid, March 24,27,29, 1938

²³⁹ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2270, 4th September 1938, TNA

²⁴⁰ The Mathrubhumi, March 27, 1938

²⁴¹ Ibid, March 24, 1938

the teachers. They demanded nothing but the abolition of private management system by bringing them under government service²⁴²

On their part the managers also opposed the scheme. As the amount of grant, the number of classes and the attendance of students were uncertain, it was not possible for them to record the period of appointment and the amount of salary in the license²⁴³. In spite of the terms in the license, they claimed the right to dismiss teachers for poor work and irregular attendance. Besides, it was not possible to run the schools with 10%. So they demanded 25% of the grant for school maintenance.

An urgent conference of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar was held at Edward Memorial Town hall, Kannur, on April 20th 1938²⁴⁴. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar in his welcome speech said "We have been given great promises. But now we are given the license, which is not acceptable without amendments. If the demand for monthly salary is not accepted and the management oppression continued, we will be forced to organize a satyagraha struggle²⁴⁵. The meeting declared that the provisions for the teachers license are unwarranted and unnecessary as they did not naturally improve the condition of teachers²⁴⁶. Hence it was decided to oppose any measure imposed upon teachers without the consent of the union. The conference demanded the abolition of private management system, introduction of the service register, increase in salary, monthly salary through the head master, training selection based on service, open enquiry on the cases of the dismissed teachers and the necessity of a democratic institution with teachers representation to control education²⁴⁷. The government was requested to take measures based on these suggestions. Thus the license system was criticised both by the teachers and the managers.

Mean while the teachers union decided to highlight another issue confronted by the teachers. There were many irregularities and malpractices in the field of training selection. The situation became worse when there no sufficient

²⁴² Ibid, March 27, 1938

²⁴³ Ibid, March 20, 1938

²⁴⁴ Ibid, April 23, 1938 Teachers jatha came from Azheekode, Narath, Kalliassery , Karivallur and Chirakkal. They rallied in the street using placards on which was written 'Down with management system'

²⁴⁵ Ibid, April 23, 1938

²⁴⁶ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2270,4th September 1938, TNA

²⁴⁷ The Mathrubhumi, April 23, 1938

number of trained teachers, the school had to maintain 2:1 ration in the appointment of trained and untrained teachers. Under this circumstance the MATU decided to observe August 3rd 1938 as 'Untrained teachers day'. On that day teachers were asked to convene public meeting. They were advised to pass resolutions demanding provision to end the irregularities in trading selection and increase in the number of seats and classes in training schools²⁴⁸. Thus the untrained teachers day was observed all over Malabar by organizing public meetings²⁴⁹.

Those who stood against the license system demanded the introduction of service register in all elementary schools. The union asked the teachers not to accept the license. But the department threatened to dismiss those who did not accept the license with in a month. Majority of the teachers supported the union's stand and refused to accept the license. Thus the department directive was defeated²⁵⁰. Majority of the teachers exerted pressure on the union for an agitation.

A meeting of the teachers union council held at Calicut demanded the abolition of the private management system. It was decided to integrate the struggle of the teachers with the anti-imperialist movement. Teachers were advised to co-operate with the anti-imperialist forces. At the same time they protested against the government policy of discarding the teachers demands for security of tenure and monthly salary through Head masters. And a warning was given that the union would be forced to organize a strike, if their grievances were not redressed²⁵¹. Prabhatham also highlighted the teachers demand for security of tenure and proper monthly direct salary²⁵².

Finally the executive committee of the MATU was held at Calicut on August 6th 1938. It decided to observe a Hartal on 31st October 1938²⁵³. All aspects of this decision were discussed and measures were adopted to make the hartal more effective²⁵⁴. Propaganda *jathas* were organized in various taluks²⁵⁵. P.R. Nambiar

²⁴⁸ Ibid, July 28, 1938

²⁴⁹ Ibid, August 6, 1938

²⁵⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.34

²⁵¹ The Mathrubhumi, July 23, 1938 & Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 15, July 18, 1938

²⁵² Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 13, July 4, 1938

²⁵³ The Mathrubhumi, August 19, 1938

²⁵⁴ Ibid, August 26, 1938

²⁵⁵ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 25, October 3, 1938

visited several places and explained why the union has to be anti-imperialist²⁵⁶. At the same time the managers began to criticize the union activist for injecting the seeds of revolution in the minds of the students and requested the government to declare the hartal illegal²⁵⁷. They also adopted measures to defeat the hartal²⁵⁸.

The proposed hartal compelled the government to take certain urgent steps. Provisions were made for ensuring the security of tenure and monthly salary of teachers. Thus in September 1938 the government issued an order which contained the provision for a service register, monthly salary and other elementary school reforms²⁵⁹. It was viewed as the first governmental interference in the administration of aided schools and was hailed as a 'Charter of Authority' for both the teachers and managers²⁶⁰. The government adopted these measures to reform elementary education in the state of Madras. When the managers began to oppose the same, C.J. Varkey, the Minister of Education declared that the new measures would be harmful to the bad managers but not for the good managements. Hence the managers were advised to improve their schools or to give up their managements²⁶¹. It contained certain provision to ensure teachers security of tenure, proper payment of salary and school administration²⁶². The main aspect was the introduction of a service register. As practiced in board and government schools, It was decided to introduce a service register for teachers in all elementary schools. Each teacher had to give Rs 1 for the same. As provision was made in it to prevent unnecessary dismissal, it was hailed as the teachers charter of right that ensure their security of tenure. It should contain in precise terms the conditions under which the teacher is entertained, the period of appointment, salary, scale of pay etc. Teachers should not be dismissed without sufficient reason. The divisional inspectors were to supervise the same. Teachers should not be dismissed with out 3 months notice except for urgent disciplinary matters. It should obtain the sanction of the divisional inspectors. If it was reported by the inspecting officers that a teacher was dismissed without sufficient reasons, the recognition of such school would be withdrawn. Measures were also

²⁵⁶ The Mathrubhumi, September 22, 1938

²⁵⁷ Ibid, September 4, 1938

²⁵⁸ Ibid, September 15, 1938

²⁵⁹ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2270,4th September 1938, TNA

²⁶⁰ The Mathrubhumi, September 28, 1938

²⁶¹ C.J. Varkey, 'Aided schools and the government' in V.R. Nayanar (ed) Malabar Vidyabhyasa Guide (Calicut, 1939) p. 23

²⁶² The Mathrubhumi, October 1, 1938

adopted for the proper payment of salary to the teachers. It was directed to record the amount of salary or the scale of pay in the service register. No deduction from the salary except fine and PF amount was permitted. If the salary of the teachers was not properly and regularly paid with out making other deduction, the grant and recognition of such schools could be withdrawn. If it was reported that the teachers were not regularly paid and that there were unnecessary deduction then such teachers would get their salary directly from the DEO. How ever it was declared impossible to distribute salary directly to the teachers. But instead of giving school grant through the District Educational Council or the proposed institution, it was decided to give monthly salary to the teachers through the DEO. The new rule also provided for the division of the grant between the manager and the teachers. 85% of the grant was to be paid to the teachers and the balance to be retained by the managers as maintenance expenditure. The teachers service register could be withdrawn by the higher authorities, if their character, conduct or performance of duty were found unsatisfactory²⁶³. The teachers were not allowed to leave the school without prior 3 months notice. At the same time government declared that it was not possible to take over all elementary schools²⁶⁴.

These reforms, which retained the ugly management system, were viewed as unsatisfactory. No provision was there to enhance the salary to the teachers or to remove the uncertainty created by the managers and the inspecting officers. Reluctance on the part of the governments to take the responsibility of giving salary to the teachers was viewed with concern. Hence the teachers demanded clear and separate salary scale. P.R. Nambiar welcomed the condition of security of tenure, but asked the teachers to continue their agitation for increased salary scale²⁶⁵. The managers also refused to accept the new rules²⁶⁶. They argued that it was not possible for them to run the schools based on the new order²⁶⁷. Hence they decided to take necessary steps to withdraw from school management²⁶⁸.

The teachers clearly realized the importance of the new rules. They felt that the system of service register, monthly salary and measures against

²⁶³ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2270,4th September 1938, TNA

²⁶⁴ The Mathrubhumi, October 1, 1938

²⁶⁵ Ibid, October 6, 1938

²⁶⁶ Ibid, October 11, 1938

²⁶⁷ Ibid, October 12, 1938

²⁶⁸ Ibid, October 21, 1938

unnecessary dismissal would really improve their service conditions. It was also viewed as a government replay to the demand for making their hartal illegal²⁶⁹. The Teachers also felt that it contained a vague promise of new scheme of elementary education²⁷⁰. Above all they understood that with one-day hartal it was not possible to make amendments to the new rules. Thus the teachers decided to postpone their programme of direct agitation. Thus on 30th September 1938, the teachers union council was held at the KPCC office Calicut and the provisions of the new order was examined. It declared that these measures did not give full satisfaction. But in order to make the teachers agitation strong and to end the government support to school business, teachers accepted these concessions and postponed their programme of agitation²⁷¹. The committee put forward the demands they had raised in the resolution taken on 6-08-38 and warned that the elementary teachers of Malabar would be forced to keep away from all educational matters in case the government did not accept their demands immediately. At the same time they asked the teachers not to be satisfied with these little gains but to continue their agitation to abolish the private management system.

The belief that the teachers could get concession through their united effort strengthened the union. The teachers began to have more confidence in the union²⁷². It was at that time a special conference was held at Tellicherry on 11th October 1938 to think about the proposed rules and to induce the government for further concessions²⁷³. K.A.Damodara Menon, the editor of Mathrubhumi, presided over the meeting. He advised the teachers to prepare a programme for the reform of elementary education and reminded them that their grievances could be redressed only with the abolition of the management system. Dr. Subharyan, the minister of education and C.J.Varkey his parliamentary secretary also attended the conference. They were greeted with the slogans such as “Demolish the management system”, ‘Give salary directly to the teachers’. Dr. Subharayan criticised the teachers for using these slogans saying that it indicated violence and intolerance and was contrary to the principles of Mahatma Gandhi²⁷⁴. He said “If

²⁶⁹ Ibid, September 28, 1938

²⁷⁰ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.97

²⁷¹ The Mathrubhumi, October 2, 1938 , & Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 26, October 10, 1938

²⁷² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.35

²⁷³ The Mathrubhumi, October 15, 1938. Delegates from different parts of Malabar attended the meeting. Several Jathas of teachers with tricolor flags came to the place and merged in the conference.

²⁷⁴ Prabhatham, October 24,1938

you continue to think about Hartal, I will be forced to bring more efficient teachers from Tamil Nadu²⁷⁵. It provoked the teachers. They responded with great protest and cried "Shame, shame". P.R. Nambiar presented a resolution regretting and protesting against the statement made by the minister²⁷⁶. Actually it was a warning against those who dared to injure the self respect of the teachers of Malabar. The conference endorsed the statement made by the district committee on the new rules. Admitting the best intention of the government order, the conference passed a resolution withdrawing the proposed hartal of 31st October 1938²⁷⁷. But it pointed out that the basic objectives of the union could not be achieved without abolishing imperialism that produces poverty and misery. Therefore it was decided to cooperate with all anti-imperialist movements. The conference admitted that the union failed to achieve the 6 demands raised in the hartal resolution. But argued that the government was forced to formulate certain measures because it could see that the union representing 13000 teachers of Malabar was getting popular support. In this backdrop the conference decided to strengthen the congress ministry. But adopted certain steps to organize their agitation more efficiently mobilizing popular support with a view to obtain the real objectives of the union. Thus the following measures were adopted.²⁷⁸

1. Admit all elementary teachers of Malabar in the union by 30th November 1938
2. Form vigilance committees to resist the malpractices followed by the authorities.
3. Open reading rooms and night schools in all branches to propagate literacy and to strengthen contact with common people.
4. Co operate with all efforts in the mobilization against imperialism
5. Form a volunteer group based on the programme formulated by the district union

²⁷⁵ T.C. Narayanan Nambiar. 'Polinjupoya Ujjualatharam' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

²⁷⁶ The Mathrubhumi, October 15, 1938

²⁷⁷ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24, 1938

²⁷⁸ Ibid

The conference presented a memorandum to the minister expressing gratitude over the new rules²⁷⁹. At the same time it demanded certain amendments in the provisions ensuring security of tenure and payment of salary. Besides these certain other demands were also raised. They wanted proposed council to be constituted democratically instead of the District Educational Council.

The new measures adopted by the government opened a new chapter in the history of the teachers union²⁸⁰. It created a spirit of awakening among the teachers. Thus they came out to co-operate with the department for the educational progress of the country. The progress of elementary education became the declared objective of the union²⁸¹. It pointed out the defect related to curriculum, teaching method, teaching facilities and the system of examination²⁸².

The Tellicherry speech of the minister had made the managers more arrogant²⁸³. They strengthened their oppression towards the teachers. False acquittance and dismissal of teachers continued in different parts of Malabar. Complaints were usually neglected because the department generally supported the managers. The government, department and the managers got their much-awaited opportunity to shatter the organized strength of the teachers. They made a move against them by using a provision in the Madras Education Rules that teachers should not be members of unrecognized unions. Thus as directed by the DEO, V.Ramunni, the president of the teachers union was asked by his manager to give his resignation or to resign from union presidentship. The Tellicherry speech of the Minister actually prompted it²⁸⁴. Thus V. Ramunni, was dismissed from service for the simple reason that he happened to be the president of the MATU. The issue was raised in the Madras Legislative Assembly²⁸⁵. As the right wing leader of the congress were on the side of the management, the Madras Government refused to take any action against this oppression.

Now the agitation for teachers security of tenure became more intensive. The teachers raised the demand for the recognition of the union. Thus hasty steps were taken to register the union. By remitting a fee of Rs 50 the union got

²⁷⁹ The Mathrubhumi, October 19, 1938

²⁸⁰ Ibid, September 28, 1938

²⁸¹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.98,215

²⁸² The Mathrubhumi, October 2, 1938

²⁸³ Ibid, December 13, 1938

²⁸⁴ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 30, November 7, 1938

²⁸⁵ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.1120, 18th May 1939, TNA

registered under the Societies Registration Act before the assistant registrar of Joint stock companies at Tellicherry²⁸⁶.

The teachers movement had grown as a part of the National movement. Being the most enlightened section of the rural poor the village teachers actively participated in the national movement. Many of them were actively involved in the civil disobedience movement²⁸⁷. Efforts were also made to integrate the anti caste movement with the national movement because the movement against disunity and factionalism was regarded as a struggle against imperialism²⁸⁸. Influenced by the ideology of nationalism the teachers union decided to start elementary schools, teachers association meetings and their own union meetings with Vande Mataram.²⁸⁹ School walls were decorated with pictures of national leaders.²⁹⁰ The union activists who participated in the teachers *jatha* used to wear Gandhi caps.²⁹¹ The union meetings passed resolutions praying for the health of Mahatma Gandhi.²⁹² The tricolor flag was adopted as the union flag in teachers *jatha* and union meetings²⁹³. Most of its members were the members of the congress. V.Ramunni, the president of the union stated that there were about 4000 congress members among the teachers. Many of them were also office bearers of village committees. K.Kelappan was the founder president of one of the branches of the teachers union in Kurumbranad taluk. Some of them were even elected to the KPCC. Many among them became the activists of the Kerala congress socialist party. As the union was aware of the importance of popular support they tried to obtain the support of political organization including Indian national congress²⁹⁴. The teachers were asked to vote in favour of the congress in the 1937 election.

²⁸⁶ The Mathrubhumi, December 27, 1938. The union was registered in the name of the following members. V. Ramunni (Tiruvannur, Kallai), P.Sekhara Varier (Vallapuzha) P.R. Nambiar (Vatakara) T.C.Narayanan Nambiar (Kannadiparamb) M.Sankaran Kutty Nair (Valapad) P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar (Azheekode) N.Gopala Kurup (Thiruvangad) K.P. Krishnan (Kolavallur) K.P. Kunhiramakurup (Orkatteri) P.T. Narayanan Nair (Eranjippalam) P.V.Sekhara Kurup (Parappanangadi) N.Pokker (Kondotti) V.Kuhikrishanan Menon (Sree Krishanpuram) M.P Krishana Menon (Valanchery) and K. Unnalachan (tarur)

²⁸⁷ K.Karunakaran Nair, Who is Who of the Freedom fighters of Kerala, (Trivandrum, 1975) Teachers like P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, K.V. Govindan, T. Ramunni Kidav , Kunhappa Master and T.C.Narayanan Nambiar participated in the salt satyagraha

²⁸⁸ A.K.Gopalan, Ente Jeevitha Kadha, (Trivandrum, 1985), p. 36

²⁸⁹ The Mathrubhumi, October 19, 1937

²⁹⁰ Ibid

²⁹¹ Ibid, November 6, 1937

²⁹² Ibid, September 29, 1938

²⁹³ Ibid, September 10, 1938

²⁹⁴ Ibid, February 11, 1938

P.R. Nambiar made it clear that unless poverty was rooted out, there will not be any progress in education. So it was the duty of the teachers to vote for congress which was trying to eradicate poverty. Thus the union actively worked for the success of the congress candidates. Some of the union activists were even punished for participating in election propaganda²⁹⁵. The teachers requested amendments in educational rules for permitting them to participate in politics²⁹⁶. The union welcomed the Wardha scheme of education²⁹⁷. It passed resolution attacking Japanese imperialism and expressing sympathy with China²⁹⁸. At the same time the congress protested against the order preventing teachers and students from political activities²⁹⁹. The KPCC passed a resolution asking the government to repeal the order preventing the use of elementary schools for political purpose. Another resolution presented by K.A. Keraleeyan demanded the abolition of private management system and the take over of elementary education by the government. Peasant organizations and political conferences also emphasized the abolition of private management system, the take over of elementary education by the government and also the implementation of free and compulsory elementary education³⁰⁰. The congress committees promised to support the proposed teachers hartal of October 31st 1938³⁰¹. At the same time the congress leaders depicted the British imperialism as the common enemy of the people and reminded the teachers that unless it is rooted out, the ministry could not do anything to redress their grievances³⁰². This anti imperialist ideology propagated by the congress profoundly influenced the teachers³⁰³. Thus the teachers moved more and more towards the national movement and their movement was characterized as a part of the anti-imperialist movement. This anti-imperialist trend among the teachers was intensified by an article entitled '*Teachers union oru Samrajya Viroda Prasthanam*' (Teachers union: an anti-imperialist movement)³⁰⁴. Through this article T.C.Narayanan Nambiar tried to

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, February 10, 1937

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, January 25, July 27, August 17, 1938

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, March 29, September 29, 1938

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, January 11, March 25, 1938

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, August 16, 1938

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, May 10,18,19, June 8,24, 1938

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, August 18, 1938

³⁰² *Ibid*, February 17, 1938

³⁰³ P.R. Nambiar, 'Adhyapaka Prasthanavum Swathandrya Samaravum' in *Swathandrya Samara Smaranika* (Kannur, 1982)

³⁰⁴ *Prabhatham*, Volume 26, October 10,1938

show that the teachers movement was a part of anti imperialist movement. He narrated the pathetic condition of the poverty stricken children of the elementary school of Malabar who had no sufficient food or clothing and pointed out the helplessness of their parents who were crushed by feudal oppression, capitalist exploitation and imperialist appropriation. Then proceeding to a pathetic story of a Muslim lady at Kalpakanchery who asked the judge to take her child itself as fine for not sending him to school, T.C.Narayanan Nambiar wrote "Illiteracy is the sister of poverty. Imperialism is the cause of poverty. There fore like the mother at Kalpakanchery, the Union believed that in order to attain educational progress and eradicate poverty, we have to eradicate imperialism, which feeds an officer who gets 8 annas as bata in a minute must be rooted out..... When a mass movement was developing the teachers who had intimate relation with the country and its people could not keep away from it. He knows that education, which he expects, will grow only in the funeral ashes of imperialism.... He had promised to destroy imperialism which lead teachers and the country to slavery and poverty³⁰⁵. The right left conflict in the congress had sharpened during this period. The association of teachers with peasants, labours and student movements were strongly opposed by the right wing congress leaders³⁰⁶. They wanted no other organization than the Indian national congress. Hence they were moving against the teachers union. At the same time as per the intelligent direction of P. Krishnapillai a smooth strategy was adopted within the teachers union³⁰⁷. Due importance was given to all shades of opinion. They decided to act on the basis of a trade union. Thus the right wing congress leaders like P.S. Varier and active congress socialist like T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and V.Ramunni came to the union leadership. P.R. Nambiar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar were the bridge between these two groups. It had the objective of organizing a strong teachers movement incorporating all sections of teachers. But the ideological split in the national movement had its own impact on the teachers. The article written by T.C.Narayanan Nambiar had great repercussion inside the union. P.S. Varier the activist of the Gandhi Seva Sangham organized by the right wing congress group was the vice president of the teachers union. He vehemently opposed the article

³⁰⁵ Ibid, Volume 26 , October 10,1938

³⁰⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.33

³⁰⁷ P.R. Nambiar, 'Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodatuthu' In Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi, (Quilon,1975)

and viewed it as a conspiracy of the leaders to make the teachers union a communist association³⁰⁸. Hence he wanted the union to pass a resolution dissolving the article and to publish the same in new papers. Otherwise he threatened to resign from the union. It became a subject of heated discussion through out Malabar. Consequently an executive meeting of the teachers union was held at Quilandi. Majority of the working committee members were congress activists. But a large section of the union members were not members of congress. P.S.Varier presented the issue. But there was nobody to support him. P.R. Nambiar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar tried their best to avoid a split in the union. Finally it was decided that the article was totally in line with the policy of the teachers movement. The publication of this article helped much to make majority of the teachers anti-imperialist. It helped much to rally the teachers of Malabar against British imperialism. It actually provided them a clear perspective and intensified the anti-imperialist feeling among the teachers³⁰⁹. There after the teachers movement was considered as an anti-imperialist bloc in the national movement³¹⁰

The special conference of teachers held at Tellicherry on 11th October 1938 decided to resist the proposed federation and requested the KPCC to observe a 'Federation Day'. It also congratulated the state congress agitation in Travancore and protested against the police brutality. Above all the British policy towards Palestine was criticised.

The governments decision to introduce the service register created a new spirit among the teachers. They raised the slogan "teaching is service to the nation: service to the nation is the aim of life". This slogan was heard in the teachers *jatha* and the meetings reflected the change appeared among the teachers³¹¹. However the managers association as well as the reactionary elements in the department did not welcome this change.

The upliftment of elementary education became the declared objective of the union. But the slogan that 'Teaching is service to the nation and service to the

³⁰⁸ Ibid

³⁰⁹ V.V. Dakshinamoorthi, 'Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam' In Chinda Rajatha Jubilee Pathippu, (Trivandrum, 1988)

³¹⁰ P.R. Nambiar, 'Adhyapaka Prasthanavum Swathandrya Samaravum' in Swathandrya Samara Smaranika (Kannur, 1982)

³¹¹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.98

nation is the aim of life' actually had a political tinge. Thus the teachers movement revealed the nature of an anti-imperialist movement and maintained close contact with the political leadership in Malabar³¹². They also maintained a close contact with the trade union movement, peasant movement and students movement in Malabar³¹³. Teachers union opened reading rooms, adult education centres and arts clubs to inculcate anti-imperialist feeling among the people. Leaders like P.Krishnapilla, A.K.Gopalan, K.P.R Gopalan and E.P.Gopalan participated in the agitation of teachers. All these attracted the union towards anti-imperialist movement³¹⁴. The right left split in the congress was clearly exposed during this period. The right wing leaders and the news papers accused the union for moving towards left wing politics and socialism. The ideological split in the congress had its own impact in the union. On one hand it was argued that the victory of the anti-imperialist struggle is inevitable for the progress of education and therefore teachers were to participate in it. On the other hand it was argued that the teachers movement had no political objective other than their economic demand. It was in this context that T.C.Narayanan Nambiar wrote his article in Prabhatham stressing the anti -imperialist nature of the teachers movement. The controversy and discussion on this issue provided a clear perspective to the teacher movement and made majority of the teachers anti-imperialist. At the same time the managers made a propaganda that the teachers of Malabar had joined the left wing politics. The right wing congress leaders supported them. The department officers who were against politics also supported the management³¹⁵.

The fourth anniversary of the MATU held at Ottappalam on 29th and 30th December 1938 was a significant event in the history of the teachers movement. M.S. Sabhesan, the secretary of the SITU presided over the meeting attended by nearly thousand teachers³¹⁶. While he demanded parity of salary of aided school teachers and board school teachers, he reminded the teachers that involvement in

³¹² *Ibid*, p. 215

³¹³ Vallathol Kumara Menon, *op.cit*, p.33

³¹⁴ P.R. Nambiar, *op.cit*, p.290

³¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 98

³¹⁶ *The Mathrubhumi*, December 31, 1938. The teachers jatha from Kannur under T.C. Narayanan Nambiar and the cycle jatha from Chirakkal under V.Ramunni reached Ottappalam. And the jathas of teachers from Karimbuzha, Mannarkad and Sreekrishanapuram merged with it at Cherpulasserri. The joint jathas reached the venue of the conference. Several other jathas from place like Valancheri, Cherukkara and Parali had reached the place and the meeting began with the hosting of the tricolor flag.

politics will not be beneficial and advised them to stick to constitutional methods³¹⁷. So he opposed the resolution against the federation adopted by the subject committee of the conference. As he considered it a politically motivated one, he vacated the chair³¹⁸. But the meeting continued with Ramunni as the president. Now P.R. Nambiar argued that Indian freedom is inevitable for the growth of national education in India. So the congress demand against federation is an educational demand. Thus the resolution which supported the slogan of the national movement was unanimously adopted by the conference. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and V.Ramunni made earnest efforts to mobilize the support of the teachers in favour of this resolution³¹⁹.

The resolutions passed at the conference high lighted a variety of issues. It pointed out that the episode in Kuthiravattam higher elementary school and St.Antony's schools had completely shattered the expectation given by the government order³²⁰. About 100 branch unions had sent their resolutions supporting a general strike to face the urgent situation. They were actually inspired by the agitators organized by the peasants and workers of Malabar³²¹. These resolutions passed by the branch and taluk union clearly revealed the unrest among the teachers. A committee was constituted to study the possibility of a general strike³²². But the conference assured that it would be used only as a last weapon. At the same time they asked the union to take immediate steps to obtain the following demands³²³.

1. The salary scale of each teacher should be fixed clearly and the same should be distributed through the head master w.e.f 1st may 1939.
2. The right to fix the salary and to incorporate any provision in the service register should be deleted.
3. Enforce restrictions in the appointment and dismissal of teachers and make provisions to prevent any loss to the teachers in case of arbitrary dismissal.

³¹⁷ Ibid, December 31, 1938

³¹⁸ Ibid, January 3, 1939

³¹⁹ Quilandi Taluk APT union, Randam Varshika Souvenir, (Quilandi,1960)

³²⁰ The Mathrubhumi, January 3, 1939

³²¹ Ibid

³²² Ibid

³²³ Ibid, January 3, 1939

4. Adopt measures to prevent irregularities in training selection
5. Recognize the Malabar aided teachers union
6. The first statement of the director on teachers security of tenure was made on 5th June 1937. Hence all teachers dismissed after the same should be reinstated.
7. Distribute the annual grant of 1938-39 by March 31 itself. The conference requested the government to make an official statement recognizing these moderate demands of the teachers. At the same time the conference proposed certain measures to make the union more effective.
 1. The agitation against the private management system should be made a state issue
 2. Publish a monthly order of the auspices of the union w.e.f February 1939.
 3. Form a sub committee to prepare a report of the plan of action to be adopted in case of a strike.
 4. No teachers shall retire from any school without the prior consent of the union.
 5. To propagate the decision of the conference, it was decided to observe 22nd January 1939 as a union day through out Malabar by organizing public meetings and processions. Above all KPCC and SITU were requested to cooperate with the activities of the union.

The conference declared that the abolition of the private management system was necessary for the progress of the nation³²⁴. It was further observed that the District Educational Council had proved ineffective. Instead, a Board with nonofficial majority was to be constituted. Demands for improving the quality of teaching were also made³²⁵.

The conference also pointed out the failure of the British government in eradicating illiteracy in Malabar and asked the union to prepare an adult education scheme and to implement the same by 31st January 1939. The conference also

³²⁴ Ibid, January 3, 1939

³²⁵ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24,1938

welcomed the Wardha scheme. Above all it demanded the demolition of the Hitchcock memorial which retained the memory of a person who ruthlessly suppressed the people of Malabar³²⁶.

The conference appealed the teachers to organize a strong agitation for getting their union recognized. They decided to observe January 22 as the Union Recognition Day. This was done all over Malabar by organizing public meetings³²⁷. It demanded the recognition of their union and reinstatement of V.Ramunni, who was dismissed from the service for being the president of an unrecognized union. The issue of the union recognition was raised in the Madras Legislative assembly. The teachers agitation had its own result. On February 24th, 1939 the government issued orders containing provisions for the recognition of the union³²⁸. Accordingly on June 30th 1939 the MATU the only association of aided elementary school teachers of Malabar was recognized by the director of Education³²⁹.

Meanwhile teachers oppression continued in different parts of Chirakkal taluk. The department officers had an important role in the oppression of the teachers in the taluk. They instigated the managers to violate their agreements with the teachers³³⁰. They issued orders prohibiting the participation of teachers in politics and in elections. The police often came to the classroom to arrest teachers. The District Educational Council was replaced by taluk educational advisory committee with non congress majority³³¹.

It was under these circumstances that the executive committee of the MATU was held at Calicut on 9th September 1939. It decided to boycott the meetings of the teachers association and promised to co-operate with the same only if their reform proposal of 11-10-38 was adopted by the government. Based on this decision some of the association secretaries resigned³³². But very soon the union reconsidered its decision and decided not to start such an agitation at the moment. On the other hand it was decided to organize a one-day hartal of teachers. As a first step it was decided to organize the agitation only in Chirakkal

³²⁶ The Mathrubhumi, January 3, 1939

³²⁷ Ibid, February 26, 1939

³²⁸ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.416,24th February, 1939, TNA

³²⁹ The Mathrubhumi, July 5, 1939

³³⁰ Ibid, August 17, 1939

³³¹ Ibid

³³² Ibid, September 23, 1939

taluk, and to extend the same through out Malabar later, if necessary³³³. Thus the union called up on the teachers to observe a hartal on 25th September 1939 all over the Chirakkal taluk³³⁴. Actually it was a mark of protest aimed to bring the attention of the government to the grievances of the teachers and the upliftment of primary education³³⁵. Branch meetings of the teachers union welcomed the decision and decided to make it a success³³⁶. Teachers unions in other taluks promised all help and co-operation to the proposed hartal³³⁷. Though the decision was made known to the government, the union failed to get a reply. Hence the union decided to make an intensive propaganda for the hartal and all regular activities of the union was suspended for the time being and strike committee was also constituted³³⁸. At the same time the managers association opposed the hartal. The managers asked the public and the government to take urgent steps to prevent the hartal activities³³⁹. They also requested the authorities to give necessary instructions to deal with the situation.³⁴⁰

Mean while an urgent conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union was held at Edward Memorial Town hall on September 23rd 1939. The meeting was attended by large number of people including more than many teachers. This meeting presided over by Swami Ananda Teerta passed resolutions raising the following demands³⁴¹.

1. Each teachers should be given a definite salary scale and the same should be distributed monthly through the Head Master.
2. Managers should be given separate grant for school building rent and expenditure.
3. Repeal the right of the managers to incorporate any provision of his choice in the service register.
4. The Government should have control over the appointment and dismissal of teachers.

³³³ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.40

³³⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.102

³³⁵ The Mathrubhumi, September 27, 1939

³³⁶ Ibid, August 17, 1939

³³⁷ Ibid, August 26, September 6, 1939

³³⁸ Ibid, September 14, 1939

³³⁹ Ibid, September 17, 1939

³⁴⁰ Ibid, September 20, 1939

³⁴¹ Ibid, September 27, 1939

5. Provisions should be made to protect the interest of the teachers who are dismissed unjustly
6. Prevent the irregularities in training selection through definite provision and protect the untrained teachers from the exploitation of the managers and inspecting officers.
7. Teachers should be given the right to serve their mother land with pride and self respect
8. Ensure the upliftment of education by developing a healthy relation between the teachers and the inspecting officers.

The conference protested against the attempt made by the inspecting officers to make the hartal a failure and expressed anger over the managers who are acting as their puppets. It decided to resist any attempt on the part of managers and department to victimize those teachers who take part in the hartal. Above all in order to compensate the regular work of the hartal day, October 7th was decided to be a working day³⁴².

On 25th September 1939 the teachers of Chirakkal taluk successfully observed the hartal³⁴³. All teachers except some teacher managers, managers relatives and some others who were not conscious of the union, rallied behind the union. But the management and the department tried to defeat the agitation. The managers and the inspecting officers used all sorts of threats and promises to discourage the teachers from hartal activities. Commenting on the same Adhyapakan observed "The inspecting officers worked more than the managers to defeat the hartal. ... They brainwashed many managers and turned them against the teachers³⁴⁴. But the teachers withstood all their measures adopted by the managers and the department. In 500 schools more than 1800 teachers observed hartal³⁴⁵. Thus 70% of the teachers participated in it. Most of the schools remained closed. The teachers who refused to participate in the hartal were picketed in 52 centres. Consequently 8 schools were forced to observe hartal³⁴⁶. The police were present everywhere. The managers and the inspecting officers

³⁴² Ibid, September 29, 1939

³⁴³ Ibid, September 26, 1939

³⁴⁴ Adhyapakan, Volume 2, October 1939

³⁴⁵ Ibid

³⁴⁶ The Mathrubhumi, September 29, 1939

tried their best to break the hartal. The taluk senior deputy Inspector tried to conduct the annual inspection of the Kuttikkav South school at Edakkad centre on the hartal day. But he was picketed by the teachers³⁴⁷. Even in the absence of teachers, schools were kept opened by the managers. They took the attendance of the students and then allowed them to return home³⁴⁸. The managers suspended or expelled teachers in different parts of the taluk some of them who were parents of teachers expelled them from schools as well as from their homes³⁴⁹. But the hartal had great support. There was an instance of parents rebuking the teacher who refused to participate in the hartal³⁵⁰. Thus the teachers hartal at Chirakkal taluk proved to be a great success.

The teachers union in different parts of Malabar congratulated the Chirakkal union for the hartal and asked the government to accept the demands in the hartal memorial³⁵¹. The district Teachers union sent a telegram seeking government interference stating that other wise the union would be ready for an agitation³⁵². The MATU council met at Kannur asked the government to stop teachers oppression or the teachers of Malabar will be forced to go on a strike. It authorized the executive committee to organize a strike all over Malabar or taluk after taluk by giving one-week notice to the government to get the unions demands accepted³⁵³. The teachers of Kottayam taluk union expressed their happiness over the success of hartal but protested against the oppression of teachers who participated in it by the managers and the department. It requested the government to issue an order before 31st October by accepting the teachers demands in the hartal memorial and also by repealing the actions taken against the teachers, or else the teachers of Kottayam taluk will organize a strike³⁵⁴. The Kurumbranad and Kazargod taluk aided teachers union expressed happiness over the hartal victory and invited the attention of the congress ministry on the teachers

³⁴⁷ Ibid

³⁴⁸ Ibid, September 30, 1939

³⁴⁹ Ibid, September 29, 1939

³⁵⁰ Ibid, October 25, 1939. The teachers of Edachovva school who signed the hartal pledge refused to participate in the hartal. The parents and the public criticised their stand. They argued that education of their children under such teachers would be injurious to their future and therefore refused to send them to the school. Thus the teacher apologized and promised in writing to obey the instruction of the union in future

³⁵¹ Ibid, September 29, 1939

³⁵² Ibid

³⁵³ Ibid, September 27, 1939

³⁵⁴ Ibid, October 3, 1939

oppression due to the hartal³⁵⁵. A meeting of the North Malabar District congress committee under K.T. Kunhiraman Nambiar brought the attention of the Government in Chirakkal hartal and asked to accept the demands of the teachers³⁵⁶. But the government in a reply to Swami Ananda Teerta expressed dissatisfaction over the teachers resorting to hartal as a method of agitation³⁵⁷.

In spite of the measures adopted by the managers and the inspecting officers, the teachers hartal proved to be a great success. Majority of the schools remained closed practically on that day. It really infuriated the managers as well as the department officers. The Chirakkal taluk managers association asked the teachers to apologise or to face legal action³⁵⁸. K.V. Kannan Nair president of the Association blamed the union for organizing hartal without consulting their association³⁵⁹. But T.C.Narayanan Nambiar in his reply argued that the hartal was not against the managers and that the teachers were ready to make elementary education more effective even when the schools were closed by the managers³⁶⁰.

The teachers who gave leadership to the hartal were punished. P.M. Kuhiraman Nambiar, the president of the Teachers union was suspended from Azhikode south Higher elementary school³⁶¹. Three other teachers of the same school were also suspended. But the remaining teachers of the school demanded that the teachers should be reinstated or else they would go for a strike. They failed to get a reply. Thus 17 teachers including the head master and three women teachers struck work. The manager refused to turn up. The school had a strength of 700 students. The head master handed over the key to the public. As the school remained closed, the people asked the students to return home³⁶². O.K.Raman Nambiar, the president of the Azheekode branch was suspended from Azheekode west School, P.V. Kunhiraman the secretary of the union was dismissed from Kiayafat Ul Islam Madrassa. Teachers struck work in both these centres³⁶³. A rival school was opened against he Kiayafat Ul Islam Madrassa. At Azheekode, Vayal higher elementary school, M. Ragavan and P.Chathu Nambiar

³⁵⁵ ibid, October 11, 1939

³⁵⁶ ibid, October 4, 1939

³⁵⁷ ibid, October 6, 1939

³⁵⁸ ibid, October 12, 1939

³⁵⁹ ibid, October 13, 1939

³⁶⁰ ibid

³⁶¹ ibid, October 7, 1939

³⁶² ibid, October 8, 1939

³⁶³ ibid, October 10, 1939

were suspended. The remaining seven teachers refused to apologise and struck work. A parent meeting demanded the repeal of the order. But the manager refused to accept it. Thus a committee was formed to bring the matter to the attention of the government and efforts were made to open a rival school³⁶⁴. From Azheekode North higher elementary school P.Gopala Sarma was suspended. Here three other teachers struck work. A public meeting under Potheri Madhavan demanded the repeal of the suspension³⁶⁵. But the manager remained obstinate. Thus another meeting was convened and demanded that the teachers be reinstated before 12th November or decided to take steps to ensure the education of the students³⁶⁶. Consequently here also a rival school was opened³⁶⁷. The policy of punishment and the resistance of the teachers and the public continued³⁶⁸.

The Kottayam taluk teachers union asked the government to repeal all action taken against the teachers and to accept the demands in the hartal memorial and also gave the warning of a general strike³⁶⁹. The Kasargode taluk teachers union expressed its happiness over the hartal victory in Chirakkal and passed a resolution bringing the attention of the Government in the dismissal of teachers³⁷⁰. North Malabar district congress committee requested the government to accept the demands of the teachers³⁷¹. Kurumbranad taluk teachers union

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*, October 18, 1939

³⁶⁵ *Ibid*, October 25, 1939

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*, November 12, 1939

³⁶⁷ *Ibid*, November 24, 1939

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*, October 11,13,18,25 and December 21, 1939. K.V.Kannan, O.V. Kannan and K.Kunhiraman Nair were suspended from Madayi South School. Nine teachers of Varam Higher elementary school were suspended indefinitely. Elayayavoor school was closed by the Manager. The manager of Puzhati North Higher elementary school moved the court against his head master, C.K.Achuthan who was also the president of the branch union. Two teachers of dharma Samajam Higher elementary school Chovva were suspended for one week and their salary for one week was withheld. A Sankaran Nair, the Head master of Muzhappilangad girls school and K.V. Kunhambu Nair his colleague were dismissed by the manager with out giving notice. The public demand there reinstation in writing. A.M Narayanan Nambiar and Govindan were dismissed from Muzhappilangad Higher elementary school without notice. From Kadavur Girls School N.Govindan and K.V.Devaki were dismissed. V. Bapputty was dismissed from Muzhappilangad West school. Five teachers of Kadavur Mappila East school were not permitted to run the school. Here K.V. Govindan Marar who refused to apologies was dismissed. At Mattul elementary school P.K.Karunakaran and A.Gopalan Nair were not permitted to enter the school. The Manager setup a fence around the school with a Board "No Admission". Public interference proved effective in certain places. K.M Kammaran Nair the manager of Azheekode south higher elementary school accepted the request of parent and the public and withdraw his suspension order against the teachers. The action taken against the teacher of Azheekode Vayal Higher elementary school and Hidayatul Islam Madrassa school were repealed and consequently the rival schools were closed

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*, October 3, 1939

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*, October 11, 1939

³⁷¹ *Ibid*, October 4, 1939

expressed their sympathy over the teachers oppression in Chirakkal taluk. They demanded changes in elementary education rules and declared that otherwise teachers would be ready for a strike³⁷². The Ponnani taluk teachers union supported the Chirakkal hartal and expressed their willingness for a strike³⁷³.

The teachers hartal proved to be a great success. But a large number of teachers were either suspended or dismissed. Several teachers were given notice for certificate suspension for organizing picketing on the hartal day³⁷⁴. In Azheekode branch alone 51 teachers were expelled³⁷⁵. As a result of the hartal 65 teachers of 20 schools were suspended or dismissed³⁷⁶.

Teachers in different parts of Malabar demanded that the policy of oppressing teachers should be stopped. Various unions of taluk passed resolutions for strike. Majority of the people of Chirakkal taluk which was the cradle of left movement, stood behind the teachers. The situation became very critical. Mean while R.M Statham visited Kannur to enquire about the hartal. He had discussions with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at Choyees sea side Hotel on 5th and 6th October 1939. He promised to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the teachers³⁷⁷. C.J.Varkey, the education minister reached Kannur and promised to take steps to stop the teachers oppression. He agreed for a compromise talk to admit the demands of the teachers³⁷⁸. But before that the Rajaji Ministry at Madras resigned.

Adhyapakan, the journal of the teachers union evaluated the impact of the hartal as follows³⁷⁹. The hartal made those people who never cared for the grievances of the teachers more active. Common people rallied behind the teachers and this rapport with the people instilled a spirit of self confidence among the teachers..... The Adhyapakan concluded. "The civil and criminal cases registered after hartal have shown that the teachers could not work under the private management system. They realised that a struggle is inevitable to change

³⁷² ibid, October 11, 1939

³⁷³ ibid, August 26, October 26, 1939

³⁷⁴ ibid, December 3, 1939

³⁷⁵ ibid, October 13, 1939

³⁷⁶ ibid, November 4, 1939

³⁷⁷ ibid, October 7,11,39, 1939

³⁷⁸ P.R. Nambiar, 'Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodatuthu' In Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi, (Quilon,1975)

³⁷⁹ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 2, October, 1939

the existing evils in the education Act to spread literacy with pride and peace. It also inspired them to sacrifice their life to obtain the objective”³⁸⁰.

Mean while the Second World War broke out. Britain pushed India in to the war without her permission. In response to it, all congress ministries resigned. Thus the Rajaji government in Madras also came to an end. At that time the communist were impatient at the inactivity of the right wing and emphasized a revolutionary struggle resulting in the over throw of the foreign government³⁸¹. Now the teachers of Malabar had to face the rule of the British government directly. Thus the department and the management got an opportunity to crush the union and they intensified their policy of oppression. In spite of the promise given by R.M.Statham, they continued their repressive measures against the teachers.

The union leaders had no clear idea about the change appeared in the field of government³⁸². Hence the teachers union refused to move away from the path of agitation. A strong agitation was found inevitable to get the suspended teachers reinstated. They found no other way but an agitation of civil disobedience. Under this circumstance the MATU gave the warning of a general strike and an executive committee was authorized to take steps in this direction³⁸³.

The union clearly realized the necessity of an agitation against the government. They wanted to show the department and the government the unity and strength of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar. The union also realized the importance of mass support for their agitation. It was pointed out that a strike would hinder the education of the students for a long period. The advice given by political leaders and mass organization was also on the same line³⁸⁴. They were looking for a method of agitation, which would not effect the education of the students. Thus a new technique of agitation was designed. The boycott of teachers association meetings (Gurujana Samajam) which was the very symbol of British bureaucracy was adopted as a method of agitation³⁸⁵. This method that would not affect the regular work in the school was supported by majority of the

³⁸⁰ Ibid

³⁸¹ File No. 5-7/ 39 Home Political, Note on Communism, NAI, New Delhi.

³⁸² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit

³⁸³ The Mathrubhumi, September 27, 1939

³⁸⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit

³⁸⁵ Kittettan, 'Ennum Adhyapakan' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988). P.R. Nambiar was the main architect of this method of agitation

parents³⁸⁶. The MAST union called up on the teachers to boycott all association meetings through out Malabar.

As per department direction, the elementary school teachers of all categories - labour, board and aided - used to meet compulsorily at different centres. These meetings were called teachers association or Gurujana Samajam. These meetings were convened by the department officers in any one of the Saturdays in a month. Hence it was also know as the Durbar of Deputy Inspectors. Teachers of about 50 schools attended the meeting and majority of them who participated in these meeting were aided elementary school teachers³⁸⁷. As the meeting day was scheduled on a working day, absence was illegal³⁸⁸. So it was compulsory for the teachers to participate in these meetings. The department and the management had the power to take action against the teachers who refused to attend the meeting.

There existed bureaucratic autocracy in these meetings. Matters not related to education were not usually discussed. Managers were not to be criticised. Political discussion was strictly prohibited. When it was reported that socialism was discussed in one of these meetings, order was issued to punish such teachers by cancelling their certificates³⁸⁹. More over the teachers were not allowed to discuss their problems and difficulties in the meeting. Generally these meetings were not beneficial to the spread of elementary education. It proved useless except helping the government to save postal stamps. So during that period these meetings were criticised as 5th wheel or *Ajagalastanam*³⁹⁰. The great satirist Sanjayan ridiculed it as 'Saniyan Sabha'. Here it is to be noted that these meetings were held on the day of *Sani* (Saturday) and the term *saniyan* has also the meaning nuisance.

³⁸⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit

³⁸⁷ *The Mathrubhumi*, July 18, 1936 & August 4, 1938. The deputy inspector would preside over these meetings and would make a long speech in a wide variety of subjects. In his absence one of the teachers, very often a board teacher presided over the meeting. But when the inspector come, he was bound to vacate the chair, otherwise he will be punished. The meeting usually began with a prayer. Before 1930 it was the recitation of Bhupalamangalam. The front seats of the meeting were reserved for the Board school teachers. The government orders and circulars were read and explained to the managers and teachers. After that one of the teachers would take a model class and another one would present an essay on which others expressed their opinion. Sometimes there would be entertainment programmes

³⁸⁸ Thikkodiyar , *Arangu Kanaatha Natan* (Kottayam, 1991). p. 69

³⁸⁹ *The Mathrubhumi*, November 9, 1937

³⁹⁰ Interview with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28 March 1993

Now the teachers union decided to administer very intensively their decision to boycott the teachers association meeting. And committees were formed to enforce the same³⁹¹. Thus the aided elementary teachers of Malabar came forward to start the first agitation against, the British rule during the war period³⁹². The boycott of teachers associations began on 7th October 1939. The office bearers of the association began to resign their post as per the direction of the union. They argued that this association proved inefficient in achieving its objectives and were retained with teachers contributions but denied their right to elect its president³⁹³. The department and the managers got ready to face the new situation. Efforts were made to discourage the teachers and also to inform the authorities about the new developments³⁹⁴. The association meetings were boycotted at Tellicherry and Kozhikode. In the Hindu range meeting at Tellicherry out of 203 only 53 teachers attended. Thirty one among them were managers and their relatives. In the mappila range out of 90 only 27 teachers attended the meeting. There were teachers picketing in both these centres³⁹⁵.

The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union welcomed the decision to boycott the association meetings³⁹⁶. The Palakkad taluk teachers union decided to begin the boycott movement³⁹⁷. Thus the boycott and picketing spread to various centres of Malabar such as Vallikkad, Mandaratur, Thiruvallur, Perambra, Cheruvallur, Rayiranallur, Kadachira and Madayi³⁹⁸. Managers began to take disciplinary action against those who boycotted Samajams. Teachers began to be suspended and some of them were given dismissal notice³⁹⁹. M.P.Krishna Menon, the joint secretary of the MATU and the president of the Ponnani taluk teachers union and his colleagues K.Kutty Sankaran Nair were dismissed from Chembra Coranation Higher elementary school⁴⁰⁰. The MATU executive meeting held at Malappuram asked the authorities to stop teachers oppression and decided to intensify the boycott movement⁴⁰¹. The Valluvanad taluk teachers union asked the

³⁹¹ The Mathrubhumi, October 3, 1939

³⁹² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit

³⁹³ The Mathrubhumi, October 10,24,26, 1939

³⁹⁴ Ibid, October 7,10, 1939

³⁹⁵ Ibid, October 10, 1939

³⁹⁶ Ibid, October 11, 1939

³⁹⁷ Ibid, October 20, 1939

³⁹⁸ Ibid, October 18,24,26, 1939

³⁹⁹ Ibid, October 11, 1939

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, November 4, 1939

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, October 26, 1939

teachers to be prepared for an agitation and decided to boycott their association meetings⁴⁰². The Eranad Taluk teachers union decided to organize a strong propaganda for the boycott movement⁴⁰³. In this backdrop, the government withdrew the recognition given to the MATU on the ground that it inspired the teachers to involve in undesirable activities such as hartal, strike and boycott of teachers association meetings⁴⁰⁴. It was declared that the recognition was repealed on the basis of the provision in the government order⁴⁰⁵. It was also declared that teachers who continue as members of unrecognized union were to be prevented from serving as teachers in recognized schools⁴⁰⁶.

The boycott of teachers association continued successfully under their unrecognized union. The department officer adopted all measures of threat and promises to conduct the meeting properly. At the same time the teachers tried their best to prevent these meetings⁴⁰⁷. The union decided to picket the teachers who refused to co-operate with the agitation. Thus the teachers volunteer group was organized and picketing began early in the morning in front of all meeting halls⁴⁰⁸. Police aid was sought at various centres. It further infuriated the agitation⁴⁰⁹. In the meeting at Azheekode, out of 136 members only 27 teachers attended. At Trichambaram out of 138 members only 30 teachers attended the meeting. At Vatakkumbad out of 190 only 42 teachers were present. Among them there were only 6 aided elementary teachers. Here also there was picketing and public meeting⁴¹⁰. The annual meeting of the Madayi branch teachers union was to intensify the agitation. The Valluvanad teacher union protested against the withdrawal of union recognition and decided to intensify the movement⁴¹¹. The Eranad teachers union conference protested against the withdrawal of union recognition and decided to boycott their Association meetings. Thus the association meetings at Parappanangadi, Areekode and Kottakkal were boycotted⁴¹². In the Mannarkad Hindu Centre out of 30 members, 17 teachers

⁴⁰² Ibid, November 3, 1939

⁴⁰³ Ibid, November 1, 1939

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, November 8, 1939

⁴⁰⁵ G.O.(Education) Madras , No.416 ,24th February1939, TNA

⁴⁰⁶ Mathrubhumi Weekly, November 12, 1939

⁴⁰⁷ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.105

⁴⁰⁸ Fortnightly report , Second Half of December 1939

⁴⁰⁹ Fortnightly report , First Half of December 1939

⁴¹⁰ The Mathrubhumi, November 16, 1939

⁴¹¹ Ibid

⁴¹² Ibid, November 22, 1939

including two women teachers boycotted the meeting. At Ramanattukara, 33 teachers boycotted the meeting, organized a picketing at the gate and then went to attend the taluk conference. At Changaram Kulam Hindu centre in Kuttiadi, out of 51 members only 7 Board teachers and 4 teacher managers attended the meeting. At Mannur centre out of 35 members 26 teachers boycotted and therefore the meeting didn't take place. At Panur Hindu boys range, out of 230 members only 64 attended the meeting. Among them there were only 15 elementary teachers. At Koodali centre, out of 74 members only 5 Board teachers attended the meeting. Here it is to be noted that all 14 teacher managers boycotted the meeting. At Nadapuram Chalappuram Girls centre out of 49 members only 21 teachers attended. 3 among them were board teachers and two teachers were teacher managers⁴¹³

As advised by the managers union, some teachers of the Nanminda branch were suspended. The remaining teachers protested and demanded to repeal the order. But the manager remained obstinate and the teachers left the school. The manager convened a public meeting to settle the issue. But demanded an assurance from the parents that the teachers would not violate the government rules in the future. Hence his attempt failed. Thus 15 suspended teachers and 21 others remained out the school⁴¹⁴. The managers gave the warning that the teachers who were the members of the unrecognized union should resign or will be punished⁴¹⁵. K.Krishnan Nair of Punnol Boys school was suspended and fined⁴¹⁶

The MATU meeting held at Ramanattukara protested against the policy adopted by the government, department and the managers to crush the teachers agitation. It demanded to reconsider the withdrawal of union recognition and advised the taluk unions to intensify the agitation. It decided to observe 7th December 1939 as the union recognition day all over Malabar. Above all it welcomed the strike decision adopted by the Kottayam taluk union⁴¹⁷.

But the department continued to take action against the teachers. The inspecting officers served showcause notice to the teachers of Ramantali

⁴¹³ ibid, November 23, 1939

⁴¹⁴ ibid, November 22, 1939

⁴¹⁵ ibid, November 8, 1939

⁴¹⁶ ibid, November 18, 1939

⁴¹⁷ ibid, November 22, 1939

Chidambaranath Higher elementary school for involving in the boycott movement⁴¹⁸. It was also declared that the Director or the Divisional Inspector has the right to suspend the certificate of teachers who refused to attend two consecutive association meetings⁴¹⁹. The south Malabar DEO and the deputy inspectors warned the teachers about the consequences of their action and required a statement that they would not boycott the association meetings⁴²⁰. As per the advice of the school inspectress, the certificate of K.M.Krishnan, a Girls school Teachers got suspended for one year. It made the teachers further furious and they began to boycott the meetings of Girls school also⁴²¹. Meanwhile the director had discussion with the leaders of Valluvanad taluk union. He sympathized with their demands except that of monthly salary. The union leaders promised that they would try their best to end the agitation⁴²². But as the oppression of teachers continued all over Malabar, the Valluvanad teachers conference held at Cherpulasserri gave up their earlier promise and decided to intensify their agitation⁴²³.

The teachers agitation became more active. At Mattannur Mappila centre, out of 38 members only 7 teachers attended the meeting⁴²⁴. The boycott and picketing spread to several centres such as Chengalayi, Mayyil, Kannadiparamb, Echur, Kadachira and Madayi.⁴²⁵ At the Vatakara girls centre meeting, out of 140 members only 50 teachers attended the meeting, that too were board teachers. Here the teachers organized a picketing at the gate by lying on the ground. The teachers of Ganapathy Vilasam girls school stepped over their bodies to enter the Hall in front of the public. The public meeting held at Kottapparamb protested against it and refused to send children to their school. Consequently all 138 students except one boycotted the school⁴²⁶. The Kozhikode taluk teachers conference gave the warning that they would be forced to start a strike from 4th June 1940 if the department continued oppression of the teachers⁴²⁷. The Ponnani

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, November 16, 1939

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, November 24, 1939 & Mathrubhumi Weekly, December 3, 1939

⁴²⁰ The Mathrubhumi, December 24, 1939

⁴²¹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.105

⁴²² The Mathrubhumi, November 25, 1939

⁴²³ Ibid, December 7, 1939

⁴²⁴ Ibid, November 30, 1939

⁴²⁵ Ibid, December 3, 1939

⁴²⁶ Ibid, December 7, 1939

⁴²⁷ Ibid, November 29, 1939

taluk teachers union decided to intensify their agitation⁴²⁸. The situation in Malabar became worse. At one place a teacher who came to attend the meeting was ridiculed and scolded by the union activist. They accompanied him with burning torch in the daylight making all sorts of sounds. At another place the deputy inspector stepped over the bodies of the teachers volunteers to enter the Hall⁴²⁹. The police also resorted repressive measures against the teachers. At Thalipparamba, the police plucked off the moustache of Govinda Varier a Higher Elementary teacher of Akiparamb School⁴³⁰.

The department continued to take action against the teachers. The cancellation of certificate was the main disciplinary action resorted to. The union leader T.C.Narayanan Nambiar, a member of KPCC, was asked to resign from the congress. He send a prompt reply refusing to do so. But he along with T.M. Radhakrishanan Nambiar, the vice president of the Chirakkal taluk union and K.Kumaran were debarred from teaching in any of the recognized schools⁴³¹. Several teachers lost their certificate or got dismissed by the managers⁴³².

The attempt made by the government to crush the self confidence of the teachers by cancelling the certificates of the union leaders actually infuriated the teachers. It was at that time that the director R.M Statham visited Kannur. On that day teachers organized a very huge procession in the city attended by hundreds of teachers⁴³³. In the meeting that followed T.C. Narayanan Nambiar read out his reply to the government order asking his resignation from the congress. He said "if I am not a qualified teacher to serve in this government, a democratic government which would invite me to be a teacher may be constituted. Then I can continue in the congress⁴³⁴. The teachers welcomed it with great applause.

In spite of the oppressive measures, the boycott and picketing spread all over Malabar. In Valluvanad association meeting were boycotted at several centres like Mannarkad, Alanallur, Angadipuram, Mangada, Tirurkad, Karimpuzha,

⁴²⁸ *Ibid*, December 3, 1939

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, December 14, 1939

⁴³⁰ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.219. Police justified their action by asking whether it was the right for an elementary teacher to have such a long moustache

⁴³¹ *The Mathrubhumi*, December 13, 1939

⁴³² *Ibid*, December 7,15,17,19,22,23,24,27,30, 1939.

⁴³³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.220. The teachers raised the slogan "Certificate pullanu" teaching is service to the nation and service to the nation is the aim of life"

⁴³⁴ C.Bhaskaran, G.D. Nair, *Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Oru Charithram*, (Trivandrum, 2006). p. 92

Vellinezhi, Kulukkallur, Vilayur, Vallappuzha and Rayiranellur. Police presence was there in all these centres. At Rayiranellur out of 57 teachers 14 teachers boycotted. At Vilayur Mappila centre out of 50, 40 teachers boycotted the meeting⁴³⁵. Association meetings were boycotted at Vengara, Thirurangadi, Cheruvallur and Kongad⁴³⁶. The boycott and picketing lead to the arrest and imprisonment of teachers. The first arrest took place at picketing centres like Chovva, Thiruvellur and Pannur. Thus several teachers were arrested and put behind the bars. K.K. Kunhirama Panikker, M.P. Achuthan, K.K Naryayanan Nambiar, N.Chathukutty, K.C. Sreedharan, T.K Raman, K.V.Govinda Menon, P.C Ramachandran, C.K.Kunchanbu and P.V. Kunhiraman were arrested at Chovva centre in Kannur⁴³⁷. They were the first batch of volunteers who were arrested for boycotting and picketing in Chirakkal taluk. They were given 4 months rigorous imprisonment⁴³⁸. The union journal published a special note congratulating these teachers⁴³⁹. P.V. Kunhiraman one among them was a Teacher manager as well as secretary of the branch union. Here it is to be noted that there were many such teacher managers at that time who were against the private management system and loyal to the teachers movement⁴⁴⁰. Several teachers were arrested in Kurumbranad taluk also⁴⁴¹. The students of Karakkad Hindu boys school observed hartal, when their teachers P.V Pokinan was arrested⁴⁴². All these teachers were given three months rigorous imprisonment and also a fine of Rs 25 or two weeks simple imprisonment⁴⁴³. There was intense picketing at Panur centre in Kottayam taluk leading to arrest⁴⁴⁴. When K.K. Velayudhan Adiyodi was arrested, his students, in spite of their examination marched to Panur with black flags to participate in a protest meeting⁴⁴⁵. There was wide spread protest against the

⁴³⁵ The Mathrubhumi, December 24, 1939

⁴³⁶ Ibid

⁴³⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.43

⁴³⁸ The Mathrubhumi, December 21, 1939 & Adhyapakan, October 1939

⁴³⁹ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 2, October, 1939

⁴⁴⁰ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.105

⁴⁴¹ The Mathrubhumi, December 24, 1939. Here K.I. Damodaran M.K.Raman, P.P Arunachalam Pilla, C.K Vasu, K.M.Chappan Panikker, M.Chathu, P.M.Kelappan, M.M Gopala Kurup, P.V. Pokkinan, M.Madhava Varier and E.M Narayanan Adiyodi were arrested at Thiruvallur centre.

⁴⁴² Ibid

⁴⁴³ Ibid, December 27, 1939

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, December 30, 1939. Here the taluk union president N.GopalaKurup, K.K.Velayudhan Adiyodi, C.M Sankaran Nambiar, P. Kunhappa Nambiar, K.M Krishanan, M.T. Paidal Nair P.Kumaran, C.K. Abdulla, T.K Abdurahiman, P.V. Nanu Nambiar, E.P Krishanan Adiyodi and K. Kunhikrishanan Nair were arrested

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid

policy of oppression towards the teachers. The parents arranged protest meetings in different parts of Malabar against the arrest of teachers. Thus meetings were convened at various places like Uralungal, Kannukkara, Kunnumakkara, Onchiyam, Karakkad and Panur⁴⁴⁶. Highlighting the arrest and imprisonment of teachers Adhyapakan wrote "The imperialist Government hiding behind the managers and the department officers had been preventing the educational upliftment of the land. Now it appeared in its real form to prevent the progress of the teachers union..... The attempt to enforce police rule in the holy temple of education prove that the government was determined to ruin the education of the little kids of the land⁴⁴⁷.

The department and the management tried to suppress the agitation. But the teachers stood firm. Hundreds of teachers were there in all picketing centres. Common people began to assemble there to assist the teachers. Those who picketed were arrested and Managers began to take disciplinary action against those who boycotted Samajams. To defeat the picketing some managers tried to keep teachers in the meeting hall at night. But the people reached the centres early in the morning before the volunteers came, got the teachers out and led them to their house⁴⁴⁸. Some of the inspectors also used such techniques to save themselves from picketing. But they were compelled to return escorted by people with burning torches even in the day light making all sorts of sounds. The DEO C.V.Govindan Nambiar had to face this situation several times⁴⁴⁹. A large number of teachers were arrested and put behind the bars. The teachers led *jathas* singing songs depicting their arrest and imprisonment. Their agitation acquired popular support.

The government and the management continued their policy of oppression towards the teachers. The recognition given to various taluk teachers union was cancelled⁴⁵⁰. The suspension, dismissal, certificate cancellation, arrest and imprisonment of teachers also continued. 123 teachers were arrested and punished⁴⁵¹. Thus T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar were

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*, December 24, 1939

⁴⁴⁷ *Adhyapakan*, Book 1, Vol 2, October, 1939

⁴⁴⁸ Thikkodiyan, op.cit. p. 123

⁴⁴⁹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit. p.220

⁴⁵⁰ *The Mathrubhumi*, December 24,29, 1939

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid*, December 1939, January 1940 & Fortnightly report, First half of January 1940. See appendix IV

put in Jail. 79 Teachers got their certificate suspended or cancelled⁴⁵². Thus union leader like P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, T.C.Narayanan Nambiar, P.R Nambiar, V.Ramunni and C.C.Nair lost their Certificates. Many teachers were suspended⁴⁵³. A large number of teachers were suspended or dismissed in different parts of Malabar⁴⁵⁴. About 800 teachers lost their job. Thus altogether more than 7000 teachers were punished⁴⁵⁵. But the union stood firm in the agitation. Teachers meeting in different parts of Malabar asked the union leadership to declare a strike at the earliest. As it was the war period, the agitation got the active support of the national movement⁴⁵⁶. K.Damodaran promised the support of the workers to the teachers agitation⁴⁵⁷. Peasant meetings sympathised with the teachers movement and passed resolutions requesting congress to begin agitation against the government⁴⁵⁸. The AICC was requested to interfere in the issue because it was complained that the teachers were encouraged to resort to direct action⁴⁵⁹.

Mean while the MATU decided to convene special conferences to plan about the future activities. Thus it was decided to convene regional conferences of teachers at Tellicherry Ramanattukara and Pattambi⁴⁶⁰. A combined meeting of teachers of Chirakkal, Kottayam and Kurumbranad taluks was held at Tellicherry on December 23 1939. The conference made the following declaration "The boycott of meetings of the teachers association was sought to bring the teachers grievances to the attention of the government without hindering the education of the students. The union resorted to this harmless method only when all other steps proved to be futile. But the authorities used cruel oppression against it. In case the government refused the demands of the teacher, then the elementary teachers of Chirakkal, Kottayam and Kurumbranad taluk would go on for strike from 30th January 1940. The conference welcomed the support rendered and asked them to continue to extend the same in future if there is a fight against the imperial government⁴⁶¹. The joint conference of Valluvanad, Ponnani and

⁴⁵² Ibid, December 1939, January 1940. See appendix V

⁴⁵³ Ibid, October, November, December 1939, February, March 1940. See appendix VI

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, November, December 1939, January, February, March 1940. See appendix VII

⁴⁵⁵ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.106

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid

⁴⁵⁷ The Mathrubhumi, November 29, 1939

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, December 13, 1939

⁴⁵⁹ AICC Papers, p.12, 1939,40,(Nehru Memorial Museum and Library,New Delhi) Hereafter NMML New Delhi.

⁴⁶⁰ The Mathrubhumi, December 22, 1939

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, December 27, 1939

Palakkad teachers was held at Pattambi on 24th December 1939. This meeting under V.Ramunni welcomed the strike decision and congratulated the teachers persecuted in their agitation⁴⁶². The third regional conference attended by teachers of Eranad and Kozhikode taluk was held at Ramanattukara on 30th December 1939. This meeting under H. Manjunadha Rao welcomed the strike decision and informed their willingness to do the same⁴⁶³.

Mean while the MATU executive meeting held at Pattambi on 25th December 1939 accepted the strike decision taken by the teachers⁴⁶⁴. At the same time the government found no justification for teachers indulging in such 'undesirable activities' as strikes. The government declared that they will not hesitate to take preventive measure. News papers in Madras came out with reports of the strike and urged the government to settle it. Teachers association in Punjab, Utarpradesh, Delhi, Bengal and Andrapradesh asked the government to begin talks with the teachers who were on the verge of strike⁴⁶⁵. The secretary of SITU went to Calicut to initiate talks. Public meetings were held throughout Malabar in favour of the agitation⁴⁶⁶.

Prominent leaders came forward to end this agitation in Malabar. V.R.Nayanar, the secretary of the servants of India society invited MLAs, MLCs, DEOs, District board president and the representatives of managers association and teachers union for a meeting to discuss the issue⁴⁶⁷. This meeting was held at Chalappuram PSV Hall on 30th December 1939. Swami Ananda Teertha and leaders like Potheri Madhavan, A Chandu, E. Kannan, P.Madhavan Nair, K.A Damodharan Menon and P.R.Nambiar attended the meeting. A large number of teachers and managers were also there for the meeting. C.K.Govindan Nair presided over the meeting. This meeting asked the teachers to stop their boycott and picketing and requested the government to release the teachers, to restore their certificates and to redress the grievances of the teachers⁴⁶⁸. P.R. Nambiar promised to stop their agitation, if the government was ready to give a favourable

⁴⁶² Ibid, December 30, 1939

⁴⁶³ Ibid, January 5, 1940

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, December 27, 1939. But some of the measures adopted by P.S.Varier, the vice president of the union had created great resentment among the teachers.

⁴⁶⁵ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.106 & Vallathol Kumaramenon, op.cit, p. 44

⁴⁶⁶ G.O.(Home) Madras , No.1270,12th March 1940, TNA

⁴⁶⁷ The Mathrubhumi, December 22, 1939

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, January 2, 1940

response. S.D.Ramanuja Ayyankar who reached Calicut also gave a talk in this meeting. A committee consisting of K.Kelappan C.K.Govindan Nair, E.Kannan, and P. Madhavan Nair was constituted under the leadership of V.R Nayanar to begin the compromise talks and to end the agitation. The teachers union also supported this compromise move. The union president in his statement showed how the teachers agitation in Malabar became a state issue that could gain the sympathy of teachers Association in different parts of the state. It asked all teachers associations and guilds in the Madras state to convene meetings before 10th January 1940 to request the government and the director to redress the grievances of the teachers especially the teachers of Malabar and also to advise the teachers of Malabar to stop all their direct actions⁴⁶⁹.

At this stage, the Malabar collector C.F.V Williams advised the teachers to desist from strikes and to bring grievances if any, before the authorities in an orderly and constitutional manner⁴⁷⁰.

Under these circumstances the strike committee of the union met at Calicut on 6th January 1940. It evaluated the situation. The SITU and the educationalists in Malabar made sincere effort to end the agitation. The public and the news papers showed great interest in the matter. Moreover the Malabar collector showed sympathetic attitude towards the teachers. All these prompted the union to postpone the strike which was to take place on 10th January 1940⁴⁷¹.

Though the proposed strike was postponed the teachers continued their boycott and picketing. Thus arrest and imprisonment continued in different parts of Malabar. Efforts were made to strengthen the agitation at several centres⁴⁷².

There was widespread protest against the teacher oppression. Public meetings were held at places like Quilandy, Chokli, Panniyannur, Kannur, Mattannur, Nadapuram, Trikitiri, Thirur and Vettath Puthiyangadi⁴⁷³. Several school observed hartal to protest against the arrest of teachers⁴⁷⁴. Kottayam taluk congress committee protested against the suspension, dismissal, certificate cancellation and debarring and the arrest and punishment of teachers. At the

⁴⁶⁹ ibid, January 5, 1940

⁴⁷⁰ ibid

⁴⁷¹ ibid, January 9, 1940 & Fortnightly report , First Half of January 1940

⁴⁷² ibid, January 6, 1940

⁴⁷³ ibid, January 9,10,11, 1940

⁴⁷⁴ ibid, January 11,12, 1940

same time the union was asked to stop strike so as to enable the peoples committee to take up the compromise talks⁴⁷⁵.

The failure to suppress the agitation and the changed circumstances prompted the government to change their attitude towards the teachers agitation⁴⁷⁶. The deputy director D. Sadasiva Reddy on 6th January 1940 promised S.D.Ramanuja Ayyankar, the secretary of SITU that if the teachers begin their regular activities, the department would try to redress the grievances of the teachers. He also promised to receive the delegation of the Malabar committee. SITU asked the teachers of Malabar to make use of this opportunity⁴⁷⁷. On the basis of a letter from D.S Reddy, V.R. Nayanar convened a meeting of the Malabar committee at D.M.R.T office at Chalappuram, Calicut on 14th January 1940. The union leaders were also invited to prepare the memorandum of teachers grievances⁴⁷⁸. Even at this stage the management and the department continued their policy of oppression against the teachers⁴⁷⁹.

The secretary of the South Indian Teachers Union expressed his uneasiness over the arrest of teachers even after the withdrawal of their strike decision. He also expressed his anxiety over the arrest of the union secretary. He asked the government to stop the oppression of teachers and also to restore their certificates. At the same time he reminded the teachers of the effects being made by SITU and Malabar committee for preparing the memorandum to be submitted to the government. Therefore the union was advised to stop their boycott and picketing⁴⁸⁰.

Meanwhile the teachers continued their boycott programme. Thus association meetings were boycotted at several places in Malabar such as Payyoli, Ulliyeri, Kondotty, Karantur, Kovurparamb, Parappanangadi, Engandiyur, Kuthurparamb, Paraparam, Peralassery and Payyannur⁴⁸¹. But the changed circumstances and the failure in suppressing the agitation prompted the government to change their tactics.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, January 9, 1940

⁴⁷⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.107

⁴⁷⁷ The Mathrubhumi, January 13, 1940

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid, January 13,14,17,18,23, 1940.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid, January 17,19, 1940

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, January 18, 1940

Under these circumstances, the MATU strike committee met at Calicut on 16th January 1940. It concluded that the promise of a sympathetic consideration of the grievance of the teachers held out in the government communiqué was substantiated in the amicable attitude shown by the authorities in dealing with the teachers association meeting through out Malabar except Kizhal and Thalipparamba. This change in the government attitude towards the teachers agitation was acknowledged. It also viewed the efforts made by SITU and Malabar committee as highly encouraging and so considered their appeal to end the boycott movement. So the union wanted to give an opportunity to the SITU and the Malabar committee to make their efforts successful⁴⁸². The MATU suspended all direct action including picketing and boycott of teachers association on 16th January 1940⁴⁸³. Thus the teachers agitation which continued for a long period of 101 days came to an end. As a result of this agitation several teachers were arrested and imprisoned. Many of them lost their certificates. A large number of teachers were suspended or dismissed. Most of the union leaders were among them.

The Director of Education had promised to redress the grievances of the teachers and also agreed to accept a memorandum of their actual grievances. The SITU president Yajna Narayana Ayyar and its secretary S.D Ramanuja Ayyankar reached Calicut on 20th January 1940. They had discussion with prominent public leaders like V.R. Nayanaar, C.K Govindan Nair, and K.Madhava Menon and also with the managers and the union leaders of teachers. They attended the meeting of the Nayanayar Committee held at the DMRT office and gave all necessary help to prepare the teachers memorandum to be submitted to the government⁴⁸⁴. The union submitted the memorandum containing their immediate demands and showed their willingness to discuss their problems. But the director refused to talk with the union as it was not a recognized one. He argued that as an unrecognized union, the MATU had no right to submit a memorandum to the government. He declared that if the teachers who had been punished apologized and gave a guarantee of good conduct in future, immediate steps would be taken to consider their case personally⁴⁸⁵.

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, January 18, 1940

⁴⁸³ Fortnightly report , Second Half of January 1940

⁴⁸⁴ *The Mathrubhumi*, January 23, 1940

⁴⁸⁵ G.O.(Home) Madras , No.1270,12th March 1940, TNA

The union viewed it as unfortunate because such a statement would endanger the emerging spirit of compromise⁴⁸⁶. As per the statement the teachers were asked to approach the department directly and not through their association. It was viewed as an attempt to crush the union and also to weaken public interference. It is to be noted that the Director had had discussions with the union in 936, when it was an unrecognized one.

However the department and the government continued their policy of oppression. M.V. Narayanan Nambiar, K.V.Narayanan Nambiar V.Kunhiraman Nambiar, and C.Achuthan Nambiar who were arrested at Mayyil were given 3 months rigorous imprisonment and one month simple imprisonment⁴⁸⁷. Five of the teachers arrested at Trikkittiri were given 3 months rigorous imprisonment. One month simple imprisonment and also a fine of Rs 10. K.Keshavan who was fined Rs 15 refused to remit the amount. How ever he was let free⁴⁸⁸. The teachers who were arrested for picketing at Thiruvallur submitted an appeal but their punishment was retained⁴⁸⁹.

The managers supported all these measures of teachers oppression. Two teachers of Pernjanam East Hindu Higher elementary school were dismissed for boycotting the teachers association meetings⁴⁹⁰. V. Kumaran Nair the Head master of Kottpadam Hindu elementary school and his colleagues P.Unnikrishnan Nair and K. Balakrishna Menon boycotted their association meeting. The manager asked them to apologise to the department. But they refused and got dismissed⁴⁹¹. T. Kunhikrishnan Thangal was dismissed in Mandaratur elementary school⁴⁹².

The managers also began to dismiss teachers for being members of an 'unrecognized union'. Thus P.V.Krishna Varier and V. Achuta Varier of Mannmbatta Hindu aided elementary school were dismissed. At Valambilimangalan Hindu aided elementary school, P.Govindan Nair, A.M.Govndan Nair and P.Narayanan Nair were dismissed. At Karimbuzha Mappila school, A.Thachu Menon, M.Balakrishanan Nair and K. Raman Menon

⁴⁸⁶ Mathrubhumi Weekly, January 28, 1940

⁴⁸⁷ Mathrubhumi, February 3, 1940

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, February 4, 1940

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, February 6,13, 1940

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid, January 28, 1940

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, February 3, 1940

⁴⁹² Ibid, February 7, 1940

were dismissed⁴⁹³. Teachers were asked to resign from the union. But they refused to obey the order. Thus V.Kelappan Nambiar, T.Ananda Varier, T.V.Govinda Varier and K.V. Krishanan were dismissed at Thalipparamba, Trichanbalam East school. Twelve teachers of Puliyanchery girls school, Kuruvangad Hindu boys school, Puliancheri Hindu Boys school, Muchukunnu North Hindu boys school and Puduppanam boys school in Kurumbranad taluk were dismissed⁴⁹⁴. The Deputy Inspector demanded monthly report containing the details of teachers who were members of teachers union, congress and the Muslim league. The managers were also asked not to employ members of unrecognized union in recognized schools⁴⁹⁵. Thus the news of the dismissal of teachers spread wide. At Kollam women teachers like T. Tirumalakutty, Kousu and Madhavi were dismissed. At Tellicherry T.K.Chandupanikker and M Sarada were dismissed⁴⁹⁶.

The SITU expressed anxiety over this situation but asked the teachers not to revive their earlier programmes. V.R Nayanar went to meet the Director R.M.Statham as well as Rutherford the Education Adviser of the government⁴⁹⁷. However the teachers continued to be dismissed for being members of the teachers union⁴⁹⁸.

There was widespread dismissal in Malabar. At Mannarkad 18 teachers were dismissed. 5 teachers were dismissed at Sreekrishnapuram. In Valluvanad taluk 118 teachers were thus dismissed; 5 teachers were imprisoned and 5 teachers lost their certificates⁴⁹⁹. All together 58 teachers were dismissed in different parts of Eranad taluk only. Protest meetings were held at several places against arbitrary dismissals⁵⁰⁰. At several places such large scale dismissal lead to the closing of the school⁵⁰¹.

Thus a large number of teachers were dismissed for becoming members of an unrecognized union. Based on the written instruction from the inspecting officers hundreds of teachers were dismissed in 6 taluks of Malabar⁵⁰². Teachers

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, January 23, 1940

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid*, January 28, 1940

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid*, February 1, 1940

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid*, February 3, 1940

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid*, February 4, 1940

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid*, February 1940

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid*, February 14, 1940

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*, February 8, 1940

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid*, February 17, 1940

⁵⁰² *Ibid*, February 29, 1940

were forced to apologize to retain their profession⁵⁰³. Some of them were forced to resign from their union⁵⁰⁴. Public meetings were organized at several places in Malabar such as Alanallur, Valanchery, Chengottukav, Kuruvangad, Poyilkav, and Edakkara to express protest against the teachers oppression and also to ask the government to redress their grievances⁵⁰⁵. In certain schools students observed hartal against the dismissal of teachers⁵⁰⁶. At Chemanchery east school, E Kunhappa Nambiar who was not a member of the teachers union resigned his post in protest against the dismissal of teachers⁵⁰⁷. More than 500 teachers were thus dismissed. At several places like Sreekrishnapuram, Madai, Vatakara, Chemanchery and Iringath schools were closed. Thus 15 schools were closed and more than 100 school were effected. Rival schools were opened in certain places. The whole educational activities in Malabar were thus paralyzed⁵⁰⁸.

When the oppression of the teachers spread all over Malabar V.R. Nayanar took active steps to mobilize pubic opinion in favour of the teachers. These efforts at the time of governor's rule in Madras were also supported by the congress leaders⁵⁰⁹. The KPCC meeting held on February 15 1940 under Muhammed Abdurahman unanimously passed a resolution on the teachers agitation in Malabar⁵¹⁰. The KPCC secretary P. Narayayanan Nair made a statement highlighting the teachers oppression in Malabar even after the withdrawal of their agitation. Thus the KPCC asked the government to stop these measures and to recognize the teachers union. It also demanded the dismissed teachers to be reinstated, release of teachers from jail and the redressal o f the basic grievances of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar. Above all it was decided to observe a teachers day all over Kerala on 24th February 1940 to highlight the necessity of ending the teachers agitation in Malabar⁵¹¹. The day was observed through out Malabar. Public meetings were convened at several places like Nilambur, Tirur, Engandiyur, Kuttiattur, Elathur, Onchiyam, Chokli, Prapram, Kathirur, Edakkad, Pappinisseri, Thalipparamba, Azheekode, Kayaralam, Mayyil, Kodokkad, and

⁵⁰³ *Ibid*, February 8, 1940

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid*, February 3,9,24, March 1, 1940

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid*, February 8,9, 1940

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid*, February 9, 1940

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid*, February 17, 1940

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid*, February 29, March 1, 1940

⁵⁰⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.46

⁵¹⁰ *The Mathrubhumi*, February 17, 1940

⁵¹¹ *Ibid*, February 21, 1940

Karivellur and passed resolutions requesting the director to interfere in the issue to redress the grievances of the teachers⁵¹². These meetings protested against the arrest and oppression of the teachers⁵¹³. It demanded the release of teachers, cancellation of punishments, recognition of the union and the redressal of the teachers grievances.

Meanwhile V.R Nayanar met the director R.M. Statham on 6th February 1940 and discussed the issue of teachers agitation in Malabar⁵¹⁴. Along with him Yajnanarayana Ayyar, the president of the SITU and Surya Narayana Rao of the servant of India society also got involved in this discussion. Now the director wanted the teachers to express regret instead of apology. At the same time he promised to consider their issues such as monthly salary and security of tenure at the earliest. As the boycott and picketing were over, he agreed to consider the demands of taluk unions recognition. More over he promised to restore the certificate of all those teachers who expressed regrets on their action. But to release teachers from jail, the mediators were advised to meet the district collector. Accordingly Nayanar met the collector Williams and discussed the matter. And he was told that necessary steps would be taken at the earliest after consulting the government⁵¹⁵. Now V.R Nayanar made the suggestion of a peoples memorandum to the government. Thus a memorandum requesting the release of teachers from the jail, signed by the public leaders like K. Kelappan, K.A Damodaran Menon, E Narayanan Nair, C. Vasudevan, T. Krishna Kurup and P. Krishanan Nair was submitted⁵¹⁶. More over on behalf of the Malabar committee Surya Narayana Rao met the government adviser Rutherford and discussed the issue. But the government refused to take a clear stand on this issue.

Even at this stage teachers continued to be dismissed at several places⁵¹⁷. The KPCC asked the government to stop the dismissal of teachers, to release imprisoned teachers, to reinstate the teachers already dismissed, give recognition to taluk union and to admit the major demands of the teachers⁵¹⁸. V.R Nayanar immediately brought the same to the attention of the department and the

⁵¹² *Ibid*, March 1, 1940

⁵¹³ G.O.(Home) Madras , No.1270,12th March 1940, TNA

⁵¹⁴ *The Mathrubhumi*, February 9, 1940

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid*

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid*, February 14, 1940

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid*, February 23,24, March 1, 1940

⁵¹⁸ AICC Papers, p. 12, 1939,40, (NMML, New Delhi)

government. It was responded sympathetically. It was informed that as the boycott and picketing was over the government had stopped the suspension of teachers certificates. It was also declared that the taluk teachers union would be recognized on certain conditions and teaching grant would be sanctioned to the teachers who were members of the union. More over inspecting officers were given instructions to prevent the dismissal of teachers and promised to distribute the school grant of the current year by March 31st itself. All these steps reflected the sympathetic attitude of the department and the government⁵¹⁹. P.R. Nambiar welcomed the government stand and requested the redressal of the basic grievances of the teacher and also asked to release the teachers from jail⁵²⁰. Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Eranad, Valluvanad, and Ponnani taluk requested for union recognition⁵²¹. As a result of these developments the Coimbatore region Deputy Director RM Savor reached Calicut and discussed the teachers problems with V.R Nayanar and P.R Nambiar⁵²². Now the government agreed to release all teachers except the leaders of agitation based on a written apology for the past and an undertaking for the future⁵²³. All teachers except 4 rejected the offer⁵²⁴. P.R. Nambiar and V.Ramunni were acting as the leaders of the strike committee. All other leaders were in Jail. Meanwhile leaders like T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and P. Anandan Nambiar came out of the jail⁵²⁵. Thus points of compromise were thoroughly discussed. Consequently an executive committee of the MATU was held at Calicut on 25th and 26th February 1940⁵²⁶. The present situation was reviewed and the following points were noted. It was the sympathetic note reflected in the collectors statement, government communiqué and the assurance given by the SITU and the Malabar committee that prompted teachers to stop their direct action on January 16th 1940. But as per the written instruction of the inspecting officers, teachers were dismissed in 6 taluks of the district. They were forced to resign from the union. The Nayanar committee brought the matter to the attention of the government. Consequently department stopped the policy of oppression. Instructions were given to stop the dismissal of

⁵¹⁹ The Mathrubhumi, February 21,23,24,March 1, 1940

⁵²⁰ Ibid, February 27, 1940

⁵²¹ Ibid, March 9, 1940

⁵²² Ibid, February 28, 1940

⁵²³ Fortnightly report , First Half of December 1939

⁵²⁴ G.O.(Home) Madras , No.1270,12th March 1940, TNA

⁵²⁵ The Mathrubhumi, February 27, 1940

⁵²⁶ Ibid, February 29, 1940

teachers for being members of the union. Steps were taken to give recognition to the taluk unions. It was promised to give the teaching grant before 31st March 1940. Assurances were given on issues such as monthly salary and security of tenure. Above all union leaders were permitted to meet the authorities. Under these circumstances the union felt that it was not necessary to revive their agitation which was stopped on January 16th 1940. Thus the strike committee was dismissed and it was declared that the union had no intention to adopt illegal programmes. The taluk unions were advised to deny membership to those who violate this decision. At the same time the union requested the government to release the teachers from jail and to reinstate all teachers who lost their job due to hartal, boycott, picketing and also for being members of the union. The union also requested the government to give recognition to their taluk unions. At the same time the union requested the support of the SITU the Nayanar committee and other public organizations for getting their grievances accepted. Thus the compromise effort to settle the teachers agitation ended successfully⁵²⁷. The boycott of teachers association meetings was a thrilling episode in the history of the teachers movement in Malabar. This agitation prompted the government to adopt a series of measures favourable for the teachers. It was a severe blow to the arrogance and power exhibited by the department. The salary of the higher trained teachers and secondary trained teachers were increased to Rs 14 and Rs 18 respectively⁵²⁸. The recommendation from the managers was not needed anymore for selection of teachers for training.⁵²⁹ 85% of the teaching grant was to be distributed among the teachers and the managers were asked to get the salary register signed by the teachers⁵³⁰. The manager lost his right to dismiss teachers without giving 3 months prior notice and salary. The school grant to the managers who had to clear the salary arrears was reduced. The department sent the salary arrears directly to the teachers even in their jail address⁵³¹. In fact it was really a new chapter in the history of the elementary school teachers of Malabar. However the department refused to consider the case of teachers who were in jail. The Malabar collector demanded written apology from the teachers. But it was ignored. Hence the compromise talks continued. By the end of March 1940 V.R Nayanar

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.* V.R. Nayanar and Ramanuja Ayyankar played a remarkable role to make it a great success

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 9, 1940

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, March 19, 1940

⁵³⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, *op.cit.*, p.47

⁵³¹ P.R. Nambiar, *op.cit.*, p.108

and P.R Nambiar once again met the deputy Director R.M Savoor at Coimbatore. Accordingly he agreed to restore the certificates of teachers and also to recognize the taluk teachers unions. Managers were advised to reinstate the teachers who were dismissed. More over it was decided to give salary directly to the teachers in cases where it was not paid regularly. Twelve such schools were identified⁵³². The MATU executive meeting held at Calicut welcomed these measures and advised the teachers to send request for the restoration of their certificates. It also decided to consult SITU for linking the taluk union with the district Teachers council⁵³³. The teachers agitation and the compromise efforts made by the public leaders had a profound impact. Hence the teachers continued to get more concessions. Thus the teachers of Wayand area got 50% increase in their salary⁵³⁴. Another amendment was made to the government order of 1939 which prevented the teacher from participating in politics and election. The first amendment had allowed the teachers to be members of political parties. But the present amendment permitted the secondary teachers and college teachers to participate in elections⁵³⁵. Even then the elementary teachers were denied such a right and this injustice was brought to the attention of the government⁵³⁶. The government also accepted a very important demand raised by the teachers for a long period. The 8th standard examination was conducted and certificates were distributed by the inspecting officers. Here corruption bribery and nepotism had prevailed. The teachers union had been demanding since 1935 to make it a public examination. Hence the government decided to make the ESLC examination a public examination⁵³⁷. Above all attempts were made to reform the teachers association meeting⁵³⁸. The teachers agitation in Malabar had its own political results. The teachers of the villages came very close to left politics. P.R. Nambiar wrote, "Teachers began to have more respect towards the left leaders especially the communist⁵³⁹. The teachers movement emerged as a second front of the agitation against the British imperialism⁵⁴⁰. The teachers of Malabar were the first to

⁵³² The Mathrubhumi, March 19, 1940

⁵³³ Ibid, March 22, 1940

⁵³⁴ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.47

⁵³⁵ The Mathrubhumi, May 22, 1940

⁵³⁶ Ibid, May 24, 1940

⁵³⁷ Ibid, May 9, 1940

⁵³⁸ Ibid, April 4, 1940

⁵³⁹ P.R. Nambiar, 'Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodatuthu' In Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi, (Quilon, 1975)

⁵⁴⁰ Thikkodian, 'Oru Koodikkazhayude Orma', P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)

organize an agitation of civil disobedience against the British rule during the war period and emerged as strong stream of anti-imperialist movement⁵⁴¹.

Here ends the first phase of the teachers union activities and agitations. The period which followed was marked by the Second World War, the Quit India Movement led by the congress and the Peoples War Policy of the Communist Party of India. All these exerted a great influence on the teachers movement. This is taken up in the next chapter.

⁵⁴¹ P.R. Nambiar, 'Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodatuthu' In Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi, (Quilon, 1975)

CHAPTER FOUR
**TEACHERS MOVEMENT:
WAR YEARS AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE**

The Second World War opened a new chapter in the history of the teachers movement in Malabar. During this period teachers faced many new problems inside and outside the union. The Quit India Movement, the People's War Policy and other problems created by the global war had a profound impact on the elementary teachers movement.

The teachers agitation of 1939-40 clearly demonstrated the strike potential of the Malabar Aided Elementary Teachers Union. The teacher's willingness for direct action and their organised strength was clearly reflected at various centres of agitation in Malabar. As we have seen in the previous chapter this generated a feeling of fraternity among all sections of teachers. Consequently suggestions were made to link the aided elementary teacher with the Malabar Teachers Guild, the district unit of the South Indian Teachers Union.

During the agitation, the Malabar aided elementary school teachers union had lost its recognition. In the absence of recognised union, the teachers union activities really remained unorganised. Actually at the time, the taluk unions which regained their recognition after the agitation carried on these activities in Malabar. In this backdrop it was felt that the integration of various taluk unions with the Malabar Teachers Guild would fill the gap of a centralised leadership. It was also argued that such a step would help to make the grievances of the Malabar teachers a state issue. Hence efforts were made to affiliate the Taluk Teachers Unions with the Malabar Teachers Guild, the district unit of SITU. The executive committee of the MATU decided to begin consultations with the Guild leadership¹. Consequently taluk conference of the teachers also began to raise these demands².

¹ The Mathrubhumi, March 22, 1940

² Ibid, June 1 & 13, 1940

The Guild actually represented 400 teachers and 21 teachers associations in High Schools and Colleges. A committee was constituted for working out the modalities and in January 1941 decided to affiliate eight recognised taluk unions with the Malabar Teachers Guild. Each taluk was permitted to send one representative to the Guild executive committee. The elementary teachers were also given the right to nominate the Vice president and Joint secretary of the Guild. A sub committee was also setup to look into the matters of elementary teachers³. At the same time each member was to give one anna to the Guild and each taluk was directed to give one rupee every year to the South Indian Teachers Union⁴. The affiliation of the elementary teachers union with the Guild changed the attitude of the high school and college teachers who views the elementary teachers as depressed section⁵. But the Guild's anxiety over the politicization of the teachers union in Malabar and the teachers belief, that, as a reactionary organisation, the Guild could do nothing to achieve their rights, hampered these efforts till 1944.

But the teachers continued to raise their demands and tried to bring the attention of the department and the government to their grievances. The restoration of certificates, payment of monthly salary, extension of PF benefit to the teachers and the selection for training on the basis of service were demanded by them. These demands were made in the 6th anniversary of the Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union, Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union, Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Union and the Kozhikode Taluk Teachers Union⁶.

On the other hand, the managers were reluctant to reappoint the dismissed teachers because they were advised by their association to take a decision only after proper thinking. They asked the department not to force them to reappoint the teachers who were dismissed, or to reduce the grant given on receiving a complaint from the teachers⁷. The managers conference also warned the department not to interfere in the appointment and dismissal of teachers and distribution of grant. All these would hamper the smooth running of the institution.

³ Ibid, January 29,1941

⁴ Ibid, September 24,1941

⁵ Ibid, March 19, 1942

⁶ Ibid, June 1, July 26,13, August 8,29,1940, March 7,1941.

⁷ Ibid, January 7, 1941

They wanted the department either to give them full rights or run the schools directly⁸.

The managers continued their policy of refusing salary to the teachers⁹. The teachers of several places gave notice of retirement¹⁰. But the Director of Public Instruction ordered that action be taken against the managers who denied salary to the teachers¹¹. There were also instances of parents forcing the managers to pay the salary of the teachers¹².

A meeting of the taluk union presidents was held at Pantalayani on January 18th, 1942. It prepared a plan to continue the union activities of the elementary teachers of Malabar¹³. Thus with a gap of two years after the agitation of 1940, the 5th anniversary of the MATU was held at Panoor on February 14th, 1942. By then the attitude of the high school and college teachers who viewed the elementary teachers as a depressed class had changed¹⁴. S.T. Ramanuja Ayyankar, the secretary of the SITU and R. Ravivarma, the president of the Malabar Teachers Guild in their presidential and inaugural address respectively asked the teachers to be free from the clutches of political parties and to work along with their associations¹⁵. Thus the conference decided to affiliate their taluk unions with the Malabar District Teachers Guild¹⁶. It also prepared an annual plan of action for the union¹⁷. However the teachers conferences in Malabar repeated their common demands such as the abolition of private management system and the take over of schools by the government, monthly salary through head masters, war allowance, rectification of the defects in the service register, priority for service in training selection, PF benefit to all teachers, special allowance for Head Masters, provision for sick and maternity leave, reform of teachers association, the repeal of the government order No.1280 and 200 working days for schools¹⁸.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid, April 1, 1941

¹⁰ Ibid, July 1, 13, 1941

¹¹ Ibid, June 15, 18, 1941

¹² Ibid, August 6, 1941

¹³ Vallathol Kumara Menon, Adhyapak Prasthanam Uthara Keralathil, (Trivandrum, 1978) p. 48

¹⁴ The Mathrubhumi, March 19, 1942

¹⁵ Ibid, February 21, 1942

¹⁶ P.R. Nambiar, Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam (Trivandrum, 1982) p. 220

¹⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 49

¹⁸ The Mathrubhumi, February 1, 1942

Along with these common demands, certain other important issues were also highlighted. The department had been adopting an unsympathetic policy towards the untrained teachers of Malabar¹⁹. Very often teaching grant was refused to them. Prior sanction was made necessary for their appointment. They were also denied justice in training selection. The teachers union took up their case. An untrained teachers conference was held at Payyoli under C.C. Nair. It highlighted their demands such as retaining them in service, repeal of the order giving priority to the ESLC holders in training selection and the implementation of service priority for the same, increase in salary, war allowance etc. It decided to collect the signatures of all untrained teachers and to submit a memorandum to the Director²⁰.

The global war had its own impact on the teachers movement. Even though the teachers were not given any salary increase or DA, the Director issued an order on December 7, 1941, directing them to remit an amount of 8 annas as annual subscription to the teachers associations. As these meetings were arranged range wise, the teachers had to spend an amount for travelling to attend the meeting. Besides, all teachers irrespective of their salary had to remit the same amount²¹. Various Taluk Unions protested against this order²². However the agitation failed to get the needed widespread support. The SITU refused to take up the issue. The government, board and municipal teachers were not ready to co-operate with the move²³. Even the aided teachers however had no unity on this issue. Therefore Adhyapakan wrote "Instead of being an organisation demanding a reduction in the subscription, it should elevate itself to an agitation to democratise the association. We should have the right to fix the subscription rate, collect it and spend it. Let the thought that we should run our association

¹⁹ Ibid, August 8,29, 1940 The Valluvanad taluk teachers union decided to observe an 'untrained teachers day' on 3rd August,1940. The teachers were asked to convene public meetings and pass resolutions highlighting the grievances of the untrained teachers. The district union was requested to take steps to observe the day all over Malabar. And the day was successfully observed in Valluvanad taluk

²⁰ Ibid, February 15,1942. An untrained teachers day highlighting the grievance of the untrained teachers had been observed in Valluvanad taluk on 3rd August 1940

²¹ Ibid, March 13,1942 & Adhyapakan, Book 1,Vol 1, November 1942. The Inspecting Officers who were afraid of the strength of the teachers union and the association meetings were the actual brain behind this decision.

²² Ibid, March 13, April 30, October 28, December 6, 1942. Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union requested to repeal the order. The Chirakkal, Kurumbranad and Ponnani Taluk decided to give only two rupees.

²³ Adhyapakan, op.cit

reverberate in every meeting”²⁴. The union leaders met R.M.Saovur and discussed the teachers grievances. He accepted their demands on association subscription and promised to send a circular to accept any amount²⁵. The standing committee advised the teachers to give full subscription amount and to adopt measures to make it as cultural centres²⁶.

The teachers continued to raise their demand to abolish the private management system and the take over of the elementary education by the government²⁷. The teachers also moved more towards to the ideology of socialism. In the teachers unions meetings the experience of the Russians in the field of education were explained²⁸. It was also pointed out that their grievances would be redressed only under a socialist government²⁹.

The Second World War led to inflation, rise in prices of commodities and the scarcity of food. Hence life in Malabar became extremely miserable. In this situation teachers were asked to propogandise for increasing food productions and to make the villagers self sufficient by cultivating grain and tapioca. They were also advised to organise peace corps to remove the war phobia among the people³⁰. But the teachers argued that the government policy prevented them from organizing peace corps and from joining ARP and therefore asked to repeal the order No. 1280³¹. Besides the unrest due to the high prices led to widespread demand for DA³². Thus the government servants were given DA at the rate of Rs. 4 in the beginning which was later increased to Rs 8 /-. Though the government was compelled to give DA to their servants they declared their inability to grant the same to the teachers. Thus their demand for DA was not conceded. The meeting of the presidents of the taluk union held at Calicut decided to rally the teachers against the policy of the government³³. Thus all the taluks of Malabar sent representations for reasonable DA in the situation of war. Meanwhile the taluk union presidents met at Trikitiri and decided to prepare a memorandum of

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ The Mathrubhumi, December 9, 1942

²⁶ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

²⁷ The Mathrubhumi, April 23, 1942

²⁸ Ibid, April 23, 1942

²⁹ Ibid, July 2, 1942

³⁰ Ibid, April 16, 1942

³¹ Ibid, April 25, 1942

³² Fortnightly Report, first half of May 1943

³³ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 49 & The Mathrubhumi, April 24, 1942

grievances of teachers signed by all and to submit the same to the Director³⁴. The representatives of Eranad, Valluvanad and Ponnani taluks met the Director at Malappuram on June 8th, 1942 and submitted the memorandum. After long hours of discussion he agreed to consider their demands sympathetically, but refused to give a promise on their demand for war allowance³⁵. There after four representatives each from all taluks met at Calicut Town Hall and decided to send taluk deputations to the Divisional Inspectors to submit the major demands of the teachers. It also pointed out the misbehaviour of the Inspecting Officers towards the union activists and demanded a better treatment. More over in response to the Directors reply of June 8th 1942, all taluk unions were asked to observe 8th July 1942 as a 'war allowance day' all over Malabar³⁶. The day was observed at several places like Peruvayal, Kakkodi, Chombala and Valancheri. Public meetings were organised and resolutions demanding 25% salary increase was passed³⁷. In Chirakkal Taluk it was observed on 25th July³⁸. The department officers and managers collected compulsory contributions from the teachers for war fund thereby adding to their miseries³⁹. The union gave immediate instruction to the teachers not to contribute to the war fund and demanded that they too should be given DA as given to other government servants. Thus the attempt of the department and the managers proved to be a failure. The teachers demand obtained widespread support. The union could rally the elementary teachers of almost all districts of the Madras state behind them. Even the Guild and SITU supported their demands⁴⁰. Now the government became aware of the agitative mood among the teachers. Thus a monthly DA of 50 paise was granted. This did not satisfy the teachers and so they continued their struggle until a reasonable DA was sanctioned to them⁴¹.

The agitation for war allowance made the teachers conscious of the importance of a centralised leadership. Thus the union leaders began to think of a district union. The delay in affiliating their taluk unions with SITU also strengthened this view. By that time 10 taluk unions had obtained the recognition

³⁴ The Mathrubhumi, June 4, 1942

³⁵ Ibid, June 11, 1942

³⁶ Ibid, July 2, 1942

³⁷ Ibid, July 15, 1942

³⁸ Ibid, August 1, 1942

³⁹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 112

⁴⁰ Adhyapakan, November 1942

⁴¹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 112

of the department. In this backdrop, the old union leadership in their unofficial talks suggested the formation of a standing committee representing the recognised taluk unions of Malabar⁴².

Thus a conference of the taluk union representatives was held at Calicut on 3rd October 1942. A standing committee was constituted with T.C.Narayanan Nambiar as its organiser. It consisted of the presidents of all recognised taluk unions⁴³. Thus the teachers tried to overcome the prohibition order against their union⁴⁴. The Kurumbranad taluk union welcomed the decision taken by the conference⁴⁵. Soon it was decided to convene another conference at the Adhyapakan office Calicut to elect its office bearers. All taluk union presidents and two elected representatives from each taluk were asked to attend the meeting⁴⁶. Thus Ponnani and Eranad taluks elected their delegates to the conference⁴⁷. The proposed meeting was held under C.C. Nair at Adhyapakan office on 14th November 1942. The standing committee was extended with 13 members including one member each from all taluks. N.P. Narayanan Nair (Valluvanad) was elected chairman of the standing committee. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar became the general secretary⁴⁸. The publication of 'Adhyapakan' the journal of the union was revived. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar became the new editor. An Adhyapakan publishing house was also opened. With a view to strengthen the union and to bring the grievances of the teachers to the attention of the government, the teachers and parents together were asked to observe a union week all over Malabar in the first week of December 1942⁴⁹.

The Quit India movement and the Peoples War Policy had great impact on the teachers movement in Malabar. It sowed the seeds of disunity among the

⁴² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit p. 113

⁴³ *The Mathrubhumi*, October 9, 1942

⁴⁴ *Adhyapakan*, Vol 10, August 1961

⁴⁵ *The Mathrubhumi*, October 28, 1942

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, October 29, 1942

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, November 10,11, 1942

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, November 18, 1942. K.V. Kunhappa Nambair (Chirakkal) and K.P.K. Krishnan (Kottayam) were elected Joint Secretaries. C.C. Nair (Kurumbranad) K.Krishnan Nambiar (Kottayam) K.V. Narayanan Nambiar (Chirakkal) K.K. Kuttisankaran Nair (Eranad) T. Achuthan Nair (Kozhikode), T.K.Kumaran Nair (Ponnani) and P.Achuthan Nair (Palakkad) represented various taluks of Malabar.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, November 18,27, 1942. The first day was to be observed as the Grant Day; the second day as students day; third day as a day of collecting educational statistics; fourth day as union day; fifth day as war allowance day; sixth day as parents day; seventh day as membership day; eighth day as education day and the last day 16th December 1942 as the day of declaration of the rights.

teachers⁵⁰. The movement had considerable repercussion through out the province⁵¹. At that juncture, attempts were made to bring the teachers who were united on trade union lines, within the vertex of political agitation. Union leaders like P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar wished to lead the teachers directly to the Quit India Movement. He found it meaningless to run the schools till the attainment of freedom and asked the teachers to leave their schools⁵². Some of the teachers responded to this call. Cutting of telegraphic wires, attempts to sabotage railway, attack on government offices and distribution of leaflets spread through out Malabar⁵³. Many teachers actively participated in the movement⁵⁴. They picketed government offices and also took part in sabotage activities.

At the same time the communists adopted a different line. When Soviet Union was attacked by the Fascist forces, they highlighted the changed nature of the war and called it Peoples War. At that moment they were not in favour of an agitation which would really weaken the anti-Fascist movement. Under these circumstances the line adopted by P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar and others was considered suicidal. The union leaders like P.R. Nambiar and T.C.Narayanan Nambiar argued that participation in the Quit India Movement would isolate the union leadership from the teachers. So the attempt of using the teachers for cutting telegraph lines, derailment, food robbery, closing of schools and organised propaganda were severely criticised. Adhyapakan wrote "Fascist invasion is waiting to swallow our culture and everything that is beloved to us. Weakness at front will only lead to destruction. It is most necessary that, at this serious juncture, all patriots must unite to attain the freedom for which we have sacrificed heavily and shed so much of our blood"⁵⁵. The role of teachers in contemporary politics was also emphasised in these lines "War naturally leads to famine and it in turn to the decline of education. To put an end to famine, war is to be ended. If our nation plays its role, the allied powers would be victorious. Then only we will

⁵⁰ Adhyapakan, Vol 7, March 1970

⁵¹ Fortnightly Report, Second half of August 1942

⁵² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 51

⁵³ Fortnightly Report, October, November, December 1942. For details of Quit India Movement see M.G. Indira Devi, Kerala and The Quit India Movement (Chengannur, 2005); K.K.N. Kurup, Quit India Samaram Keralathil (Trivandrum, 1993)

⁵⁴ Karunakaran Nair, Who is Who of the Freedom Fighters of Kerala (Trivandrum, 1973)

⁵⁵ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 8, June 1943

get freedom. A national government can awaken the talents of our country. So we demand the release of our leaders to form a national government⁵⁶.

Ultimately this line began to gain predominance. But the union was accused of being directed by the communists and many resigned their post⁵⁷. Thus a feeling of disunity and split appeared among the teachers.

It was at that time, N.P.Narayanan Nair the chairman of the standing committee resigned his post to join military service. Now the standing committee meeting held at Adhyapakan office elected C.C. Nair, a silent gentleman not so explicit in this political views, as the new chairman. It saved the union from its collapse and C.C. Nair played an important role in preserving the unity of the teachers. Later he wrote "Our union is the organisation of teachers. This union that adopts programme democratically for a common interest will have and should have members from all political shades. If the Gandhians resign on account of the communists and the communists because of others, it would be suicidal and would weaken our union. This is an attempt to make the union their own association. A split in the union would help bureaucratic hegemony and it would be betraying the interest of the teachers"⁵⁸.

The elementary teachers suffered a lot during the war period. Expecting the quarterly grant, the merchants used to give articles to the teachers on credit basis. But now in the context of scarcity of food and rise in prices, this practice was stopped⁵⁹. Thikkodiyar's note published in Mathrubhumi clearly reflected the pathetic condition of the teachers of Malabar⁶⁰. The helplessness of the teachers were clearly portrayed in the contemporary poems⁶¹. Though the government servants were sanctioned monthly salary and war allowance, the elementary teachers were denied it⁶². Thus their demand for monthly salary and war allowance became wide spread. The Eranad taluk union decided to observe a war allowance week from 9th to 16th January 1943⁶³. The Palakkad taluk teachers

⁵⁶ Ibid, Book 1, Vol 8, June 1943

⁵⁷ The Mathrubhumi, December 1,8,24, 1942. They were A.K.Damodaran Nambiar (Branch Secretary of Kadachira) and T.P. Kelu Nambiar (Branch Secretary of Peralassery). The Branch Secretary of Valanchery and also the Ponnani Taluk Secretary resigned their post.

⁵⁸ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 3, January 1943

⁵⁹ The Mathrubhumi, January 12, 1943

⁶⁰ Ibid, February 4, 1943

⁶¹ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

⁶² The Mathrubhumi, January 12, 1943

⁶³ Ibid, January 7, 1943

conference demanded a war allowance of Rs. 5 and the withdrawal of teachers association subscriptions⁶⁴. The first conference of the Kasargod Taluk Teachers Union, attended by more than 250 teachers also repeated the demand for war allowance⁶⁵.

Meanwhile R.M.Statham, the Director of Education visited Calicut. A 17 member deputation met him and submitted a memorandum highlighting the teachers grievances such as monthly salary, war allowance, grant cut, restoration of certificates, association subscription, ARP Training, food crisis and the utilization of association centres for the distribution of daily articles⁶⁶. The Director who had once refused to talk to an unrecognised union, now accepted the memorandum submitted by the union⁶⁷. Meanwhile the government issued orders granting two rupee DA to all teachers⁶⁸.

The standing committee took up another important issue during this period. The government imposed a huge cut in the last instalment of the school grant of 1942. At a moment of great misery, it was a heavy blow for the teachers. Hence both the managers and teachers were asked to oppose it and to compel the government to stop the deduction. A deduction day was observed in different parts of Malabar. Public meetings were held in places like Mavoor, Ponniam, Pernjnam, Thirumittacode and Vettath Puthiyangadi and resolutions were passed⁶⁹.

The 6th annual conference of the teachers was held at Tellicherry Town Hall on 6th June 1943. Two teachers *jathas*, one from Karivellur in the North and another from Palakkad in the South, reached Tellicherry after receiving several receptions organized by the people enroute. They raised the slogan of Teacher-Manager- People unity and made the people conscious of its importance to save the mother land⁷⁰. A large number of peasants and workers with red flags in their hands came to welcome the teachers. 342 delegates representing 133 branch unions in different parts of Malabar attended the conference. Among them were 18 Muslim teachers, twenty women teachers including Sarabibi a Muslim from Eranad and two dalit teachers. All together 2000 teachers including 1500 union members

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, January 22, 1943

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, February 21, 1943

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, February 28, 1943

⁶⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 51

⁶⁸ *The Mathrubhumi*, February 5, 1943

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, April 28, 1943

⁷⁰ *Adhyapakan*, Book 1, Vol 8, June 1943

participated in the meeting⁷¹. Along with them 1500 common people reached Tellicherry to attend the teachers rally and meeting. Monthly war allowance of Rs 5, assurance for the teachers security of employment, abolition of the practice of grant cut, repayment of the amount deducted from the annual grant of 1942, removal of the harmful provisions in the recognition rules that effect the interest of the teachers, three months maternity leave with salary and the implementation of the Sargent committee report were demanded. At the same time the teachers were advised to cultivate more food items, to co-operate with food committees and also to open paper making centres in different parts of Malabar. Above all the conference asked the government to release the national leaders from prison⁷². Certain resolutions related to the organisational matters were also adopted. It was decided to increase the union membership and journal subscription to 10000 and 2000 respectively. Decisions were taken to raise the Adhyapakan fund to Rs 5000 and to establish a publishing house to publish circulars and pamphlets. It was decided to appoint a full time organiser in each of the taluks and also to open paper making units in all the taluks so as to produce a minimum of 5000 sheets of paper. The taluk unions were advised to subscribe South Indian teachers, Fort St. George Gazette and the elementary education report and the teachers were advised to make use of it. The taluk union were also directed to affiliate their union with the Guild and the SITU and to prompt the board and municipal unions to copy the same. The teachers were advised to form attendance committees consisting of teachers, managers and people in their schools. They were also asked to read the union journal seriously and to use it as a tool for their union work. Above all the union leaders were asked to create a rapport with the Inspecting Officers⁷³. When all the proceedings were over, the teachers moved to Jawahar Ghat for a public meeting. On the road the peasants and Beedi Workers welcomed and greeted the teachers with red flags. Never before was such a grand rally like this seen in the city. It moved to the beach. P.R.Nambiar, in his speech declared that he was speaking as a communist activist and highlighted the significance of the slogan, Teacher- Manager-Peoples unity. The audience shouted the slogan 'communist party zindabad' several times⁷⁴.

⁷¹ Ibid, Book 1, Vol 8, June 1943

⁷² The Mathrubhumi, June 9, 1943

⁷³ Adhyapakan, op.cit

⁷⁴ The Mathrubhumi, June 9, 1943

The issue of disunity among teachers in connection with the Quit India Movement was the main topic discussed in the meeting. The union placed two options before the teachers. "Victory through unity or Slavery through disunity, and "Freedom through saving the country or Slavery through Fascism". C.C.Nair a union loyalist and also a congress man along with a large number of teachers with congress line vehemently opposed all efforts for effecting a split in the union⁷⁵. The communist teachers under P.R. Nambiar and T.C.Narayanan Nambiar offered active support to them. Consequently all those who tried to split the union got isolated. Thus the Tellicherry conference ended by raising the flag of teachers unity⁷⁶. The receptions given by people and managers to the teacher *jathas* from Karivellur and Palakkad at several places, the Kottayam peasants who contributed coconut, vegetables and plantain leaves to the conference, the peasant and beedi workers who greeted the teachers rally at Tellicherry and the strong protest against the police assault against a member of the teacher *jatha* revealed the new spirit among the teachers and the popular support obtained by them⁷⁷.

Refuting the allegation of being loyal to the communists, the president of the conference pointed out that most of the members of the reception committee were not communists. Some of the communist leaders were invited to address the meeting because they were also the leaders of the teachers union. Actually the audience response to the messages read out in the conference proved that many of the participants were anti- communist. Even though the general secretary of the union was a communist, his ideology was not reflected in any of the resolution or speeches. When objected by the teachers, the beedi workers of Tellicherry had removed their red flags from the rally. It was also argued that both the slogans 'Communist party zindabad' and 'Indian National Congress zindabad' were raised in the conference. P.R. Nambiar spoke as a communist, because his certificate had been cancelled. The allegation that none of the leaders spoke about the pedagogy of teaching was also dismissed because Guild was there to perform such a duty. Above all it was argued that the teachers union was a trade union to redress their grievances and to protect the interest of the teachers⁷⁸. A report published in Mathrubhumi entitled 'Escape from the grip of communism' also

⁷⁵ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 113

⁷⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 53

⁷⁷ Adhyapakan, op.cit

⁷⁸ The Mathrubhumi, June 16, 1943

showed the intention to create a split among the teachers. But Adhyapakan wrote "The union is not a tool of any of the political parties. How ever it would accept all their proposals acceptable to the teachers. The union accepted the principle of paper making proposed by Gandhi Seva Sangh. But it would not make the union a tool in their hands. The union had admitted the special rights of the Muslims and advocated special grant for religious education in Mappila schools. It would not make the union a sub committee of the Muslim league. The union accepted the proposal made by Hindu Maha Sabha to give military training to all the adults. It would not make the union a subcommittee of their organisation. In 1939 K.Kelappan had called up on the teachers to oppose 'Federation'. It never showed that the union had accepted his leadership or became a subcommittee of the congress. When the country was trapped in danger, the communist adopted a policy to save the nation. Though that is acceptable to the union it would never make the union a sub committee of that party. Many of the union leaders are communists. But they never tried to make their union a subcommittee of the communist party⁷⁹. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar said "Teachers union is not a subcommittee of the communist party or Gandhi Sangam. It is an independent association of teachers. Communists like me and Gandhians like C.C. Nair are its members. Unite teachers and save them from disunity and ruin. Lead them in this disaster. Make them serve the country. It is the duty of the teachers to save the nation and to inculcate that feeling among the teachers. This is nationalism. Those who are against it are not nationalists, but traitors"⁸⁰. Now a large numbers of teachers agreed to this view.

The mass participation in the Tellicherry conference and its political leniency turned some teachers against the standing committee. The propaganda of communist menace prompted some teachers to resign from the union. But all these allegations were proved baseless. Thus V.K. Padmanabhan Nair, the president of the Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union withdrew his resignation. He confessed his misunderstanding in the union journal⁸¹. C.C.Nair clarified the position: "The union members are free to be members of political parties of their own ideology. They are free to do their political work after completing the work

⁷⁹ Adhyapakan, op.cit

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid & Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 54

assigned by the union. If it is done with their own fund, the union can't interfere in it. There are clear rules for preventing the use of union fund for political work. More over not a single paise was spent from the union fund for any thing other than the union activities⁸².

A subcommittee of 7 members representing all political view was constituted to settle the differences within the union. It prepared a report proposing the following conditions. The political parties should not interfere in the union activities, while involving in the union work in their taluks by utilising the union fund. The leaders were not expected to indulge in active political activities; complaints against the union activists should be settled with in the union. Now it was argued that these conditions would prevent further misunderstanding within the union. Hence the report was accepted⁸³.

During this period, Adhyapakan the official journal of the union which had ceased publication was started again. This was in November 1942⁸⁴. V.Ramunni, the President of the Aided Elementary Teachers Union, had published a monthly periodical in 1939⁸⁵. The first volume of the journal was published at Calicut in September 1939 with a price of three annas for single copy and two rupee annual subscription⁸⁶. It contained several articles of educational importance and also a poem written by S.K.Pottakkad depicting the future teachers⁸⁷. But it was stopped after publishing two issues on account of the agitation carried on by the teachers union⁸⁸ (Boycott of central meetings of the Teachers Association). However the Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union under C.C.Nair took the initiative to revive the journal in 1942. It was declared that the magazine would deal with purely educational matters; publish government orders and department circulars, formulate the ways to improve the elementary education, redress the grievances of the teachers and submit union proposal for the upliftment of the elementary education⁸⁹. It was decided to publish 1500 copies of the journal with an annual

⁸² The Mathrubhumi, November 21, 1943

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 222. See Appendix VIII

⁸⁵ R.Dis No. 182 M / 40 Dated 03-03-40, Department of Revenue, Office of the District Magistrate, Calicut, RAC

⁸⁶ The Mathrubhumi, October 14, 1939

⁸⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.81

⁸⁸ R.Dis No. 5459 M / 53 Dated 19-12-53, Department of Revenue, Office of the District Magistrate, Calicut, RAC. See also Appendix IX

⁸⁹ R.Dis No. 6551 M / 41 Dated 13-06-42, Department of Revenue, Office of the District Magistrate, Calicut, RAC

subscription of rupees three⁹⁰. This journal played a crucial role in maintaining the unity among teachers. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar was its editor. The poem by Vallathol was a welcome note to the journal. It was stated that the Adhyapakan should never be used for propagandising for any political party as it was self destructive⁹¹.

As decided in the annual conference at Tellicherry an Adhyapakan publishing house was opened at Calicut⁹². V. Ramunni was appointed the manager of the publishing house. It published its first book '*Indiyude Karachil*' a collection of three poems written by Vallathol. It also decided to publish a 'Union History', a syllabus of adult education and also a booklet containing the report and resolutions of the 6th conference. It also decided to purchase a press to print the union journal, books pamphlets and circulars. It was expected that it would help the teachers, students and the parents by publishing text books, note books and all forms required for schools⁹³. All these measures raised the prestige of the union among the parents and educationalists. However the shortage of papers due to the war made it difficult to continue the publication of the journal. Therefore measures were adopted to make papers manually using waste paper as the raw material. The hand made papers produced at different centres were given for printing the journal of the union. However the teachers could not produce sufficient quantity of papers required for all purposes. They could produce only as much needed to publish their journal. So it was felt necessary to produce papers on an industrial basis. Hence a paper making unit with all equipments was found necessary. So the teachers were asked to intensify the collection of the Adhyapakan fund.

Sincere efforts were made to raise the fund in different parts of Malabar. The teachers meetings and conference were used as an opportunity to raise the fund and also to subscribe the journal. The winners of the various competitions held as a part of these conferences contributed their prizes to the fund and these were auctioned at the same place⁹⁴. Fund was raised from all categories of

⁹⁰ R.Dis No. 4525 – M. 43, Dated 24-07-43, Department of Revenue, Office of the District Magistrate, Calicut, RAC

⁹¹ *Adhyapakan*, Book 1, Vol 1, November 1942

⁹² *Ibid*, Book 1, Vol 8, June 1943

⁹³ *Ibid*, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

people and from people belonging to different political parties. A special supplement of the journal was published in April 1944⁹⁵. It had messages of Dr. Radhakrishnan and Hiran Mukkerji. It contained thirty eight articles of interest to the teachers and a poem of Vallathol in the opening page praising the firmness of the teachers of Malabar⁹⁶. Vallathol, Mundasseri, Sankaran Nambiar, Balakrishna Pillai and E.Raman Menon, V.R. Nayanar and many other prominent writers contributed to it. The article 'Childrens Russia' and the poem 'Sickle' reflected the general spirit of the age and also the dream of an independent India. Certain articles contained the grievances of the teachers, the arrogance of the government and also the suggestions to redress the grievances of the teachers. The poem of Vallathol praised the firmness of the teachers and inculcated self confidence among them. Above all this volume contained a history of the teachers movement in Malabar.

At the same time there were criticism against the journal. While inaugurating the 7th anniversary of the Kozhikode Taluk Teachers Union, R.Ravivarma, president of the Malabar teachers Guild denounced the journal for criticizing the government and the management system⁹⁷. The journal was also criticised for being a replica of Desabhimani, the organ of the communist party of Malabar. The Inspecting Officer of Eranad taluk directed the teachers association to subscribe certain news papers and journal but not the journal of the teachers union⁹⁸.

However Adhyapakan remained the beloved journal of the teachers of Malabar. It was the only popular educational magazine in Malabar. The Malayalis outside Kerala also welcomed the journal. The Coimbatore Divisional inspector and the North Malabar DEO had promised to give all support to the journal⁹⁹. The unions advised all schools, teachers associations and reading rooms to subscribe the journal¹⁰⁰. The journal played a remarkable role in making the teacher associations centres of knowledge. When there was acute poverty in Malabar, students refused to attend their schools and teachers tried to give up their

⁹⁵ Ibid, Book 2, Vol 10, August 1944

⁹⁶ Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book 22, Vol W.15, June 25, 1944

⁹⁷ The Mathrubhumi, January 20, 1943

⁹⁸ Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 10, August 1944

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Book 2, Vol 7, May 1944

profession; the union journal tried its best to retain school education in Malabar¹⁰¹. The journal continued to be published till 1948. There after it was revived only in 1955. Thus the union journal played a remarkable role in the history of the teachers movement in Malabar.

Mean while the teachers became aware of the welfare measures adopted by the National Union of Teachers in England and the Educational Workers Union in Soviet Union. Thus they were inspired to help the teachers who suffered much for the teachers movement in Malabar. Under these circumstances the Adhyapakan publishing house decided to raise an Adhyapakan protection fund¹⁰².

Even when the controversy on political interference was going on, the union activities continued all over Malabar. It was a period of poverty and distress. Adhyapakan wrote "Children have nothing to eat. They have no dress, no paper and due to the shortage of kerosene they can't even read. Efforts were to be made to supply food, dress, paper and kerosene. Attempts are to be made to increase food production, to open paper production centres and P.C.C societies¹⁰³.

Malabar witnessed acute famine and poverty during the war period. The poems published in the union journal revealed its impact on teachers and students¹⁰⁴. Production fell considerably. Hoardings and black marketing raised its ugly head. There was great rise in prices. Epidemics like cholera and smallpox spread extensively. About 32,590 people were affected and total number of death in Malabar was 24,856¹⁰⁵. The scarcity of food affected education very badly in Malabar. The attendance was very low in elementary schools. Children had no paper to write. The scarcity of kerosene made it very difficult for them to read. Sincere efforts were made to face the food problems and famine.

All branch unions were advised to co-operate with the food committees. Thus in Chirakkal taluk alone 243 teachers actively participated in 52 food committees¹⁰⁶. Adhyapakan published a detailed programme to increase agriculture production in Malabar¹⁰⁷. Teachers were asked to organise peasants

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Book 2, Vol 10, August 1944

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid, Book 1, Vol 8, June 1943

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

¹⁰⁵ Fortnightly Report, First Half of October 1943

¹⁰⁶ Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

and workers to achieve more agricultural production and also to propagandise for the same. Teachers themselves cultivated food items in their school premises.

The teachers union also took up the issue of paper shortage. The teachers were asked to collect the details of paper required in each area and to submit memorandum in this regard. They were also asked to compel the merchants to sell paper at reasonable rate¹⁰⁸. The acute shortage of paper prompted them to produce hand made paper by using waste paper as the raw materials. The union adopted waste paper collection as an important programme¹⁰⁹. K.V.Raghavan Nair opened a paper making unit at Puzhathi Elementary School in Chirakkal taluk¹¹⁰. As a part of the exhibition arranged in the 9th anniversary of the Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union, a demonstration class for making papers was also arranged¹¹¹. The taluk unions were asked to open paper making units and to produce at least 5000 sheets of paper. Efforts were also made to open more such units under the supervision of the branch unions¹¹². Thus a paper making unit was opened at Nanminda under the leadership of the branch union¹¹³. The hand made papers produced in these centres were given for printing the journal of the union. It really impressed the patriots and those who loved education. It was also a reply to those who tried to crush the union on political lines. At the same time the merchants were requested to sell papers at reasonable rates. Write less, speak more became the slogan of the teachers. *Adhyapakan* highlighted the harmful impact of the governments restriction on the use of paper and requested to exclude the hand made paper from its purview¹¹⁴. The teachers also asked the government to supply standard dress in the rural areas. The teachers also played very remarkable role in the propaganda against hoarding and black marketing. Teachers were asked to co-operate with the people to prevent these practices. They raised the slogan "Destroy hoardings and Black marketing to save the education of the little kids"¹¹⁵ A Programme of collecting surplus paddy was

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.

¹¹⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 57

¹¹¹ *Adhyapakan*, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹¹² *The Mathrubhumi*, December 8, 1943

¹¹³ *Adhyapakan*, Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

adopted. By about 107 PCC societies were opened in Malabar. The elementary school teachers were the real brain behind this programme¹¹⁶.

Even though the government made continuous efforts to instill the need for more food production, it failed to propose a practical programme for the same. Thus in 1943 the Chirakkal taluk Kisan Sangam decided to cultivate the waste land at Mangattuparamba. Elementary school teachers like C.Koran Master and K.V. Moosankutty master played an important role in this agitation¹¹⁷.

The acute poverty had made life extremely miserable in Malabar. It affected school attendance and led to educational crisis. But the teachers faced the situation with their mid-day meal programme. School teachers and common people at Tirur formed a poor students aid society and began to give mid-day meals to the students. Efforts were also made to provide books and slates to them¹¹⁸. Teachers union activists gave leadership to organise school attendance committees consisting of teachers, managers and the people in all the schools. Efforts were made to raise funds for the mid-day meal programme. School anniversary meetings were often used for the same. Here local people gave paddy, coconut and vegetables to prepare mid-day meals for the students. The prizes given to the students in the meeting were auctioned for ready cash. Even skits were staged to raise fund for the students mid-day meal programme¹¹⁹. A poem in the union journal wished all success to those teachers who were very active even in the midst of their own miseries. Another poem called up on the teachers to give mid-day meals to their students before arranging charts, maps and pictures to teach the students¹²⁰. Parents who were merchants gave provisions, peasants contributed coconuts and some of the managers and landlords offered rice to the schools. Some of the managers themselves implemented the programme in their schools. V.R.Nayanar the Hon. Secretary of the Malabar distress relief fund allotted financial assistance to various schools of Malabar as per the details given below¹²¹.

Taluks	Schools	Students	Amount Rs
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¹¹⁶ Interview with T.C.Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28th March 1993

¹¹⁷ Communist Party Anpatham Varshika Souvenir (Kannur, 1990)

¹¹⁸ Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹¹⁹ Ibid, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ Ibid, Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

Eranad	11	1110	318
Chirakkal	31	2823	877
Kottayam	16	1764	529
Kozhikode	8	413	131
Kurumbranad	20	2039	542
Ponnani	16	1723	524
Total	102	9872	2921

The schools were advised to collect an amount equal to this allotment from the people. The teachers found it difficult to implement their programme because the merchants often refused to give the required quantity of rice. The Tahsildar refused to allot sufficient quota of rice. The teachers conferences asked the district collector to sanction rice quota to the school committees. At the same time the school committees were asked to convene public meetings, pass resolutions and to meet the collector to obtain the required rice quota. The teachers were advised to raise their own demands of monthly salary and government rate DA in these meetings¹²². The teachers also demanded the introduction of rationing in Malabar. When it was introduced, the teachers were asked to be vigilant against the enemies of rationing who had propagated that the paddy procurement programme was not at all practical. But the teachers were asked to make the paddy procurement programme a success. They were advised to study the rationing rules and to teach it to the people¹²³. They were asked to collect a statistics of the rice required in each area, to oppose black marketing and to co-operate with the rationing inspectors. Adhyapakan, in an editorial, advised the teachers to expose the officers who were trying to defeat the programme and asked them to utilise the opportunity of the education week to adopt measures making the programme a success¹²⁴. Even after the implementation of the rationing system, schools beyond the rationing limit continued to lose students attendance. Thus the Dharmadam branch teachers union sought the help of the people and organised the Dharmadam village distress eradication committee and started mid-day meal programme for the students. The beedi workers of Palayad co-operated with these efforts¹²⁵.

The mid day-meal programme was implemented effectively in different parts of Malabar. The case of death due to cholera was reported more from

¹²² *Ibid*

¹²³ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 11, September 1944

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

Eranad taluk. Teachers realised that poverty was the main reason for it. Hence the teachers who wished to prevent the recurrence of this calamity adopted measures to give mid-day meals to more than 1500 students. In Chirakkal taluk 45 schools implemented this programme. The programme was effectively implemented in various places of Palakkad taluk. Valluvanad taluk was viewed as a surplus taluk and it was argued that there was no poverty there. But here more than 3000 students were given mid-day meals¹²⁶. The peasants, workers women and children's organisations cooperated with the teachers in this programme¹²⁷. The teacher co-operated with the distress eradication committee and the Friends Ambulance Society to open milk distribution centres in different parts of Malabar.

When the mid-day meal programme was introduced in one school, it inspired the teachers of the surrounding areas. The teachers themselves carried the provisions required for the mid-day meals to the school. They served the meals to their students. It impressed the people and they realised that it was the best way to prevent poverty epidemics¹²⁸.

The Mid-day meal programme stimulated the union activities. The implementation of the programme in western Eranad laid the foundation of new branches of the teachers union in eastern Eranad. Thus the programme strengthened the teachers union in Malabar¹²⁹.

Along with the shortage of food, epidemic spread all over Malabar¹³⁰. Thousands of people died due to cholera and dead bodies remained unburied¹³¹. Large numbers of schools remained closed¹³². Now it was the elementary school teacher who took the leadership in the campaign against cholera in Malabar. At this critical stage, they came forward to take up the programme of cholera eradications in rural areas. In a meeting of the teachers union leaders held at Calicut on 31st July 1943, T.C.Narayanan Nambiar reminded the teachers of their duty in moments of crisis. The teachers were given study classes on the disease, cleanliness and treatment. They were advised to co-operate with other mass organisations to eradicate this harmful disease. Where there was no such

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 10, August 1944

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

¹³⁰ *The Mathrubhumi*, July 4 to 11, 1943

¹³¹ *Ibid*, July 13, 1943

¹³² *Ibid*, August 5, 1943

organisation the teachers themselves were advised to form the eradication committees to serve the people¹³³. Thus the teachers visited the affected people and tried to inculcate self confidence among them¹³⁴. They also supplied medicine and emphasised the necessity of sanitation and vaccination¹³⁵. They spent sleepless nights nursing the patients at their home. The confidence and courage exhibited by the teachers really impressed the people¹³⁶. The teachers union gave leadership to open cholera eradication committees in the rural areas. The teachers of the village helped to bury the dead bodies. The reports published in the union journal clearly revealed the role played by the teachers of Malabar at this moment. Due to epidemics many children became orphans. The standing committee of the union also decided to support the decision to observe an 'Orphan's Day' on 11th September 1943. Thus the teachers were asked to observe the day all over Malabar by taking a census of orphans in each village and also by collecting dress items for them¹³⁷. Thus the day was observed all over Malabar with the help and co-operation of the teachers¹³⁸. People were asked to co-operate with the union to protect the orphans. All Malabar food committee was requested to consolidate these efforts¹³⁹.

At the same time the teachers also raised their own issues. Their conferences demanded monthly salary, grant based on the number of classes, amendments in the rules of recognition, implementation of the Sargent committee report, distribution of paper on control price, introduction to paper making units in higher elementary schools, increase in the food quota and the distribution of standard textile items in rural areas¹⁴⁰. The teachers also demanded increase in their DA, repeal of the G.O No.1280 and official encouragement for paper making¹⁴¹. A union deputation met the DEO at Kannur to submit the demands of the teachers¹⁴².

¹³³ Ibid, August 5, 1943

¹³⁴ Interview with K.P. Padmanabhan at his residence at Quilandi on 30th March 1993

¹³⁵ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 8, June 1943

¹³⁶ Ibid, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

¹³⁷ The Mathrubhumi, September 7, 1943

¹³⁸ Ibid, September 16, 1943

¹³⁹ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

¹⁴⁰ The Mathrubhumi, November 11, 1943

¹⁴¹ Ibid, November 13, 1943

¹⁴² Ibid

The teachers were not blind to the developments in national politics. The standing committee expressed anxiety on the fast of Gandhiji and sent a telegram to the Viceroy to release him at the earliest¹⁴³. The teachers conferences passed resolutions for his long life and also highlighted the importance of khadi propaganda¹⁴⁴.

The union was also ready to implement the programmes suggested by the upper bodies. The SITU had asked the teachers to observe an education week from 18th to 25th of October 1943. The standing committee formulated a clear programme for the same¹⁴⁵. It was decided to observe the education week from January 17th onwards. Besides, as seven taluk union had already remitted their subscription, it was decided to allow their representatives as the Vice President and Joint Secretary of the Malabar teachers Guild¹⁴⁶.

The mass participation in the Tellicherry conference and the political leniency turned some teachers against the standing committee. In this backdrop a meeting of the Malabar teachers standing committee was held on 28th and 29th of January 1944. It decided to affiliate the standing committee directly with the all India teachers federation and to convene a special conference of the elementary teachers of the state along with the proposed 34th state educational conference. It also decided to organise a district conference at Shornur in May 1944 and all the news papers were requested to co-operate with it¹⁴⁷. But there was opposition to this decision. K.Krishnan Nambiar, the president of the Kottayam teachers union published a statement entitled "The new venture of the standing committee" in the Mathrubhumi. He argued that the standing committee was actually formed in the absence of a central organisation, to propose uniform programme for the taluk union. It was not a permanent committee and had no control over the taluk unions. As the taluk unions were already affiliated to the Guild and SITU and thereby with the All India Teachers Federation, a new affiliation was not necessary. When it was decided to hold a Guild conference, the attempts made by the standing committee to hold another one at Shornur was also objected. Above all it was argued that the formation of the Guild elementary education sub

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, February 25, 1943

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, October 17, 1943

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, September 14, 1943

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, November 27, 1943

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, February 8, 1944

committee would make the standing committee fully unnecessary. Thus he questioned the existence and programme of the standing committee¹⁴⁸. But strong protests were raised against him from different parts of Malabar and the decision taken by the standing committee was welcomed¹⁴⁹. First, it was the standing committee that really made the taluk union active and organised. Secondly, the Guild was a passive organisation of High School and College Teachers and so the active elementary teachers of Malabar needed a central organisation like the standing committee. Hence all the teachers were asked to promote the standing committee without hindering the policy and programmes of the Guild¹⁵⁰. At the same time T.C. Narayanan Nambiar argued that the decision was actually taken by the teachers conference at Tellicherry and pointed out that the guild and the standing committee operate in two separate circle. But this observation of separate circles for the Guild and standing committee was viewed as communist tactics. Under these circumstances the Guild issued a circular: As the standing committee was not a recognised one, the taluk unions were directed not to co-operate with it. The Guild elementary education subcommittee would be the only organisation representing the teachers of Malabar. Hence the taluk union were asked not to give membership or subscription to any other organisation or receive any orders from them¹⁵¹. Mean while Adhyapakan once again gave a clear statement of the policies and programmes of the standing committee¹⁵². Kottayam taluk union council held at Kuthuparamba finally agreed to accept the standing committee till the formation of the Guild subcommittee but demanded wider representation¹⁵³.

Meanwhile there arose a move among the teachers. At that time, only in the district of Malabar could the elementary teachers become an organised force. It alone could demand the government to introduce basic educational reforms. Hence it was felt that their integration with the SITU would help to organise the elementary teachers all over the state and also to enlist the co-operation of other sections of teachers¹⁵⁴. The opposition to the standing committee and the criticism

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, February 20, 1944

¹⁴⁹ Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹⁵⁰ The Mathrubhumi, March 8, 1944

¹⁵¹ Ibid, April 29, 1944

¹⁵² Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 58 & P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 111

against the political partiality of the union leadership further strengthened this move. Thus efforts were made to unite the union with the Malabar teachers Guild, which was the district unit of the SITU. Actually it was an organisation of high school and college teachers¹⁵⁵. It had 21 teacher associations with a strength of about 400 teachers¹⁵⁶. It had 4 colleges and 30 high schools under it and was patronised by eminent personalities like Zamorin Raja, Nilambur Raja, Raja of Kolathunad and Ali Raja of Arakkal¹⁵⁷. Any how it was decided to affiliate the Taluk Teachers Unions with this body. Thus their representatives participated in the Guild general body held on 4th March 1944 along with the Guild delegation on equal terms¹⁵⁸. As decided earlier the post of Guild Vice President and Joint Secretary were given to the representatives of the elementary school teachers. Thus the following members were elected as the office bearers of the newly constituted Malabar teachers Guild: R.Ravivarma, Principal, Zamorin's College, Calicut (President) K.Radhakrishanan Nambiar, Aided elementary school teacher (Vice President) P.R. Subramanian, Head Master, Raja's high school, Kollamgode (Secretary) Vallathol Kumara Menon, Aided elementary school teacher (Joint Secretary)¹⁵⁹. A sub committee was formed to formulate the war time demands of elementary school teachers and to submit a memorandum of their grievances to the DPI¹⁶⁰. For the first time an elementary school teacher was elected office bearer of the SITU. Thus the elementary school teachers, once regarded as an outcaste were given a place in the common organisation of teachers in the Madras state; the teachers of colleges, high schools and elementary schools came together under a common organisation. It opened a new chapter in the history of the SITU.

After the affiliation, the first annual conference of teachers of South India under SITU was held at Annamalai University on 9th, 10th and 11th of May 1944. It was also the 34th annual conference of the SITU. For the first time the leaders of aided teachers union participated in it as delegates. Along with the Guild leaders C.C.Nair, P.R. Nambiar, K. Radhakrishnan Nambiar and Vallathol Kumara Menon attended the conference. These leaders of the Malabar teachers agitation got a

¹⁵⁵ The Mathrubhumi, March 8, 1944

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, January 14, 1941

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, May 12, 1945

¹⁵⁸ The South Indian Teacher, Volume 17, October 1944

¹⁵⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 59

¹⁶⁰ The South Indian Teacher, op.cit

warm welcome in the conference. Many of the leaders who spoke on this occasion congratulated the teachers agitation and their achievement in Malabar. In this backdrop P.R. Nambiar, the delegate of the aided teachers was given an opportunity to welcome the president of the conference, N. Gopaldaswami Ayyankar, the retired Divan of Kashmir. It revealed the change in the SITU attitude towards the elementary teachers which was entirely different from the old one adopted in the Ottappalam conference of 1938. The Malabar delegates actively participated in the discussion of the conference including the Sargent report. The conference expressed happiness on the release of Gandhi but argued that a national government was necessary for the reorganisation of education¹⁶¹.

The 10th annual conference of the Malabar Teachers Guild was held at Malabar Christian College, Kozhikode on August 26th 1944. 145 delegates representing 28 associations attended the meeting. Altogether about 300 teachers attended the meeting. M. Narayanan Kini, in his welcome speech viewed the affiliation of the elementary teachers union with the Guild as an important event in the history of the Malabar Guild. It put an end to the segregations created by British imperialism among the teachers. The teachers of colleges, high schools and elementary schools under various agencies assembled together reflected the unity among the teachers. The conference adopted several decisions to make the Guild more active. K.V.Surya Narayana Ayyar who inaugurated the meeting demanded that the government should take the responsibility of education¹⁶². The conference passed resolutions such as special teaching grant to aided schools in the wake of war, government rate DA , PF benefit to all teachers, supply of food items to teachers by incorporating them in the essential service, exemption for hand made paper from paper control, government salary scale to board and municipality teachers and the affiliation of the remaining secondary and elementary teachers union with the Guild¹⁶³. Mathrubhumi in its editorial congratulated the affiliation of the elementary teachers union with the Guild. It said, "As a result of the affiliation the Malabar elementary teachers union which had once been only an instrument to propagate certain political ideologies, has now obtained more opportunity for their independent growth and development. At

¹⁶¹ Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

¹⁶² Ibid, Book 2, Vol 10, August 1944

¹⁶³ The Mathrubhumi, August 27, 1944

the same time the Guild got a chance to exert its influence over a vast area of operation under the elementary teachers¹⁶⁴.

The teachers union continued their activities all over Malabar. The education week was celebrated in several places¹⁶⁵. The standing committee decided to give a memorandum through its upper bodies to the Director, Education Advisor, Governor and the Viceroy and also to submit a petition to the Malabar Collector highlighting the issues such as rationing, rice quota, paper distribution and mid-day meals for school children. It also decided to start a teachers protection fund¹⁶⁶. Teachers meetings continued to pass resolution on paper price and war allowance¹⁶⁷. Teachers organised public meetings and demanded the distribution of rice, sugar and kerosene¹⁶⁸. About 50 teachers organised a *jatha* from Manjeri to Malappuram met the Sub Collector and requested to take action to supply rice at reasonable rate¹⁶⁹.

The inflation due to the war reduced the value of Rupee to 25% and made the life of the teachers miserable. Hence their then salary of Rs 12 (85% of Rs 14) had only the value of 3 rupees. Actually they would have to get a monthly salary of Rs 48/-. The government was asked to give at least half of that amount and thus the teachers demanded 50% increase in their basic salary. Thus the teachers would get an amount of Rs 24 (Rs 18 + government rate DA of Rs 6)¹⁷⁰

The war led to rise in prices. The teachers were given a DA of Rs 2 in 1942 when the DA was increased in 1943 the elementary teachers were neglected. But soon the local boards and municipalities were advised to sanction government rate DA to their teachers by imposing additional taxes. They were also promised special grant by the government, if necessary. At the same time the aided elementary teachers were given only increase of one rupee in their DA. Actually these teachers who were getting a very low salary were fulfilling the major part of elementary education in the state. They were the people who made more sacrifice in the name of war. More over they had been silently tolerating the prorata cut

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, August 30, 1944

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, February 5, 1944

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, February 8, 1944

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, February 18, 1944

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, March 21, 1944

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, July 6, 1944

¹⁷⁰ *Adhyapakan*, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

imposed due to the economic crisis created by the war. Hence they demanded government rate DA from December 1943¹⁷¹

In spite of the promise given to the union, a large cut was imposed on the last instalment of the teaching grant of 1943. Now the union asked the managers and the teachers to demand the restoration of the deducted amount¹⁷².

The teachers found it very difficult to meet their expenses with their meagre salary. In a story entitled 'Absent' Cherukad described the acute poverty among the teachers¹⁷³. Many of the teachers left their profession and joined the army. In Chirakkal taluk alone 123 teachers opted for military service¹⁷⁴. Many active and qualified teachers became agents and auditors in ration depot and small industrial concerns in rural areas¹⁷⁵. A short story published in Mathrubhumi clearly narrated the circumstances that prompted the teachers to give up their profession¹⁷⁶. The number of teachers in Chirakkal taluk alone decreased from 2000 to 1700 during this period. Many schools were closed as a result.

Under these circumstances the teachers demanded 50% increase in their salary, government rate DA and monthly salary without any deduction. Efforts were also made to strengthen the union. No teachers association in India had such a percentage of membership as that of the teachers union in Malabar and no other teachers had such a sense of union as that of the Malabar teachers¹⁷⁷. There were 1820 teachers in Chirakkal taluk. Here 1526 teachers were union members and they work in 20 branches. Out of them 176 were lady teachers, 83 Muslim teachers and 122 teacher managers¹⁷⁸. The Kurumbranad taluk had 1312 union members. In Eranad taluk out of 884 teachers 322 teachers joined the union¹⁷⁹.

Art forms were often used to raise funds and also to make union propoganda among the people. The Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Union decided to raise a fund by staging skits depicting the grievances of the teachers. Thus

¹⁷¹ ibid

¹⁷² ibid

¹⁷³ Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book 23, Vol W.19, July 22, 1945

¹⁷⁴ Adhyapakan, op.cit

¹⁷⁵ ibid, Book 2, Vol 12, October 1944

¹⁷⁶ Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book 24, Vol W.14, January 26, 1947

¹⁷⁷ Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 11, September 1943

¹⁷⁸ ibid, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹⁷⁹ ibid, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

Cherukad, the Malayalam Vidwan of Pulamanthol higher elementary school, wrote a skit entitled 'Ramani' which was staged at several places. The Melattur Adhikari, the district board president and even a police constable helped the teachers to sell the tickets¹⁸⁰. The Ottamthullal presented at the 9th anniversary of the Chirakkal union attracted the audience. The background song of the programme depicted the miserable conditions of the teachers¹⁸¹. The taluk unions also decided to form a drama troop of the teachers.

Meanwhile S.M.Statham the Director of education went on leave. Consequently Dr. D.B. Day, the Principal of the Presidency College took charge of the same. Thus for the first time an Indian came to this post¹⁸². At the same time T.Austin, the adviser of the Governor, revealed the government's intention to introduce monthly grant to the elementary schools¹⁸³. The Director also issued a statement that all possible efforts would be adopted to increase the salary and DA of the teachers¹⁸⁴. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union welcomed this move¹⁸⁵. Thus the government increased the DA given to the elementary teachers from Rs 3 to Rs 4¹⁸⁶. The taluk advisory committee for elementary education formed in 1939 was also abolished¹⁸⁷.

The Malabar Teachers Guild called up on the teachers to observe a teachers day on 27th July 1944. It was intended to bring the grievances of the elementary teachers to the attention of the government and to get it redressed. Thus public meetings were organised at several places. The day was observed all over Malabar. Public meetings demanded increase in basic salary, government rate DA, mid-day meals for poor students and promised support to the district and state conferences¹⁸⁸.

The SITU used to celebrate an education week every year to highlight the major educational issues of the concerned period. Thus it was decided to observe such a week from 9th October to 14th October 1944. The teachers were advised to

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

¹⁸¹ Ibid, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹⁸² The Mathrubhumi, March 21, 1944

¹⁸³ Ibid, March 5, 1944

¹⁸⁴ Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹⁸⁵ The Mathrubhumi, April 18, 1944

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, May 3, 1944

¹⁸⁷ Adhyapakan, Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

highlight the issues of rationing and reorganisation of education¹⁸⁹. The Guild also asked the teachers to observe the week in Malabar. Thus the Chirakkal taluk union decided to organise a propaganda campaign in the taluk to emphasise the importance of the union and school protection programme and also to highlight the grievances of the teachers. A pamphlet explaining the aims and objectives of the programme was printed and published and it sought public support. All branch unions were asked to arrange reception meetings. The *jatha* was inaugurated at Karivellur, by K.Krishnan Master, the Secretary of the Kisan Sangh. It went to several areas and visited two high schools and five higher elementary schools. Peasants, workers, and reading room activists received them on their way and organised public meetings. They used the opportunity to raise Adyapakan fund and to subscribe the journal. It demanded a definite salary, government rate war allowance, universal rationing, education protection fund, implementation of the Sargent report and also the restoration of the certificate of T.C.Narayanan Nambiar¹⁹⁰.

The union was also aware of the sufferings of some of their colleagues in the agitation of 1940. The Wardha model school was the product of that agitation. It was the only national school in Kerala. Here along with the usual subjects, spinning, Hindi and music were also taught to the students. But the government refused to recognise the school and thus it failed to get the teaching grant. There were 9 teachers and 200 students in the school. The school committee found it very difficult to retain the school. Thus P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar called up on the teachers to save their colleagues from their miseries¹⁹¹.

The teachers were also conscious of the problems faced by the managers. The managers argued that it was not possible to run the schools with the 15% maintenance grant. In one of their meetings the teachers union leader V. Ramunni advised them to strengthen their association and to present their demands to the government. At the same time they were asked to co-operate with the teachers to retain education¹⁹².

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 11, September 1944

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 12, October 1944

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 10, August 1944 & Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

¹⁹² *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 11, September 1944

The teachers were also vigilant on national politics. They expressed happiness over the release of Gandhi, but argued that the existing system of education could be abolished only under a national government¹⁹³.

The teachers gave leadership to face the educational crisis and also took up the common issues of the people. When the board high school at Quilandi faced the problem of space and building, the teachers union took the initiative to solve the crisis and also came forward to construct a shed for the board school at Cherukunnu¹⁹⁴. When they found the old St. George reading room at Quilandi in a dilapidated condition, the union convened a public meeting. A fund was raised by staging a drama and the reading room was renovated¹⁹⁵. They opened libraries in the schools and subscribed news papers. The union adopted measures to open dispensaries in rural areas¹⁹⁶. Efforts were made to open libraries, reading rooms and night classes in the villages. The union gave leadership to the food committees, mid-day meal programme and to the efforts for cholera eradication. Now the people came forward to protect their education. When a school was closed by the manager who was a land lord at Ellerenji, the parents opened a new school under their leadership. They gave leadership to raise a fund to increase the salary of the teachers of Azheekode school. People also raised a fund to introduce a scale for the teachers of Blathur school. People committees were formed at several places to run their schools effectively. People gave all help to the reading rooms opened by the union. They even organised a fine arts day to raise a fund to help the public reading room opened by the Chirakkal taluk union. All these clearly proved that where ever the teachers mingled with the people and made them conscious of their responsibilities there, the education could be protected¹⁹⁷.

The 35th Madras State Education Conference was held at Zamorin's Guruvayurappan Hall, Calicut on 9th May 1945. B.V. Narayana Swami Naidu, Principal, Pachayappas College, Madras presided over the meeting which was attended by more than 300 delegates. It constituted a committee to prepare a memorandum of grievances of board and elementary teachers. It also highlighted

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944 & Book 2, Vol 9, July 1944

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 8, June 1944

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, Book 2, Vol 5, March 1944

the food problem in Malabar and the scarcity of paper which compelled to stop the journal, *Adhyapakam*¹⁹⁸. The Eranad teachers union protested against the denial of government rate DA to the elementary teachers while all other categories were sanctioned the same. Hence all schools were advised to submit a memorandum to the Director demanding monthly salary, government rate DA and 50 percent increase in their salary¹⁹⁹.

At that time the union also took up the grievances of the untrained teachers. A major section of the elementary teachers belonged to this category. The department demanded prior sanction for their appointment. They were often denied the teaching grant. They were not given due consideration in the training selection. The union leaders could bring this issue to the attention of the department²⁰⁰.

The acute poverty of the period had made life in Malabar extremely miserable. Even the talented teachers found it very difficult to continue in their profession and left it. This led to the scarcity of teachers in Malabar. To bring this issue to the attention of the government and the people the SITU observed a 'war allowance day' on 11th August 1945. The day was observed at several places such as Calicut, Kanjangad, Alathur, Pattambi, Quilandi, Kodyeri, Vatakara, Thalasseri etc. Under the Malabar Teachers Guild the day was observed at Zamurin's College Calicut. It demanded government rate DA to the elementary teachers. The government was asked to advise the management for the same and also to give financial assistance to them if necessary²⁰¹.

The Malabar District Teachers Guild constituted a committee to prepare a report on education reconstruction in Malabar and also a statement of urgent educational reforms for the people and the candidates before the assembly election. It also formulated their demands to be submitted in the proposed All India Education Conference to be held at Madras. It consisted of teachers right of organisation, free and compulsory education all over India under government responsibility and also the amendment of the grant-in-aid code. It was also decided to affiliate the Guild with the all India teachers federation²⁰².

¹⁹⁸ *The Mathrubhumi*, May 13, 1945

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, July 5, 1945

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, January 7, 1945

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, August 14, 1945

²⁰² *Ibid*, December 12, 1945

Meanwhile it was decided to sanction the teaching grant of untrained teachers with minimum two years experience. The Guild welcomed the decision²⁰³. The government also issued order sanctioning government rate DA to secondary and college teachers²⁰⁴. Now the government was requested to make the order applicable to the elementary teachers also. The Guild secretary sent a letter to the government on this issue. The teachers union also sent telegrams to the Director to highlight this issue²⁰⁵.

A Guild deputation met the Director R.M. Savour at Tellicherry on 16th February 1946 and presented the major grievances of the teachers. But they were told that certain proposals were under government consideration to solve their problems²⁰⁶. At the same time a joint conference of board and elementary teachers of Valancheri warned the government of a general strike, if their demands were not conceded by 1st June 1946²⁰⁷. A teachers *jatha* was organised at Valluvanad which visited several places, organised public meetings and demanded the redress of their grievances. It also decided to organise a one-day hartal, if their demands were not conceded²⁰⁸. The Kozhikode municipal teachers union demanded salary increase and made preparation for a strike²⁰⁹. The Palakkad municipal teachers also adopted the same decision²¹⁰.

The Malabar Teachers Guild had asked the taluk unions to organise teachers rallies to highlight their grievances on 20th April 1946. The rally held at Vatakara asked the government to admit the urgent demands of the teachers. More than 1000 teachers including board and municipal teachers participated in the rally held at Tellicherry. It requested the government to concede the urgent demands of the teachers and also to introduce free and compulsory education. The Valluvanad rally held at Perinthalmanna decided to raise a fighting fund for the union²¹¹.

²⁰³ ibid

²⁰⁴ ibid, November 11, 1945

²⁰⁵ ibid, December 22, 1945

²⁰⁶ ibid, February 21, 1946

²⁰⁷ ibid, February 3, 1946

²⁰⁸ ibid, April 3, 1946

²⁰⁹ ibid, March 13, 1946

²¹⁰ ibid, April 27, 1946

²¹¹ ibid

The Eranad Taluk Teachers Union decided to submit a memorandum to the government. In case it was not responded favourably, the Guild was requested to give leadership for a strike from 1st June 1946²¹². The union leader were authorised to submit memorandum to the members of the Legislative Assembly, KPCC and the Director of education. It was also decided to make preparation for a strike and the teachers were asked to contribute their one-day salary for the fighting fund of the union²¹³. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union also asked the teachers to be ready for any sacrifice and decided to raise a fighting fund by collecting 2 rupees each from the members²¹⁴. The board and elementary teachers jointly observed a 'Salary Day' at Kottacheri on 28th April 1946. Teachers wearing the badge of 'Starving Teacher' and holding placards marched through the town and demanded basic salary of Rs 50 and the repeal of the G.O. No. 1280²¹⁵. The Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union authorised C.C. Nair to submit a memorandum to the MLA's before the next assembly session and decided to raise a union fund. C.C. Nair was also elected as the union delegate to the state conference to be held at Bellari²¹⁶.

It was a period of political changes. A national government was formed in Madras. Hence the teachers who were to go for strike were requested to grant sufficient time for the new congress ministry²¹⁷. An executive meeting of the Malabar Teachers Guild was held at Zamorin's high school Calicut on 27th April 1946. It considered the teachers request for giving leadership to an agitation. But in the new scenario, it decided to postpone the strike proposal until the policy statement of the government. How ever it was decided to submit a memorandum to the congress ministry at the earliest²¹⁸. As a popular ministry was there in Madras, the Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union welcomed the Guild decision, but sent an urgent telegram to the government²¹⁹.

The 11th anniversary of the Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union was held at Perambra on 18th May 1946. R.Raghava Menon, MLA in his presidential address

²¹² *Ibid*, April 28, 1946

²¹³ *Ibid*, May 14, 1946

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, May 3, 1946

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, May 4, 1946

²¹⁶ *Ibid*

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, May 5, 1946

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, May 7, 1946

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, May 9, 1946

promised to meet the Minister to present the grievances of the teachers but advised them not to go for a strike for the time being.

While the correspondence with the Minister was going on, the Eranad teachers postponed the proposed strike²²⁰. Their delegate, Krishna Menon went to Madras and submitted a memorandum to the Minister and demanded, basic salary, DA, security of employment and compulsory education. The Minister promised to consider their demands as and when the financial position of the government was improved²²¹. The union presidents of Kottayam and Chirakkal taluk also decided to submit memorandum to the Minister²²². P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, Nettur P Damodaran and T.K. Narayanan went to Madras, submitted a memorandum to the Minister and requested the redress of teachers grievances²²³. With a view to bring the attention of the government on the teachers grievances and also to highlight the co-operation of the teachers union for the educational, reorganisation, the SITU called up on the teachers to observe an 'All Malabar Teachers Day' on July 27th 1946. So the teachers were asked to hold public meetings, pass resolutions and to send it to the government²²⁴. Thus the day was observed at several places in the district²²⁵. But as there was certain delay in getting the SITU circular many of the unions failed to observe the day. However the union leadership asked the teachers to observe it on any other day before 4th August 1946²²⁶.

It was in May 1946 that the congress ministry came to power in Madras. The popular government issued order to restore the certificate of T.C. Narayanan Nambiar, suspended in 1939 and to reappoint him in his old school²²⁷. The Minister Avinasalingam Chettiar declared in the assembly that out of 31, 11 teachers were given their certificates lost in the teachers agitation of 1940²²⁸. The government also decided to increase the teaching grant of aided elementary school at the rate of Rs 2 to a teacher. Thus the higher and secondary trained

²²⁰ ibid, May 31, 1946

²²¹ ibid, June 30, 1946

²²² ibid, June 28, 1946

²²³ ibid, June 26, 1946

²²⁴ ibid, July 26, 1946

²²⁵ ibid, August 1,2, 1946

²²⁶ ibid

²²⁷ ibid, July 10, 1946

²²⁸ ibid, August 17, 1946

teachers would get Rs 16 and 18 respectively²²⁹. Efforts were also adopted to give recognition to the Thayyil Wardha Model school²³⁰. Above all it was decided to give separate grant to the teachers and the managers²³¹. However all the major demands of the teachers remained neglected.

At that time teachers agitation developed in different parts of India. In the United Province, the teachers of Allhabad formed an organisation and declared strike. Ten thousand teachers in Gujarat under Prenelal Desai and 40000 teachers in Bombay had moved towards strike. The all Bengal elementary teachers union came to the forefront of the teachers movement in Bengal and demanded Rs 50 and Rs 40 to the trained and untrained teachers respectively. They warned the government of a strike, if their demands were not accepted²³². The teachers of Malabar heard this news about the awakening of teachers in different parts of the country²³³. In Kerala the Travancore private teachers formed their own association and gave a strike notice to the government demanding an increase in their basic salary. The teachers of Cochin were also on the path of agitation²³⁴. All these had great impact on the elementary teachers of Malabar²³⁵. At the same time the board and municipal elementary teachers of Malabar also were trying to organise their own district associations. It was in this context that the SITU conference was held at Bellari in 1946. Here V.Ramunni tried to present a resolution for the formation of a sub committee to consider the grievances of the elementary school teachers. But fearing an agitation, he was not allowed to present the same. Consequently the elementary school teachers who came from different parts of the Madras state assembled together and decided to form the Madras elementary school teachers federation²³⁶. All these developments had great impact on the teachers of Malabar.

Under these circumstances a convention of the important activists of the teachers union was held at Calicut on 16th July 1946 It decided to revive the former Malabar aided elementary teachers union. Thus the standing committee was

²²⁹ Ibid, July 28, 1946

²³⁰ Ibid, August 12, 1946

²³¹ Ibid, August 11, 1946

²³² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 117

²³³ The Mathrubhumi, April 3, 1946

²³⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 117

²³⁵ Adhyapakan, Volume 10, August 1961

²³⁶ V.Ramunni, 'Enne Varthedutha Bahujana Prasthanam' in Kannur Jilla KAPT Union Onnam Varshika Souvenir (Thalipparamba,1972)

suspended. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar the hero of the Quit India movement became the president of the union. T.C. Narayanan Nambiar and P.R. Nambiar were selected as the secretary and treasurer respectively²³⁷. To ensure the support of all sections of teachers it was decided to act as an independent unit of the South Indian Teachers Union.

The congress ministry under T. Prakasam could not do much for the teachers. The decision of the government to increase two rupee in salary did not satisfy the teachers. It actually infuriated them. So they raised their major demand i.e., salary of Rs 50 and security of employment.

The Malabar District Teachers Guild nominated V.Ramunni, P.R. Nambiar and E.Gopalankutty Panikker as their delegates to the All India Teachers Federation. It also decided to encourage the affiliated unions and associations to organise separately at district level so as to strengthen the Guild. The Guild also asked the teachers to get ready for an agitation, if their demands were not accepted till 31st December 1946. To invite the attention of the government on the teachers demand for government rate DA, all schools were advised to send signed petitions to the Minister and the Chief Minister on 16th September 1946. The Guild also called up on the teachers to observe an all Malabar teachers day on 25th September 1946²³⁸. Thus public meetings were held in different parts of Malabar where the government was requested to redress the grievances of the teachers²³⁹.

The Malabar teachers had great expectation in the new Congress Ministry which came to power in 1946. But no major attempt was made to introduce educational reforms in the state. The government made no efforts to introduce even the Wardha scheme in the elementary schools. The teachers were not satisfied with the increase in salary by two rupees. Their problems of security of tenure and the demand for increment were not considered. Thus all their major demands remained neglected. Therefore the Malabar teachers felt that an agitation was inevitable.

But the teachers were highly conscious of the new political situation. In 1940 they got much popular support because they were fighting against an oppressive colonial government. But now they were before a ministry which was

²³⁷ The Mathrubhumi, July 31, 1946

²³⁸ Ibid, October 2, 1946

²³⁹ Ibid, September 28, 1946

getting great support from the people. Hence an agitation confined to a district alone would not be effective and successful. So they wanted to mobilise all teachers of the Madras state in their agitation. They also wanted the support of the SITU. It was also felt necessary to make the people conscious of the relationship between the demands of the teachers and the educational progress. The Malabar union decided to take leadership in these efforts.

The MATU called up on the teachers to be ready for an agitation²⁴⁰. The council meeting held at Calicut on August 17th 1946 raised the demands such as basic salary of Rs 50, government rate DA, service based increment, monthly salary through Head Masters, service rule as that of the government servants repeal of the G.O. No 1280, reorganisation of the teachers associations, 200 working days and free and compulsory elementary education. If these demands were not accepted till December 31st 1946 all unions were advised to be prepared for a general strike²⁴¹. The Chirakkal taluk union president P.C. Kunhiraman met the Minister at Kannur Railway station, who was on his way to Mangalore and presented the teachers grievances. The Minister revealed his eagerness to help the teachers but sought their help to the government²⁴². Meanwhile an allegation was raised that the communists were the real brain behind the strike decision adopted by the teachers²⁴³. Now the KPCC reminded the teachers about the formation of the interim government and advised them to give up their strike decision²⁴⁴. At the same time the Madras state elementary teachers federation also adopted a strike decision. With a view to mobilise public opinion, it was also decided to organise a cycle *jatha* from Mangalore to Madras. V.Ramunni, the Director of the *jatha* stated the details of the receptions and public meetings to be held on their route²⁴⁵. At the same time the South Karnatic district elementary teachers union opposed this decision²⁴⁶.

Meanwhile the board elementary teachers of various taluks met at Zamorins college and formed the district board teachers union. P.K. Pachukutty

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, July 24, 1946

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, August 24, 1946

²⁴² *Ibid*, November 7, 1946

²⁴³ *Ibid*, August 28, 1946

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, September 3, 1946

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, November 27, 1946

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, November 29, 1946

and E.Gopalankutty Panikker were elected its president and secretary respectively²⁴⁷. It presented a memorandum to the KPCC president K. Kelappan and demanded DA arrears and increase in their salary. They also declared their decision for a strike²⁴⁸. The board teachers of Valluvanad also decided to collect a signed statement of willingness from the teachers.

The elementary teachers of Malabar, thus moved ahead with their decisions. They found their teaching grant delayed even under a popular congress ministry and the Guild was asked to take up the issue²⁴⁹. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union asked the government to take action against those who were responsible for the delay in the payment of teaching grant. Complaints were also raised against the irregularities in the training selection. The priority given to military service and its misuse was seriously objected²⁵⁰. Fearing certain changes in the rules related to the teachers security of employment, some of the managers also began to dismiss teachers to appoint their own relatives. The teachers union requested the Director to take urgent action against this practice²⁵¹. A note in the Mathrubhumi clearly reflected the helplessness of the teachers. "Every one needs the service of the teachers, they are utilised for aforestation programme, census and ration card enumeration. But once their service comes to an end, they are totally neglected"²⁵². Thus the teachers expressed their willingness for a strike and asked the Guild to take steps in this direction²⁵³

K.Kelappan in his inaugural speech in the 10th annual conference of the Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Union told the teachers that their agitation could gain popular support only when it was just, non violent and devoid of hatred. The Eranad and Ponnani teachers union, South India Teachers Federation and the communist party of Valluvanad promised all help to the teachers agitation. A propaganda *jatha* with public meetings was also arranged. It was also decided to organise a one day Hartal, if their demands were not accepted till December 31st 1946²⁵⁴.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, August 24, 1946

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, October 27, 1946

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, December 1, 1946

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, August 6, 1946

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, December 12, 1946

²⁵² *Ibid*, December 6, 1946

²⁵³ *Ibid*, December 5, 1946

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, December 26, 1946

When the teachers were thus moving towards as agitation, the managers conference held at Tellicherry demanded increase in the management grant. They declared that, otherwise they would be compelled to give up the school management²⁵⁵.

Even when the teachers were on their way to agitation against the congress ministry, efforts were also made to organise the nationalist teachers in Malabar. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar published a detailed statement and proposed to convene a convention of the nationalist teachers at Calicut on 21st December 1946. He wrote "Teachers from different political shades are members of the union. Its activities are designed to protect the common interest of the teachers. It should not be in any way injurious to the national interest. But recently a political party, through their efforts could motivate the union to do certain things which were against the policies of the union. The teachers are to obtain their benefit without hindering the national interest"²⁵⁶. A convention of the nationalist teachers of Malabar was held at Ganapath High school Calicut on 3rd January 1947. More than 300 teachers attended this convention. Here an executive committee of 21 members including 4 Muslim teachers was constituted. K. Balakrishanan Nair of Valluvanad was elected as its convener²⁵⁷.

There after a meeting of the Malabar nationalist teachers forum was held at the congress office Vatakara on 8th February 1947. It viewed the policy adopted by the congress ministry objectionable and decided not to remain silent but to adopt an ultimate decision before the district union conference. It also decided to print and distribute a pamphlet explaining teachers grievances to the president of the KPCC, MLA's, Ministers and the news papers and if their grievances were not redressed before the month of April, to organise a strike against the government²⁵⁸. The forum submitted a petition to K. Kelappan the president of the KPCC explaining the pathetic conditions of the teachers. As the teachers were on the verge of a strike, he was requested to interfere in the issue. He promised to do everything possible but advised the teachers to give up their decision of strike

²⁵⁵ Ibid, August 25, 1946

²⁵⁶ Ibid, December 5, 1946

²⁵⁷ Ibid, January 8, 1947

²⁵⁸ Ibid, February 14, 1947

for the time being. The teachers forum also decided to convene a joint meeting of the forum and the taluk unions at Pattambi on 5th March 1947²⁵⁹.

It was at that time, that a cycle *jatha* from Mangalore to Madras under the leadership of V.Ramunni was organised. This *jatha* began on 7th January 1947 in a meeting presided over by C. Kunhambu Nair²⁶⁰. Six of its members including P.T. Narayanan Nair (President Kozhikode taluk union) K.K. Panikker and V.P. Narayanan Nair were from north Kerala. The *jatha* captain brought with him a memorandum of teachers grievances to be submitted to the Minister. The teachers and the public gave warm welcome at several places enroute. Thus the *jatha* could awaken the elementary teachers of different districts in the Madras state. The *jatha* with 22 members reached Madras on 29th January 1947 and submitted a memorandum to the Minister²⁶¹. He praised the teachers adventure and promised to consider their problems favourably. Now an attempt was made to organise the Madras state elementary school teachers federation. But the Andhra teachers had already organised a union of their own. Thus the Tamil Nadu teachers union, the first central organisation for the elementary teachers of Tamil Nadu was formed under the leadership of V.Ramunni. He remained there in the union leadership till his death²⁶².

At the same time the teachers union in different parts of Malabar were getting ready for a strike against the government. The 11th annual conference of the Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union held at Madayi, attended by more than 250 delegates demanded monthly salary of Rs 50, DA from July 1944, compulsory PF, amendment to the G.O 1495 and the abolition of the practice of arbitrary dismissal. The conference also decided to organise a one day hartal in January and ultimately a strike after 30th April 1947²⁶³. The teachers conference at Palakkad demanded government rate salary to the teachers and also adopted a strike decision against the government²⁶⁴. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union expressed their dissatisfaction over the new salary proposal and the government's reluctance to abolish the private management system. Thus telegrams

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, March 2, 1947

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, January 10, 1947

²⁶¹ V. Ramunni. op.cit

²⁶² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 120

²⁶³ *The Mathrubhumi*, January 9, 1947

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, January 24, 1947

highlighting these points were sent to the government²⁶⁵. The Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union asked the government to reconsider its proposal on teachers salary. At the same time Guild and the district union were requested to take any step including a strike, if a favourable decision was not adopted before the end of the present assembly session²⁶⁶.

Meanwhile police oppression was going on in Chirakkal taluk against the teachers, students and reading room activists. The MSP, virtually declared a war against education and culture. Many teachers and students were arrested at their schools. School records were taken in to custody. The death of Kumaran a teacher of Blathur school really frightened the teachers. Many of them went underground. Schools remained closed²⁶⁷. There was such police oppression in different parts of Malabar. Kelu Master, a teacher of Kalpathur higher elementary school Perambra was arrested while he was engaging his class and taken to police custody in chains²⁶⁸. The arrest and imprisonment of the union leaders had paralysed the union activities in Malabar. T.C. Narayanan Nambiar viewed this encroachment over the civil liberties as an attack against the teachers movement²⁶⁹.

The executive meeting of the MATU held on 16th February 1947 decided to begin the strike on a date fixed by the district conference of the union²⁷⁰. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar explained the circumstances for taking such a decision "The teachers agitation of 1940 was withdrawn on the basis of the government promise and the request made by the people committee. How ever the teachers demands were not accepted even to that day. The formation of the congress ministry made the teachers happy. But they did not get anything. Now they were hearing the news of the teachers agitation in different parts of the country.... Here we tried our best to keep away from disturbing the government, but later it was decided to begin the strike, if a decision was not adopted by 31st December 1946. Even then the teachers were reluctant to take such a step"²⁷¹. They waited for the

²⁶⁵ Ibid, February 14, 1947

²⁶⁶ Ibid, February 19, 1947

²⁶⁷ The Desabhimani, February 14, 1947

²⁶⁸ Ibid, March 5, 1947

²⁶⁹ Ibid, February 14, 1947

²⁷⁰ The Mathrubhumi, February 21, 1947

²⁷¹ Ibid

cabinet decision. When it came on 18th January, the teachers found it very disappointing²⁷².

E. Moidu Moulavi in his inaugural speech at the 4th annual conference of the Kasargode Taluk Teachers Union criticised the government's carelessness towards the teachers and its excuse in the form of 'financial difficulty'. He asked the government to confiscate the properties that capitalism had acquired through black marketing and profiteering and thus to redress the grievances of the teachers. The meeting sympathised with the teachers agitation in different parts of the country and welcomed the proposed strike, if the teachers salary was not increased by 31st March 1947²⁷³. K.A.Damodara Menon viewed the teachers agitation as a national agitation²⁷⁴.

Under these circumstances, the union found it necessary to know the willingness of the teachers for such an agitation. Thus a strike ballot was conducted by the union in February 1947. While 1635 teachers of Chirakkal taluk voted in favour of the strike, 38 teachers opposed the decision²⁷⁵. 634 teachers of 15 branches of Eranad taluk voted favourably and 31 teachers against the decision²⁷⁶. In Kurumbranad taluk 1705 teachers voted favourably and 98 teachers opposed it²⁷⁷. In Kottayam taluk while 1656 teachers voted in favour of the strike proposal, 68 teachers opposed the decision²⁷⁸. Thus altogether more than 95% of the teachers of Malabar voted in favour of the proposed strike.

The 7th annual conference of the MATU was held at Calicut on 22nd February 1947²⁷⁹. Here a group of teachers demanded that the strike be advanced to 24th March 1947. But it was voted out and it was decided to begin the agitation on 15th June 1947²⁸⁰.

The Palakkad municipal teachers union protested against the government proposal on the teachers salary and decided to begin a strike. The district Guild and the municipal teachers union were requested to give leadership for the same.

²⁷² Ibid

²⁷³ Ibid, March 2, 1947

²⁷⁴ Ibid, February 27, 1947

²⁷⁵ Ibid, March 6, 1947

²⁷⁶ The Desabhimani, March 6, 1947

²⁷⁷ The Mathrubhumi, March 7, 1947

²⁷⁸ Ibid, March 9, 1947

²⁷⁹ Ibid

²⁸⁰ Ibid

It was also decided to conduct a strike ballot to know the willingness of the teachers²⁸¹.

By then the Malabar Teachers Guild also realised that it too would not be able to make the ministry favourable to the teachers with out an agitation. In this backdrop the Guild general body met at Zamorin's college, Calicut. It viewed the government order on teachers salary quite insulting and expressed its protest. It also declared that, if the lower bodies were found willing for an agitation, it would make a call for a strike from 15th June 1947. At the same time it was made clear that they were free to begin their agitation before that date and as a central organisation the Guild promised all help to them²⁸².

The resolutions passed by the district Guilds prompted SITU to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the elementary school teachers. The board school and municipal school teachers were also moving towards a strike.

The Malabar District Board Teachers Union under P.K Pachukutty welcomed the Guild decision and advised its lower bodies to make preparations for the proposed strike of 15th June 1947. It was also decided to raise a strike fund from the teachers²⁸³. The Kottayam taluk board teachers union decided to begin their strike on 15th June 1947 along with other teachers unions²⁸⁴. A joint conference of board and elementary teachers was held at Kottakkal. The teachers rally organised as a part of it was attended by more than 400 teachers including several mistresses. Here P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar requested the support of the general public and the news papers for the proposed agitation²⁸⁵.

Meanwhile a conference of teachers was held at Madras Christian College in March 1947. L.S. Chattanatha Karayalar, Parliamentary Secretary of the Education Minister was the president of the meeting. Fearing a strike resolution he left the place soon. But the meeting proceeded under the leadership of V.Ramunni. It passed the strike resolution with great applause²⁸⁶. A committee to pilot the strike was soon organised. V.Ramunni worked hard to organise strike in Andhra and Tamil Nadu.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, March 4, 1947

²⁸² *Ibid*, March 4, 1947

²⁸³ *Ibid*, March 19, 1947

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, April 6, 1947

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, March 29, 1943

²⁸⁶ V. Ramunni, op.cit

The strike ballot held at Calicut showed that 90 percentage of the municipal teachers were willing for an agitation. On the basis of this, the Kozhikode taluk municipal teachers union criticised the governments reluctance to increase their salary and decided to join the strike²⁸⁷. The Tellicherry municipal teachers union also decided to go on with the strike with the approval of the Malabar Teachers Guild and the SITU. An action council was also formed to proceed their efforts²⁸⁸.

M.P.Govinda Menon asked the government to take action against the managers who dismissed teachers without the consent of the inspecting officers. He also criticised in the assembly, the cruel attitude of the government towards the teachers and demanded the government to take over the private elementary schools²⁸⁹. However in the assembly the Minister of education Avinasalingam Chettiar declared that nothing could be done with regard to the teachers salary²⁹⁰. It was argued that the same could be considered only in view of a financial assistance from the government of India²⁹¹. To mobilise resources to increase the salary of the teachers, they were advised to propagandise for new tax proposal by the government²⁹². This request made by the Minister, Madhava Menon at Calicut was severely criticised by the union²⁹³.

The teachers moved towards an agitation so that 'they could live as human beings'. Hence it was viewed as a struggle of the people. Teachers meetings all over Malabar requested the political parties, news papers and the common people to support their proposed strike. The union president P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar said "The union which was formed in 1934 took to the weapon of strike only in 1947. It was taken up only when they knew that there was no other way to redress their grievances. Even Mahatma Gandhi had sought to it when the situation demanded"²⁹⁴. Public meetings supported the teachers demands and demanded the withdrawal of MSP force and the release of P.R. Nambiar²⁹⁵. Peoples committees and volunteer corps were formed at several places to support

²⁸⁷ The Mathrubhumi, April 3, 1947

²⁸⁸ Ibid, April 26, 1947

²⁸⁹ Ibid, March 6, 1947

²⁹⁰ Ibid, March 28, 1947

²⁹¹ Ibid, April 19, 1947

²⁹² Ibid, April 8, 1947

²⁹³ Ibid, April 20, 1947

²⁹⁴ The Desabhimani, May 9, 1947

²⁹⁵ Ibid, May 3,7, 1947

the strike²⁹⁶. Public meetings were held at several places like, Kanhangad, Vylathiur, Sreekrishnapuram, Balusseri, Manjeri, Nellore, Nellikode, Tritala, Edappally, Edakkulam, Chirakkal, Veliyankode, Ottappalam, Cherukara, Perumbadappu, Andathode, Perambra, Palappetty, Vellikulangara, Karura and Mannarkkaad. The communist party organised rallies to prepare the venue of these meetings²⁹⁷. The teachers attended these meetings wearing strike badges. As the teachers demands were considered a common demand, both the congress and Muslim league leaders attended these meetings²⁹⁸. The government was asked to accept the demands of the teachers otherwise it was declared that the teachers would get the whole support of the people²⁹⁹. They wished the attempt to increase the teachers salary would be an initial step for implementing free and universal education for the take over of education by the government³⁰⁰. The teachers who betray the strike were warned that in such a situation the parents would not sent their children to the schools and they would have to teach empty benches and desks³⁰¹. Such teachers would have to engage classes over the dead bodies of the teachers³⁰². It was declared that the teacher who were fighting to retain their life was actually fighting against their own colleagues who had participated together in the toddy shop picketing of 1930's against imperialism³⁰³. Hence it was requested not to make the teachers, who were freedom fighters, a puppet of imperialism³⁰⁴. The teachers movement was characterised as a fight against imperialism³⁰⁵. Now the government realised that their leaders like T.C. Narayanan Nambiar were getting support even from the congress teachers. Hence it was directed to arrest him before the 15th of June 1947³⁰⁶. Now the teachers were given the following advice "Imperialism hiding behind the popular ministry which imprisoned P.R. Nambiar may arrest the other leaders also. In such a situation each teacher should come forward as a leader to lead our agitation"³⁰⁷.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, May 7,9,28, 1947

²⁹⁷ Ibid, May 14, 1947

²⁹⁸ Ibid, May 15, 1947

²⁹⁹ Ibid, May 16, 1947

³⁰⁰ Ibid, May 28, 1947

³⁰¹ Ibid, May 16, 1947

³⁰² Ibid, May 20, 1947

³⁰³ Ibid

³⁰⁴ Ibid, May 24, 1947

³⁰⁵ Ibid, May 16, 1947

³⁰⁶ Ibid, May 30, 1947

³⁰⁷ Ibid, May 15, 1947

Efforts of strike propaganda was made all over Malabar P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar began the strike propaganda in Eranad taluk on 1st May 1947³⁰⁸. The Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Union celebrated a propaganda week from 1st to 7th May 1947³⁰⁹. Public meetings at several places passed resolutions, supporting the teachers agitation. The first day was celebrated at Pulamanthol as a 'day of the declaration of rights'. The second day was observed as the 'union day' at Kattupara. The third day was celebrated at Natymangalam as a 'strike day' and an 'untrained teachers day' was celebrated at Karingnad on 4th May 1947³¹⁰. A propaganda *jatha* consisting of 10 members was organised in Kozhikode taluk and it began its journey on 28th May and concluded at Calicut Town Hall on 28th May 1947. P. Madhavan Nair, the secretary of the Kozhikode taluk Kisan sabha asked to give all help to this *jatha*. The *jatha* got reception at several places. In a meeting held at Nellikod, K. Madhavan Nair demanded that sufficient salary should be given to the teachers not by squeezing the blood of the poor people, but by opening the chambers and cash box of the profiteer and black marketers³¹¹.

The teachers could gain the support of the congress leaders for their agitation. In the Eranad taluk political conference held at Manjeri, E. Moidu Moulavi criticised the governments policy towards the teachers. He said "When the revenue officials demanded an increase in salary, fearing administrative failure, it was granted. Certainly there are ways to solve the issue. The abolition of the post of Divisional Inspectors, abolition of Malikhan and also the confiscation of properties acquired through bribery and black marketing after 1939 are ways by which it can be solved"³¹². In the annual conference of the Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union M.P.Govinda Menon demanded the government take over of education to redress the grievances of the teachers. The congress committee president at Tanur promised all help to the teachers³¹³. Supporting the demands of the teachers, the village congress president at Tritala said "This is not a strike called by the communist. Teachers demands are just and reasonable. Hence it should be accepted even if it is raised by the communists"³¹⁴. The congress

³⁰⁸ The Mathrubhumi, May 3, 1947

³⁰⁹ Ibid, May 9, 1947

³¹⁰ The Desabhimani, May 11, 1947

³¹¹ The Mathrubhumi, May 14, 1947 & The Desabhimani, May 15,17,20, 1947

³¹² The Mathrubhumi, May 28, 1947

³¹³ The Desabhimani, May 9, 1947

³¹⁴ Ibid, May 7, 1947

committee president at Tanur promised all help to the teachers³¹⁵. K.O. Kunhikrishanan Nambiar, the president of the Kottayam taluk congress committee demanded the withdrawal of the MSP force, restoration of the civil liberties and promised all support to the teachers agitation³¹⁶. He said “It was the congress that had taught the people to unite and agitate for the basic needs of life. Hence the teachers strike is not against the congress or the congress government, but a struggle to expel the vested interest that had crept in to the congress. The Kottayam taluk congress committee promised support to their struggle. Even if the KPCC stood against your decision, we will support the struggle neglecting all disciplinary actions”³¹⁷. In the joint conference of the board and aided teachers held at Tellicherry on 1st June 1947 he repeated his promise³¹⁸. Presiding over the Chirakkal branch teachers union conference the taluk congress committee president T. Balakrishanan Nair opposed the governments policy towards the teachers. As it would be an obstacle for the growth of the congress, the government was asked to express their policy otherwise the taluk congress committee would support the proposed strike³¹⁹.

The managers of Malabar also turned in favour of the teachers. The annual conference of the Chirakkal taluk managers Association asked the government to accept the reasonable demands of the teachers or else to support the proposed strike³²⁰. The managers association of Nattika area also promised help to the teachers agitation³²¹. The Kurumbranad managers association decided not to oppose the teachers strike, which was not harmful to the interest of the managers and therefore asked the government to accept their demands³²².

The board teachers of Malabar also began to think seriously of the strike. The Palakkad board teachers union decided to give strike notice and consequently an action council was also formed³²³. The Ponnani taluk board teachers conference decided to begin their strike on 15th June itself³²⁴. The Chirakkal taluk

³¹⁵ Ibid, May 24, 1947

³¹⁶ Ibid, May 18, 1947

³¹⁷ Ibid, May 16, 1947

³¹⁸ The Mathrubhumi, June 4, 1947

³¹⁹ Ibid, May 13, 1947

³²⁰ Ibid, May 17, 1947

³²¹ Ibid, May 29, 1947

³²² Ibid, June 7, 1947

³²³ Ibid, May 6, 1947

³²⁴ The Desabhimani, May 17, 1947

Board teachers conference also demanded the redressal of their grievances and decided to begin the strike on the same day³²⁵. Meanwhile the joint meetings of the board and elementary teachers of several places requested the help of the people of their respective areas³²⁶. A joint meeting of board and elementary teachers of Nattika furca was held at Perinjanam on 18th May 1947. More than 300 teachers including mistresses attended the rally organised as a part of the meeting³²⁷. The skit, *Avasanakkai* (Final step) staged at the conference clearly depicted the existing conditions of the teachers. The people promised all help to the teachers agitation³²⁸. In the general body meeting of the Malabar District Board Elementary Teachers Union held at Calicut on 23rd May 1947, it was decided to begin the strike on 15th June 1947 and also to distribute strike badges to the teachers³²⁹. A joint rally and conference of board and aided teachers was held at Tellicherry on 1st June 1947. More than 800 teachers including mistresses participated in it with placards in their hands. The conference pointed out that the strike was not to over throw a popular ministry but one to get their grievances redressed. It was argued that while the Bombay teachers got their salary increased through agitation, the Malabar teachers, the most powerful and well organised teachers organisation in India also should follow the same path³³⁰. The Malabar district Hindi teachers conference also decided to begin the strike on 15th June along with other teachers³³¹.

Meanwhile the attitude of the SITU also underwent a great change³³². The cultural progress of the students and the professional growth of the teachers were the declared objectives of the union. But now it was felt that as long as the deplorable salary and service conditions of the teachers were not changed, the educational progress would not be possible. It was the efforts made by the various district Guilds and their resolutions that prompted the SITU to take such a stand. Now the leadership also felt that the teachers especially aided elementary teachers were really insulted. In this backdrop several leaders who were against an agitation withdrew from the scene and a new leadership emerged in the SITU.

³²⁵ *Ibid*, May 18, 1947

³²⁶ *The Mathrubhumi*, May 11, 1947

³²⁷ *The Desabhimani*, May 24, 1947

³²⁸ *The Mathrubhumi*, May 22, 1947

³²⁹ *Ibid*, May 30, 1947

³³⁰ *Ibid*, June 4, 1947

³³¹ *Ibid*, June 3, 1947

³³² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 121

Thus the 37th Madras educational conference declared that the 1,26,000 teachers of the state would begin their strike on July 1st 1947³³³. Thus the SITU submitted their urgent demands before the government. Now the executive meeting of the Malabar Teachers Guild held at Ganapath High school, Calicut nominated P.R. Subrammania Ayyar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar as their representatives to the SITU action council to discuss the strike decision adopted by the SITU. Moreover to ensure effective organisation of the Guild and to mobilise public support, it was also decided that the Guild leaders should organise an extensive tour all over the district from 2nd to 12th June 1947³³⁴.

The strike propaganda meetings continued to be organised all over Malabar³³⁵. Now the people took up the responsibility of making the strike a success³³⁶. Everyone without any political bias began to rally around the teachers³³⁷. Village congress committees, Muslim league, communist party, Kisan Sangh and Kisan Congress promised all help to the teachers³³⁸. The annual conference of the village reading rooms and workers meetings supported the teachers agitation³³⁹. A poem published in *Desabhimani* clearly reflected the strike spirit of the teachers. It asked the teachers to continue their fight till victory until death³⁴⁰. Fighting songs and other art forms were actively utilised. The role played by Valancheri Kutti Sankaran Nair can be cited in this context. The teachers agitation was viewed as a struggle for *Dharma*³⁴¹. But the department viewed the wearing of badges in the class room as a violation of discipline³⁴².

The Kottayam taluk congress committee asked the government to redress the grievances of the teachers³⁴³. M.P. Govinda Menon, M.P. Damodaran, Dr.Chandu, Manikkoth Kumaran and K.Raghavan the representatives of Malabar in the Madras assembly also asked the government to redress the grievances of the teachers³⁴⁴. The KPCC meeting sympathised with the teachers grievances

³³³ *The Desabhimani*, May 15, 1947

³³⁴ *The Mathrubhumi*, May 29, 1947

³³⁵ *Ibid*, May 28, 1947

³³⁶ *The Desabhimani*, May 30, 1947

³³⁷ *The Mathrubhumi*, June 1, 1947

³³⁸ *Ibid*

³³⁹ *Ibid*

³⁴⁰ *The Desabhimani*, May 24, 1947

³⁴¹ *Ibid*, May 25, 1947

³⁴² *Ibid*, May 30, 1947

³⁴³ *The Mathrubhumi*, June 4, 1947

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*

and asked the government to avoid a situation of strike. At the same time the teachers were advised to realize the limitations of the government and to withdraw from their strike decision.

Thus the aided elementary teachers, board teachers and the municipal teachers came together for a strike against the government. The Malabar Teachers Guild along with some other Guilds decided to join them. Even the SITU leadership came forward to support the agitation. For two months there was intense strike propaganda all over Malabar. The propaganda song 'Victory or Death' written by K. Kunhikrishanan Nambiar was echoed everywhere in Malabar. All people regardless of any political religious or communal differences rallied around the teachers. The government found it difficult to ignore the seriousness of the situation. A direct confrontation with the teachers was found undesirable. Hence the government agreed to have discussions with the union leaders. This was a change from their earlier stand³⁴⁵.

The Minister invited the union leaders to Madras. Along with M.P.Govinda Menon and R.Raghava Menon union leaders P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, N.P. Narayanan Nair and V. Ramunni held discussions with the Minister. First it was decided to consider the issues of the elementary teachers. Now the government agreed to increase the teaching grant³⁴⁶. But the union leaders demanded a salary scale for the teachers instead of the teaching grant. The Minister was not ready for such a compromise. Thus the talk failed and the teachers decided to go ahead with their strike proposal.

The strike propaganda continued all over Malabar and it mobilised great popular support. At a teachers conference in Valluvanad, the communist party, Vidyarthi congress, the SNDP and the Dalits promised to support the teachers agitation³⁴⁷. The 7th anniversary of the Palakkad taluk board elementary teachers union asked the government to admit the demands submitted in the Guild memorandum, otherwise decided to begin the strike on 15th June 1947. The managers of Malabar also responded to the proposed strike. The Malabar district aided elementary school managers association declared that in case it was found

³⁴⁵ Ibid, June 11, 1947

³⁴⁶ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 121

³⁴⁷ Ibid

impossible to run the schools, all the schools would be closed and the same would be reported to the department³⁴⁸.

Meanwhile T.T.Krishnamachari, the central minister for commerce, came to preside over the annual conference of the SITU. He took up the issue of the teachers and reopened the compromise talks. He used his influence in the Madras Ministry. A SITU deputation under his leadership met the Madras Minister and submitted a memorandum of teachers grievances³⁴⁹. As a result it was promised to revise the salary scale of all teachers of different category. It was in this backdrop that the Madras government issued a communiqué on 5th June 1947. It sanctioned for the first time in history, a salary scale instead of teaching grant to the elementary teachers of Malabar. Thus the teachers began to get an increment based on their service.

As per the government communiqué, the management grant was also increased³⁵⁰. At the same time the managers were directed to give an additional amount of Rs 5 as their share to the teachers salary³⁵¹. But it remained unimplemented. The following chart shows the proposed change in the teachers salary.

		OLD SALARY SCALE	NEW SCALE
Board elementary teachers	Lower elementary teachers	20-1-30	23-1-33
	Higher elementary teachers	25-1-40	30-1-45
	Secondary teachers	35- 1½ - 65	40- 1½ - 75
Aided elementary teachers	Lower untrained teachers	Rs 8	Rs 11
	Lower trained teachers	Rs 15	Rs 18
	Higher trained teachers	20 – ½ - 25	25- ½ -30
	Secondary trained teachers	25 – 1 – 35	35 – 1- 45
	College trained teachers	Rs 35	35 – 1- 45

Source: The Mathrubhumi, June 7, 1947 and The Desabhimani June 7, 1947

³⁴⁸ The Mathrubhumi, June 11, 1947

³⁴⁹ Ibid, June 5, 1947

³⁵⁰ Ibid, June 7, 1947

³⁵¹ Vidyalokam, Volume 7, August 1951

The new government communiqué really disappointed the teachers. It was viewed as a tactics to create split among the teachers and to prevent the popular support to the teachers³⁵². Cherukad in his poem 'War cry' ridiculed the government promise and called up on the teachers to enter the fight facing bullets³⁵³. Thus the strike propaganda continued. About 60 schools submitted strike notice and teachers *jatha* continued in different parts of Malabar. The teachers continued to get popular support. At Parappur the league committee president promised all support to the teachers³⁵⁴. The Malabar district board secondary teachers association decided to begin their strike on 1st July 1947³⁵⁵. The municipal teachers of Palakad celebrated a 'Teachers week' to highlight their grievances and also to mobilise popular support to their agitation³⁵⁶. The Tellicherry municipal teachers also decided to begin their strike on July 1st³⁵⁷.

The joint conference of board, municipal and aided teachers of Malabar was held at Zamorin's College, Calicut on 8th June 1947. It viewed the government communiqué unsatisfactory because only very few of the teachers grievances were addressed in it. Hence it was felt impossible to withdraw from the proposed strike. However the conference could feel the change in attitude of the government. Therefore with a view to make the agitation more effective by incorporating all teachers associations in the state, it was decided to postpone the strike from 15th June to 1st July as already proposed by the SITU³⁵⁸. The resolution for the same was presented by V.K.Menon and was supported by P.R. Kurup (District board teacher) But some of the teachers opposed it, tore up the strike badges and went out of the hall. But the leadership stuck to their decision. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar , N.P. Narayanan Nair and K. Muhammad were authorised to meet M.P Govinda Menon and R.Raghava Menon to continue the talks with the government³⁵⁹.

P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, the president of the MATU and P.K. Pachukutty, the president of the District Board Teachers Union published a joint statement

³⁵² The Desabhimani, June 11, 1947

³⁵³ Ibid

³⁵⁴ Ibid, June 11, 1947

³⁵⁵ The Mathrubhumi, June 5, 1947

³⁵⁶ Ibid, June 11, 1947

³⁵⁷ The Desabhimani, June 11, 1947

³⁵⁸ The Mathrubhumi, June 10, 1947 & Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book 25, Vol W. 13, June 15, 1947

³⁵⁹ Ibid

explaining the background of the government communiqué and the circumstances for the postponement of the proposed strike. “The Malabar teachers decided for a strike from 15th June 1947. They made active preparation for the same. The MATU conference held at Calicut on 8th March and the District Board Teachers Union council held on 16th March adopted the decision. The Malabar District Teachers Guild and its lower bodies took the same decision. The SITU also adopted the same line. Sincere efforts were made to mobilise public opinion. As a result of 2 months propaganda, all people irrespective of their political ideology, religion or community rallied around the teachers. It was at this stage that the government came with a communiqué”³⁶⁰. But the union leaders argued that it was not possible to compel the managers to give an additional amount of Rs 5 to the teachers when they were not ready to remit even their share of the teachers provident fund. It was also argued that as long as the management system and the practice of salary cut was retained, the teachers would not get the promised amount. They repeated the major demands of the teachers such as the repeal of the G.O No.1280 and local board statutory rule 5 (a), government rate DA from July 1944, security of employment, the abolition of the aided management system and argued that these demands were not considered in the communiqué. Above all it was argued that the proposed strike was not for mere salary increase but it was also for national reorganisation of education and the government take over of education. All these points remained neglected in the communiqué. It was these circumstances that compelled the leaders to postpone the proposed strike³⁶¹.

However the Malabar District Teachers Guild and the SITU gradually began to make attempts to withdraw from the strike. An executive meeting of the Guild was held at Ganapath High school Calicut. Here S. Natarajan, the convener of the SITU action council pointed out that it was better to begin a state wide strike on a date decided by the SITU. Thus the Malabar District Teachers Guild once again decided to postpone the strike³⁶².

Meanwhile newspapers, well wishers and the all India teachers federation advised the teachers to give some more time to the government. It was also found necessary for certain prominent personalities to interfere in this issue of the

³⁶⁰ *Ibid* June 11, 1947

³⁶¹ *Ibid*,

³⁶² *Ibid*, June 24, 1947

teachers. Under these circumstances the Madras state elementary school teachers federation decided to postpone the proposed strike and the teachers were advised to withdraw their strike notice. V. Ramunni, the secretary of the federation declared that such a step would prove that the teachers were wise and not at all adamant. He thanked all the individuals and the associations for their support to the teachers. At the same time the teachers were advised not to be disappointed but to strengthen their union with increased vigour and vitality³⁶³.

At the same time teachers continued their strike propaganda all over Malabar. Public meetings supporting the teachers agitation was held at several places³⁶⁴. Meanwhile the manager also raised their own demands. A meeting of the Malabar district aided school manager council held at Pantalayani on 7th June declared their inability to run the schools with 15 percentage grant and informed the government that they would leave the school managementship from October 1st 1947³⁶⁵. Hence it was decided to give dismissal notice to the teachers and the government was asked to take over the schools by October 1st by fixing a definite rent or price for their school buildings and equipment³⁶⁶.

Meanwhile as decided earlier, a joint meeting of board aided and municipal teachers was held at KSR School Calicut on 29th June 1947. It decided to postpone the teachers strike indefinitely. A five member committee was formed to chalk out the future programme. The meeting also decided to affiliate all elementary teachers union with the Madras state elementary school teachers federation³⁶⁷.

The teachers agreed for a compromise with the government at a transitional phase in Indian politics. By now the freedom movement had reached its last phase in India. The congress was trying to mobilise all the people of India against British imperialism. An agitation against a popular ministry at this stage was considered against the interest of the nation. Moreover the attitude adopted by SITU and other associations prompted Malabar teachers to re consider their stand. Thus they withdrew from their proposed agitation.

³⁶³ The Desabhimani, June 24, 1947 & The Mathrubhumi, June 25, 1947

³⁶⁴ The Mathrubhumi, June 25, 1947

³⁶⁵ Ibid, June 11, 1947

³⁶⁶ Ibid, June 26, 1947

³⁶⁷ Ibid, July 1, 1947

The post independent period was very important in the history of teachers movement in Malabar. The linguistic reorganisation of state made Malabar a part of Kerala in 1956. The important developments of this period are taken up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHERS MOVEMENT - 1947 – 1956

India got independence on 15th August 1947. The teachers of Malabar who were active participants in the national movement, rejoiced in it along with other sections of the society. The MATU asked the teachers to hoist the national flag in union office and to involve themselves in the Independence Day celebrations¹.

However the unrest among the teachers went on increasing. So the KPCC president K.Kelappan met the Minister and brought this to the notice of the government. He demanded monthly salary and the promised pay scale to the teachers. The Minister agreed to accept all their demands except those involving financial commitment². Now the teachers became restless. They began to think of all possible steps including strike. The Malabar District Teachers Guild reviewed the existing situation of the teachers. It pointed out the miserable conditions of the teachers and how they were disappointed by the popular government. It indicated the active efforts of strike adopted by the teachers and how it was postponed due to public interference. The government policy was criticised and the teachers demand for monthly basic salary, central pay scale, DA, service based weightage and security of employment were viewed as national demands. It was under these circumstances that the Guild called up on the teachers to observe a 'Teachers day' on 15th January 1948 and requested the people and mass organisations to render all support to it³. At the same time Guild president E.Raman Menon stated that the abolition of private management system was the only means to protect the interest of the teachers. But as the government was not ready for it, an assurance of teachers security of employment was suggested by him as the only temporary way out.

The political polarisation of the post independence period was reflected on the teachers movement⁴. The communal riots and the Pak invasion of Kashmir

¹ The Desabhimani, August 14, 1947

² The Mathrubhumi, January 6, 1948

³ Ibid, January 15, 1948

⁴ Vallathol Kumara Menon, Adhyapaka Prasthanam Uthara Keralathil, (Trivandrum, 1976) p. 68

had made the teachers aware of the serious problems confronting the national government. They were convinced that all their problems could not be solved immediately. The teachers were well aware of the limitations of the government. Therefore most of them felt that the government should not be disturbed further with strike and agitations and they were reluctant to place more demands at that moment⁵. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar was the leader of this group. At the same time a radical group within the teachers union argued that it was the best opportunity to fight and obtain their urgent demands⁶. Hence they demanded intense agitations. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar was the spoke man of this view point.

The radical wing under T.C.Narayanan Nambiar decided to convene the 8th anniversary of the union at Tirur. But P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, president of the union opposed this move⁷. For the first time the union was on the verge of a split. But T.C.Narayanan Nambiar, the secretary of the union moved ahead with his plan. The annual conference was held at Tirur recreation club on 6th March 1948. Presiding over the meeting S. Natarajan, the president of Madras State Elementary Teachers Federation said "As a result of the promises made by the government, we withdrew our strike last year. But now they expressed their helplessness to fulfil these promise and instead advised us to be aware of our responsibilities. How could we keep up our responsibilities amidst poverty, dilapidated school building and with no food and clothing for our children? The future of the country lies in the teachers. The only solution in front of them is strike⁸. But K.A.Damodara Menon in his inaugural address advised the teachers to give up their decision to strike work. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar and some other prominent members of the executive committee refused to attend the meeting. It was informed that, as there was no sufficient time several taluks could not elect their delegates to the conference. So it was requested not to take important decisions and to postpone the conference⁹. But the request was rejected. Now a group of teachers under K.V.Kunhikkannan Nair, the secretary of the Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union, boycotted the meeting. They assembled together and declared that the decisions of the conference would not be binding on them¹⁰.

⁵ P.R. Nambiar, (ed) Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam (Trivandrum, 1982) p. 123

⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 68

⁷ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 123

⁸ The Mathrubhumi, March 11, 1948

⁹ Ibid, March 14, 1948

¹⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 69

These 69 teachers were reported as nationalist teachers. However, the Tirur conference went on and the following demands were raised. 1. Government take over of schools within five years. 2. Service conditions as that of the government servants. 3. Implementation of the pay commission report. 4. Monthly salary and security of employment. 5. Repeal of the order preventing teachers to become members of political parties. 6. Teachers provident fund. 7. Free and compulsory education. 8. Salary through Head Masters. 9. Duty allowance to their service. 10. Average attendance. 11. Abolition of the practice of salary cut. 12. Mid-Day meals, dress and books to poor students¹¹.

In case these demands were not admitted by June, they opted to organise a strike which would be decided by the teachers conference to be held at Calicut on 5th June 1948¹². At the same time teachers were asked to organise protest meetings and *jathas* on 6th April 1948. More over it was decided to send a brotherly *jatha* to Travancore to express solidarity with their strike. The conference also demanded the formation of the Kerala state. And to promote the Aikya Kerala Movement, it was decided to form a joint federation of elementary teachers of Travancore, Kochin and Malabar and to link the same with the Madras State Elementary Teachers Federation¹³.

K.V.Kunhikkannan Nair, leader of the 69 teachers who had boycotted the meeting questioned the relevance of the conference. There were congress men, Muslim leaguers and socialists among those who had boycotted. At the same time he pointed out that many of the executive members had refused to attend the meeting. As sufficient time was not given, 70 branches in Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad and Eranad could not conduct the election to send their representatives to the conference. Thus out of 500 delegates to be participated, only 200 members were there in the conference. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and his communist colleagues, in their eagerness to declare a strike manipulated majority and took decision in an autocratic manner. It was certainly an attempt to impose one's political ideology on the union¹⁴. But the secretary of the reception committee sharply reacted to these allegations. First of all it was pointed out that no controversial decision was adopted by the conference with majority votes. On

¹¹ The Mathrubhumi, March 11, 1948

¹² Ibid

¹³ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 70

¹⁴ The Mathrubhumi, March 11, April 10, 1948

the other hand it was left to the teachers conference at Calicut to decide the date of the proposed strike. Secondly instead of hartal it was decided only to organise protest meetings and *jathas* on 6th April 1948. Above all it was the union executive held under P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar that had decided to hold the conference. Accordingly circulars were issued and statements were published in news papers. And subsequently 233 delegates were elected. Due to all these, it was not possible to postpone the conference. With these arguments all the allegations charged against the conference were refuted¹⁵.

Under these circumstances efforts were made to organise the protest day celebrations in several taluks. At the same time certain taluks too turned against the decisions of the Tirur conference. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union asked the union leadership to reconsider the conference decision because it could not represent the whole teachers of Malabar¹⁶. The Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union requested clarification on the conference decision from the District Union¹⁷. The Eranad Taluk Teachers Union rejected the Tirur decision and decided not to observe the protest day on 6th April¹⁸. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union decided to neglect the union decision completely¹⁹. The Kurumbranad taluk union adopted the same line and decided not to observe the protest day on 6th April 1948²⁰. As an attempt to justify these stand, it was pointed out that while the teachers were getting comparatively better salary, the protest day celebration was quite undesirable. Moreover while the teachers demanded service conditions of the government servants, they were not ready to accept their limitations. Above all it was argued that after the Calcutta conference, the communists were organising strikes where ever possible. Therefore the proposed protest day of 6th April was really a copy of the anti-repression day observed by the communists on 26th January 1948²¹.

Now efforts were made to isolate and expel the radical members of the teachers union. They were accused of involving in political propaganda and also trying to overthrow the government. How ever the teachers demand for the repeal

¹⁵ *Ibid*, April 4, 1948

¹⁶ *Ibid*, March 24, 1948

¹⁷ *Ibid*, April 1, 1948

¹⁸ *Ibid*, April 6, 1948

¹⁹ *Ibid*, April 7, 1948

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ *Ibid*, April 4, 1948

of the government order against the teachers politics was raised again and again. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union protested against the government order preventing teachers from becoming members of political parties and asked the KPCC to take up the issue²². The Malabar district teachers Guild claiming itself an apolitical organisation expressed loyalty to the Nehru government. And asked teachers not to expose their political view in their schools. But at the same time requested the government to repeal the order preventing teachers from becoming members of political parties and asked SITU and KPCC to take necessary steps in this regard²³.

At the same time the teachers of Malabar continued to get a very low salary. Even this meagre amount was not paid properly. Besides, even though the TPF was made compulsory, many teachers could not join the scheme because the managers refused to sign their request²⁴. Actually the manager had to get the prior sanction from the department to dismiss their teachers. But they violated the same and teachers were dismissed in different parts of Malabar²⁵. The Malabar teachers Guild protested against the department officers who were reluctant to take action against the managers for no payment of salary, remittance of PF amount and unnecessary dismissal²⁶.

Meanwhile the allegations levelled against the radical members of the union became very acute. They were accused of propagandising for communists in their schools to mislead the students. In this context, it was reported that a hand written magazine entitled 'Student' was published in an elementary school under the guidance of a teacher with the front page picture of a prominent communist leader of Kerala²⁷. Many protested against this trend. The Payyoli village political conference requested the government to expel communist teachers and to cancel their certificates²⁸. The Menaprom village political conference asked the government to expel the communist teachers, to ban the CPI and also to confiscate the Desabhimani press²⁹. The Muttungal village political conference

²² *Ibid*, March 24, 1948

²³ *Ibid*, April 22, 1948

²⁴ *Ibid*, May 2, 1948

²⁵ *Ibid*, April 7, 1948

²⁶ *Ibid*, April 22, 1948

²⁷ *Ibid*, April 3, 1948

²⁸ *Ibid*, May 13, 1948

²⁹ *Ibid*, May 18, 1948

demanded the dismissal of communist teachers³⁰. Now the KPCC, as a suggestion to prevent the communist violence in Malabar, asked the government to expel all communist teachers³¹. The Desaraksha volunteers caught the communist teachers and handed them over to the police³². K. Krishanan Nambiar, the former president of Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union was brutally beaten and hospitalised³³. Communist teachers involved in violence were arrested at several places. Kizhakke Ayatathil Choyi Master, a teacher and the branch secretary of the CPI was arrested³⁴. P.C. Raman, another teacher involved in the Chirakkal violence was arrested at Tellicherry³⁵. Several other teachers involved in the Onchiyam violence were also arrested³⁶. Now K.Kelappan adopted a very firm stand against the communist teachers. He viewed them as the real propagators of communist ideology. He found that many of them were involved in Chirakkal violence and that many had went underground. He argued that they were injecting poison in the minds of the students therefore that was more dangerous than the other communists. Hence he wanted them to be expelled from the schools. He found it an appropriate opportunity for the same and the issue was brought to the attention of the managers and the department³⁷. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union protested against the attack on their former president. But at the same time requested the authorities to expel communist teachers and asked the union leadership to expel the communist office bearers of the union³⁸.

The Tirur conference had created a lot of confusion among the teachers. The teachers involvement in the Malabar violence made the situation worse. In this backdrop the teachers unions requested for a teachers meeting to reconsider the Tirur decision and also to discuss the involvement of teachers in the Malabar violence. Thus P.M. Kunhiraaman Nambiar convened a meeting of the teachers union councillors at Calicut on 22nd May 1948³⁹. This meeting held at Ganapath High School, Calicut decided to reject the Tirur decision and denounced the

³⁰ *Ibid*, June 18, 1948

³¹ *Ibid*, May 5, 1948

³² *Ibid*, May 8, 1948

³³ *Ibid*, May 11, 1948

³⁴ *Ibid*, May 18, 1948. He was injured in the police firing at Onchiyam

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ *Ibid*, May 20, 1948

³⁷ *Ibid*, May 11,19, 1948

³⁸ *Ibid*, May 20, 1948

³⁹ *Ibid*, May 16, 1948

violence led by the communists. A committee was constituted to enquire about the involvement of teachers in the violence. Moreover being attached to a party that tried to overthrow the government, T.C.Narayanan Nambiar was removed from the editorship of the journal, Adhyapakan. At the same time, the meeting expressed anxiety over the violation of the government communiqué of 5th June 1947 and repeated the major demands of the teachers⁴⁰. The meeting also pointed out that the withdrawal of school recognition and the practice of stopping, grant for management faults was equal to punishing teachers and students and therefore requested to declare them as 'undeserving' It was also requested to take criminal procedures against the managers who refused teaching grant and in such cases the buildings and equipments were to be handed over to the committees⁴¹.

K.Kelappan continued his attack of the communist teachers. He viewed them as the enemies of the nation and called up on the people to get them removed from the schools⁴². In the Chirakkal taluk congress conference K. Madhava Menon pointed out that besides the workers, some of the teachers were helping the communists. Several memoranda were submitted to the Director to take action against the communist teachers⁴³. The communist teachers were arrested in different parts of Malabar⁴⁴. The certificate of P.Vikkiran Nair was suspended by the Divisional Inspector⁴⁵. The Valluvanad Taluk Managers Association decided to dismiss the communist teachers⁴⁶. The Malabar District Teachers Guild regretted the teacher's involvement in communist violence and declared that such people would not have any place in their association. The teachers union also advised the teachers not to involve in communist activities or to make schools an instrument for communist propaganda⁴⁷. An allegation was raised against T.C.Narayanan Nambiar that he was not doing his work properly.

⁴⁰ Ibid, May 23, 1948. It included governments take over of schools within a definite period, service conditions as that of government teachers, teachers security of employment, abolition of the practice of salary cut and deduction, government responsibility of TPF, right of appeal, compensation against unjust dismissal, early introduction of free and compulsory education, salary through Head Masters, duty allowance to their service, repeal of the government order curtailing the civil rights of the teachers, one teacher for one class, and 200 working days including teachers association meetings.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid, May 25, 1948

⁴³ Ibid, May 29, 1948

⁴⁴ Ibid, June 3,5,11,16, 1948

⁴⁵ Ibid, June 30, 1948

⁴⁶ Ibid, June 1, 1948

⁴⁷ Ibid, June 23, 1948

Hence he was replaced by a new Joint Secretary⁴⁸. The Kurumbranad Teachers Union protested against the involvement of teachers in the violence of North Malabar. The union accepted the decision of the Kozhikode teachers conference and decided to expel the communist teachers. The teachers and the public were advised to observe the activities of the teachers who were members or supporters of the CPI. Branch unions were directed to collect the details of the communist teachers. The union activists were also advised not to give membership to suspected members or supporters of the communist party⁴⁹. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union also protested against the communist violence in Malabar and congratulated the teacher who tried to end the same. The union accepted the decision of the Kozhikode teachers conference and decided to expel the communist teachers. But at the same time stated that all teachers should not be branded as communists⁵⁰. The Kannadi Paramb Branch Teachers Union listed teachers involved in the Chirakkal violence and demanded action against them. When some members of the Chirakkal taluk union were arrested in connection with Chirakkal violence, the taluk executive committee resigned. The new committee decided to make enquires and to take action against them⁵¹.

As many teachers were found involved in the violent activities in Malabar, the teaching grant was withheld at several places. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union demanded immediate action on the ground that the union, the congress committee and the MLA of the area had already demanded action against such teachers⁵². Now it was argued that the teaching grant in North Malabar was delayed because the actions against the communist teachers were yet to be decided. But P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar pointed out that the teachers got involved in the violent activities as members of the CPI and not as per the direction of the union. Moreover it was reminded that the union had already demanded action against them and had even helped to arrest the communists⁵³. But the department asked the managers to submit a declaration on the political affinity of their teachers and a certificate from the village officers of the area as condition for

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, May 29, 1948

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, June 8, 1948

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, June 16, 1948

⁵¹ *Ibid*, June 18, 1948

⁵² *Ibid*, June 20, 1948

⁵³ *Ibid*, June 26, 1948

releasing the teaching grant⁵⁴. These measures adopted by the managers and the department created much unrest among the teachers.

Under these circumstances the MATU council was convened at Calicut on 3rd July 1948. This meeting under P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar viewed the government action affecting the teachers as a whole and protested against the withholding of teaching grant for the alleged involvement of teachers in the communist violence. The meeting admitted the temporary stoppage of grant of teachers who were arrested or went underground for communist propaganda but attacked the government for throwing thousands of teachers in poverty for the action of a very few. The meeting raised no objection to the cancellation of the certificates of those teachers who got involved in communist violence, but pointed out that it was not proper to suspend the certificates of teachers for being members of a party which has not been declared illegal. The meeting also protested against the required certificates proving that the teachers were not communists. It was in this meeting that P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar resigned his post due to having to bear several other responsibilities. Therefore C.C.Nair was elected the new president of the union. Now the meeting demanded the disbursement of the teaching grant of 1948 at the earliest. It requested the government to neglect the certificates of the village officers but to take actions based on the direction given by the department officers. It also asked the government not to suspend the certificates of teachers with out proper reasons and also to admit their right of appeal⁵⁵. Based on these facts the MATU decided to submit a memorandum to K.Kelappan highlighting the issues of non payment of teaching grant and suspension of certificates and also to meet the Director to present the case. Above all it was decided to revive Adhyapakan, the journal of the union⁵⁶.

However communist teachers were arrested at places like Arur⁵⁷. At Palakkad a teacher was arrested for collecting party fund⁵⁸. Teachers were dismissed without sufficient reasons. At Pulamanthol, the teachers who failed to get the required certificates from the village officers were dismissed without notice.

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid, July 4, 1948

⁵⁶ Ibid, July 15, 1948

⁵⁷ Ibid, July 9, 1948

⁵⁸ Ibid, September 21, 1948

How ever they continued to attend school and thus got arrested⁵⁹. The congress party was accused of being responsible for the certificate suspension of the teachers. Alleging communist connection, the teaching grant of Azheekode South Higher Elementary School was suspended. Here it is to be noted that many of the teachers were nationalist and even anti-communists. The Taluk Teachers Union protested against such withholding of grants⁶⁰.

The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union requested to release the first and second instalment of teaching grant and also to give an opportunity for the teachers who lost their certificates to prove their innocence⁶¹. The Eranad Taluk Teachers Union protested against the required certificates and demanded the release of the teaching grant and the early implementation of the G.O. 1154⁶². The Malabar Teachers Guild congratulated the government policy towards the communists, but requested the government to implement the order 1154 and protested against the denial of teaching grant, the required certificates from the village officers and the certificate suspension without proper enquiry⁶³. Above all the North Malabar Aided Teachers Union submitted a memorandum to the District Education Officer to invite his attention on these issues. But he promised that the teaching grant would be released as soon as the requested certificates were obtained⁶⁴.

Meanwhile as a response to the department's attitude, the teachers union also began to take certain measures. The Kavalappara teachers union demanded action against the teachers involved in violence⁶⁵. The Kasaragod Taluk Board Teachers Union suspended the membership of those who got involved in violence⁶⁶. The MATU executive committee decided that the teachers who lost their certificates were not to sit in the elected post of the union and all those who were declared undeserving by law were not to be made members of the union. Hence taluk unions were directed to submit the list of punished communist teachers. How ever it was decided that the teachers who were punished for

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, August 3, 1948. Later they were sentenced to imprisonment

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, October 1, 1948

⁶¹ *Ibid*, August 12, 1948

⁶² *Ibid*, July 17, 1948

⁶³ *Ibid*, July 20, 1948

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, July 29, 1948

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, July 13, 1948

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, July 16, 1948

having connection with the communist party but not for involving in violence were to be allowed to continue their profession⁶⁷.

Even at this stage, the Madras government failed to implement the promise of minimum pay scale and monthly salary given to the teachers in June 1947. So the union decided to submit a memorandum to the Minister and also to observe 'A monthly definite salary day' on October 23rd 1948⁶⁸. Teachers were also advised to organise public meetings and *jathas* to make the day a great success⁶⁹. The monthly salary day was observed at various places like Nadapuram, Balusseri, Villiappally, Pookottour, Kuttikattoor, Ramanattukara and Kuttiadi⁷⁰. The union leaders also met the Education Minister Avanasalingam Chettiar, submitted a memorandum and demanded monthly salary, security of employment and the recognition of the union. But the Minister in turn told them that the teachers of Malabar were actually giving importance to matters other than education⁷¹.

But the teachers union continued to highlight their grievances. Strong protest arose against the denial of teaching grant and the harassment of the communist teachers in Chirakkal, Kottayam and Kozhikode taluks. The Kozhikode Taluk Teachers Union decided to collect the details of teachers who were denied teaching grant and also to submit a memorandum demanding the release of teaching grant of those who were not actually involved in violent activities⁷². The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union protested against the denial of the third installment of teaching grant in the pretext of communist connection⁷³. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union requested that the innocent teachers who were branded and harassed as communists were to be given an opportunity to prove their innocence. It also requested to exempt the political parties with no violent programme from the order against teachers politics. Moreover the District Union was advised to convene a meeting of teachers who were denied teaching grant due to their communist link⁷⁴. The MATU protested against the denial of the third instalment of the teaching grant and argued that many among them were actually

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, October 5, 1948

⁶⁸ *Ibid*

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, October 17, 1948

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, October 30, 1948

⁷¹ *Ibid*, November 2, 1948

⁷² *Ibid*, November 17, 1948

⁷³ *Ibid*, December 17, 1948

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, December 28, 1948

nationalist having no connections with the communists. It also requested the repeal of the order asking teachers to resign from all political parties including the Indian National Congress. Now it was also found necessary to discuss all the major issues like denial of teaching grant, certificate cancellation and also the teachers membership in political parties. Under these circumstances it was decided to convene a special conference on 15th January 1949⁷⁵.

The special conference of the Malabar teachers was held at Calicut on 15th January 1949. K.Kelappan, the president of the KPCC presided over the meeting. In his presidential address, he protested against the denial of teaching grant, demanded an impartial enquiry and requested the release of salary for the work that had already done. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar in his speech criticised the injustice involved in the policy of certificate cancellation by highlighting an incident in which the certificate of a women teacher was cancelled because her husband had some communist connection. M. Narayana Kurup, the secretary of the KPCC who spoke on the occasion refuted the allegation that it was the congress that got the certificates of many teachers suspended. However the conference demanded an immediate release of the teaching grant and an impartial enquiry on certificate cancellation and invited the attention of the congress committees of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra and AICC to take necessary steps on these issues of the teachers of Malabar. With a view to bring the attention of the government it was also decided to observe an 'Urgent Demands Day' on 15th February 1949⁷⁶. The conference also protested against the government order against teachers membership in political parties which was a right admitted even during the colonial period. Therefore it was requested to allow the teachers to join in political parties having no violent programmes. As decided earlier, the teachers who lost their certificates were not given representation in the conference. But a delegate from Ponnani taluk questioned this union stand which was ignored. Thus a separate meeting of those teachers was held at the Guruvayurappan Hall, Calicut. This meeting held under C.C. Nair was attended by about 100 teachers including two women teachers. The meeting passed a resolution asking the District Union to demand an unconditional restoration of certificates⁷⁷.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, December 29, 1948

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, January 18, 1949

⁷⁷ *Ibid*

A conference of the dismissed teachers was held at Tirur on 13th March 1949. K.V. Narayanan Nambiar presided over this meeting which congratulated the oppressed teachers. It demanded unconditional restoration of certificates and also compensation for the period of suspension. A committee was constituted to meet the Prime Minister as well as the Education Minister. It was also decided to publish a journal called 'Vidyabhyasa Keralam' to fight for the rights of teachers⁷⁸.

Meanwhile certain steps were taken to ameliorate the grievances of the teachers. The Malabar DEO promised to consider their issues of salary arrear and unjust dismissal sympathetically. He told the union leaders of Chirakkal Taluk that their salary bill was already signed and their certificates would be restored after police verification. It was also promised that the school recognition would be withdrawn where the managers refused to remit their share of TPF⁷⁹. The casual leave of the teachers was increased from 15 to 20⁸⁰. The government also issued an order pertaining to the teachers security of employment. The MATU executive meeting discussed its provisions and pointed out the possibility of misinterpretation and misuse of the same by the managers. Hence the union demanded that the appointment and dismissal of teachers should be placed under the control of the department and the teachers were to be given a right of appeal⁸¹. The government also made provisions to introduce monthly salary to the teachers. However the Education Minister Avanasalingam Chettiar clearly declared that it was not at all possible for the government to take over all elementary schools in the state⁸².

The MATU welcomed the decision to introduce monthly salary to the teachers. The union viewed the pay scale and monthly salary as the result of their 14 years of agitation in Malabar. But the government decided either to deduct the M.O charge from the salary of the teachers or to give the amount as quarterly grant. This decision disappointed the teachers⁸³. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union congratulated the Madras government for implementing the system of monthly salary but requested the government to bear the money order charge⁸⁴.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, March 22, 1949

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, February 18, April 1, 1949

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, April 6, 1949

⁸¹ *Ibid*, February 24, 1949

⁸² *Ibid*, March 24, 1949

⁸³ *Ibid*, May 8, 1949

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, July 6, 1949

Meanwhile several irregularities were reported in the payment of salary. C.C. Nair met the District Education Officers and the Head Post Master at Calicut and informed the matter⁸⁵. The Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union protested against the irregularities in the distribution of teaching grant and sent telegrams to the Director and the Minister⁸⁶. The MATU asked the government to redress the issue at the earliest⁸⁷.

The teachers union continued to raise their demand for the restoration of certificates⁸⁸. The Malabar District Teachers Guild also requested the restoration of certificates which were dismissed with out any reasons⁸⁹. But as it was done after proper enquiry, the Minister refused to have any compromise on this issue. However he agreed to correct the cases of unjust actions, if any⁹⁰. Accordingly the government repealed the certificate suspension of 19 teachers⁹¹.

The union had already decided not to elect the teachers who lost their certificates to the official post of the union. As elections were conducted more than once in Ponnani, the District Union gave show cause notice to the teachers union⁹². Therefore the executive committee recommended the dismissal of the taluk union⁹³. The Union Council dismissed the union and decided to organise a new one⁹⁴.

Meanwhile the weightage given to the 4th and 5th classes of elementary school was suddenly stopped⁹⁵. Though the matter was published only in the gazette of March 1949, it came in to effect in January 1949 itself. It effected many schools that retained teachers based on one class one teacher ratio. Teaching grant of all such schools were stopped. Teachers viewed it an injustice to withhold the salary of the work already done. The Eranad teachers union requested to postpone the same till the end of 1949⁹⁶. The secretary of the Chirakkal Taluk

⁸⁵ Ibid, May 8, 1949

⁸⁶ Ibid, May 27, 1949

⁸⁷ Ibid, May 25, 1949

⁸⁸ Ibid, June 2, 1949

⁸⁹ Ibid, July 27, 1949

⁹⁰ Ibid, July 28, 1949

⁹¹ Ibid, August 25, 1949

⁹² Ibid, July 29, 1949

⁹³ Ibid, August 10, 1949

⁹⁴ Ibid, August 31, 1949

⁹⁵ Ibid, August 18, 1949

⁹⁶ Ibid, January 6, 1950

Teachers Union demanded its postponement to 1950⁹⁷. The MATU also asked the government to postpone its implementation to June 1950⁹⁸. Moreover as it was not actually informed in the teachers associations meetings, the lower bodies were directed to send telegrams to the department and the government. The union asked the government to release the withheld salary along with the last instalment of teaching grant. Moreover C.C. Nair was directed to go to Madras to submit a memorandum in this effect⁹⁹.

It was during the same period that the teaching grant of certain schools in Chirakkal taluk was stopped due to mismanagement¹⁰⁰. The MATU demanded urgent action to redress this grievance¹⁰¹. A Bill was introduced in the Madras assembly to take over the schools in case of mismanagement¹⁰². The Muslim and Christian members raised their objection. However the bill was passed and it was decided to take over those schools which were closed before the end of an academic year by giving proper compensation¹⁰³.

The managers continued to dismiss teachers even during this period. Teachers were dismissed after tampering their service registers¹⁰⁴. At Thavannur three teachers were dismissed with out notice and new teachers were appointed¹⁰⁵. It is to be noted that the Village Congress Committee encouraged them to dismiss teachers who were socialist and communists¹⁰⁶. Several teachers were dismissed in different parts of Kottayam taluk and the union decided to make an enquiry on it¹⁰⁷. All these were against the provisions of the Madras education rule. According to it the teachers and the managers had to sign a contract. Before its expiry the teachers had no right to relieve and the managers to dismiss them. And all their disputes were to be settled by the education officer¹⁰⁸. The 13th

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, February 2, 1950

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, August 31, 1949

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, December 23, 1949

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, July 15, 1949

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, August 18, 1949

¹⁰² *Ibid*, December 18, 1949

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, December 22, 1949

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, April 1, 1949

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, April 26, 1949

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, May 27, 1949

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, November 1, 1949

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, December 2, 1949

anniversary of the Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union passed a protest resolution for not ensuring the teachers security of employment¹⁰⁹.

There were also complaints regarding the misbehavior of the department officers towards the teachers. Kannur South Range Deputy Inspectress insulted the teachers by scolding them in front of the students. It was also alleged that she showed partiality towards some schools¹¹⁰.

By that time the teachers union demanded the formation of a Kerala state. The Ponnani Teachers Union, demanded a United Democratic Kerala¹¹¹. The Kurumbranad teachers union requested the formation of an Aikya Kerala state based on geography, language and culture and as a first step in this direction requested the formation of the Malabar state¹¹². The Malabar District Teachers Guild welcomed the decision of the Aikya Kerala conference and stated that as long as there was Raja Pramukh in Tiru Kochi, Malabar won't accept the plan¹¹³. The 13th annual conference of the Kurumbranad Teacher Union held at Balusseri requested the government to form an Aikya Kerala state based on geography, language, culture and administrative convenience¹¹⁴.

The minimum salary promised in the government communiqué of 5th June 1947 had not been enforced effectively. The Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union demanded to include provisions for the same in the next budget¹¹⁵. The Chirakkal Teachers Union also demanded to implement the same by the next financial year¹¹⁶. The MATU sent telegrams in this regard to the Prime Minister, Education Minister and the Minister of Finance¹¹⁷. At the same time it was requested that as long as there was fee collection in elementary school, the increased amount of salary to the teachers was to be considered as proper expenditure. But as it was not done so in 1949, the maintenance grant was stopped in those schools. So here the managers asked the teachers to give back the received amount from

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, December 28, 1949

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, December 17, 1949

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, June 2, 1949

¹¹² *Ibid*, November 30, 1949. By this time the erstwhile princely states of Travancore and Cochin were amalgamated in to Tiru Kochi state.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, November 20, 1949

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, December 28, 1949

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, March 8, 1950

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, April 4, 1950

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, March 22, 1950

them. Therefore the government was requested to compensate this loss incurred by the management¹¹⁸.

At the same time controversies over management ownership often led to the closure of school. Thus attempts were made to withdraw the recognition of 9 schools in Chirakkal taluk. As it would effect the education of the students and the occupation of the teachers, the taluk union expressed anxiety and requested necessary amendments in the concerned rules so as to hand over the correspondent right of such schools to the Head Masters¹¹⁹. At the same time in case of withdrawal of recognition due to mismanagement, the government was requested to take over the school building and equipment and hand over the same to the teachers¹²⁰.

At that time the teachers under government and local boards were getting a monthly salary of Rs 30. Therefore there were also thoughts of increasing the salary of aided elementary teachers¹²¹. The Minister revealed the government's intention in the Madras Legislative Assembly¹²². After the necessary Ministerial deliberations it was declared that actually the higher grade elementary teachers were given Rs 25 by the government. Even though the managers were directed to give an additional amount of Rs. 5 to the teachers, it remained to be implemented. Therefore now the government decided to give an increase of Rs 2 in the salary of the teachers and the managers were asked to pay the balance amount of Rs 3 to them. It was also decided to give 15% of the total school expenditure as the maintenance grant. At the same time it was stated that measures would be taken to reduce the grant of those managers who refuse to give the stipulated amount to the teachers¹²³.

Meanwhile the 9th annual conference of the MATU was organised in a very grand manner as that of an all India conference at Chovva on 21st May 1950. The conference pointed out how the policies of the teachers union which was able to organise direct agitation under the colonial rule, to redress the grievances of teachers that was completely changed after national independence¹²⁴.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, March 8, April 4, 1950

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, April 4, 1950

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, October 15, 1950

¹²¹ *Ibid*, January 20, 1950

¹²² *Ibid*, March 28, 1950

¹²³ *Ibid*, April 21, 1950

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, May 24, 1950

Meanwhile it was also decided to give representation for teachers in the Legislative Assembly. Out of the 72 seats in the assembly 6 seats were reserved as teacher constituencies. Thus for the first time teachers got representation in the assembly. But only those teachers with at least 3 years service in classes not below first form were allowed to elect their representatives¹²⁵. Thus voting right was given only to teachers of secondary school and above that level. The elementary school teachers were denied voting rights and therefore they could not contest election in the teachers constituencies. The SITU requested that all trained teachers having minimum three years service were to be given voting right in the teacher constituencies¹²⁶. Now the MATU discussed the issue and decided to convene a convention of aided, board and municipal elementary teachers on 16th July 1950. C.C. Nair pointed out the importance of the representation of elementary teachers in the Madras Assembly and asked all the teachers to attend the convention to be held in Government Training school, Calicut¹²⁷. This teachers convention held at Calicut was attended by 103 delegates representing Board/Municipal and Aided school teachers. The convention passed a resolution protesting against the denial of voting rights to the elementary teachers and requested the union president and Central Government to take necessary steps to enable the teachers to participate in the coming elections. The attention of the Madras government, members of parliament and SITU leadership was also invited¹²⁸.

The teachers continued to be dismissed in different parts of Malabar. As the new rules made it difficult for the managers to use this weapon as before, they began to use certain other tactics. They refused register to the teachers and when questioned they were told that the teachers were absent¹²⁹. K.V.Kunhikkanan Nair the secretary of the MATU was given dismissal notice¹³⁰. The MATU expressed anxiety over the dismissal of teachers by violating the government order (G.O. No. 3211) ensuring their security of employment and denounced the indifference of the inspecting officers. The union also decided to institute a 'Teachers Protection

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, June 22, 1950. First form of the middle schools and high schools means the 5th standard class of the elementary schools

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, July 6, 1950

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, July 13, 1950

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, July 19, 1950

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, June 24, 1950

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, June 28, 1950

Fund' for the affected teachers¹³¹. Meanwhile more teachers were dismissed in different parts of Chirakkal taluk. The inspecting officers also supported the same. The union expressed great anxiety over it and decided to convene a teachers conference at Kannur on 19th August 1950¹³².

The main aim of the teachers movement in Malabar for the last 16 years was salary for subsistence and security of employment. The teachers did not stop their agitation because the managers with the support of the inspecting officers continued to dismiss teachers in different parts of Malabar. The teachers insistence on their rights always endangered their security of employment. Therefore they could not demand even the salary sanctioned by the department. The managers and the department officers also followed a policy of hatred towards the union activists. Now the union pointed out the limitations of the government order (3211) of December 1948 on teachers security of employment. Though the Minister promised to make necessary amendments after a years experiment, the government not only refused to rectify the defects but even tried to violate its own provisions. Under these circumstance C.C.Nair, the president of the MATU, asked the government to redress the grievances of the teachers or else it would lead to an uproar in the Malabar education scene¹³³. He requested the support of the people, public leaders and news papers. Even then the teachers were harassed by the manager and some inspecting officers. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union protested against the dismissal of K.V.Kunhikannan Nambiar, the secretary of MATU even by violating the order of the District Education Officer. It expressed its discomfort over the policy of 'Teachers hatred' followed by the inspecting officers but congratulated the North Malabar DEO for the strict enforcement of the rules and regulations¹³⁴. The MATU expressed great anxiety over the efforts made by the managers and inspecting officers to break the security of employment ensured by the new rules¹³⁵.

Besides the issue of security of employment, the teachers had to face many other grave problems during this period. By that time food condition in Malabar

¹³¹ *Ibid*, July 4, 1950

¹³² *Ibid*, August 5, 1950

¹³³ *Ibid*, august 12, 1950

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, September 27, 1950

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, September 16, 1950

grew worse¹³⁶. As the ration was reduced it affected the attendance of the students in elementary schools¹³⁷. The food situation in Chirakkal and Kurumbranad taluk was very bad. Here the ration was stopped and many schools were closed¹³⁸. Thus generally life became deplorable in Malabar. The teachers were further disturbed by another development. As excess amount was given to the managers as maintenance grant, the government decided to deduct the same from the teaching grant. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union protested against it and requested the government to give up this move¹³⁹. More over many teachers who were branded as communists had lost their certificates in Malabar. Even during this period the teachers union had been demanding the restoration of their certificates¹⁴⁰. Consequently many of them got their certificates back. But many others did not get it. Even though their innocence was proved in law courts, the department was not ready to reconsider their case¹⁴¹. Above all the denial of voting rights really disappointed the teachers.

The Kurumbranad teachers union requested the Minister to keep up the promise of an increase in Rs 5 in teachers salary. They also requested for an increase in DA rate of teachers. More over the government was asked to give back the amount deducted from the teaching grant so as to compensate the reductions in the maintenance grant of 1948. The union authorised its president to visit Madras to submit a memorandum to the government to introduce the minimum pay for teachers and to improve their service conditions¹⁴². The Eranad teachers union also demanded the promised increase of Rs 5. Besides, as the scarcity of food in Malabar had affected the attendance in schools, it was requested to reduce the average attendance from 20 to 15. Above all it protested against the denial of voting rights and requested to prevent the dismissal of teachers at several places¹⁴³.

C.C.Nair, the president of the MATU and E.Raman Menon the president of the Malabar district teachers guild, submitted a memorandum to the Minister and

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, August 14, 1950

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, August 6, 1950

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, August 21, 1950

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, August 8, 1950

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, April 4, May 24, 1950

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, August 9, 1950

¹⁴² *Ibid*, August 31, 1950

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, September 6, 1950

the Director to bring their attention to the teachers grievances. It highlighted the issues like, teachers security of employment, five rupee increase in salary, reduction of teaching grant for the excess payment of the maintenance grant, the grant reduction at schools where there was fee collection and the suspension of certificates with out proper enquiry¹⁴⁴. The Guild president declared that the government would give the two rupee increase in salary to the lower trained and also to the secondary teachers¹⁴⁵.

Meanwhile new office bearers were elected to the District Union. C.C.Nair and K.K. Velayudhan Adiyodi were elected president and secretary respectively. The new leadership sought clarification on the decision of the two rupee increase in teachers salary and protested against exemption of lower trained and secondary teachers from its purview. It also demanded central pay scale and DA rate to the teachers, voting right to elementary teachers and one post for the Malabar teachers in the assembly. Above all it welcomed the Tiru Kochi education programme¹⁴⁶.

At the same time the teachers were continued to be harassed by the managers and the department. In Kannur, the manager of Machery Mappila School gave dismissal notice to his teachers¹⁴⁷. At Ottappalam two teachers were dismissed after being given 5 days notice¹⁴⁸. Moreover the government and the department remained indifferent to the teachers who had lost their certificates¹⁴⁹. The special conference of the Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union advised them to approach the court of law and the teachers and students were asked to give all help to them¹⁵⁰. The union continued to raise all their basic demands including the introduction of free and compulsory education¹⁵¹. In the Madras Assembly, the Minister K. Madhava Menon declared the governments intention to consider the demands of the teachers¹⁵². The government projected their financial problems.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, September 7, 1950

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, September 24, 1950

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, October 16, 1950

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, December 4, 1950

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, December 20,30, 1950

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, December 27, 1950

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, December 15, 1950

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, October 15, 1950

¹⁵² *Ibid*, November 28, 1950

A joint conference of taluk union councillors was held at Calicut on 20th January 1951. C.C.Nair presided over the meeting. Delegates from Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Kozhikode, Eranad, Valluvanad and Ponnani taluks attended this conference. The conference hoped that a minimum pay of Rs 30, 40 and 50 would be given to the lower, higher and secondary teachers respectively till the Central Pay Commission pay was implemented. It was also decided to send a deputation under the Guild president to meet the Minister and the union was free to take any decision, if these demands were not accepted¹⁵³. Telegrams were sent to Minister and the president of the SITU¹⁵⁴. A memorandum was prepared to be submitted to the Madras government and decided to send its copies to the members of the legislative assembly, political leaders and news papers. The deputation under the Guild president E.Raman Menon submitted the memorandum to Education Minister¹⁵⁵.

The managers, however, refused to accept the government direction. The Kurumbranad managers association declared that it was not possible for them to give the additional amount of three rupees instead asked the government to give the full amount to the teachers. At the same time the managers were advised not to apply for the extension of the period of implementation. The association also demanded increase in the maintenance grant and its disbursement along with the teaching grant, repeal of the order for cutting the maintenance grant of the schools where there was fee collection, permission to use the fee amount for school expenditure, remittance of the managers share of the TPF by the government and the right of the managers to dismiss teachers who were detrimental to the interest of the school. At the same time the association demanded the restoration of teaching certificate after proper enquiry and the introduction of free and compulsory education¹⁵⁶. The All Malabar Aided School Managers Association also protested against the governments decision and advised the managers not to apply for extension of the period¹⁵⁷. Thus the managers rejected the government direction and refused to give the amount to the teachers. It really strained the relation between the teachers and the management. Even then, in the Madras

¹⁵³ Ibid, January 22, 1951

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, February 7, 1951

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, March 17, 1951

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, March 8, 1951

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, March 9, 1951

assembly the Minister declared that it was not possible for the government to take over the schools¹⁵⁸.

However the union continued to highlight their basic demands. The 10th anniversary of the Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union held at Tirur demanded the government take over of elementary education and to make it free and compulsory. It also demanded the restoration of suspended certificates and voting rights for elementary teachers to elect their representative to Madras Legislative Assembly¹⁵⁹. The MATU once again highlighted the issue of the suspended teachers. It recalled the certificate suspension during 1948. Out of 350 teachers about 250 teachers got their certificate back. It was pointed out that the suspension was done without sufficient cause. When the younger brother was suspended for being a communist, his elder brothers also lost his certificate. When the communist brother got his certificate back, the innocent elder brother did not get it back. Many of the teachers did not know the charges levelled against them and many others were not at all punished. After 3 years of repeated requests these teachers were advised to go for legal action. One among them had sought the help of Madras High Court. Under these circumstances teachers were advised to give financial help to them¹⁶⁰.

A joint meeting of the MATU executive committee and the taluk union leaders was held at Ramanattukara. It decided to send reminders to the president and the Malabar representatives in the parliament regarding the voting rights of elementary school teachers. It also asked the taluk unions to constitute defence committees to help the suspended teachers. At the same time they concluded that the issue of giving membership to the suspended teachers would be decided by the district conference¹⁶¹. The Kurumbranad teachers union decided to inform the District Union that it was not possible to give membership to the suspended teachers and decided not to constitute defence committees in the taluk but to strengthen the District Defence Committee¹⁶². According to the taluk union,

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, April 2, 1951

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, March 22, 1951

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, March 29, 1951

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, April 26, 1951

¹⁶² *Ibid*, May 9, 1951

membership could not be given to the suspended teachers. The Kottayam taluk union decided to bring it to the attention of the District Union¹⁶³.

The 10th anniversary of the MATU was held at Ramanattukara on 17th June 1951. The conference demanded central pay scale and till then a minimum pay of Rs 30,40 and 50 to lower, higher and secondary teachers, the central rate DA and the teachers security of employment. The conference also raised the demands such as, monthly salary through Head Masters before the end of the next month, duty allowance for their service, 200 working days including teachers association meetings, one class one teacher ratio, dismissal of teachers only with the consent of the department, repeal of the G.O 1280, the government remittance of the TPF by deducting the same from the school grant and voting rights to the elementary teachers. In this context, the meeting requested SITU to direct the secondary and college teachers not to use their voting right. Above all the government was asked to abolish the private management system, take over all elementary schools and to make elementary education free and compulsory. At the same time to protest against the indifference of the government towards teachers grievances, it was decided to observe a protest day on September 1st 1951 all over Malabar. If it was found necessary the executive committee was authorised to take a strike ballot also¹⁶⁴.

Meanwhile measures were adopted by the taluk union to organise the observation of the proposed protest day of 1st September 1951 and requested the government to adopt urgent measures to redress the grievances of the teachers¹⁶⁵. The protest day was observed in various places like Taliparamba, Kannadiparamba, Muzhappilangad, Thalasseri, Paral, Nadapuram, Vatakara, Payyoli, Elathur and Chathamangalam. As a part of the celebration, public meetings were held in different parts of Malabar and demanded central pay scale or the promised minimum salary. To highlight the teachers security of employment, it was also requested not to dismiss teachers without the consent of the department¹⁶⁶. At the same time the union's stand on the proposed salary increase was viewed with wonder because the union had itself asked the government not to compel the managers to give the additional amount of three

¹⁶³ Ibid, May 13, 1951

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, July 4, 1951

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, July 12, August 10, 1951

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, September 5, 1951

rupees to the teachers. Hence the Minister reminded the teachers that the managers were not running their schools with noble intentions¹⁶⁷. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union requested the government to continue the old system of giving salary directly to the teachers¹⁶⁸.

The government reply to the teachers memorandum was not satisfactory. So the union leaders C.C.Nair, K.K.Velayudhan Adiyodi and K.V.K Nair were authorised to inform the union's stand to the government. Moreover each school was directed to inform their grievances to the Prime Minister, Education Minister and the Director of Education¹⁶⁹. Now the government revealed its stand and clearly pointed out the measures already adopted on the issues such as teachers salary, security of employment and the restoration of certificate. The government also promised to consider all the other demands of the teachers such as grant cut, PF and duty allowance for Head Masters¹⁷⁰.

The managers expressed their inability to run the schools and decided to close down their schools on 31st March, 1952. Teachers were to be given dismissal notices. The government showed no inclination to take over the schools. It was under such circumstances that a special conference of the MATU was convened at Calicut.

The special conference was held on 8th March 1952. After a long period of 4 years teachers of different political shades assembled together. Leaders who were scolding each other joined together for the cause of the teachers¹⁷¹. The resolution passed by the conference highlighted the following points. It expressed regret on the government's refusal to accept the demands raised by the Ramanattukara conference on 17th June 1951. It also protested for not implementing promise made in the government communiqué of 5th June 1947. From 1934 onwards the union had been demanding the abolition of the private management system and the take over of elementary education. But the government remained obstinate and failed to give sufficient salary for the teachers and proper assurance for their security of employment. Now the increase in the living expenses had made their life extremely miserable and they were not in a

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, September 19, 1951

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, September 16, 1951

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, October 5, 1951

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, October 8, 1951

¹⁷¹ *The Desabhimani*, March 10, 1952

position to continue their profession. Under these circumstances the conference declared that if their demand for the minimum salary of Rs 50 and definite security of employment was not accepted, the teachers would be compelled to struck work in the near future and the union was authorised to take further steps¹⁷².

Meanwhile government adopted certain measures favourable to the teachers. The government had already decided to give free education to the children of government and board servants. The union argued that the government should first have introduced the same for their children¹⁷³. The North Malabar Congress Convention congratulated the step taken by the government but requested to give the same to the children of aided teachers also¹⁷⁴. Consequently the Madras government issued order sanctioning half fee concession in high school to the children of aided school teachers¹⁷⁵. Measures were also adopted to withdraw school recognition for the non-remittance of the management share of the TPF¹⁷⁶. But at the same time the District Union pointed out the instances of department indifference in ensuring the rights of the teachers¹⁷⁷.

As per the decision of the special conference at Calicut, the union submitted a memorandum to the Minister on 9th June 1952. Besides the issue of salary increase it brought his attention on certain other points. Dismissal notices should not be given without prior sanction and teachers could be dismissed only after the final appeal verdict. The cut in the grant for the inefficiency of a teacher is not fair. The government was to deduct and remit the PF amount both from teaching and maintenance grant. Duty allowance should be given to the Head Masters. Above all the government was to prepare a statistics of unemployed trained teachers¹⁷⁸. The Minister discussed all these issues with the union leaders for more than two hours. He accepted the demand for teachers security of employment and promised to consider all other demands. How ever he refused to give any promise on teachers demand for salary increase¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷² Ibid, March 12, 1952

¹⁷³ The Mathrubhumi, May 22, 1952

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, June 5, 1952

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, July 15, 1952

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, June 11, 1952

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, June 30, 1952

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, June 13, 1952

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, June 19, 1952

The grievances of the Malabar teachers were raised in the Madras Legislative Assembly. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar who had been elected to the assembly argued that while teachers certificates were cancelled by the early government on the basis of the advice given by village congress presidents, the new Rajaji government refused to give up the grand-in-aid code introduced during the colonial period¹⁸⁰. Here it was pointed out that the salary of the teachers was less than that of the chaprasis in the secretariat. Now the Minister promised a provident fund insurance scheme for the teachers but declared that it was not possible to increase the salary of the teachers¹⁸¹.

The demands of the teachers became a topic of heated discussion in the Madras Legislative Assembly. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar argued that the government had violated its promise of 1947. But it was informed that in 1951 itself the government had given two rupees to the teachers as salary increase and the managers were directed to give the balance amount of Rs 3¹⁸². However it was the widespread threat of school closure that compelled the government to repeal that order¹⁸³. But T.C.Narayanan Nambiar told that it was not possible for the teachers to live with a salary of 27 rupees. He criticised the educational policy of the government for stopping compulsory education and thereby violating the 45th article of the constitution¹⁸⁴. He found the management system an obstacle for the growth of elementary education and demanded to abolish it and to introduce central pay scale to the teachers¹⁸⁵. Dr. K.B. Menon argued that the congress ministry was retaining the same system introduced by the British¹⁸⁶. He pointed out that the government was making education a market place by encouraging private management. So he demanded the state take over of education¹⁸⁷.

An executive meeting of the MATU was held at Calicut Town Hall on 26th July 1952¹⁸⁸. It congratulated the government for granting fee concession to their children and expressed happiness on its sympathetic attitude on matters like security of employment, one class one teacher ratio, reduction of the working days

¹⁸⁰ The Desabhimani, July 6, 1952

¹⁸¹ Ibid, July 11, 1952

¹⁸² Ibid

¹⁸³ Ibid, July 27, 1952

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, July 20, 1952

¹⁸⁵ The Mathrubhumi, July 19, 1952

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

¹⁸⁷ The Desabhimani, July 20, 1952

¹⁸⁸ The Mathrubhumi, July 29, 1952

and the teachers provident fund. But it protested against the government refusal to increase their salary and so decided to convene a district conference on 30th September to take a final decision¹⁸⁹.

Regardless of protest, suspension and dismissal of teachers continued all over Malabar. The following table indicates the same.

NAME OF SCHOOL	NAME OF TEACHER	REASON
Peruvayal school	Teacher dismissed	Change of Management
Meppayil school	Teacher dismissed	To appointment manager's relative
Chedicheri School	R.K.Devaki	
Karalmanna School	A.Ammaluamma	
Varot School	4 Teacher dismissed	Absence of division class
Thrikkangot School	Teachers dismissed	
Chengottur School	Teachers dismissed	
Thrichambaram School	Teachers dismissed	
Kaypamangalam School	Teachers dismissed	
Meethana School	Teachers dismissed	
Vengad School	Teachers dismissed	
Nattika School	P.A. Mary	
Ponmundam School	Teachers dismissed	
Chengottur School	P.Gopalan Nair	For being a communist

Source: The Mathrubhumi July 23, July 29, July 31, August 4, September 21, 1952 & The Desabhimani, March 6, March 12, May 3, July 6, July 13, August 14, September 18, 1952

All these developments very clearly showed that the policy adopted by the new government was not at all different from the earlier one. Therefore it was decided to hold a special conference at Calicut to take a final decision¹⁹⁰. This special conference of the union was held at Calicut Town Hall on 4th October 1952. 360 delegates as one representing 20 teachers attended the meeting. A grant conference like this had not been organised after the one that was convened on the eve of the proposed strike of 1947¹⁹¹. C.C. Nair presided over the meeting. The conference clearly reflected the eagerness of the teachers to end their grievances they had suffered during the last five years. They must have been

¹⁸⁹ The Desabhimani, July 29, 1952

¹⁹⁰ The Mathrubhumi, October 4, 1952

¹⁹¹ The Desabhimani, October 8, 1952

influenced by the news paper reports of the teachers agitation in Uttarpradesh¹⁹². The conference decided to take a strike ballot in November to confirm the willingness of the teachers for such an agitation and the taluk unions were asked to make it a success¹⁹³.

The Madras revenue Minister Manikkavelu Naikar also declared in the assembly that due to financial stringency it was not possible to increase the salary of the teachers¹⁹⁴. Now the teachers clearly realised that their methods of agitation like, request, resolutions, petitions and memorandum won't help to redress their grievances. So they argued that it was the policy of the government that made the teachers strike inevitable¹⁹⁵.

The teachers moved ahead with their decision. Several measures were adopted to make their strike ballot a great success. Teacher squads were formed. General instruction, receipt book for union fund and ballot papers were distributed and each teachers was directed to give Rs 2 to the union fund¹⁹⁶. At certain places schools were categorised in to groups under convenors. As per prior notice distributed among the teachers, the squad activists visited the booths arranged at schools or reading rooms to conduct the ballot¹⁹⁷. They distributed ballot boxes and papers. The teacher welcomed the squad activists with great enthusiasm¹⁹⁸. Most of the teacher managers joined them¹⁹⁹. Along with the union leaders, teachers visited schools for Ballot propaganda²⁰⁰. The strike ballot propaganda made the sleepy branch unions more active. The strike ballot was conducted from 9th to 14th of November 1952. The MATU meeting held on November 22, 1952 examined and published the result of the strike ballot. It clearly revealed that majority of the teachers were in favour of a strike²⁰¹. The strike ballot revealed that there was great unrest among the teachers and they were ready for any sacrifice.

¹⁹² Ibid, August 31, 1952

¹⁹³ The Desabhimani, October 8, 1952

¹⁹⁴ The Mathrubhumi, November 7, 1952

¹⁹⁵ The Desabhimani, November 8, 1952

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, November 7, 30, 1952

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, November 13, 1952

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, November 15, 1952

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, November 18, 1952

²⁰⁰ Ibid, November 19, 1952

²⁰¹ Ibid, November 25, 1952. It was found that 13662 teachers participated in the ballot. Out of it 12138 teachers supported the strike and 1387 teachers opposed the same and the remaining 137 was declared invalid

The restoration of certificate was an important issue raised by the teachers during this period. It was pointed out that many teachers who celebrated August 15 had lost their certificates²⁰². By about 600 teachers got their certificates cancelled or dismissed for being members of political parties. It was viewed as an assault against the civil rights and democratic education because even in Britain, the union leaders were allowed to involve in election campaigns. Moreover even though the violence was confined to North Malabar it was argued that the teachers of South Malabar also lost their certificates. These communist teachers were denied salary for the work already done. When a teacher was dismissed, the salary already given to him was deducted by the department from the salary of his brother working in another school²⁰³. It was viewed as a challenge to the teachers movement and therefore the teachers were asked to resist it. The teachers were suspended on the basis of the reports given by police or local officials or those who wanted to take revenge against the teachers²⁰⁴. V. Ramunni, the secretary of the Madras State Teachers Federation submitted a memorandum to the Minister for the restoration of the teachers certificates. He asked the teachers to provide necessary details to mobilise public opinion and to organise agitation of the same²⁰⁵. At the same time the managers refused to readmit the teachers who lost their certificates in their schools. Finally due to the teachers agitation and popular demand, the government agreed to restore the certificates. Now V.Ramunni advised the teachers to approach the authorities²⁰⁶. They agreed to regularise their service but refused to give the salary during the period of suspension²⁰⁷. While the District board and municipal teachers were allowed compensation for the period of suspension, the elementary teachers were denied the same²⁰⁸. The taluk union asked the MATU to take legal actions against the government to get the remaining certificates²⁰⁹. Now the government agreed to speed up the restoration of the certificates. It was declared that out of 315 suspended

²⁰² Ibid, December 27, 1952

²⁰³ Ibid, March 1, 1952

²⁰⁴ Ibid, October 9, 1952

²⁰⁵ Ibid, March 13, 1952

²⁰⁶ Ibid, June 24, 1952

²⁰⁷ Ibid, July 30, 1952

²⁰⁸ Ibid, October 9, 1952

²⁰⁹ Ibid, October 30, 1952

certificates 221 certificates and out of 18 cancelled certificates 6 certificates had already been restored. Steps were being taken to settle the remaining cases²¹⁰.

The problem of union recognition also disturbed the teachers during this period. The government order of 1939 on union recognition was declared unconstitutional by the High Court. It was replaced by another one in 1951 which provided for the recognition of the District Union instead of taluk unions²¹¹. But as it was questioned in the assembly it was also repealed. As there was no recognition, teachers felt that it was illegal to be the members of the union. But the union leaders pointed out that as the constitution guarantees the right of organisation separate recognition was not at all necessary. Above all the possibility of the formation of an elementary teachers federation of Aided Board, Municipal and Panchayath teachers was also cited in this context²¹².

It was in this backdrop that the 11th anniversary of the MATU was held at the 'Neelakanda Nagar' in front of the Sanskrit College Pattambi on 8th 9th and 10th of January 1953. About 4000 teachers and 375 delegates including former union leaders, teachers who were imprisoned in 1939-40 and those who lost certificates in 1948 attended the conference²¹³. The huge participation of teachers made it one of the greatest teachers conference after 1948²¹⁴. Teachers *jathas* from several places like Karivellur and Ponnani organised as a part of the conference reached the place²¹⁵. K.Kelappan in his presidential address argued that the Madras government had no definite policy in any matter and found no difference between the foreign and the independent government²¹⁶. He asked the government to accept the teachers demands and advised the union to avoid a strike. At the same time it was pointed out that he could not indicate the nature of the education policy to be adopted by the union²¹⁷. But P.R. Nambiar emphasised a scientific and popular education and advised the teachers to formulate such a scheme based on basic education deleting the unscientific aspects of the same. He argued that the teachers were actually fighting for the same and their financial

²¹⁰ Ibid, December 4, 1952

²¹¹ G.O.(Education) Madras, No 416 ,24th February 1939 & G.O.(Education) Madras, No 2775, 24th October 1951

²¹² The Desabhimani, December 9, 1952

²¹³ Ibid, January 15, 1953

²¹⁴ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 78

²¹⁵ The Mathrubhumi, January 16, 1953

²¹⁶ Ibid, January 13, 1953

²¹⁷ The Desabhimani, January 16, 1953

demand was to make it successful. He also advocated the formation of an education council represented by teachers, parents and government nominees and to bring all schools under the same management. At the same time he advised the teachers to give up some of their practices so as to reform the tradition of the Malabar Teachers Union. Above all he asked the teachers to mobilise the support of the teachers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra, and Tiru Kochi for their ensuing agitation²¹⁸.

The resolutions of the conference highlighted the following major demands of the teachers such as basic salary of Rs 50, security of employment, teachers right to participate in politics and election, restoration of certificates compensation for the suspended teachers, fixation of the school working days, duty allowance to Head Masters and above all the government take over of elementary schools²¹⁹. But the education Minister M.V. Krishna Rao who inaugurated the conference revealed the inability of the government to take over the schools, but promised to give priority to the elementary teachers, if there would be an increase in the salary of teachers²²⁰.

Now the teachers were really in an agitative mood. It is to be noted that the 11th conference was held at the time of the teachers agitation in Punjab²²¹. As their demands were rejected 14000 teachers struck work and schools remained closed in Punjab and the leaders were in a hunger strike²²². The news paper reports of the same must have influenced the Malabar teachers. So the conference congratulated the Punjab teachers and asked the government to redress their grievances²²³. Thus they were in an agitative mood. If the demands were not met till 30th April 1953, the conference decided to go for the strike as decided by the union²²⁴. Now the taluk unions were advised to organise furca *jathas* and volunteer corps to mobilise public support. It was also decided to raise a strike fund by collecting 20 percentage of the salary of the teachers and also to publish a journal²²⁵.

²¹⁸ Ibid

²¹⁹ The Mathrubhumi, January 12, 1953

²²⁰ Ibid

²²¹ Ibid, January 7, 1953

²²² The Desabhimani, , January 13, 1953

²²³ The Mathrubhumi, January 13, 1953

²²⁴ The Desabhimani, January 13, 1953

²²⁵ The Mathrubhumi, January 13, 1953

At this stage the government promised to consider the teachers demands sympathetically. The education Minister indicated the governments desire to give the three rupee salary increase to the teachers, which was actually to be given by the managers so that the teachers would get an amount almost equal to those of board teachers²²⁶.

Meanwhile the union executive committee meeting was held at Calicut Town hall on 7th march 1953. It decided to submit a memorandum to the government highlighting minimum salary, security of employment and the restoration of certificates²²⁷. Thus C.C.Nair, Vallathol Kumara Menon and K.K. Velayudhan Adiyodi went to Madras and submitted the memorandum and invited the attention of the Prime Minister²²⁸ on the issue of the appropriation of the teaching grant by the managers and the arbitrary dismissal of teachers in Malabar. But Rajaji threatened the teachers that the proposed strike would not effect the government but only worsen the situation. He promised to consider their grievances without affecting the interest of the managers²²⁹. So Rajaji advised the union leaders to examine the possibility of running elementary schools on a co-operative basis. But the leaders immediately pointed out the practical difficulty involved in it.²³⁰

The next day they also gave a memorandum to the Education Minister. But they were told that as the proposed formation of the Andhra state had upset the budget allocations it was not possible to increase their salary or even to give the promised three rupees to the teachers. He argued that famine and low salary was not a peculiarity of Malabar, but it was applicable to the whole state. Hence nothing could be done to Malabar alone. So he advised them to give up their strike decision and threatened to close the elementary schools of Malabar²³¹. Now the union leaders clearly realised that the government would not do anything favourable to the teachers and their grievances could be redressed only through a direct agitation²³².

²²⁶ Ibid, February 20, 1953

²²⁷ The Desabhimani, March 12, 1953

²²⁸ The Chief Minister was known as Prime Minister in those days

²²⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 79

²³⁰ The Mathrubhumi, March 18, 1953

²³¹ The Desabhimani, March 22, 1953

²³² Ibid

Most of the members of the legislative Assembly irrespective of their region or party affiliation promised their support to the teachers. People of all political shades admitted the reasonable demands of the teachers for minimum salary and security of employment. In the Madras Assembly T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and V.Sankaranarayana Menon vehemently attacked the government policy. Now Rajaji promised to make a direct enquiry on the service conditions and security of employment and also to provide every thing possible to the teachers. At the same time he viewed the proposed strike as a crime against the students²³³.

The government's response to the union delegation was severely criticised. The union meetings actively discussed the issue²³⁴. It was pointed out that the Malabar teachers demanded nothing special but the salary increase and security of employment for the whole teachers of the state²³⁵. The teachers union conferences viewed the government response disappointing and emphasised the urgent need to raise a strike fund²³⁶. Teachers propaganda *jathas* were organised in different parts of Malabar. Two teachers *jathas* with 15 members each were organised in Chirakkal taluk²³⁷. In view of the proposed strike Ponnani taluk union organised their furca *jathas*²³⁸. Two teachers *jathas* were organised in Valluvanad taluk²³⁹. These propaganda *jathas* of teachers were welcomed by the communist party and peasant organisation at various places and their support to the teachers agitation was promised²⁴⁰.

Now the government changed its stand and agreed to restore the certificates of teachers with out police enquiry²⁴¹. The government also began to think of the possibility of constituting local committees to run the elementary schools of Malabar²⁴². Moreover an insurance scheme for the elementary teachers was also suggested²⁴³. The MATU evaluated the new situation. It viewed the government proposal impractical and as an attempt to torpedo the teachers demand for the government take over of elementary schools. This move

²³³ The Mathrubhumi, March 24, 1953

²³⁴ Ibid, April 1, 1953

²³⁵ The Desabhimani, April 9, 1953

²³⁶ The Mathrubhumi, April 10, 1953

²³⁷ The Desabhimani, February 6, 1953

²³⁸ The Mathrubhumi, March 20, 1953

²³⁹ Ibid, April 10, 1953

²⁴⁰ The Desabhimani, April 10, 1953

²⁴¹ Ibid, March 29, 1953

²⁴² The Mathrubhumi, April 4, 1953

²⁴³ The Desabhimani, April 5, 1953

was also criticised as a helping hand to the crumbling management system. The union also protested against the treacherous policy adopted by the mother organisation. It declared that the teachers of Malabar were never reluctant in fulfilling their duty to the nation. It was this peculiarity that prompted them to withdraw from their strike in 1935, 39 and 1947. At the same time praise and allurements can't inspire them to turn away from their agitation. As the time limit given to the government would expire on 30th April, it was decided to stick on to the decision of the Pattambi conference. Thus the union decided to convene a meeting of all political leaders and members of legislature and also to revive the journal of the teachers union. Moreover all teachers were asked to be ready for the agitation²⁴⁴.

Meanwhile Rajagopalachari government proposed a new plan of education changing the whole system of elementary education in the state of Madras²⁴⁵. It suggested half day school education and half day vocational training for the elementary school students²⁴⁶. Accordingly circulars were sent to the meetings of the teachers associations. Thus the school time was reduced from 5 hrs to 3 hrs and there after the students were to practice their traditional occupations along with their parents. Thus it was decided to introduce the shift system by the beginning of the next academic year in all elementary schools. The morning shift was from 9 to 12.30 and the evening shift from 1 to 4.30 pm²⁴⁷. Actually Rajagopalachari was adopting the outer form of the Basic education by rejecting the very essence of it.²⁴⁸ He had already indicated this plan in his speech of 19th July 1952²⁴⁹. P.R. Nambiar opposed the new scheme saying that it was an attempt to implement the outdated family occupation theory to retain the children of carpenters as carpenters and the children of goldsmiths as goldsmiths²⁵⁰. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar criticised the scheme as a measure not at all beneficial to the country and the people. He said "A major section of our students are the children of village peasants. Most of them were actually children of agricultural labourers doing manual work in the lands of janmis. As per the new scheme, the

²⁴⁴ The Mathrubhumi, April 18 & The Desabhimani, April 25, 1953

²⁴⁵ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 130

²⁴⁶ The Mathrubhumi, April 29, 1953

²⁴⁷ Ibid, May 1, 1953

²⁴⁸ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 131

²⁴⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 80

²⁵⁰ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 131

students were to practice their traditional occupation in the free time. Therefore in Malabar where the tenancy act was to be implemented soon, the children of peasants and agricultural labourers will have to work in the land of the janmis along with their parents. In effect the new scheme will create a group of students working for the landlords with out wages²⁵¹. The Madras state elementary education conference was held as a part of the 43rd annual conference of SITU at Mangalore, S.Natarajan, the president of the union viewed the scheme utopian and not practical²⁵². The conference asked the government to accept the demands of the teachers of Malabar. The MATU viewed the scheme unscientific and argued that it was not practical in Malabar and therefore asked the government to stop the implementation of the scheme²⁵³.

A meeting of political leaders and members of the legislature was held at Ganapath High School Calicut on 25th may 1953 to decide over the proposed strike. This meeting under C.C.Nair represented by different political parties advised the teachers not to involve in a sudden strike creating a crisis in the field of education²⁵⁴. A 7 member conciliation committee was also constituted to approach the government²⁵⁵. Thereafter a conference of district, taluk and branch union activist held at Ganapath High School Calicut on 30th May 1953 accepted the request made by this meeting and decided to stop their proposed strike. At the same time it accepted the resolution of the union against the new education plan and hence decided to oppose the same²⁵⁶.

At the same time, the new scheme of education began to be implemented in different parts of Malabar. It was introduced in several schools in Payyoli, Chokli, Tellicherry and Pattambi and the department gave necessary instruction for the same²⁵⁷. But there were strong oppositions to the scheme. The union fought against it and the teachers were advised not to implement it in any of the schools and the people were requested to co-operate with them to defeat the scheme²⁵⁸. People, students and teachers organised protest meetings and

²⁵¹ The Desabhimani, May 9, 1953

²⁵² The Mathrubhumi, May 11, 1953

²⁵³ The Desabhimani, May 17, 1953

²⁵⁴ Ibid, May 27, 1953

²⁵⁵ The Mathrubhumi, May 28, 1953. K.Kelappan, Dr. K.B Menon, M.P. Govinda Menon, A.K.Gopalan, A. Appu, Uppisahib and T.C.Narayanan Nambiar were its members

²⁵⁶ Ibid, June 1, 1953 & Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 83

²⁵⁷ The Mathrubhumi, June 5,6,11, 1953

²⁵⁸ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 83

collected signatures to prepare mass petitions asking the government to stop the plan²⁵⁹. The teachers association meetings in different parts of Malabar demanded the withdrawal of the scheme²⁶⁰. Parent teachers meetings and its discussions viewed the plan unscientific and impractical²⁶¹. But the Chirakkal taluk congress conference welcomed the plan. K.Kelappan advised the teachers to test the scheme while admitting that it was not practical in Malabar²⁶². Moreover the Minister of education in his radio talk agreed to rectify the defects in the scheme and advised the teachers not to have any anxiety over their dismissal²⁶³. In view of these developments the union meeting held on 13th June 1953 decided to reconsider the union policy towards the scheme²⁶⁴. Now it was felt that the union policy to continue its oppositions would lead to an untimely conflict. The teachers were advised not to continue their policy of non-co-operation to the scheme. As directed by the District Union, the taluk union repealed their old policy that the scheme should not be accepted till the required clarifications were obtained²⁶⁵. However there was protest against this policy shift of the union²⁶⁶. The new scheme was introduced first in rural areas²⁶⁷. Basic schools were exempted from the scheme. The new plan was applicable only to the 1st to 5th standards classes of elementary schools. Earlier schools functioned from 10 am to 4 pm with an interval of one hour. Now shift system was introduced having two school sessions with duration of 3 hours²⁶⁸. However the total working days remained 220 as earlier. The three hour school classes were divided into 4 periods of 40 minutes with two intervals of 20 minutes. All subjects except craft and drill including languages, Maths, Natural Science, History, Geography, Health Science, Civics, Moral Instruction and Music were taught to the students. For the remaining 3 hours students were directed to acquire practical training. Thus the parents were advised to utilise their children in agriculture or in their traditional occupations or to

²⁵⁹ The Desabhimani, June 11, 1953

²⁶⁰ Ibid, June 12, 1953

²⁶¹ Ibid, June 13, 1953

²⁶² The Mathrubhumi, June 13, 1953

²⁶³ Ibid, June 20, 1953

²⁶⁴ Ibid

²⁶⁵ Ibid, June 18, 1953

²⁶⁶ Ibid, July 15, 1953

²⁶⁷ Ibid, June 30, 1953

²⁶⁸ Ibid, November 1, 1953. The first batch of students attended the morning session from 9 am to 12 noon and the second batch came for the evening shift from 1 pm to 4 pm. Earlier there were five or five and a half working days per week. Now Saturdays were made a working day and thus a 6 day week was introduced.

send them to the artisan centres in the village and it would help to eradicate their contempt for manual labour²⁶⁹.

Even though the scheme began to be implemented in Malabar, the teachers and the people had no clear idea about the same²⁷⁰. There was total confusion among the people. However it was expected that the co-operation of the teachers, leadership of the department and the propaganda through teachers association meetings would help to enforce the scheme effectively²⁷¹.

At the same time protest against the scheme continued in different parts of Malabar. Protest meetings were held at several places and the plan was ridiculed as Saniyan plan²⁷². There were nine schools and nearly 1000 students at Uralungal²⁷³. The parents here protested and opposed the scheme. They criticised saying that the plan was implemented with hidden motives. They argued that high schools and colleges were assigned the task of producing scientists and technocrats whereas the poor aided schools students were to remain artisans forever.²⁷⁴ It was also pointed out that the students would be exploited by the contractors of the rural areas. But Rajagopalachari declared that the new scheme would actually liberate the students from the school prison²⁷⁵. It was pointed out that the scheme was introduced without any discussion in the assembly²⁷⁶. The claim of occupational training was meaningless because no arrangements were made for the same²⁷⁷. Above all the student attendance in the evening shift was found very bad²⁷⁸. The union leader met the Director and told him that six hours and six days of teaching would affect the health of the teachers and the decrease in the learning hours would affect the quality of education. Moreover as there were schools in almost all areas of Malabar and as majority of the students were already admitted in schools, the new plan need not be imposed on Malabar²⁷⁹.

²⁶⁹ Ibid

²⁷⁰ Ibid, June 20, 1953

²⁷¹ Ibid, June 27, 1953

²⁷² The Desabhimani, June 20, 1953

²⁷³ Ibid, June 18,28, 1953

²⁷⁴ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 131

²⁷⁵ The Desabhimani, June 19, 1953

²⁷⁶ The Mathrubhumi, July 8, 1953

²⁷⁷ Ibid, July 3, 1953

²⁷⁸ Ibid, July 7, 1953

²⁷⁹ Ibid, July 20, 1953

But the government and the department were very firm in its stand. The communists were accused of organising people against the scheme, collecting signatures from the people and inspiring teachers to fight against it²⁸⁰. An inspector declared that the communist were actually behind the opposition to the scheme. He threatened that those who opposed the plan would be branded as communist and that their certificates would be cancelled²⁸¹. The District Union decision of 13th June became a topic of controversy in their meetings. Here it was argued that though the policy of non-cooperation was repealed, the union had not decided to stop the agitation against the new plan. Therefore it was decided to observe a protest week in the first week of July and the teachers were asked to organise protest meetings, pass resolutions, collect signatures of people and parents and also to sent telegrams and mass petitions to compel the government to withdraw the plan²⁸².

Thus there was strong opposition to the new plan. The teachers, education experts, SITU, MATU, most of the district board presidents, congress president of Tamil Nadu former Chief Minister Ramaswami Raddiar, Madras Mayor and many others were against the government stand²⁸³. The issue was hotly debated in the Madras Legislative Assembly. A member moved a resolution seeking to postpone the implementation of the scheme and to refer it to an expert committee. This amendment was passed with 139 against 137 votes²⁸⁴. Now it was decided to appoint an expert committee to examine the impact of the scheme²⁸⁵. Thus a four member committee was constituted²⁸⁶. The committee was to study the old education system and to propose suggestions of improvement and the ways to attract more students to the school. It was also directed to make an enquiry on the new scheme and to propose suggestions for improvement²⁸⁷. The government issued an order preventing the dismissal of teachers without three months notice

²⁸⁰ Fortnightly Report, Second Half of June 1953 and First Half of July 1953

²⁸¹ The Desabhimani, June 18, 1953

²⁸² Ibid, June 25, 1953

²⁸³ Ibid, July 5, 1953

²⁸⁴ The Mathrubhumi, July 30, 1953

²⁸⁵ Ibid, August 1, 1953

²⁸⁶ Ibid, August 27, 1953 Prof B.V. Parulekhar, Director, Indian Education Institute, Bombay was made its Chairman. Dr. B.B. Day (Rtd Education Deputy Director Madras) Dr. Najeeb (Vice Chancellor, Jamiamilia University Delhi) and S.Govinda Rajalu (Director of Education Madras) were the other members.

²⁸⁷ Ibid

and prior sanction of the department. Government also granted permission for elementary teachers to participate in elections.

Mean while a new leadership was elected to the MATU. The first meeting of the union adopted certain important decisions. It welcomed the assembly decision to stop the scheme and to subject the same for an expert enquiry. At the same time union pointed out that, the promise that teacher would not be dismissed in the wake of the new scheme was being violated by inspecting officers by stopping the division classes. Hence government was requested to take urgent action. It decided to give membership to those teachers whose certificates were suspended without proper enquiry. But teachers engaged in other profession or serving in the official posts of political parties should not be elected to the elected post of the union. It was decided to prepare a report about the experiences of the new scheme and so decided to collect report from all branches about the implementation of the scheme. The union also decided to constitute an expert committee of teachers and educational experts to prepare an education scheme suitable to the peculiarities of Malabar. Government was requested to make rules to deduct the salary arrears from the maintenance grant. When school recognition was repealed, government was requested to give powers to DEO's to hand over school buildings and equipments to the school committees for the rent or price fixed by the government. Above all the union protested against the government for not allowing the financial demands of the Pattambi conference and to get it accepted by the government, it was decided to observe a 'Basic Salary Week' from 4th October to 11th October 1953²⁸⁸.

The MATU asked the teachers to observe the salary week and as a part of it they were advised to wear badges, organise processions and public meetings and also to submit signed petitions to the government. At the same time it requested the people to co-operate with their programme²⁸⁹. Taluk unions formulated programmes to make it a great success. Public meetings and procession were organised at several places. Teachers wearing badges raised the demands of basic salary of Rs 50 and the repeal of the new scheme in their *jathas*²⁹⁰.

²⁸⁸ The Desabhimani, September 4, 1953

²⁸⁹ Ibid, October 3, 1953

²⁹⁰ Ibid, October 7,11,13,20, 1953

Meanwhile the Madras government adopted measures to give salary directly to the teachers. Thus provision was made to give direct salary to the teachers through the treasuries and also to deduct the managers share of the PF from their maintenance grant²⁹¹. At the same time it was decided to implement the scheme first in Malabar²⁹². It was the organisational strength of the teachers union that compelled the government to adopt such a decision²⁹³. The MATU congratulated the government for introducing the scheme of direct payment of salary to the teachers but requested to increase their basic salary to Rs 50²⁹⁴. At the same time the managers association argued that the attempt to introduce direct payment of salary to the teachers under the management system would create many confusions and problems. They demanded increase in their maintenance grant and asked the government to repeal the order directing the managers to give the salary of teachers whose grant was not sanctioned by the government²⁹⁵. At the same time government had issued order directing not to make any delay in the implementation of the scheme²⁹⁶. When it was delayed again C.C. Nair once again highlighted the case in his memorandum to the divisional inspector²⁹⁷. Meanwhile the teachers were getting aware of the apartheid in American education and teachers agitation in France²⁹⁸. Finally the case was raised in the Madras assembly by T.C.Narayanan Nambiar. Now the Finance Minister declared that all efforts would be taken to implement the plan for the direct payment of salary to the teachers and the officers would not be allowed to destroy the plan²⁹⁹.

The Parulekhar committee submitted its report on 27th November 1953. It viewed the elementary education scheme introduced in the Madras state as an initiative for a new venture and also made certain important comments. The new scheme was an effort to introduce universal education with minimum expenditure. It was a practical plan to satisfy the constitutional obligation. Besides bookish knowledge, students were able to acquire practical knowledge of their occupation

²⁹¹ G.o. (Education) Madras No. 2295 Dated 28th September 1953

²⁹² The Mathrubhumi, September 30, 1953 & The Desabhimani, November 3, 1953

²⁹³ The Desabhimani, October 15, 1953

²⁹⁴ The Mathrubhumi, October 24, 1953

²⁹⁵ Ibid, November 12, 1953

²⁹⁶ The Desabhimani, November 4, 1953

²⁹⁷ Ibid, December 16, 1953

²⁹⁸ Ibid, November 1, 10, 1953

²⁹⁹ Ibid, December 25, 1953

and also the sense of dignity of labour. The committee also made certain recommendations such as revision and renewal of methods of education, universal education, increasing the number of schools and students, extension of the scheme to municipalities and sufficient salary to the teachers³⁰⁰.

The teachers opposed the new scheme as well as the Parulekar committee report. As it would reduce the number of teachers leading to dismissal, the teachers meeting at Karivellur asked the government to reject the report³⁰¹. In various union meetings the government was asked to reject the report³⁰².

In spite of opposition C.Rajagopalachari determined to implement the new education scheme. There was widespread protest against the scheme in Tamil Nadu. Arrest and police firing took place at several places. Rajagopalachari ministry resigned and it was decided to form a new one under Kamaraja Nadar. The Education Minister C. Subramaniam stated in the Assembly that, Rajagopalachari plan would be replaced and the old scheme reintroduced in June 1954. It was also decided to appoint a committee to make an enquiry on the elementary education of the state. But he emphasised the revision of the teachers salary and the introduction of free and compulsory education and argued that the scheme was actually an initial step to convert all Elementary Schools in the basic scheme³⁰³. The opposition wing in the Assembly including the socialist and the communists congratulated the government.

It was then that a long standing demand of the union was met. The government issued necessary orders to distribute the salary of aided teachers through the treasuries near their schools³⁰⁴. Accordingly 19607 aided teachers of 3386 schools began to get their salary directly. But the teachers had to assemble and rush at the treasuries to collect their salary. As there was not sufficient staff in the treasuries, it was found very difficult to disburse the salary. Hence a request was made to appoint more staff in the treasuries³⁰⁵. But it is to be noted that the scheme was actually the result of the teachers agitation in Malabar because in the Madras state, the scheme was introduced only in the district of Malabar³⁰⁶.

³⁰⁰ The Mathrubhumi, November 28, 1953 & The Desabhimani, November 28, 1953

³⁰¹ The Desabhimani, January 2, 1954

³⁰² Ibid, January 15,22,26, February 6,11, 1954

³⁰³ The Mathrubhumi, May 19, 1954

³⁰⁴ Ibid, January 29, 1954

³⁰⁵ Ibid, February 17 , 1954

³⁰⁶ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 88

The Madras government had adopted several measures to ensure the security of employment of teachers. But the managers had their own way to violate it and continued to dismiss the teachers. It was in this backdrop an order was issued by the Director on 17-01-1953 preventing the dismissal of teachers without 3 months notice and the prior consent of the department. It put the manager in great difficulty. But they found a provision in it permitting them to suspend teachers for 3 months in urgent situations. It became a weapon in their hand and they suspended the teachers and refused to reinstate them. The Azheekode school issue was one such development. Here 3 teachers were suspended and later dismissed by the manager. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union expressed anxiety over this issue and requested the interference of the department and the government. The manager who got the support of his association refused to repeal his order. The union also realised that the department was also supporting him. Thus it was decided to observe an 'Azheekode School Day' on 6th February 1954³⁰⁷. Meanwhile North Malabar DEO gave directions to the manager to reinstate the teachers. Hence the union gave up the decision³⁰⁸. At the same time the manager neglected the department order. The attitude of the manager was questioned even in the Madras Assembly³⁰⁹. But teachers continued to be dismissed in different parts of Malabar. At Chennamangalam N.K. Narayani was dismissed³¹⁰. The manager of Kuhimangalam Gopal Higher Elementary School gave dismissal notice to four teachers of his school. Two teachers of Madayi South Elementary School were dismissed by the advice of the Deputy Inspector. They were the first victims of the new scheme and Parulekar committee report³¹¹. Based on the circular of average attendance two teachers of Maniyur North Aided School and one teacher of Thurayur Aided School was given dismissal notice by the manager³¹². The Azheekode issue remained unsettled and teachers of several schools began to get dismissal orders. The MATU meeting held at Calicut expressed anxiety over the dismissal of the teachers in different parts of Malabar. With a view to bring the attention of the government and the public on this issue and also to put an end to

³⁰⁷ The Desabhimani, January 22, 1954

³⁰⁸ Ibid, February 4, 1954

³⁰⁹ The Mathrubhumi, March 27, 1954

³¹⁰ The Desabhimani, February 6, 1954

³¹¹ Ibid, February 27, 1954

³¹² The Mathrubhumi, March 23, 1954

the education crisis in Malabar, it was decided to observe an 'Anti-dismissal day' on 17th July 1954 all over Malabar. The teachers were asked to organise public meetings and processions on that day³¹³. As per the call of the District Union the anti dismissal day was successfully celebrated through out Malabar from Chirakkal taluk to Palakkad³¹⁴. Public meetings were held at several places to express anxiety over the dismissal of teachers and requested the government to take up the issue. Finally the District Board under P.T. Bhaskara Panikker saved these teachers by appointing them in the board service³¹⁵.

The Elementary School teachers began to get their salary directly. But there were several problems in the disbursement of salary. The Treasury officers very often took an unsympathetic attitude towards the teachers. The teachers who came from long distances had to go back disappointed after hours of waiting. Many complaints in the payment of salary in treasuries continued to be raised³¹⁶.

It was at that time the demand for the appointment of an Elementary Education Commission was raised³¹⁷. The All India Primary Teachers Federation submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister requesting to incorporate free and compulsory education as a part of the Second Five Year Plan³¹⁸. Moreover the Central Government invited the attention of the state government on the unsatisfactory salary scale of the elementary teachers³¹⁹. Above all Dr.Amaranath Jha the president of the federation of All India Educational Association criticised the government for its unnecessary interference in the field of education and argued that if the teachers were made unhappy no plan of national development could be successful³²⁰.

Now the government decided to constitute a committee to suggest the changes to be introduced in the field of elementary education and also to suggest the ways to make it universal³²¹. Thus a six member committee was constituted with R.M.Alakappa Chettiar as its Chairman. The committee had to suggest the

³¹³ Ibid, July 1, 1954

³¹⁴ The Desabhimani, August 13, 1954

³¹⁵ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 234

³¹⁶ The Mathrubhumi, October 29, 1954

³¹⁷ Ibid, June 25, 1954

³¹⁸ Ibid, July 8, 1954

³¹⁹ Ibid, August 24, 1954

³²⁰ The Desabhimani, October 23, 1954

³²¹ The Mathrubhumi, November 23, 1954

ways to make elementary education universal as envisaged by the constitution, methods to improve elementary education, means to attract students to schools and also the steps to make Elementary Schools as basic schools³²². It was criticised in the legislative council that the members of the committee were not competent to make recommendations on educational matters. Malabar having more Elementary Schools in the state was not given representation in the committee³²³. The MATU protested against the non-representation in the committee and requested to include its nominee in the committee³²⁴. The Taluk Unions in Kozhikode, Ponnani and Chirakkal also protested against this decision³²⁵.

The Teachers Union was very active during this period. The MATU meeting held at Calicut congratulated the government for the withdrawal of the scheme but asked the government to nominate its representative to the proposed committee. When the government decided to appoint secondary trained teachers as Head Masters of Elementary School having more than 4 teachers, the union asked the government to appoint them only in the new vacancies and also to avoid the possibility of dismissing the existing teachers. The union demanded the redress of their grievances related to the payment of salary and also to give the increased salary to the lower trained teachers also³²⁶. Realising the financial situation, the Valluvanad Teachers Union asked the government to advise the managers not to collect fee in Elementary Schools³²⁷. The newly elected union council was held at Ganapath High school Calicut. C.C. Nair was elected president of the union. By that time the union had a membership of 11,110 teachers with one rupee membership fee³²⁸. The MATU also protested against the common grant cut for the minor faults in the annual examination and also demanded the right of explanation and appeal in such cases³²⁹. When there arose a controversy regarding the number of working days in the Elementary Schools, the union resolved it and declared that there would be 220 working days including

³²² *Ibid*, November 25,26, 1954 M.Arunachalam, K.Arunachalam, Meenakshisundaram Mudaliyar, S.Gopala Krishanan and the Director of Education were the other members of the committee

³²³ *Ibid*, December 4, 1954

³²⁴ *Ibid*, December 9, 1954

³²⁵ *Ibid*, November 18, January 15, 1955

³²⁶ *Ibid*, July 1, 1954

³²⁷ *The Desabhimani*, August 7, 1954

³²⁸ *The Mathrubhumi*, October 5, 1954

³²⁹ *Ibid*, December 9, 1954

the teachers associations meetings³³⁰. When many of the elementary teachers failed to get the increased salary of 3 rupees the union raised it in the Madras Assembly³³¹.

This period witnessed efforts to unify teachers union activities and to bring teachers working under different agencies in a single union. The most prominent among them was the MATU. The District Board Elementary Teachers Union was not so active and could not do their work continuously. But when it got a new leadership in 1953 it became more active. The elementary teachers of Kannur, Tellicherry, Calicut and Palakkad municipalities had their own associations. They came together under P.K. Nambiar and formed the Malabar Municipal Teachers Union³³². It was more active than the board Teachers Union. Now there arose a desire to form a common association for the elementary teachers of Malabar. Thus some of the branches of Aided Teachers Union proposed a common union. All the union in Malabar had been opposing different management system and different scales of salary in the field of elementary education. The government take over of elementary education was their common demand. It was also found necessary to formulate a common policy of elementary education. Under these circumstances the meeting of the Kurumbranad taluk Board Teachers Union held at Quilandy on 15-11-1953 passed a resolution for the unification of all elementary Teachers Union and invited the attention of all teachers on this matter³³³. At first the Board Elementary Teachers and Aided Elementary Teachers decided to work together in common association. The teacher under the municipalities promised to join them later. Thus a joint meeting of Aided and Board Teachers Union was held at Ganapath High School Calicut on 10th May 1954. The possibilities of the formation of the Malabar Elementary School Teachers Federation were discussed and C.C. Nair was authorised to achieve this objective³³⁴.

Another desirable change was in the very nature of the Teachers Union. The union which had been criticising government schemes and also raising the economic issues of the teachers began to think about a separate elementary education policy. Vallathol Kumara Menon prepared an elementary education

³³⁰ Ibid, December 7,16,21, 1954 & The Desabhimani, December 11, 1954

³³¹ The Desabhimani, December 14, 1954

³³² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 235

³³³ The Desabhimani, December 1, 1953

³³⁴ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 96

plan for the union and presented it in the 13th annual conference of the Ponnani Taluk Union held at Valanchery. Many participated in the discussion that followed³³⁵. Chirakal Taluk Teachers Union also prepared and discussed such a scheme of elementary education.

The Elementary Education Commission was constituted to make proposals to introduce universal education within a period of 10 years as envisaged by the constitution. R.M. Alakappa Chettiar, a Mill owner was its Chairman and all of its members were the supporters of the Rajaji plan. The MATU and the SITU were not given representation in the committee. The Chettiar committee as a part of its enquiry and study prepared and distributed a questionnaire that focused on the aim, structure, curriculum, inspection, buildings, managers, teachers and public support. Though not represented in the committee, the MATU decided to respond to the questionnaire. It was decided to submit a uniform reply to the commission. It was also decided to submit a memorandum based on it to the Chettiar Committee during their visit to Malabar³³⁶. The Malabar Teachers Guild also decided to prepare answers to the questionnaire of the Elementary Education Commission.

During this period the payment of salary once again became a problem for the teachers of Malabar. It was the continuous agitation of the teachers that prompted the government to introduce the direct salary scheme. Thus from January 1954 onwards teachers salary was distributed directly through the treasuries. However it created several difficulties and problems and thus several complaints were raised. Now the government decided to send their salary as M.O from January 1955. Thus the Director of Education issued the necessary proceedings on 5th February 1955³³⁷. At the same time it was decided to abolish the additional post in the Treasury. It was misinterpreted and the last instalment of the teaching grant of 1954 was withheld. It created so much difficulties and C.C. Nair asked the government to take urgent steps³³⁸. Telegrams were sent to the

³³⁵ Ibid. P.K.Korumaster a renowned education expert presided over the meeting. Several leaders such as M.P.Govinda Menon, Vidwan C.H.Kumaran, K.Bheeman Nair, C.C.Nair, M.Ramakrishnan, T.Sankaran Nair, K.N.Balan and G.T.Ookken participated in the discussion. M.P. Govinda Menon alone opposed the scheme. C.C. Nair declared that the District Union was preparing a scheme and refused to comment on the one presented in the conference.

³³⁶ The Mathrubhumi, January 31, 1955

³³⁷ Ibid, February 12, 1955

³³⁸ The Desabhimani, February 13, 1955

government, members of the legislative Assembly and also to the SITU³³⁹. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar raised the issue in the Madras Assembly and argued that 16000 teachers were put in great difficulty in Malabar³⁴⁰. The Minister of Education promised to take necessary steps and directions were given to the treasuries to release the salary of the teachers³⁴¹. But when the government decided to send the teachers salary by M.O, they were directed to remit their share of PF themselves instead of the earlier practice of department deduction. Thus the government decision actually endangered the PF benefit already obtained by the teachers. V.K. Menon argued that as the Post Offices were not ready to accept the PF amount from the teachers separately without the amount to be remitted by the managers, the teachers would be compelled to remit the whole PF amount and those who refused would be dismissed by the managers. Thus he viewed the government direction as an official attempt to appease the managers of Malabar. Hence Taluk Unions were advised to pass resolutions requesting the government to take the full responsibility of the TPF by sending teachers salary after deducting their share and deducting the managers share from their maintenance grant. He also requested the District Union and the Guild to take necessary steps³⁴². The MATU discussed this issue and refused to pass a resolution and instead decided to submit a memorandum to the government³⁴³.

Certain other measures adopted by the government during this period also affected the teachers. The government decided to stop the salary of the teachers of the schools which were converted as basic schools. It was made on the ground that they had no basic training. Their willingness to undergo basic training was not considered. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union protested against it, asked the government to repeal the order and to give the teachers an opportunity for retraining³⁴⁴. It was during the same period that the government proposed the gradual replacement of elementary grade teachers with secondary trained teachers in Elementary Schools. It was with this motive that the 3 rupee salary increase was denied to the elementary grade teachers³⁴⁵. At the same time the

³³⁹ The Mathrubhumi, February 12, 1955

³⁴⁰ The Desabhimani, February 15, 1955

³⁴¹ The Mathrubhumi, February 16, 1955 The Desabhimani, February 15, 1955

³⁴² The Desabhimani, February 15, 1955

³⁴³ The Mathrubhumi, February 25, 1955

³⁴⁴ Ibid, February 17, 1955

³⁴⁵ Ibid, February 24, 1955

Madras government adopted certain steps favourable to the teachers. Thus it was decided to exempt all poor students irrespective of their caste from school fees³⁴⁶. Moreover the Minister of education informed the Assembly that necessary directions were given to send the salary of the teachers by M.O, but expressed the inability of the government to bear the charge for the same³⁴⁷.

Meanwhile education and the grievances of the teachers became a widely discussed topic. The All Indian Education Conference held at Patna emphasised free and compulsory education, sufficient salary for the teachers, Civil and political rights of the teachers, their representation in the policy making bodies and also an allocation of 25 percentage of the state budget and 15 percentage of the central budget for education³⁴⁸. The All India Primary Teachers Federation requested the president to make an amendment to the constitution to include education in the concurrent list to enable the introduction of free and compulsory education³⁴⁹. Under the auspices of the Kozhikode Town Teachers Union, the All India Primary Teachers Day was observed at Ganapath High School Calicut and demanded more budget allocation for education³⁵⁰.

The aided primary school teachers were not given pension benefits. But their demand for the same was realised when C.Subramanian, the Minister of education declared in the Assembly that all elementary teachers would be given $\frac{1}{4}$ of their salary as pension benefit and it would be enforced on April 1st 1955. Though the compulsory insurance was very helpful to the teachers, many of them refused to utilise this benefit. Hence the government also promised to think of remitting this amount from the PF³⁵¹. Thus the Aided teachers and Board teachers were given the same status of the government teachers at least after their retirement. Thus one demand of the teachers agitation got materialized.³⁵²

Meanwhile it was decided to organise the 13th annual conference of the MATU at Tellicherry. Active arrangements were made to make it a great success. A huge panthal with a sitting capacity for 8000 teachers was raised. Separate

³⁴⁶ Ibid, February 27, 1955

³⁴⁷ Ibid, March 3, 1955

³⁴⁸ Ibid, January 1,3, 1955

³⁴⁹ Ibid, January 8, 1955

³⁵⁰ Ibid, January 11, 1955

³⁵¹ Ibid

³⁵² The Desabhimani, April 12, 1955

accommodation was arranged for women³⁵³. In connection with the conference two Mail Trains were permitted to stop at Temple Gate Railway Station³⁵⁴. The school managers were allowed to declare these days as compensatory holidays³⁵⁵. Various competitions for both teachers and students such as short story, poetry and essay writing were also conducted³⁵⁶.

The conference was held at Sreenarayana Nagari near Temple Gate Tellicherry on 8th, 9th and 10th April 1955. It was reported that: "More than 6000 teachers including the union activists of the past and present were found seated on their feet in the beautifully decorated panthal. Prominent personalities of different political shades, political leaders who never come together, many government officials, especially that of the education department and also a large number of workers in Tellicherry attended the meeting. The Education Minister C.Subramanian inaugurated the meeting. T.P. Sreenivasa Varadan, the president of the SITU, the oldest teacher association in India presided over the conference. The Teachers Union leaders like T.C.Narayanan Nambiar who became a communist leader of Malabar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar who rose to the leadership of PSP, C.C. Nair who always stood with teachers movement without being involved in any party politics attended the conference. K.P. Kuttikrishnan Nair the former Minister and V.R. Krishna Iyyar, an independent MLA were also there on the dias"³⁵⁷.

The following were the main demands that were raised in the conference: a salary scale of Rs 80-5-100-7-170 to secondary teachers and Rs 60-4-80-5-130 to the higher trained teachers; avoid the delay in the payment of salary due to the M.O system and the government to bear its charge also; voting right for elementary teachers in teachers constituencies, repeal of the order preventing teachers from politics and election; end the practice of average attendance by adopting one teacher for one class; 3 rupee salary increase to elementary teachers also; department deduction of the PF amount; teachers right to carry over

³⁵³ Ibid, April 8, 1955

³⁵⁴ The Mathrubhumi, April 3, 1955

³⁵⁵ Ibid, April 6, 1955

³⁵⁶ The Desabhimani, April 8, 1955

³⁵⁷ Ibid, April 12, 1955. The conference clearly proved that the teachers movement in Malabar had attained its phase of youth. It was argued that the teachers could mobilise a whole mass of people behind their issues, with their grant organisational tactics. They could integrate their issues with the common national demand and got it accepted by all sections of people

their leave, 200 working days including teachers association meetings; fee concession up to high school classes and mid-day meals and study materials to poor students³⁵⁸.

The Chettiar Committee which was appointed to propose a new education policy visited Malabar during the third week of April³⁵⁹. Teachers association, managers and several prominent personalities met the commission at Palaghat. They emphasised free and compulsory education, the enhancement of the teachers salary and also the government take over of elementary education. The memorandum submitted by E.H. Parameswarn for the District Teachers Guild emphasised teachers security of employment and a salary scale of Rs 75-5-150 plus allowance to secondary trained teachers, Rs 50-2-90 plus allowance to higher trained teachers and Rs 50 plus allowance to lower trained teachers. At the same time it demanded the abolition of private management system and the government take over of elementary education to enforce the 45th article of the constitution. The municipal Teachers Union also demanded the take over of elementary education by the government³⁶⁰. At the same time the managers association argued that direct payment of salary to the teachers actually curtailed their influence and it affected the discipline and maintenance of Elementary Schools³⁶¹. The common reply to the questionnaire of Chettiar Commission already prepared by the MATU and DBTU was also submitted. The proposals contained in it were actually helpful to give a national and progressive content for education and also for the democratisation of educational institutions³⁶². T.C.Narayanan Nambiar submitted a memorandum to the Chettiar Committee on 19th April 1955. It rejected the emphasis given by the government to basic education, but admitted its emphasis on patriotism, love for mother tongue and emphasis on manual labour. Above all the memorandum demanded the repeal of the ban against teachers politics³⁶³. He also submitted a detailed reply to the questionnaire of the Chettiar Committee which contained the proposals of the CPI of Malabar. It touched all aspects of elementary education - aims and objectives, structure, curriculum,

³⁵⁸ The Mathrubhumi, April 14, 1955

³⁵⁹ Ibid, April 17, 1955

³⁶⁰ Ibid, April 25, 1955

³⁶¹ Ibid

³⁶² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 99

³⁶³ The Desabhimani, April 22, 1955

management, teachers, building and equipment, inspection, public support and also certain general proposals³⁶⁴.

The Chettiar Committee submitted its report on 2nd October, the Gandhi Jayanthi day³⁶⁵. It made the following recommendations. The state was to take measures to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14. As an initial step all villages with a population between 300 and 500 were to be provided with an Elementary School. Gradually primary education was to be converted to the basic scheme. Students were to be admitted in the schools at the age of 5. Free mid-day meals and study material were to be provided. English was to be made compulsory between 5th and 8th standards. The students were allowed to learn cottage industries, but it was not made compulsory. Regional Boards were to be constituted to supervise elementary education in the state. It would function for a period of 3 years. It will have the nominees of the government, District Board and panchayats. It would manage the board and panchayath schools also. In future only these boards and municipalities would have the right to open new Elementary Schools. These boards should not have more than 200 schools under their control. For inspection, the board could appoint Elementary School supervisors. The schools under private individuals should have properly constituted managing committees including a government nominee³⁶⁶. The report recommended to stop fee collection in Elementary Schools, appointment of mistress in lower standards, special schools for the disabled and also to avoid religious instruction during the school hours³⁶⁷. Above all it recommended the appointment of a committee to propose desirable changes in the curriculum and to continue the system of public examination in the 8th standard.³⁶⁸ The SITU welcomed the recommendation of the Regional Board to supervise elementary education; but argued that more clear suggestion could have been made to improve the salary and the position of the teachers³⁶⁹. The

³⁶⁴ Ibid, April 25, 1955

³⁶⁵ The Mathrubhumi, October 15, 1955

³⁶⁶ Ibid, The Desabhimani, October 15,16, 1955

³⁶⁷ The Mathrubhumi, October 22, 1955

³⁶⁸ The Desabhimani, October 16, 1955. Mathrubhumi on 29th October declared that in effect the Rajaji plan was given up and argued that there was nothing new in the Alakappa Committee report. It further pointed out that the committee failed to make proposal on important matters like sufficient salary to the teachers, attracting efficient teachers to the field of education and the importance of Hindi in elementary schools.

³⁶⁹ The Mathrubhumi, November 22, 1955

Teachers Union in Malabar also opposed the report³⁷⁰. It was argued that the members of the committee were not much related to elementary education. Though Alakappa Chettiar, a wealthy mill owner could give financial assistance to several educational institutions, he was not at all competent to be the Chairman of the committee³⁷¹. The representatives of the organised teachers movement were not included in the committee. Hence it failed to suggest proposals capable of making meaningful changes in the field of education or to improve the service conditions of the teachers³⁷². Therefore the MATU opposed the report. Adhyapakan in an editorial wrote "Even when a committee was appointed, the Teachers Union in Malabar had pointed out that the committee with certain elites having no connection in the field of elementary education could not do anything effectively in the field of elementary education. It is known to all that a committee with certain members who never got an opportunity to understand the pulse of villages could not plan a scheme imbibing the demands and aspirations of the villagers. Only those who are in touch with elementary education can make desirable proposals for the required changes in this subject. The Madras government closed its eyes on this important point and the result was a report which could not satisfy the educational experts and in effect became a useless one. The committee had no courage or farsightedness to accept a desirable and urgent proposal for the abolition of private management system and the take over of elementary education by the government. Teachers conferences continued to oppose the Alakappa Committee report³⁷³. At the same time they wished to formulate a new educational system suitable to an independent nation and requested the co-operation of the people to implement the same. Students conferences also demanded a thorough change in the field of elementary education.

The aided teachers were facing many other grievances during this period. They were getting their salary every month as M.O from January 1955. But they got it only after much waiting. The M.O sent by the DEO reached the branch Post Offices only on 30th or later. Due to the shortage of staff it was delayed in the Post Offices at the taluk head quarters. The non availability of sufficient fund created

³⁷⁰ The Desabhimani, December 13, 1955

³⁷¹ Ibid, October 16, 1955

³⁷² P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 134

³⁷³ The Desabhimani, December 13, 1955

some more delay in the branch Post Offices. Thus most of the teachers had to go and wait at the Post Offices to collect their salary. The teachers had another grievance while the government and municipal teachers were getting HRA, the same was denied to the elementary teachers. The issue was raised in the Madras Assembly. But it was reported that the same had not been sanctioned to them³⁷⁴. The corruption in the education department had also disturbed the teachers. Therefore the union sent petition against the corruption practiced in the office of the Deputy Inspector³⁷⁵. At the same time the government also adopted a hostile attitude towards the teachers. The teachers who participated in the anti-imperialist struggle were victimised. Thus V.P.Narayanan of Athirakam Higher Elementary School, P.Govindan Nair of Narath Higher Elementary School and C.K. Panikker of Parassinikkadav Higher Elementary School were denied their salary³⁷⁶.

When the CPI adopted the BTR thesis in 1948 the government had initiated a witch hunt on the communist. Many of the teachers sympathetic to the communists got their certificates suspended or were dismissed. Many others were imprisoned. Actually it was a period of oppression. However by 1951, these teachers once again became active in the union. But the union leadership was not happy about these developments. They retained their old political animosity towards them. Even after two years of union work, they were not allowed to work sincerely along with their colleagues. It actually infuriated the teachers. They realised that the leadership was more interested in retaining their position than to protect the interest of the teachers. Therefore protest and opposition against the leadership appeared here and there³⁷⁷. This anti communist policy was promptly followed by the Taluk Unions also. It was reflected in an incident during the period³⁷⁸. Vallathol Kumara Menon and K Kunhikrishanan Nambiar, two prominent leaders of the teacher movement were selected to the education committee of the District Board. Now the Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union conference adopted a resolution congratulating the Board president for the same. P.T. Bhaskara Panikker was the president of the District Board at that time. But the resolution was opposed. If it was placed for voting it would have been passed. But to retain

³⁷⁴ The Mathrubhumi, August 8, 1955

³⁷⁵ The Desabhimani, June 6, 1955

³⁷⁶ Ibid, July 23, 1955

³⁷⁷ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 98

³⁷⁸ Ibid

unity among the teachers, the resolution was withdrawn. Thus the progressive wing of the teachers tried their best to avoid the schism of 1948. They always emphasised the unity among the teachers. In the annual conference of the Palakkad Taluk Teachers Union T.C.Narayanan Nambiar explained the oppression confronted by the teachers movement and viewed all their achievements as the result of their unity and organisational strength³⁷⁹.

The government also adopted measures to crush the progressive wing of the teachers movement. The proceedings No. 941(b) dated 31-08-1955 issued by the Director of Education clearly revealed the same. The Deputy Inspector issued circular based on it. The teachers Association meetings got this order from the department threatening that all teachers involved in communist activities would be punished on the basis of article 145 of the MER. At the same time the action against teachers involved in the activities of other political parties was not mentioned³⁸⁰.

A poem entitled 'The Teacher's Voice' published in Desabhimani clearly reflected spirit of opposition of the teachers. It reminded the teachers tradition of anti-imperialist struggle and warned the government that if they were united, all their oppressive measures would be destroyed³⁸¹. The Chirakkal Taluk Teachers Union declared that the circular based on new order refused the civil right of the teacher and in view of the old experience it would be more harmful to the teachers. Hence it demanded the repeal of the order and all branches were asked to pass protest resolution and to send the same to the government. As it was a violation of the civil right guaranteed by the constitution, to ensure the legal validity of the order, the District Union was requested to submit a writ file in the Madras High Court³⁸². The Taluk Union once again emphasised the teachers right to involve in

³⁷⁹ The Desabhimani, December 25, 1955

³⁸⁰ Ibid, October 10,23, 1955. The article of P.R.Nambiar published in Desabhimani clearly traced the background of the political rights enjoyed by the teachers of Malabar. Even during the colonial period, the teachers were allowed to become members of political parties and also to involve in political activities. But the congress ministry of 1938 prohibited this right. Due to strong opposition, teachers were allowed to become members of political parties. But they expected much after independence. As the teachers movement became more vigorous. Madras government once again prohibited teachers politics and oppressed the teachers. Strong popular agitation compelled the government to withdraw their oppressive measures. The teachers of Malabar played an important role in defeating the education programme proposed by Rajaji. The same person who once eulogised and implemented the plan was the education Minister at that time. P.R argued that he was trying to use the same old weapon against the teachers

³⁸¹ Ibid, November 6, 1955. See appendix X

³⁸² Ibid, November 17, 1955

politics and demanded the repeal of the order that threatened the teachers involved in politics to be punished on the basis of the article 154 of the Madras Education Rule³⁸³. The Kozhikode taluk teachers union opposed the order³⁸⁴. The order was really used by the government to threaten the teachers. When it was reported that the Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Conference discussed not only educational matters but political matters also, the government warned the teachers about the order against politics. When questioned in the Assembly the Minister replied that only a warning was given to the teachers and no action was taken against them³⁸⁵.

It was the period of Aikya Kerala movement. The teachers could not neglect the same. In a meeting of Fort Kochi Teachers Union Vallathol Kumara Menon emphasised the special responsibility of the teachers in the formation of an Aikya Kerala State and refuted the baseless anxiety of certain teachers that a united Kerala would be against the interest of the teachers of Malabar and advised the teachers to rise to the occasion³⁸⁶. The Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union welcomed the recommendation of the High Power Committee for the formation of the Kerala state³⁸⁷. In the annual conference of the board Teachers Union T.C.Narayanan Nambiar argued that no government in the Aikya Kerala State can neglect the benefits enjoyed today by the teachers of Malabar³⁸⁸.

The Kozhikode Taluk Teachers Union welcomed the recommendation of the High Power Committee to form Kerala state³⁸⁹. At the same time some of the teachers were also anxious that they might lose their existing privileges. But T.C.Narayanan Nambiar declared that as the teachers movement in Malabar was very powerful, no government could refuse the benefits already enjoyed by them³⁹⁰. The Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Union welcomed the efforts for the linguistic reorganisation of the states and asked the Central Government to incorporate all Malayali majority areas including Gudallur within the proposed state of Kerala³⁹¹.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, December 11, 1955

³⁸⁴ *Ibid*, December 13, 1955

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*, November 22, 1955

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*, November 22, 1955

³⁸⁷ *Ibid*, December 13, 1955

³⁸⁸ *Ibid*, December 30, 1955

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, December 13, 1955

³⁹⁰ *Ibid*, December 30, 1955

³⁹¹ *Ibid*, May 12, 1956

Meanwhile it had been decided to convene a joint meeting of the executive members of the MATU and Malabar District Board Elementary Teachers Union at Ganapath High school, Calicut on 15th January 1956 itself to form a common association for the aided teachers of Malabar³⁹². P.T. Bhaskara Panikker, the president of the District Board, gave all guidance for the same³⁹³. Thus the joint meeting of board and aided teachers held at Ganapath High School, Calicut formed the Malabar District Elementary Teachers Federation with C.C. Nair as the president and Kambalat Govindan Nair as its secretary³⁹⁴. An executive committee consisting of both board and aided teachers was also constituted. A three member committee was selected to prepare a constitution for the federation. It was decided to incorporate the municipal teachers also with in the union. There were 5 municipalities in Malabar. Among them Kozhikode and Tellicherry had their own union. The federation asked the other municipalities to form their own union and all the municipalities were asked to send three representatives each to the federation³⁹⁵. Thus later the Municipal School Teachers Union in Malabar also joined the federation. The MATU decided to publish their journal, Adhyapakan as the journal of the new organisation³⁹⁶. Thus the journal of the Aided Teachers Union which was published at Kannur under K.V.Kunhikkannan Nair became the journal of the federation and began to be published at Calicut from December 1956 with P.K. Nambiar as its editor. The federation also decided to work together to make the 'advance grant day' of the board teachers and the 'anti-private management day' of the aided teachers a great success³⁹⁷. Teachers responded to it and made preparations to observe these days effectively³⁹⁸. Thus the federation asked the teachers to make the 'advance grant day' a great success. Now the general secretary of the MATU called up on the teachers to co-operate with the same and to fulfil their obligation towards a sister organisation³⁹⁹. Thus the 'advance grant day' was observed all over Malabar. Joint meetings and *jathas* of Aided and Board teachers were held at several places like, Payyannur, Perambra and Kondotty. On such an occasion T.K.Kakkunni Nambiar, the

³⁹² The Mathrubhumi, January 14, 1956

³⁹³ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.134

³⁹⁴ The Desabhimani, January 16, 1956

³⁹⁵ Ibid, June 14, 1956

³⁹⁶ The Mathrubhumi, January 19, 1956

³⁹⁷ The Desabhimani, January 16, 1956

³⁹⁸ Ibid, February 2, 1956

³⁹⁹ Ibid, February 10, 1956

secretary of the Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union argued that even though the issues of board and aided teachers were different, their basic issue was one and the same⁴⁰⁰. M.P. Govinda Menon declared that if the teachers were pushed to poverty, then the government would be responsible for it⁴⁰¹. Teachers meetings in different parts of Malabar passed resolutions and asked the Madras government to sanction the advance grant⁴⁰². As the Minister failed to fulfil his promise of advance grant, the government was requested to sanction the same to ensure the proper payment of salary to the teachers⁴⁰³.

The Aided School managers of Malabar continued to harass the teachers. There was unjust dismissal at several places⁴⁰⁴. At certain places the teachers were even physically assaulted.

The teachers who were demanding their security of employment had to face another serious threat to their objective. Three teachers of Azheekode South Higher Elementary School had been suspended without prior consent from the department. Consequently the DEO and the Divisional Inspector issued an order to withdraw the recognition of the school. But the manager Kammaran Gurkkal questioned the validity of the same in the Madras High Court. The High Court in its judgment declared their order invalid⁴⁰⁵. This judgment prompted many managers to dismiss their teachers.

In view of the High Court judgment on the Azheekode school case and the union memorandum pertaining to it, certain amendments were made in the provision 13(2) of the recognition rules so as to protect the interest of the teachers. Accordingly the government issued an order on 24th March 1956 to assure teachers security of employment. It stated clearly that the government was not ready to take over Elementary Schools in any of the district of the Madras state. But certain provision was made to ensure teachers security of employment. It was

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid*, February 15, 1956

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, February 17, 1956

⁴⁰² *Ibid*, February 16, 1956

⁴⁰³ *Ibid*, February 15, 1956

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*, January 17,24,25, February 10,25 1956. E.P. Yesoda of Mathotam school at Kannadi Paramba was given dismissal notice. When the teachers of Ariyattur Devi Vilasam School resisted an attempt of dismissal, the manager closed the school. The manager of Mattool South Elementary School tried to dismiss the whole teachers of his school. The teachers dismissal at Valppad invited department intervention. The manager of Kaniyaram Lower Elementary School Wyanad tried to dismiss his teachers

⁴⁰⁵ *The Mathrubhumi*, March 4, 1956

stipulated that only the teachers whose certificates were suspended or dismissed by the Director or Divisional Inspector could be dismissed with out prior notice. Others could be dismissed based on sufficient reasons with 3 months prior notice or salary. But the teachers should be informed of their faults and be given an opportunity to explain their stand. The teacher could be dismissed only with the prior consent of the department. How ever if a DEO demanded the reinstatement of the teacher on the basis of the appeal, it should be enforced with in 10 days even if a final appeal verdict was awaited. Otherwise the DEO could take action against the management. The managers were also to give salary during the dismissed period⁴⁰⁶. This order gave partial security of employment to the teachers of Malabar. The managers could not use the rule 14 in the law Court to justify the dismissal of teachers. Several dismissed teachers benefited out of the new orders. In a reply to the petition submitted by the Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union, the DEO declared that all steps would be taken to settle the issues of the teachers who were dismissed against the existing rules⁴⁰⁷. The new situation strengthened the union. It interfered in several issues of the teachers and protected their interest. Thus O.T. Achutha Menon got his salary for the dismissed period. The fine imposed by DEO on P.Sankaran, the joint secretary of the Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union for criticising the department was cancelled. Though K.M. Balan was the one deserved to get the salary, the Deputy Inspector had given it to some other teachers. But the Deputy Inspector was directed to give the salary to K.M.Balan himself. All these incidents enhanced the prestige of the union and stimulated their faith in organised actions⁴⁰⁸.

The Madras government published a white paper proposing to provide free and compulsory education by the end of the 3rd five year plan⁴⁰⁹. It contained a detailed statistics of the existing schools, teachers, students, the educational expenses of the state and the changes to be made in the field of elementary education⁴¹⁰. But it failed to make any proposal to increase teachers salary or to assure their security of employment. So there was opposition against it in certain Teachers Union conferences⁴¹¹. Hence the government was asked to seek the

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, April 20, 1956

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, May 1, 1956

⁴⁰⁸ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 104

⁴⁰⁹ The Mathrubhumi, March 27, 1956

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, March 28, 1956

⁴¹¹ The Desabhimani, April 4, 1956

opinion of the Teachers Union before adopting a scheme based on it⁴¹². The Taluk Teachers Union discussed the white paper but demanded the take over of elementary education by the government⁴¹³.

The MATU organised a discussion on the white paper at the Mission School Badagara on 9th May 1956. More than 50 teachers attended it. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, Dr. K.B.Menon, P.R.Nambiar and V.R. Krishnaiyyar had sent their suggestions to the meeting. It adopted the following suggestions. (1). A uniform 11 year school education all over India; 7 year compulsory elementary education and 4 year secondary education. (2). School admission after the age of 5. (3). A basic salary of Rs 50, 60 and 70 to lower trained, higher trained and secondary trained teachers. (4). The prevailing teacher-students ratio until the principle of one teacher for one class was adopted. (5). 200 working days. (6). All school under the same agency and the government take over of elementary education. Till then the department control over the appointment and dismissal of teachers⁴¹⁴. However in the meeting it was pointed out that the white paper would not be beneficial because Malabar would soon become a part of the new Kerala state⁴¹⁵.

The 14th annual conference of the MATU was held at BEM High School Palghat on 18th, 19th and 20th May 1956⁴¹⁶. Delegates were elected as one for 30 members with a delegate fee of 8 *anna*⁴¹⁷. A teachers rally rounded the city with slogan demanding the abolition of the private management system and the government take over of elementary education but it is to be noted that the public took only a spectators role. There was not much people participation in the rally or conference. Prominent leaders like Dr. S.Radhakrishnan, V.K.Krishnamenon and A.K.Gopalan sent their messages to wish the conference. The conference exposed the support given by the department to the managers in their policy against the teachers movement.

At the same time the absence of the rapport between the teachers and the public which had existed till 1947 was pointed out. Hence the teachers were not successful in making the people aware that their agitation was for reasonable

⁴¹² Ibid, April 5, 1956

⁴¹³ Ibid, May 12, 1956

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, May 15, 1956

⁴¹⁵ Ibid

⁴¹⁶ The Mathrubhumi, May 22, 1956

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, April 28, 1956

demands. C.C. Nair in his presidential address admitted the progress achieved by the teachers after independence, but argued that they would not get their real relief until the abolition of the private management system and the government take over of elementary education⁴¹⁸. A symposium 'An education scheme suitable to a socialist state' was organised as part of the conference and chaired by Prof. Joseph Mundasseri. He emphasised its relevance in the wake of the formation of Kerala state. The delegate session of the conference proposed a resolution for an education scheme based on the principles of basic education. But M. Krishnan Kutty proposed an amendment for 'an education scheme suitable for a socialist system'. It led to a heated controversy which reflected the awareness of the teachers about an Indian path towards socialism. However the amendment was voted out and thus the conference demanded a national scheme of education based on the principles of basic education. The conference asked the government to reinstate the teachers dismissed at Azheekode, Naduvallur, Ariyallur, Kannur and Nadavayal schools and also to restore the hill tract allowance given to the Wyanad teachers. At the same time teachers were advised to open reading rooms in the school area, provide adult education, and form children literacy clubs and also to support the co-operative societies.

The pension scheme promised by the government had not been implemented even after a long period. The issue was raised in the Malabar Assembly⁴¹⁹. The Taluk Union conference regretted the government's stand⁴²⁰. Hence the MATU expressed anxiety over the same and requested the government to issue necessary orders before the reorganisation of the state⁴²¹. The union president was also authorised to submit a memorandum to the Minister to invite his attention to this issue and also to contact the leaders of board and municipal Teachers Unions⁴²². The North Malabar Teachers Guild also demanded the implementation of the pension scheme before the separation of Malabar from the

⁴¹⁸ The Mathrubhumi May 22, 1956 & The Desabhimani May 24, 1956. P. Vasudeva Menon, in his inaugural address opposed the dismissal of teachers and demanded the abolition of private management system. Ullattil Govindan Kutty Nair presided over the cultural session. Here K. Damodaran highlighted the progress achieved by the teachers movement during the last 25 years. He admitted their grievance of security of employment, but pointed out the material and cultural progress obtained by the teachers.

⁴¹⁹ The Desabhimani, April 5, 1956

⁴²⁰ Ibid, May 9, 1956

⁴²¹ Ibid, July 6, 1956

⁴²² The Mathrubhumi, July 5, 1956

Madras state⁴²³. The South Karnatic District Teachers Guild decided to observe a 'Pension day' on 29th July 1956⁴²⁴. The SITU had submitted a memorandum requesting to incorporate the lower trained teachers also with in the purview of the pension scheme. Thus the government decided to implement the teachers pension scheme w.e.f 1st April 1955. The Minister promised to consider the case of the LT teachers favourably⁴²⁵. However no definite step was adopted to enforce the scheme. Mathrubhumi doubted it as a tactics to postpone its implementation only after the reorganisation of the state and denounced it as a crime and injustice⁴²⁶. Desabhimani also highlighted this issue. It argued that the teachers movement in Malabar was the most organised one and it was when they were on the verge of an agitation for salary increase, that a pension scheme was promised to them. The government refused to implement the same and actually followed a treacherous policy as that of the factory owners⁴²⁷. The Malabar Elementary Teachers Federation decided to submit a memorandum to the government and advised the Board, Aided and Municipal teachers to send telegram to the government⁴²⁸. Consequently once again it was declared that all teachers under management and local boards up the age of 40 would obtain this benefit w.e.f 1st April 1955⁴²⁹. Even at this stage no clear instructions related to the pension scheme was given to the Taluk Office or the office of the Deputy Inspector. Even the concerned application forms were not made available to the teachers. Under these circumstances once again the attention of the new Kerala government was invited on this issue⁴³⁰.

There were a large number of unqualified teachers with long service in the Elementary Schools of Malabar. It was the financial benefits that prompted the managers to appoint them in their schools. They exploited the teachers. The Teachers Union conference held at Ramanattukara demanded permanent exemption for the teachers who were 35 years old and 10 years service. The government refused to admit it but agreed to give yearly exemptions. The direct salary system gave an opportunity for the managers to demand donation of Rs

⁴²³ Ibid, June 26, 1956

⁴²⁴ Ibid, July 12, 1956

⁴²⁵ The Desabhimani, July 11, 1956

⁴²⁶ The Mathrubhumi, August 12, 1956

⁴²⁷ The Desabhimani, August 30, 1956

⁴²⁸ Ibid

⁴²⁹ Ibid, September 4, 1956 & The Mathrubhumi, September 4, 1956

⁴³⁰ The Mathrubhumi, December 18, 1956

500 for fresh appointment in their schools. So they began to dismiss the unqualified teachers⁴³¹. The government also decided to stop the practice of giving exemption to these teachers. Thus a large number of teachers got out of service. Now the union demanded permanent exemption to teachers of 40 years and who had 15 years of service. Thus telegrams were sent to the department and to the government⁴³². A memorandum was also submitted. C.C. Nair requested the manager to retain them on compassionate grounds. Now the government agreed to retain those teachers who had a satisfactory service history. However the practice of demanding donations for fresh appointment continued. The unemployment among the trained teachers also contributed to this development. The Kottayam Taluk Teachers Union asked the government to take action against this ugly practice. At the same time teachers were advised not to involve in such practices⁴³³.

It was at that time the teachers of Ganapath High School at Kallai and Chalappuram demanded their salary arrear and declared a strike against the management⁴³⁴. The attempt made by P.K.Nambiar failed and hence the teachers refused to withdraw their strike⁴³⁵. The students organised a *jatha* in support of the strike⁴³⁶. The Kozhikode Municipal Council passed a resolution and expressed anxiety over the teachers strike⁴³⁷. The parents of the students submitted a memorandum to the DEO to settle the issue⁴³⁸. Now the government issued an order for giving the salary arrear directly by taking the amount from the grant due to the Malabar education society. The student meeting held at Calicut Town Hall requested to solve the strike at the earliest⁴³⁹.

Teachers Unions adopted their own measures to propagate literacy among the people. To ensure universal education T.C.Narayanan Nambiar advised the teachers to organise a 'literacy brigade'⁴⁴⁰. Thus the Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Union decided to organise an education propaganda programme at Attappadi, the

⁴³¹ The Desabhimani, May 5, 1956

⁴³² The Mathrubhumi, June 1, 1956

⁴³³ Ibid, July 20, 1956

⁴³⁴ Ibid, July 14,15, 1956

⁴³⁵ Ibid, July 16, 1956

⁴³⁶ Ibid, July 19, 1956

⁴³⁷ Ibid, July 21, 1956

⁴³⁸ Ibid, July 21, 1956. Mathrubhumi wrote an editorial to highlight the issue

⁴³⁹ Ibid, July 22, 1956

⁴⁴⁰ The Desabhimani, April 13, 1956

tribal region of the taluk. The teachers were asked to join the propaganda squad⁴⁴¹. Thus eight teacher volunteers decided to go and stay there to mingle with the Irular and Mutuga tribal groups to impart education to them. With a view to raise a fund for the same it was decided to stage a skit written by Cherukad, 'Velicham Varunnu' at several places like Pattambi, Ottappalam and Mannarkkad⁴⁴². Teachers were also asked to donate dress items to make the programme a success. Thus the programme was inaugurated on 2nd October 1956⁴⁴³. The teacher volunteer stayed in the sheds of the forest department. Altogether 29 tribals attended the camp. Soon three more camps were opened⁴⁴⁴. Free milk and dress were distributed to the tribals in the camp. The programme continued successfully even at the end of the month⁴⁴⁵.

The Kerala state was formed in 1956. As a part of the state reorganisation, Malabar and Kasargod seceded from the state of Madras and formed a part of the new Kerala state on 1st November 1956. N. Sundararaja Naidu was appointed the Director of Education. The MATU asked him not to curtail the existing benefits of the teachers in the new state of Kerala. The union asked him not to extend the Tiru Kochi shift system to Malabar, but to implement the mid-day meals scheme proposed by the Madras government. As given to the teachers of Malabar, the government was asked to give salary directly to all teachers of the state from 1st November 1956. The union also decided to leave their demand for the government take over of Elementary Schools to the new legislature of Kerala. At the same time the government was asked to prevent the unnecessary punishment of teachers and the malpractices associated with the appointment of teachers. The government was also asked to prepare a seniority list of trained teachers in each range and to appoint them only with the consent of the Deputy Inspectors. As Malabar and Kasargod had their own rules and regulations, problems were expected in this region during the interim period. Hence government was requested to consider this area as a separate region and to appoint a Special Deputy Inspector to deal with their issues⁴⁴⁶. Now the Director of education declared that the existing educational system of Malabar would continue until the

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid*, September 22, 1956

⁴⁴² *Ibid*, September 26, 1956

⁴⁴³ *Ibid*, October 9, 1956

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid*, October 15, 1956

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid*, October 28, 1956

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*, October 20, 1956

financial decisions were adopted by the new government of Kerala⁴⁴⁷. The Tiru Kochi aided teachers conference held at Quilon declared that their existing benefit should not be curtailed in the new state of Kerala. And requested the government of Tiru Kochi and Madras to adopt measures to unify the salary scale, allowance and service conditions of teachers in the proposed state of Kerala⁴⁴⁸.

Meanwhile the Madras government had increased the DA of the servants. But it was not applicable to the seceded areas. At the same time the Kerala government refused to allow the salary scale and DA already existing in Tiru Kochi to the teachers of Malabar⁴⁴⁹. The Malabar Elementary Teachers Federation called up on the teachers to protest against this discrimination. Thus 'DA day' was observed all over Malabar on 1st December 1956⁴⁵⁰. It was also decided to organise a teachers *jatha* to Trivandrum to submit a memorandum to the government. This *jatha* of 40 members under C.C. Nair was formally inaugurated at Kannur on 27th January 1957. C. Ramankutty Nair and Achutan Nambiar acted as the organiser and director of the *jatha* respectively. The *jatha* got warm reception in Malabar and Tiru Kochi. On its way procession and public meetings were organised at several places like Tellicherry, Kozhikode, Trichur, Ernakulam and Kottayam⁴⁵¹. Actually this *jatha* paved the way for the formation of the Kerala Aided Primary School Teachers Union⁴⁵². The *jatha* reached Trivandrum on 31st January. After a great procession, the teachers tried to meet the government adviser to submit a memorandum. But K.Ramunni Menon, the adviser of the Kerala state refused to meet the teachers collectively. This arrogance of Malayali bureaucrats was severely criticised. Now a delegation consisting of C.C. Nair, K.V.K. Nair, K.V. Kunhikannan Nair, C.K.Vasudevan Nambuthiri and K.P. Narayanan Nair met the government adviser and submitted the memorandum. They discussed the issue with the state Chief Secretary also. Finally the government agreed to increase the DA of the teachers of Malabar to the rate of the Tiru Kochi teachers⁴⁵³.

⁴⁴⁷ The Mathrubhumi, October 10, 1956

⁴⁴⁸ The Desabhimani, September 11, 1956

⁴⁴⁹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 236

⁴⁵⁰ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 107

⁴⁵¹ The Mathrubhumi, January 25, 1957

⁴⁵² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 107

⁴⁵³ The Mathrubhumi, February 2,5, 1957

After the formation of the new state of Kerala, Malabar was divided into Kozhikode, Kannur and Palakkad districts for administrative convenience. The union was also asked to adopt the same line in their organisational matter. However it was objected⁴⁵⁴. The issue was raised in the annual conference of the union. The 15th annual conference of the union was held at Guruvayur on 17th, 18th and 19th of May 1957⁴⁵⁵. G.T. Ukkann Master, the president of the Ponnani Taluk Union was the chief organiser of the conference. This conference was significant in many respects⁴⁵⁶. Firstly it was for the first time that all the resolutions were printed and distributed among the delegates. The conference adopted decisions on organisational matters. After a long discussion and controversy it was decided to retain the Malabar union by incorporating Kasargod and also to form three District Unions as its lower units to function above the Taluk Union. The conference also constituted an adhoc committee of 20 members for the formation of Kerala Aided Elementary Teachers Federation. Above all it was in this conference that Prof. Joseph Mundasseri, the Education Minister promised to unify the salary scale of Malabar and Tiru Kochi Teachers. Here he also pointed out that most of the school buildings of the land were actually raised using a part of the teachers salary, and said that it would not be allowed in future and the managers would certainly be controlled. It infuriated the managers of Kerala. Consequently efforts were made to increase the salary of the teachers of Malabar. Thus for the first time in history, their salary scale was scientifically revised from 7th June 1957. Even though it was lower than the scale enjoyed by the Tiru Kochi teachers, it was better than the one prevailed in Malabar before 1st November 1956. Now there arose the demand for a uniform scale for the whole teachers of Kerala.

The demand for a uniform salary scale for the whole state began to get wide support. The Tiru Kochi teachers conference had asked the government of Madras and Tiru Kochi to adopt measures to unify the salary scale, allowance and other service conditions of teachers in the proposed state of Kerala⁴⁵⁷. The Tiru Kochi Aided Primary School Teachers Federation asked the government to give the salary scale of Tiru Kochi to all the teachers of the state from November 1st

⁴⁵⁴ The Desabhimani, October 11, 24, 1956

⁴⁵⁵ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 108

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid

⁴⁵⁷ The Desabhimani, September 11, 1956

1956 along with the weightage allowed to the government scheduled teachers. At the same time it demanded educational concession to the children of the teachers of Tiru Kochi as granted to the Malabar teachers⁴⁵⁸. The MATU also raised the demand for a common salary scale and made preparation for an agitation⁴⁵⁹. The meeting held at Kottayam to discuss the formation of a Kerala Aided Teachers Federation repeated the demand⁴⁶⁰. The issue was very important for the teachers of Malabar. The Malabar Board Teachers Union, and Municipal Teachers Union also raised the demand for a uniform salary scale. Thus a joint meeting of these unions was held at Calicut and sent a deputation to Trivandrum⁴⁶¹. However there was no favourable action. Thus a 'salary-weightage day' was observed with procession and meetings all over Malabar on 7th December 1957⁴⁶². When it also proved futile, it was decided to lead a teachers *jatha* from Kannur to Trivandrum on 5th March 1958. The popular government in Kerala that could realise the injustice involved in this issue agreed to admit their stand. Thus before the commencement of the proposed *jatha*, the government issued an order and admitted the demand for the common salary and weightage to the teachers of Kerala. Thus, for the first time, it was the communist government of Kerala which granted a scientific salary scale to the primary school teachers of Kerala⁴⁶³.

At the same time, the political rift within the union also became acute during this period⁴⁶⁴. The union leadership adopted measures to defeat the left wing leaders in the union elections. It was clearly reflected in the Tirur and Ponnani Taluk Union elections. However G.T. Ukken Master and V.K.Menon, the left wing leader got elected as the union presidents respectively in both these places. In the District Union election of 5th January 1957, efforts were made to expel V.K.Menon from the executive committee. But the strong opposition compelled the leaders to accept him in the union leadership. C.Ramankutty Nair, a left wing leader defeated P. Narayanan Nair and got elected as president of the Valluvanad Taluk Teachers Union. But as he was a person involved in the communist violence of 1948, C.C. Nair and his supporters refused to accept him in the union

⁴⁵⁸ The Mathrubhumi, January 4, 1957

⁴⁵⁹ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 109

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, The Mathrubhumi, December 29, 1956

⁴⁶¹ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 237

⁴⁶² Ibid

⁴⁶³ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 110

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 105,106

executive. But they were forced to withdraw their stand. The same attitude was reflected in the defeat of all left wing leaders in the election of the Kerala State Elementary Teachers Federation. The attempt made at the joint meeting of aided and board teachers to remove Kambalath from his position also exposed the rift with in the union.

As soon as the linguistic reorganisation of the state and the formation of Kerala state were generally accepted, efforts were also made to integrate the service conditions of the primary teachers of Tiru Kochi and Malabar. In October 1954 itself the Kochin Aided Primary Teachers Association and Tiruvitamkur Private Primary Teachers Association joined together and formed the Tiru Kochi Aided Primary Teachers Federation⁴⁶⁵. The annual meeting of the Trissur group of CAPTA passed a resolution and asked Tiru Kochi aided teachers to associate with MATU to form a Kerala Aided Primary Teachers Federation⁴⁶⁶. In the annual meeting of the Tiruvitamkur Private Primary School Teachers Association, Panambally highlighted the importance of an all Kerala Teachers Union⁴⁶⁷. In the 15th annual conference of the Valluvanad Teachers Union, MP. Govinda Menon advised the teachers to stay united in the wake of the formation of Kerala state⁴⁶⁸. In view of the formation of the Kerala state, Desabhimani advised the MATU to give leadership to lay the foundation of an All Kerala Teachers Movement⁴⁶⁹. The North Malabar District Teachers Guild also asked the District Guild to contact the Tiru Kochi teachers association to think about the formation of a common association for the state of Kerala⁴⁷⁰. There after C.C. Nair, N.P. Narayanan Nair, P.Ramankutty Nair and Appu Master attended a meeting held at Kottayam to discuss the possibility of an All Kerala Teachers Association⁴⁷¹. The Guruvayur conference constituted an adhoc committee to proceed the efforts to form an All Kerala Association. It met at Kottayam and discussed the matter with the leaders of all Tiruvithamkur Private Primary Teachers Association. This meeting raised the slogan of common association and a common salary scale for the teachers of the whole state. Thus the Kerala Aided Elementary Teachers Federation was

⁴⁶⁵ P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p. 204

⁴⁶⁶ The Mathrubhumi, November 24, 1956

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, December 29, 1956

⁴⁶⁸ The Desabhimani, May 12, 1956

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, May 28, 1956

⁴⁷⁰ The Mathrubhumi, June 26, 1956

⁴⁷¹ Ibid, December 29, 1956

formed on 8th June 1957. C.C. Nair and K.O.John were elected as its president and secretary respectively. Thus it became the first organisation integrated after the formation of the Kerala state. The first meeting of the federation held at Ernakulam on 23rd July welcomed the proposed education bill of Prof. Joseph Mundasseri⁴⁷². Soon the leaders of the federation which was actually a union of four different associations prepared a common constitution, merged together and formed the Kerala Aided Elementary Teachers Union on January 1st 1958. C.C. Nair the leader of the MATU became the president; D.Vivekanandan, the leader of the Tiruvithamkur Aided Primary Teachers Association its vice president, K.O.John the leader of the Kochin teachers, its secretary and G.Umman the leader of All Tiruvitamkur Private Primary Teachers Association became its treasurer. Thus it became the largest teachers movement in India.

⁴⁷² Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p. 110

CONCLUSION

The region of Kerala has had a long and rich tradition of education. The Brahmins had their *sabhamatts* and *vedapatasalas*. Many among the *Nairs* got educated in their *kalaris*. But *ezhuthupallies* and *kudipallikudams* were the real centres of popular education in Kerala. Malabar region also had this tradition of indigenous education. The Christian missionaries were the pioneers of modern education in Malabar. But they gave more emphasis to higher levels of schools and collegiate education which catered to the interest of the elite and urban sections of society. Thus mass education got neglected.

With the growth of the national movement, the demand for national education also came up. Consequently the Madras Elementary Education Act was passed and the grant-in-aid system was introduced. Earlier schools were opened by rich individuals and landlords. But the economic crisis prompted many of them to leave the scene. At the same time middle class landlords of Malabar who had to face the economic crisis turned their attention to this field as a means for augmenting their income to maintain and enhance their family prestige. Merchants, middle class farmers, retired government servants and educated young men of the upper class also opened schools in Malabar.

The economic crisis, decline of the matrilineal system and acute unemployment prompted many members of the upper class families to become teachers in aided elementary schools. Several others having an agrarian background also joined these schools as teachers. Many were actually the tenants, of the managers who were landlords.

Various agencies imparted education in Malabar in the early decades of the 20th century. But majority of the schools were aided elementary schools managed by private individuals. The teachers of these schools received salaries much lower than those employed under other agencies. They were also denied favourable working conditions enjoyed by other teachers. The annual grants of these schools were allotted based

on the report of the deputy Inspectors. Hence all steps were adopted by the managers and the teachers to please them.

The managers considered the teachers as their servants. They misappropriated the salary of the teachers. Those who resisted were dismissed. Thus the teachers had no security of employment. The department and the government refused to interfere in the questions relating to the pay and service conditions of the teachers. Thus the condition of the elementary school teachers was extremely miserable.

At the same time these teachers could establish intimate connection with the people and emerge as the leaders of the villages. Being the most enlightened section of the rural poor, they actively participated in the social renaissance movement and national movement. Majority of their students were children of poor peasants and workers. Many of them hailed from the peasant families and were the tenants of the managers who were landlords. They were also a group exploited like the industrial workers. It enabled them to realize their grievances. All these experiences generated a new hope among them to redress their grievances through organisation and agitation.

In 1934 an aided school teachers union was formed at Kalliasseri. It led to the formation of union at several places in Chirakkal taluk. Most of the early union activists were supporters of the national movement. They got help and support from the congress socialist. Soon the union activities spread all over Malabar and the teachers demanded regular payment of salary and security of employment.

The early unionisation was actually facilitated by the *Gurujana Samajam* meetings. The aided elementary teachers met separately after these meetings discussed their issues and units of the teachers union were formed at several places. Propaganda *jathas* were organized. Consequently branch unions were formed in different parts of the district.

The main demands raised by the teachers were quarterly grant, regular payment of salary, salary parity with local board teachers, security of employment, monthly salary and representation in the District Education

Council. They adopted several methods to highlight their demands. It included *jathas*¹, refusal to sign the acquittance, observation of special days and weeks², propaganda through press³ and submission of memorandums to the officials⁴. Public meetings, telegrams, mass petitions, delegation to the authorities and distribution of pamphlets were also used to highlight the demands of the teachers.

The managers on their part resorted to many coercive measures – suspension, dismissal, withholding of part or full of the teachers salary, police help and even physical assault against the teachers. The resistance by the teachers often assumed diverse forms. Sitting in ‘dharna’ when dismissed, protest meetings and *jathas* starting rival schools and organizing *hartals* and strikes were some of them.

The movement passed through certain phases. The first phase was characterised by propaganda *jathas*, meetings, submission of memorandums, refusal to sign false acquittanace and direct resistance against arbitrary dismissal. The MATU decided to take up the issue of the arbitrary dismissal of teachers and submitted a memorandum to the director of education. He promised to consider it sympathetically.

At the same time managers dismissed teachers in service to make fresh appointment for low salary. They often refused full salary to their teachers but demanded acquittance for the full amount. Those who refused were dismissed. Now the teachers demanded that appointment and dismissal of teachers be made only with the consent of the department. They also questioned the cruel exploitation of the untrained teachers by the managers. The annual examination was a field of exploitation for the inspectors. So vigilance committees of teachers were constituted to trace it and the union asked the government to make it a public examination. However the teachers felt that their grievances could be redressed only through the abolition of the private management system.

¹ Teachers organised propaganda *jathas* and huge *jathas* with placards as a part of their conferences to highlight their demands.

² Grant week , union week, untrained teachers day, union recognition day, sympathy day etc.

³ Mathrubhumi, Al Ameen, Prabhatham, and the union journal Adhyapakan were used to publish articles highlighting the demands of the teachers.

⁴ It included Director of Education, Minister of education, Prime Minister etc.

The radical teachers conference held at Pinarayi indicated this trend. Consequently the union raised the demand for the abolition of private management system. At the same time based on the recommendation submitted by R.M.Statham, the government agreed to increase the salary of the teachers. Now the teachers realised the relevance of the union and the union activities became more active.

In the election of 1937 teachers worked for the victory of the congress candidates. The formation of the congress ministry gave an impetus to the organizational activities of the teachers. It opened the second phase of the teachers movement. But the policy adopted by the congress government disappointed the teachers. The growth of the left trend within the congress was attributed to the teachers. Therefore steps were taken to prevent the political activities of the teachers of Malabar.

At the same time the managers attempted to crush the union. Thus the union leaders were dismissed in different parts of Malabar. Besides a large number of teachers were dismissed for being members of the union or for demanding full salary. Some of them were even physically assaulted. But the teachers mobilized popular support and resisted these efforts even by opening rival schools.

The cruel exploitation behind the grant-in-aid system and the issue of the security of employment were the problems confronted by the teachers. Hence when the peasants and workers were fighting against landlordism and capitalism, the teachers demanded the abolition of private management system. They could mobilize great popular support. Now the government promised to introduce a license system to improve the condition of teachers. But it was rejected by the teachers as well as the managers. When the teachers moved to a path of direct agitation the government issued an order containing the provision for a service register to ensure their security of employment. Even though it created a new spirit among the teachers, they repeated the demand for monthly salary and abolition of private management system. But they realised that their objectives could not be achieved without the abolition of imperialism. Hence all efforts were made to integrate their movement with the anti-

imperialist movement. The article of T.C.Narayanan Nambiar published in *Prabhatham* characterised the movement as a part of the anti-imperialist movement. It gave a clear perspective to the teachers movement and helped a lot to rally the teachers against British imperialism.

The oppression of teachers became more intensive. Even the union president was dismissed. Now the teachers became aware that a strike was inevitable to redress their grievances. But at that time they were facing the British government directly. Being aware of the importance of the popular support they wished to adopt a mode of agitation that would not affect the education of the students. Thus it was decided to boycott the *Gurujana Samajam* meetings. The agitation spread all over Malabar. Several teachers were suspended or dismissed as a consequence. Many teachers lost their certificates. The department and the managers adopted all efforts to defeat the agitation. It led to picketing, arrest and imprisonment of teachers. The agitation gained great popular support. The oppressive policy of the government was severely criticized. It prompted the government to adopt certain measures favourable to the teachers. The boycott of *Gurujana Samajam* was a crucial chapter in the history of the teachers movement in Malabar. The elementary teachers of Malabar were the first to organise an agitation of Civil Disobedience against the British during the war period. Thus they came very close to the left movement and proved to be a major tributary of the main stream of the anti-imperialist movement in Malabar.

The Quit India movement, the Peoples War policy and the problems created by the global war had profound impact on the teachers movement in Malabar. The global war had made the life of the teachers extremely miserable. Their agitation for war allowance made them aware of the necessity of a centralized leadership. It led to the formation of the standing committee of the teachers union.

The Quit India Movement and the Peoples War Policy had sowed the seeds of disunity among the teachers. But the Tellicherry conference adopted an anti-fascist line and raised the slogan of Teacher, Manager Peoples Unity. The union journal played a crucial role in maintaining unity

among the teachers. But an allegation was raised that the communist party was behind this policy shift of the union. It turned some teachers against the standing committee. Consequently clear steps were adopted to affiliate the taluk teachers unions with the Malabar teachers guild. It opened a new chapter in the history of the south Indian teachers union.

The war had made the life extremely miserable in Malabar. Now the teachers took up the grave issues of the common people. They came to the forefront in the fight against poverty, famine and epidemics. They also came forward to protect education. They adopted measures to help their colleagues who had been suffering due to their involvement in the agitation of 1940.

At the same time they raised the demand for monthly salary and the abolition of private management system. The acute poverty had made the life of the teachers deplorable. Many of them were compelled to give up their profession. So they demanded increase in their salary and DA and monthly salary without deduction. The teachers turned towards direct action. Their convention held at Calicut revived the former MATU. Consequently government adopted certain measures favourable to the teachers. But their major demands remained neglected. Now the MATU repeated the major demands of the teachers and asked them to be ready for a general strike. But there was an allegation that the communists were behind the strike decision. It led to the formation of the Nationalist Teacher Forum at Calicut. But the teachers *jatha* under V.Ramunni from Mangalore to Madras awakened the teachers in different parts of the state. Thus the teachers union in different parts of Malabar got ready for a strike against the government. The strike ballot indicated that majority of the teachers were in favour of a strike. The board and municipal teachers also turned against the government. Teachers obtained support from all corners. Their agitation was viewed as popular struggle and was characterised as a fight against British imperialism. At last government agreed to increase the teaching grant. But as the teachers were demanding a salary scale, the compromise talk failed.

T.T.Krishnamachari, the Central Minister for Commerce reopened the compromise talks. Consequently the government issued a communiqué and sanctioned a salary scale to the elementary teachers of Malabar. The teachers who could feel the change in the attitude of the government decided to postpone their strike but highlighted their demands including the abolition of private management system. When the congress was trying to mobilise all people of India against British imperialism, an agitation against the congress ministry was considered against the interest of the nation. Hence the teachers finally withdrew from the agitation.

The popular government of post independent India disappointed the teachers. The political polarisation of the period also got reflected on the teachers movement, the radical section of the union tried to use this situation to fight and obtain their urgent demands. But it was viewed as a communist design and efforts were made to expel them from the union. At the same time the Ranadive thesis adopted by the communist party hastened the suppression of teachers. Teaching grant was withheld at several places. All these created great unrest among the teachers.

The government also failed to implement the promise given to the teachers in 1947. So the teachers repeated their demands including the abolition of the private management system. Thus they moved on to a strike. At the same time they also decided to oppose the new scheme of elementary education proposed by the government. The teachers obtained great popular support. However as advised by the political leaders of Malabar, they withdrew from their proposed strike but continued to oppose the 'Rajaji' scheme. It was accused that the communist were the brain behind this opposition. But the opposition continued till the scheme was withdrawn by the government. The teachers also protested against the denial of voting rights to the elementary teachers and arbitrary dismissal. The organized movement of the teachers in the district of Malabar forced the government to adopt certain favourable measures including the provision for pension scheme and security of employment.

When the teachers were fighting to obtain their demands and opposing all government schemes, they had their own creative proposals

and programmes in the field of education. Thus they came forward to formulate an education scheme suitable to Malabar. They responded positively with their own proposal to the white paper published by the government to provide free and compulsory education. Sincere efforts were also adopted to propagate literacy among the people.

At the same time they repeated their demands including the abolition of private management system. Their attitude reflected their aspiration towards a socialist path. They joined hands with the board and municipal teachers to form the Malabar elementary teachers federation. At the same time they pointed out the absence of the rapport between the teachers and the common people that had existed till 1947.

The MATU also emphasized the role of the teachers in the Aikya Kerala movement and decided to leave their demand for the abolition of the private management system to the new legislature of Kerala. The formation of the state led to the union raising the demand for a common salary scale and an All Kerala Teachers Movement. Thus the first communist government sanctioned a scientific salary scale for the teachers of Kerala. The minister of education also emphasized the necessity of controlling the private management system. It appeared in the form of education bill of 1957. It was in fact the product of the tears of the poor teachers of Kerala. The formation of the Kerala Aided Elementary Teachers Union gave birth to the largest teachers movement in India.

The teachers in Malabar did not confine themselves to the limited struggle of the South Indian teachers union. The SITU and its district units called guilds were essentially the association of high school and college teachers. The background for the formation of this early organisation was actually prepared by the British teachers in Madras who were already the members of the national union of teachers in England. The cultural programme of the students and the professional efficiency of the teachers were its chief objectives. It refused to take up the issues of the elementary teachers. It emphasized constitutional methods and was against all radical methods of agitations.

The board teachers efforts at unionisation and their involvement in the nationalist and class struggles were not at par with those of the aided elementary teachers. They had better salary and service conditions and therefore considered themselves equal to government teachers. Hence many of them had a sense of superiority and viewed the elementary teachers inferior to them. Therefore when the elementary teachers were moving on the path of agitation, they were reluctant to join them.

The movement in Travancore and Cochin was comparatively weaker. The governments of these states gave more encouragement to education. In Travancore the teachers were reluctant to organize even procession and public meetings. It is also to be noted that the teachers organisation in Cochin emerged not in the model of a trade union, but as one initiated by the department.

The teachers movement in Malabar was not a mere trade union movement. As the teachers fought against the government and the management at the same time their movement revealed both the features of a trade union and anti-imperialist movement. The teachers were a group profoundly inspired by the social renaissance movement. It turned them towards nationalism. The teachers also felt that they could get the support of the people and ameliorate their grievances only through the national movement. Thus majority of them were attracted towards the ideology of nationalism. Thus the teachers movement in Malabar grew as a part of the national movement. When the teachers were fighting against the managements, the department and the government remained indifferent or supported the managers. Thus by 1936 the teachers movement clearly turned to an anti-imperialist movement. Many among the teachers hailed from peasant and working class families. Majority of their students were children of poor peasants and workers. It enabled them to perceive their grievances. Thus they took part in the peasant and trade union movements. Being the most enlightened section of the rural poor, the teachers thus actively participated in the movement against untouchability, national movement, peasant and trade union movement. The teachers were concerned not only with their own organizations but

also with organization of working class and peasants and supplied some of the most active and capable cadres of the anti-imperialist movement. Thus they played the most crucial role to integrate all these movement with the main stream of the anti-imperialist movement. The teachers did not confine themselves to their own union activities, but were involved in all progressive movements in society. They opened libraries and reading rooms and tried to extend literacy outside class rooms. They acted as the disseminators of ideas and emerged as a group of rural intelligentsia in Malabar.

Everybody rallied around the union to fight against the private management and British imperialism. As the teachers were fighting against a foreign government, all sections of society supported them. It was also believed that the improvement in their service condition would lead to the educational progress of the nation. Thus during the early period, political views and class interest could not create a split in the teachers movement.

Like the early leaders of the communist party several teachers who were members of the upper cast families became nationalists, socialists and later communists. Majority of the teachers also had an agrarian background. Majority of their students were children of poor peasants and workers. Therefore the teachers showed an affinity towards peasant and trade union movement. Now the government forbade the teachers participation in active politics. But due to strong political pressure, the government had to change their approach towards the teachers. The teachers played an important role in the spread of socialist ideology in Malabar. It stimulated mass movements all over the district. The teachers, peasants and workers collaborated in almost all activities of the period. They came together to face the food crisis, epidemics and also to open libraries and reading rooms in Malabar. They had a common platform in the fight against British imperialism, landlordism, capitalism and private management system. Thus the teachers played a crucial role in the formation of the communist party of Kerala.

After 1957, there was a sharp polarisation between right and left wing politics in Kerala. It directly effected the teachers movement. There after all their struggles and agitations became more politically motivated. It however needs a separate study and enquiry and is not attempted here.

At present the teachers movement in Kerala is very powerful. They act as a strong force behind all progressive movements in this area. The insights drawn from the early struggles and agitations are valuable to the contemporary movements. When the present trend is to be sceptic about the relevance of unions and agitations, the fact that the social transformation of Kerala was mainly the result of the unionizations and agitations should be recognised. At the same time it is to be noted that the teachers of Malabar always stood for the issues of the common people. Their movement itself was highly integrated with popular agitations. The efforts made by the teachers to promote the educational activities by opening rival schools, literacy classes reading rooms, libraries and Mid day meal programmes appealed the masses. Thus they could emerge as the leaders and organisers in the village of Malabar. They were totally committed to society. They viewed their profession as a service to the nation and felt that it was their aim of life. To them their profession was not mechanical but an act of self dedication and sacrifice.

Appendix I

Resolution passed in the first all Malabar teachers conference held at Tellichery on 17th February 1935

1. This conference requests the government that the appointment, regularisation and dismissal of elementary school teachers should get the sanction of educational authorities
2. This conference requests the District Education Council to make provisions to distribute the teaching grant quarterly and to distribute the last installment before 31st March. It also request that in case it is not implemented action should be taken against the council by the Education Director and the Minister of Education
3. This conference requests that the elementary teachers of the same grade should be sanctioned the same scale which are being received by the District Board and Municipal teachers.
4. This conference request that a seniority based list of untrained teachers should be prepared in each range and training selection should be made based on it.
5. This conference requests to introduce a common syllabi all over Malabar and to make the 8th standard examination a public examination.
6. This meeting regrets the financial embezzlement in the District Education Council and request to collect the amount from the concerned parties to distribute the same to the aided school teachers. This conference requests the Governments to take steps to prevent the recurrence of such events in the future.
7. This conference requests that aided school teachers should be given 25% representation in the District Education council.
8. This conference requests the Madras government to encourage adult education
9. This conference requests the Madras government to introduce the system of transfer certificate to prevent the competition among school and teachers for admitting students.

10. This conference congratulates the teachers of Wardha who had decided to go on strike to get their limited, just rights and demands accepted by the authorities.
11. This conference protests against the move to repeal the right of the District education Council to elect its president and to appoint directly by the government.
12. This conference requests that the teachers should be made permanent on the basis of the number of recognised classes and all trained teachers should be admitted compulsorily in the provident fund.
13. This meeting unanimously requests the authorities to introduce free and compulsory education in Malabar.
14. This conference requests to change the period of secondary teachers training to 9 months.
15. This conference requests to repeal the power given to the director of education to repeal the recognition of schools in the new bill recently passed by the Madras Legislative Assembly.
16. This conference requests the managers to appoint teachers in all Muslim aided elementary school to teach religious subjects because the educational progress of the Muslim girls depend up on their religious beliefs.
17. This conference requests the department to act as an arbitrator and distribute the salary with out delay since the withdrawal of teaching grant in times of management disputes creates much difficulty to the teachers.
18. This conference decides to publish a monthly journal as an authentic voice of the teachers union
19. This conference regrets to note that the inspectors are not sending the copy of the report of the examination and the review on it to the schools concerned. Hence this meeting requests the Director to make provisions for the same.
20. This conference requests that aided school teachers to co-operate with all activities of rural reconstruction.
21. This conference requests Hindi to be made compulsory in all Higher Elementary Schools

Appendix II

Xerox copy of the original resolutions passed in the second conference of the MATU held at Vatakara on 4th April 1936

RESOLUTIONS OF THE MALABAR AIDED SCHOOL TEACHERS' SECOND CONFERENCE.

BADAGARA (N. Malabar)

4th. & 5th. April 1936

President:— M. S. Sreshta Esq., B. A., Bar-at-law, M. L. C.

1. This conference of the Aided Elementary School Teachers of Malabar records its great sorrow and offers its deep condolence at the demise of His Majesty, King George V, Mrs. Kamala Nehru and Messrs. Saklatvala, Champion, G. K. Chettoor and Gopalakrishna Devadhar.

2. This conference humbly requests the Government to raise the scale of grant to teachers of all Aided Elementary schools so as to bring it in conformity with the scale of pay allowed to Board school teachers.

3. This conference requests the Government that at least 25% of the members of the District Educational Council should be elected from among the Aided Elementary school teachers.

4. This conference requests the inspecting authorities to send true copies of the annual inspection reports and the review of the District Educational Officer on them, to the managers of all Aided Elementary schools after the annual inspection is over.

5. This conference recommends to the authorities that the VIII Standard E. S. L. C. examination should be made a Government examination and that, in furtherance of this object, a uniform syllabus of studies should be brought into force in all Aided Elementary schools in Malabar.

6. This conference requests the Government that grants to Aided Elementary schools in Malabar should be made payable to them monthly.

7. This conference requests the Government to sanction the appointment of an extra teacher in every completed Higher Elementary school.

8. This conference is of opinion that at the time of inspection, the inspecting officer should record in the inspection book the amount of grant he recommends; that if, for any reason, the inspecting officer deems it necessary to recommend a reduction in grant, he may do so only after affording the manager an opportunity for explanation, and that the District Educational Council should not effect a reduction in the recommended grant of a school.

9. This conference requests the Government to sanction the appointment of one teacher for every 20 pupils at least in standards I to III.

10. Whereas the existing order, that a continuous course of 3 years in one and the same school is a condition precedent to entitle a student to the VIII Standard E. S. L. C., works a great deal of hardship on pupils, guardians and the lower elementary schools, this conference requests the educational authorities to repeal the said order and to substitute it by a rule to the effect that the VIII Standard E. S. L. C. should be issued only to those pupils who have undergone three years' continuous course in the higher elementary classes of recognised schools.

11. This conference requests the Government to issue an order that within a week of the receipt of grant, managers of Aided Elementary schools should submit to the authorities concerned true copies of the receipts obtained from teachers in settlement of their claims.

- 2 -

12. This conference requests the Government to reduce the training course of teachers to nine months.

13. Whereas the existing system of allowing admission to pupils without any restriction and allowing them to attend the annual inspection in two or three schools in one and the same year causes ill feeling among managers, teachers and the public, this conference requests the authorities to bring into force the system of insisting upon school leaving certificates before granting admission to pupils.

14. This conference brings to the notice of the educational authorities that many teachers, after the completion of their training course, fail to obtain a place in the schools which had sent them up for training and that such a state of things would make it impossible for those teachers to comply with the terms of the agreement entered into by them with the government.

15. This conference strongly protests against the encouragement of communal schools in this district.

16. While recording its sorrow at the inability of the police department to obtain adequate evidence in connection with the defalcation of the Malabar District Educational Council's money, this conference humbly requests the authorities to take immediately every necessary step so as to avoid future calamities to the already suffering teachers on account of the neglect on the part of the authorities concerned.

17. This conference is of opinion that trained teachers who have put in one year's service in a recognised school should be regarded as permanent hands and before dispensing with the services of such teachers, managers should obtain the sanction of the department; and this conference requests the educational authorities to bring this opinion into effect.

18. This conference recommends to the educational authorities that Hindi should be made a subject for instruction in all schools including Government training schools.

19. This conference is of opinion that managers of Aided Elementary schools in Malabar should be required to furnish to the District Educational Council security amount equal to the average annual expenditure of the schools; that the failure to do so should entail the withdrawal of the recognition from such schools and the transfer of management either to Government or to Local Boards; and that in future this condition should be enforced in the granting of recognition to new schools.

20. This conference requests the government to issue orders that teachers employed in Government, Municipal or District Board schools should not be employed, on their retirement, as teachers in aided schools.

21. While strongly protesting against the statement made by the Honourable Minister for Education that aided elementary school managers spend a good deal of money for the cause of education, this conference informs the Government and the educational authorities that, far from spending anything for the spread of education, most of the managers usually appropriate a fair portion of the teaching grant towards their own personal purposes.

Badagara, }
20-5-'36. }

**Aided Elementary School Teachers' Union,
Malabar District.**

Appendix III

Resolutions passed in the third conference of the MATU held at Calicut on 29th
May 1937

1. This conference express its condolence on the death of the congress leader Karnataka Sadasiva Rao.
2. This conference requests to raise the service conditions of elementary teachers to the level of local board teachers as stated in the communiqué of Fort St. George Gazette dated 06-01-1937. This meeting also protests against the fact that the salary increase based on it is not satisfactory and even the same is not made applicable to lower trained teachers.
3. This conference requests to make amendments to the education rule published in the Fort. St. George Gazette of 26th January 1936 to ensure that efficient schools having an average 150 attendance should be permitted to appoint an additional teacher.
4. This meeting authorizes the executive committee to organise strikes where ever necessary to redress the grievances of teachers.
5. The conference demanded the abolition of private management system and recommended the formation of schools boards for the spread of education. The government grant, education tax contributions from charitable institutions and public can be used as its revenue.
6. This conference protests against giving receipt to managers for an amount not actually received, working for an amount below the government sanctioned rate, punishment of students in violent and illegal way and the tampering of attendance registers by some teachers causing blemish to the teaching community.
7. This conference protests against the policy of partiality adopted by the president of DEC in sanctioning grant to certain school in Kurumbranad Taluk.
8. This conference protests against the nomination of the president to the DEC
9. This conference requests the union to prepare a practical programme to make the schools centers of rural upliftment and asked the authorities to introduce a curriculum for the same.

10. This conference demand that the managers should a bond for an amount needed to run the schools for a year so as to get an assurance for the proper payment of salary to the teachers.
 11. This meeting protests against the discard of the MATU request for 25% representation in the DEC
 12. This conference welcomes the recommendation of the Finance committee for making 8th standard examination a government examination and requests to introduce the same by 1940
 13. This conference express its anxiety on the policy adopted by the manager of Kannadiparamb school against his teachers and protest against the lazy policy of the Deputy Director of the taluk in this issue and invites the attention of the DEO and the Director of Education on the grievances of teachers.
 14. This conference congratulates V.Sankara Narayana Menon for his resolution passed in the DEC and requests to distribute the withheld salary directly to the teachers.
 15. This conference demands the government to take steps to give monthly grant to the teachers
 16. This conference demands that all elementary teachers shall be admitted to the PF with out considering their grade or salary.
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Source : Mathrubhumi June 1, 1937

Appendix IV

Table showing the arrest and imprisonment of teachers in the a

Name of teachers	Centre of association	Date of Arrest
K.K. Kunhirama Panikkar, M.P. Achuthan, K.K.Narayanan Nambiar, N.Chandukkutty. K.C.Sreedharan, T.K. Raman, K.V. Govindamarar, P.C.Ramachandran, C.K.Kunhambu, P.V. KunhIRaman (Teacher Manager)	Chovva , Kannur	07/09/1939
K.I. Damadharan, M.K. Raman, P.P. Arunachalam Pilla, C.K. Vasu, K.M.Chappan Panikker, M.Chathu, P.M. Kelappan, M.M. Gopalakurup, P.V. Pokkinan, M.Madhavayyar, T.M. Narayanan Adiyodi	Thiruvallur	16/12/1939
K.K. Velayudhan Adiyodi, C.M.Sankaran Nambiar, P.Kunhappa Nambiar, K.M Krishnan, M.T. Paithal Nair, P.Kumaran, C.K. Abdulla, T.K.Abdurahiman, P.V. Nanu Nambiar, C.P.Krishnanadiyodi, P.V. Kunhikrishnan Nair, N. Gopala Kurup (President, Kottayam Taluk Union)	Panur	16/12/1939
P.Gopalan, M.Chirukandan, K. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar, M. Kunhikrishnan Nair, O.V. Kannan, T.V. Govindan Nair, T.P. Narayanan	Pazhayangadi	23/12/1939
P.K Unni Nair, P.Unni Nair, R.T Narayanan ,T.Narayanan Nair ,P.KunhIRaman nair	Kollam	06/01/1940
K.Chathukutty, M.P.KunhIRaman Nair,K.K. Narayanan Nair and K.V. Ariyan	Quilandy	06/01/1940
Eleven Teachers including two minors Vikiran and Narayanan Nair	Valanchery	06/01/1940

P. Kunhiraman, V.C. Kunhikannan, P.V.Chathu Kutty Nair, P.Kunhiraman Nair and K.Kannan	Tellicherry Kunhanparamb centre (Town Mappila School) (Parimadam)	06/01/1940
P.GopalanNair, P.K.Kunhunni Nair, K.A.Damodaran Nambiar and V. Kunhikannan	Mappila centre Tellicherry	
N. Mannan K. Krishnan, K.V. Kuttiappa and K.Govindan	Kizhur centre Mattannur	06/01/1940
E.Kannan, T.K.Narayanan Nambiar, T. Krishna Panikker, V.Kutty and M.Krishnan Nair	Thiruvallur	06/01/1940
K.K.Kunhirairu Nambiar, K.Sankaran, C.Kanaran, T. Kunhichathu Kurup and K.V.Chathu	Nadapuram	06/01/1940
A.K.Kunhikannan Nambiar , N.K. Kanaran, E. Narayanan Nair, K.P.Karuvan, C.H. Karuvan , K.P.Achuthan Nambiar, V.P. Naryananan, T. Krishanan and K. Kunhikannan	Edakkad centre	06/01/1940
K.V. Sankunny Nair, T. Balakrishnan Nair, T. Krishnan Kutty Poduval, M.P Krishanan Kutty Nair, K.Keshavan Nair and Madhavan	Trikiriti (Valluvanad)	06/01/1940
K.O. Raman Nambiar, P.Anandan Nambiar	Kannur	06/01/1940
K.V. Narayanan Nambiar , K.Kunhiraman Nambiar, C. Achuthan Nambiar	Mayyil	06/01/1940
V.C. Madhavan, P.N. Moideenkutty, T. Keshavan Nambeesan and T.C. Alavikutty	Thirur	06/01/1940

P. Balakrishana Panikker, K.P.Gopalan and T. Paramewsaran(minor)	Vettath Puthiyangadi	06/01/1940
V.K.Kunhiraman, P.G. Nair	Parimadam	06/01/1940
M.K. Kunhikrishna Kurup, P.Gopalan, K.K. Kannan, C.S.Anandan, K.Chathu Kurup	Vatakara	13/01/1940
T.C. Narayanan Nambiar	Valapattanam	13/01/1940
K.V. Narayanan Nambiar, K. Kunhiraman Nair, K.Krishnan Nair,	Payyannur	13/01/1940
P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar	Kannur	
Total number of teachers		

Source : The Mathrubhumi December 39, January,1940 and Fortnightly January 1940

Appendix V

Table showing the debarring & certificate suspension of teachers during
40

Teachers	Place / School	Month of punishment
N. Bappu (Secretary Eranad Teachers union)	Eranad	Dec-1939
P.R. Nambiar	Vatakara	Dec-1939
N. Theyyunnipanikkar and K. Kanari	Cheruvannur Hindu Elementary school, Farook	Dec-1939
T.C. Narayanan Nambiar (President Chirakkal Taluk Union) T.M. Radhakrishnan Nambiar (Vice President), A. Kumaran	Chirakkal	Dec-1939
E. Kuttikrishnapanikker (Branch Secretary Ramanattukara), P.M. Vasudevan Nambeesan, E.K. Kumaran Nair, E.K Parameswaran Nair	Peringavu Aided School	Dec-1939
P.V. Achayi, V. Sekharan, K. Kumaran	Arayakkool Girls School	Dec-1939
P. Krishnan Nambiar (President Olavilam Teachers union)	Pallippuram Mappila School	Dec-1939

M.V. Kumaran	Chokli Mappila School	Dec-1939
M. Govinda Variyar (President Valluvanad teachers union) P.S. Variyar (Vice president MATU) , Vallathol Kumara Menon (Secretary Valluvanad Teachers union) , K.S. Nair, K.V. Sankunni Nair	Valluvanad	Dec-1939
K. Kunhiraman Nair, K. Unnikkidav, P. Krishnan Nair,	Chemanchery Poyilkav Hr. Elementary School	Dec-1939
K.V. Narayanan Nambiar (Secretary Chirakkal Taluk Union) E. Narayanan Nair (Branch Secretary Kadachira, P.P. Kunhambu (Head master Puzhathi School)	Chirakkal	Dec-1939
M. Devasa Pisharadi , K. Govindapoduval , N. Kuttisankaran Nair, B. Krishnayyar, K.V. Velu Nair, E.P. Govindan Nair, T.S. Sankaran Nair, P.Gopalan Nair, C.Velayudhan Nair, T.K. Kakkunni Nambiar, K.P. Govindan Nair, M.A. Krishnan Nair, E . Madhavan Nair, K. Ramachandran Nair, E. Narayanikuttiyamma	Valanchery	Dec-1939
P.K. Ramukurup (Branch President Kuttippuram)	Pathiripatta Hr. Elementary school	Dec-1939
V. Ramunni (President MATU) N. Sankaran (President Kozhikode Teachers union) Narayanan Ezhuthachan (Secretary Kozhikode Teachers union)	Kozhikode	Dec-1939
Theyyunnipanikker , Kunhandi	Cheruvannur	Dec-1939
K. Raghavan	Makkada	Dec-1939

Ambutti, Kumaran	Elathur	Dec-1939
R.T. Narayanan	Kollam Girls Hr. Elementary School	Jan-1940
K. Kumaran	Chombal Hindu Girls School	Jan-1940

Source : The Mathrubhumi December 1939, January 1940

Appendix VI

The table showing the details of suspension of teachers during the agit:

Teachers	Place / School	Month of punishment
One teacher	Naduvattam aided Mappila School	Oct-1939
Two teachers	Chovva Dharma Samajam Hr. Elementary School	Oct-1939
Forty Teachers	Nanmanda Branch	Nov-1939
K.Krishnan Nambiar	Punnol Boys School	Nov-1939
K. Balachandran (Mannur Branch Secretary)	Mankurissi Aided Elementary School	Dec-1939
T.K.Chathupanikker , M. Saradha	Kuniyil Boys School Thalassery	Feb-1940
K. Unnara, T. Kelappan	Kuruvangad Girls School	Feb-1940
P.Achuthan, K.Gopalan Nair, P.Govindan Nair, C.K.Kunhiraman	Moozhikkara Vivekodayam Hr. Elementary School	Feb-1940

R. Kunhappa Nair	Kovoor Girls School Koothuparamb	Feb-1940
V.M. Raman Nair, M.K. Kunhiraman Nair, T.V. Govindan Nair	Chemanchery East School	Feb-1940
Five Teachers	Perumangod Elementary School Sreekrishnapuram	Feb-1940
K.M. Andi	Ponniyam, Girls School , Kathirur	Mar-1940
K.K. Mathukkuttiamma, C.K. Madhaviamma	Baluserry Girls School	Mar-1940
A. Ali, A.V. Kunhimadhavan	Baluserry Mappila School	Mar-1940
P. Raman, T.Govindan, P.K. Narayanan Nair, N.K. Krishnan Nambiar, P.K. Kunhikrishnan Nair	Sivapuram Hindu School	Mar-1940

Source: The Mathrubhoomi, October, November, December 1939, Feb

Appendix VII

List of teachers dismissed in different parts of Malabar during the agitat boycotting the Gurujana Samajam and also for being members of unre

Teachers	Place / School	Month of punishment
M.P.Krishna Menon (Joint Secretary of MATU and President of Ponnani Taluk Union) K.Kuttisankaran Nair	Chembra coronation Higher Elementary school	Nov-1939
E. Padmanabhan Nair (Secretary of the Ponnani Taluk Teachers Union)	Udumaniya Madrasa	Dec-1939
N.P. Narayanan Nair, E. Narayanan Nair	Anamangad Aided School	Dec-1939
C.T. Narayana Tharakan, Kuttikrishna poduval	Angadipuram Tharakan Higher Elementary School	Dec-1939
K.Raman	Eravimangalam Aided Elementary School	Dec-1939
M.K. Kunhukurup	Venniyur A.M School	Jan-1940
M.Balakrishnan Nair	Karimpuzha Mappila Aided School	Jan-1940
M.K. Narayana Menon	Pulamanthol Hr. Elementary School	Jan-1940
A. Parameswaran Namboothiri, K.Narayanan Nambiar	Kuttiyattur East School	Jan-1940

K. Janakiamma	Kannothe Mappila School	Jan-1940
M. Damodaran Nair	Nediyirippu A.M . School	Jan-1940
C. Ahammed	Madrasathul Islahiya	Jan-1940
K.M. Bapputty, C.P. Raman Nair, T.V. Moideen Kutty	Thirunarayanapuram Aided School	Jan-1940
P. Ramanunni panikker	Vakkathodi Mappila School	Jan-1940
C.Narayanan Moosath	Thenhipalam Hindu School	Jan-1940
V. Balakrishna Menon	Mannur North Elementary school	Jan-1940
P.V. Krishna Variyar (Branch Secretary Karimpuzha) V.Achutha Variyar	Mannampatta Hindu Aided Elementary School	Jan-1940
K.Thachu Menon, M. Balakrishnan Nair, K. Raman Menon	Karimbuzha Mappila School	Jan-1940
V.Kelappan Nambiar, T.Ananda Variyar, T.V. Govinda Variyar, K.V. Krishnan	Thrichambaram East School	Jan-1940
T. Thirumalakkutty, Kausu, Madhavi	Kollam Girls Higher Elementary School	Feb-1940
V.Kumaran Nair, P. Unnikrishnan Nair, K. Balakrishna Menon	Kottopadam Hindu Elementary School	Feb-1940
K.GovindanKidav,A.K.Krishanan Nair	Arikkulam	Feb-1940
C.P.Kunhikkannan Nair K.Kannapoduval	Annur Aided Elementary School, Chirakkal	Feb-1940
P.Chiruthakutty	Kuruvangad girls school	Feb-1940
Krishanan Nair (Head master)and K. Kunhiraman Nair	Poyilkav Higher elementary school	Feb-1940
K. Kelukutty Nair, C.P Muhammad	Cheliya Mappila school	Feb-1940
E.Achuthan Nair	Edakkara A.S.V School	Feb-1940
K.Chathu Kurup	Keezhal Hindu Boys School	Feb-1940
T. Kunhikrishnan Thangal	Mantharathur Higher Elementary School	Feb-1940
M.V.Sivarama Menon,	Ramapuram Hindu School	Feb-1940
V.N Sankara Panikker, A. Chakrapani, Unnipisharati, P.A Krishan Panikker and P. Saidali Kutty	Ramapuram Mappila School	Feb-1940

K.P. Kunhikkammu and K.Muhammad, K. Govinda panikker	Puzhakkattri Mappila school	Feb-1940
M.P Kochukrishna Menavan, C. Kutty Krishanan Nair and K. Balakrishanan Nair	Pathirimanna Mappila school.	Feb-1940
P.M Achunni Panikker, M.P. Krishnankutty menavan	Panangangara mapila school	Feb-1940
K.M Krishnan ,T.Krishana Panikker and M.T Chathukutty	Kottkkadapuram higher elementary school, Iringal	Feb-1940
K.T.Radha , P. Lakshmi and P Chathu Nambiar	Vayal Higher elementary school	Feb-1940
K. Kuttikrishna Panikker, P.P Narayanan Ezhuthan, K.gopalan, B.K.subramania Ayyar	Alanallurr	Feb-1940
Ayyappan Kutty Ezhuthachan	Alanallurr Mappila School	Feb-1940
K.P Govindan Nambiar	Eravattur Hindu school Perambara	Feb-1940
K. Abdulla , P. Krishanan Nair and N.K. Kunhikelappan Nair	Avala Kuttoth Mapila school	Feb-1940
T.K. Krishna Kurup,(the secretary of Avala branch teachers union)	Kuttoth Hindu school	Feb-1940
K Kunhiraman Kidav , K.Gopalan Nair	Edakulam Girls school	Feb-1940
K Krishanan Kidav , P. Krishanan Nair	Thalapoyil school	Feb-1940
K.Gopalan Nambiar	Feroke Cherukav School	Feb-1940
P.V.Chandu Kutty Nair, E.K Kunhappa Nambiar and P.K Sredharan Nair	Irinav Thekkubad Hindu school , Azheekode	Feb-1940
Kuttikrishnan, Narayanan Nair and Kunhikutty	Kunuvangad Adidravida School	Feb-1940
K. Kunhambu Nair and A.P Kunhikannan	Tellicherry Kuniyil school	Feb-1940
V.P Achutan, K.Gopalan Nair, P.Govindan Nair and C.K. Kunhiraman	Vivekodayam Higher elementary school, Muzhikkara	Feb-1940
P.V. Narayananan Nambeesan, M.Chatukutty and K.K. Narayanan Nambiar	Thalayi Makkuttom school	Feb-1940
K.P Govindan Nambiar	Eravattoor Hindu elemenrary school	Feb-1940
K.P.Sekhara varier, V. Govindan Nair, T moideen, A. Sankaran Nair and A . Sankunni Nair	Valancheri, Marakkara	Feb-1940

K. Kunhikannan , V.K.Raman, P.Chathu, T.Govindan and K.K.Gopalan	Mundalur new boys school peralasseri	Feb-1940
U.V Chathu, (The Head master and secretary of Perambra branch teachers union) K.Padmanabhan Adiyodi and C.Sankaran Nair	Kallod Adidravida school	Feb-1940
T.V.Damodaran (Head master) M.Damodaran, AK GopalaKurup, K Chappan Nair and C Gopalan	Chokli Netumbram Hindu boys school	Feb-1940
K.Govindnan Nambiar	Mudappilavil girls school at keezhal	Feb-1940
K. Kunhiraman Nair (The head master and the branch secretary of the union) K. Kunhikrishanan Nair	Trikottur Girls school, Thikkodi	Feb-1940
U.Ali, A.K.Gopalan Nair and P. Berankutty	Balusery Puthur vattom Aided Mappila school	Feb-1940
M.Ragavan	Azheekode Vayal elementary school	Feb-1940
M.Ammalu amma, (Head mistress)	Queen Mary girls higher elementary school, Chirakkal	Feb-1940
V.P. Gopalan and K.V.Gopalan	Vallikkad Varisakkunu Mappila school	Feb-1940
V.Ananda Kurup and P. Krishna Kurup	Varishakunu higher elementary school	Feb-1940
C.V. Kelukurup	Muttungal girls school	Feb-1940
P.Rama Kurup	Muttungal south school	Feb-1940
P.T Krishan Marar and C Kumaran	Saraswathy Vilasam school, Erapuram	Feb-1940
K. Devaki, K.T Raghavan	Pappinisseri West school	Feb-1940
K Kunhipokkan, K.Chiyyayi	Pappinisseri boys school	Feb-1940
N.Gopala Kurup, K.Chathu Kurup , P.Paru Amma, O Naniyama, O Ammalu Amma and K Janaki Amma	Chettiath Girls elementary school Vatakara	Feb-1940
T.Kelu Nambiar, (branch union president), P.V. Kunhambu Nair (branch secretary) N.Krishananmoosd, S.Kunhiraman Nambar, P.V Kannan Nambiar, P. Anandan Nambiar, M.V. Krishnan Ambalavasi, K Kunhiraman and K.K Narayani	Madayi higher elementary school	Feb-1940

T. KunhIRaman Nambiar,(president , Kalliasseri branch union) , M.P. Sankaran Nambiar,T.Kunhapa Nambiar	Morazha south school	Feb-1940
P.V. Krishanan Nambiar	Kallara Talai girls school Tellicherry	Feb-1940
P.Anandan	Punnol boys school	Feb-1940
Gopalakrishna Vellodi	Changaliri Hindu school Mannarkkad	Feb-1940
R.Achuthan Nair, P.K. Narayanan Nambiar, A. Chandukutty Nambiar, T.V Sankaran Nair and M.V. Nambi Ambalavasi	Madayi Vengara Hindu elementary school	Feb-1940
V. Narayana Panikker and P.Sankara Kurup	Karakkad Mappila school	Feb-1940
N.K. Gopalan	Pulinholi Hindu boys school	Feb-1940
P. Ramakurup	Karakkad Athmavidya Girls school	Feb-1940
R. Krishana Panikker	Orkatteri Mappila school	Feb-1940
V. Kannan and P.K Karunakaran Kurup	Erapuram Mapila school	Feb-1940
M. Lakshmi Amma and T.K. KunhIRaman Nair	Olavilam Balika Higher elementary school	Feb-1940
P.Govindan	Kararath boys school	Feb-1940
K.M. Kunhikrishnan Nair	Kannapuram School	Feb-1940
K.Gopalan Nambiar, P.K.Govindan Nambiar, K.Raghavan Nambiar and K.P Kelu	Kannapuram Hindu School	Feb-1940
K.KunhIRaman Nambiar, P.V. Raman and I.V. Chathukutty	Darul Imam Muslim School	Feb-1940
T.V.Narayanan, M.K. Abdul Kareem	Irinavu Muslim School	Feb-1940
E.K. Kunhappa Nambiar, P.K.Sreedharan Nair and Chandu Kutti Nair	Elambilad School, Koyilandy	Feb-1940
E. Gopalan Nambiar, M.V. Appukutty Kidav, E.M Kannan Nambiar E.P Gopalan Nair and K.Abdulla	Elambilad Madrasa School Quilandi	Feb-1940
N Krishanan Nair and E Raman	Meppayur Hindu boys school	Feb-1940
E.K.Chandu Nair, P.Chiyamu and K Choyi	Kayalad Hindu boys school	Feb-1940
B. Gopalan Nair, E.M Sankkaran Nambiar, Krishanan Nair, and V.Achuthan Nair	Keepayur Hindu boys school	Feb-1940

T.Kunhiraman Nair, P. Krishanan nair, M. Krishanan Nair and Miss Nanikutty	Meppayyur east school	Feb-1940
M Kelappan, N. Moideen and K.K Krishanan Nair	Iringath Mappila school	Feb-1940
K Krishana Marar	Thiruvangoor Boys school	Feb-1940
P.V Narayanan Kurup	Vayalakandi mapla school Chokli	Feb-1940
N. Narayanan and V.V Kunhiraman	Pullookkara Mappila school	Feb-1940
K Krishanan	Savanparab school Panoor	Feb-1940
N. Kavunni vallodi, K.Unneeri Nair, and K. Krishnan	Areepra Melmuri Mapila school Mankada	Feb-1940
P.Chattu Nambiar	Sivanada Vilasam Hindu boys school Vatakara	Feb-1940
E Kunhikelu Kurupu	Puthuppanam Mapila school	Feb-1940
V. Anandan	Kallingal Mapila school chokli	Feb-1940
A.M. Gopalan, V, Kunhiraman, CH. Govindan, TH. Krishanan, P.V. Kunhikannan , P.V. Kelan	Patiam West Higher elementary school	Feb-1940
K.Sankaran and P Kannan	Kannoth Mappila school Chokli	Mar-1940
A.P Kunhichandu	Punnol higher elementary school	Mar-1940
K.K Kunhikannan Nambiar	Kalai Madrasa elementary school	Mar-1940
T.H. Appunni kurup and K.K.Govinda panikker	Eramala Hindu boys school	Mar-1940
K.Gopaln Nambiar, K. Narayanan Nambiar, K Sankara Kurup, K Ammalu Amma and Kunhiraman Varier (head master)	Kurikkilad boys higher elementary school	Mar-1940
K.K. Mathukutty Amma and C.K. Janaki Amma	Balusseri Girls Hr. elementary school	Mar-1940
N.K. Madhavan Nair (Head master) and Kunhisankaran	Kammankulam Hindu boys school	Mar-1940
A.K. Kunhiraman and K.V. Kunhirkannan	Mundalur west boys school Peralasseri	Mar-1940
M.K. Kunhikrishnan Nair	Melur Hindu school	Mar-1940
C.H.Chathukutty Nambiar and K.V. Kunhiraman	Orikara Mapila school	Mar-1940
K Raman Nair	Vengalam boys school Chemenchery	Mar-1940

O.V. Govindan Nambiar (president of Chirakkal taluk teachers union)TG Govindan Nambiar, M. Raman, O.V Krishanan Nair, T.Gopalan Nambiar and CH. Govidnan Nambiar	Mathamangalan Higher elementary school Thalipparamb	Mar-1940
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Source : The Mathrubhoomi, November, December 1939, January, Feb

gitation of 1939-40

Mode of punishment
Four months rigorous imprisonment
Three months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs-30.
Four months rigorous imprisonment, one month simple imprisonment , a fine of Rs-5 or one week simple imprisonment.
Arrested
one month simple imprisonment
1 ½ months of simple imprisonment
3 months rigorous imprisonment , 3 week simple imprisonment. Being minors a fine of Rs 45 to Vikiran and Narayanan Nair. But they refused to remit the amount however acquitted

Arrested
one month simple imprisonment, a fine of Rs 5 or one week simple imprisonment
Arrested
3 months imprisonment, a fine of Rs 15 or one week simple imprisonment
two weeks simple imprisonment
Arrested
Arrested, 3 months rigorous imprisonment , one month simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 10. Being a minor a fine of Rs 15 to K.Kesavan. He refused. But acquitted
Arrested, one month simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 30.
Arrested, 3 months rigorous imprisonment , one month simple imprisonment
Arrested , 3 months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 20

3 months imprisonment and a fine of Rs 20 or two weeks simple imprisonment. Fine only to the minor . He refused, but acquitted
Arrested
Arrested
One months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 30 or one week simple imprisonment
Four months rigorous imprisonment , one month simple imprisonment.
One months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 30 or two weeks simple imprisonment
123

y report , First Half of

g the agitation 1939-

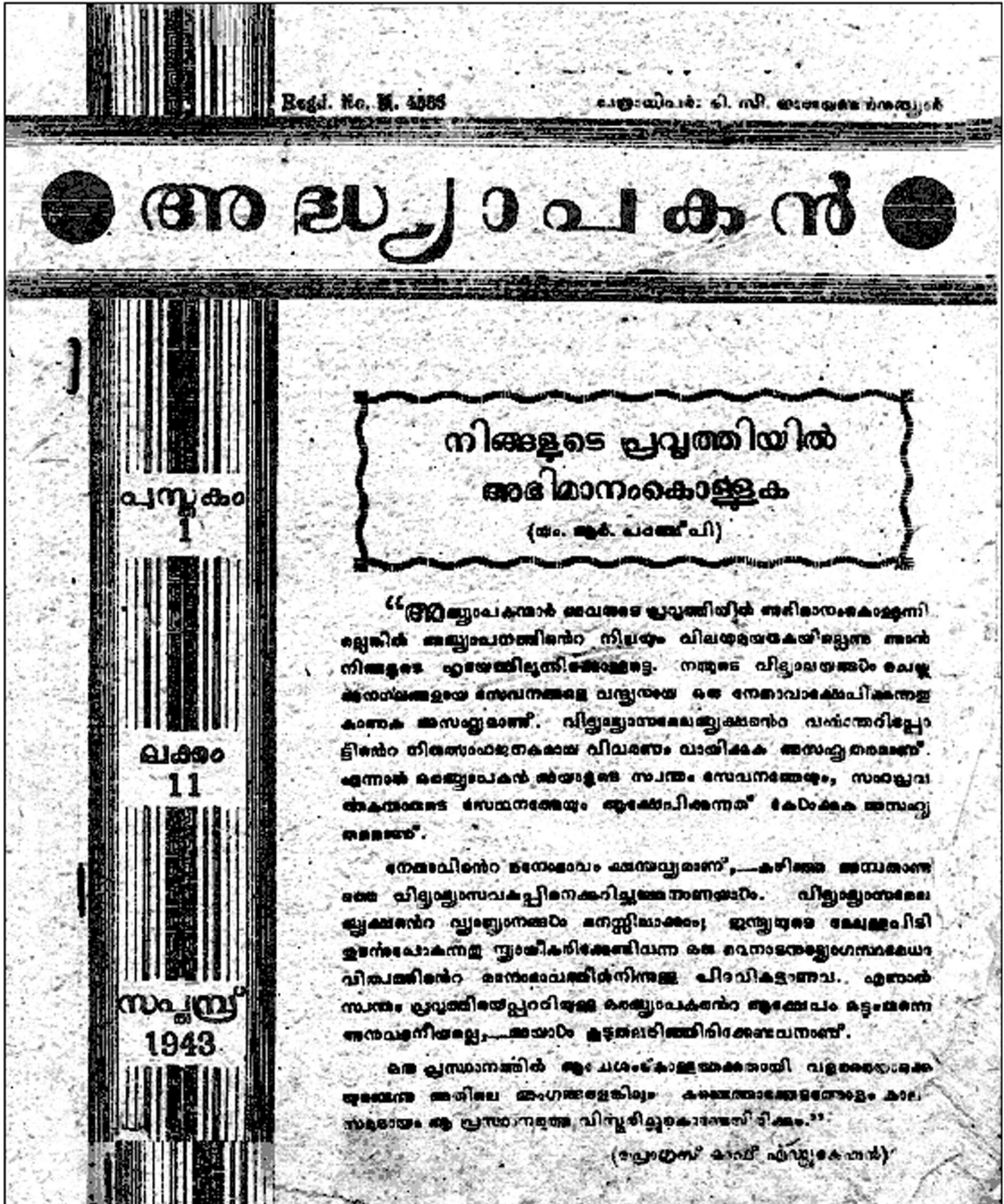
Nature of Punishment
Certificate suspension for two years
Certificate suspension for two years
Certificate suspension for two years
Debarred from teaching
Certificate suspension for two years
Certificate suspension for two years
Certificate suspension for two years

Dismissal

bruary, March, 1940

Appendix VIII

Cover page of the journal published under the standing committee of the union



Appendix IX

Cover page of the second issue of the union journal published in 1939

അദ്ധ്യാപകൻ

വിഷയസൂചി

1. അഭിനന്ദനം
2. പത്രാധിപകരിപ്പ്
3. ഹർത്താൽ നേട്ടങ്ങൾ
4. ഉൽബോധനം (കവിത) അദ്ധ്യാപിക
5. കല്ലുതെയിലെ ഇരുട്ടൻ (കെ. സി. അച്ചൻ എം. എ; എൽ. ടി)
6. G. O. No. 1903.
7. ഞങ്ങൾ
8. ദിവാകരന്റെ പിതാവ് (എസ്. കെ. ചൊററക്കാട്ട്)
9. ഗണരാജപ്രസ്ഥാനം (വിചാൻ കെ. വി. ചന്ദ്രപ്പണിക്കർ, എടക്കാട്)
10. നാഗരാണി (കവിത) വെള്ളൂർ പി. കെ. സാരായണൻസ്വാമി
11. അദ്ധ്യാപക ശുഷ്കകളും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളും (എം. പി. അപ്പ)
12. ഗ്രാൻറു സമ്പ്രദായത്തിലെ തകരാറുകൾ

Appendix X

The translation of a poem that depicts the spirit of opposition among the teachers during the post independent period.

The Teachers' Voice Kammangat Viswanathan

We offer our blood and toil
To carry forward the progress of humanity
Through the toddling words in our mother-tongue
Laying the bedrock of knowledge
We strike the chord of wisdom
In the little hearts of growing children
And set aside the thousand doubts that arise
Are we aliens to the winds of newer changes,
Though we keep the flame of wisdom live
For a brighter morrow of vibrant minds?

Forget not the days we shed
Our blood to pave the way
Of freedom when we were
Fettered by invasive forces!
Memory might have failed you who
Have forgotten the values of humanity

If not how were we
Transformed into cattle herds without any knowledge
From an erstwhile state
Of exemplars of wisdom in your eyes,
You who rule the land with
Enhanced joy and fulfillment!

As you expect us to
Sing eulogies on your misdeeds
Should we be denied the right
To political freedom?
As you stifle even our personal intellect
Brandishing your baton of power
We hold steadfast to our ideal of freedom
Belittling your loud roars of authority

Forgetful of our commitment to foment
Intellect, thought and patriotism
In the world of young generations
You train your canons of law
Against our throats

But you have gone wrong for sure!
As we surge forward in unity
The speck or shine of this
Overhanging sword of power
Would vanish into nowhere

Source: The Desabhimani, November, 1955

GLOSSARY

Adhikari	Village officer
Adhyapakan	Teacher
Aikyananaya sangam	Village bank
Ajagalasthanam	Nipple or fleshy protuberance hanging from the neck of a goat (Anything useless or worthless)
Annas	A denomination of coin, 16 annas made a rupee
Asan	Traditional Village Teacher
Athma Vidya Sangam	An organisation founded by Vagbhatananda, a social reformer of Malabar.
Bhoopalamangalam	Prayer praising the king.
Chattambi	Favorite student of the teachers who was made the monitor of the class
Cheruman	A lower caste in Kerala (Dalit)
Dakshina	Customary offerings
Etham	A mode of punishment; bowing in a peculiar way with hands holding the ears
Ezhuthupalli	Single teachers schools meant for the education of the male members of the upper caste families
Furca	An administrative unit below the taluk
Grandha	An Indian Book
Gurujana samajam	Official meetings of teachers convened by the education department
Gurukkal	Master
Harthal	A method of agitation by closing down the institutions, shops etc.
Janmi	Landlord
Jatha	Procession
Kalappura	Farm house
Kanakkappillamar	Accountants
Karshaka Sangam	Peasant Union
Kudipallikkudam	Schools modeled on ezhuthupallies meant for lower cast children
Manalezhuth	Lit. writing on sand, the beginning of teaching.
Mlecha Bhasha	Lit. Polluted language; Inferior language

Naduvazhi	Landlord
Nattezhuthachan	Traditional Village teacher
Ola	Palm leaf
Onam	Festival of flowers celebrated in Kerala
Padippura	Gate house
Panchagni	Five holy fires, viz. for fires blazing on the four directions and the sun above
Panthal	Shamiyana, Marquee
Sabhamatt	Educational centre of the Brahmins
Saniyan Sabha	Lit. Nuisance meeting – meeting held on Saturdays, the Malayalam equivalent of which is ‘sani’
Savarna	Upper caste
Thalikettukallyanam	Lit. Tying the thali, Traditional pre-puberty marriage rite
Theeru	Gift
Vannathimattu	Lit. Washed cloths given by washer woman. Required by upper caste woman after monthly periods
Vedapadasala	Centre for vedic education
Vidyarambam	Ceremony of the commencement of education
Vydya	Traditional medicine

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