CHAPTER VI

TENANCY - A MUCH DEBATED ISSUE

All over the world the under privileged section, whether they are racial and ethnic minorities or low castes and classes, are organizing themselves to fight against inequalities, discrimination and deprivation. They often violently agitated for the legitimate share in the economic opportunities, educational privileges and political power.¹

This was true with Malabar also. The first quarter of 20th century was a period of turmoil for Malabar. The tenants enslaved for decades, who were very much scared of even the sound *janmi* now muster up courage and make a valiant fight of non-violence for their emancipation from the bondages. This period is a mile-stone in the history of Malabar and Kerala because it is the one that catapulted the people to prepare for more mortal fights in future on the basis of class struggle.

The fighters in this struggle on one side were the most powerful class, the *janmis* and on the other side were their tenants, the *kudiyans*. Therefore it became a combat between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’. The struggle for the land started during the 1880’s. It acquired more momentum during the first decade of the 20th century though gains were not considerable in the balance sheet. But the second decade becomes historic as evidenced by the victory of the weak against the mighty. In this fight, to a greater extent, the proxy fighters on both the sides were

¹ M.S.A. Rao, Social Movements and Social Transformation-A Study of Two backward Class Movements in India, Delhi, 1987, p.31.
the newspapers and magazines. Usually espousing a general cause, becomes one among the many objectives of newspapers. But in respect of the issue of *janmis* and tenants the very aim behind the birth of some of the newspapers was to spearhead this fight. The newspapers like *Kudiyan, Janmi, Vasumathi* are in the array.

Even *Mathrubhoomi* was founded with an aim to enact the role of this ‘proxy fighter’ standing on the tenant side. During the early decades of 20th century the tenant side got numerically an upper edge in the Congress Movement. Thus when the majority of the Congress workers became the tenants, in a way they captured the movement from the *janmis* who were so far its bread and butter. When the *janmis* became almost deaf in the congress it became a forum for the ordinary people to discuss their vital issues. Thus the tenancy issue became an inseparable part of Congress along with nationalism. In a way Congress makes a rebirth after *Mappila* struggles in Malabar through taking up the cause of tenancy. It is at this juncture *Mathrubhoomi* is born in 1923 and spearheaded the struggle of tenancy which enabled it to take up national struggles of different nature. *Mithavadi, Kerala Kesari, Kerala Pathrika, Kerala Sanchari, Al-Ameen* and several other newspapers also played a major role in the debate on the *janmi-kudiyan* issue alongwith some English newspapers like *Malabar Spectator, The Hindu, Madras Mail, and Justice*.

When we look back at the early history of the 20th century it becomes very evident that the British who favoured the *janmis* had no intention even at the beginning of the 1920’s to pass a Tenancy Bill. But the tenant side finally emerged victorious by 1930 to coerce the
Government to pass the Bill. When we trace the history it becomes very clear that it was the newspapers that reflected the sentiments of the tenants and enlightened the rulers about the consequences that may follow if they did not favour the cause of the thousands of poor people of Malabar. This chapter is an attempt to expose the involvement of newspapers in the campaigns for the cause of the tenants.

In Malabar almost all the lands in the district were claimed by the *janmis* as their absolute property. Even the smallest parcels of land for houses or cottages had therefore to be obtained from *janmis*. Though the *janmis* formed only a small fraction of the total population of the district they were generally rich and influential.\(^2\)

T.C Varghese says that the population of Malabar in 1861 is estimated to have been about 1.71 million of which possibly two thirds were dependent on land. Out of the 1.15 million comprising agricultural population, the *janmis* numbered only 24714; of them 829 were classified as principal farmers and 250 were religious institutions. All the *janmis* together account for less than 2% of the agricultural population. To these *janmis* constituting an insignificant minority of agricultural population belonged practically every right and interest connected with land in Malabar.\(^3\)

Controlling unit of land ownership in Malabar was the *taravad*. Table given below relates to the year 1882 and gives details of the

\[\text{\footnotesize\ref{2} M.Krishnan Nair, The Malabar Tenancy Bill 1927, RAC.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize\ref{3} T.C Varghese, Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, New Delhi, 1970, p.9.}\]
break-up of the controlling houses or *taravads* in North and South Malabar.\(^4\)

**Land holdings in Malabar *Taravads and Devaswams*,\(^5\) 1882.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of land holdings</th>
<th>No. of monopoly houses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N. Malabar</td>
<td>S. Malabar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Devaswams</em></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namboothiri houses</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moosad’s houses</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nedungadi’s houses</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nair taravads</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These *janmis* did not ordinarily sell their lands and the laws which governed them prohibited partition and thus prevented the distribution or diffusion of landed property. The *janmis* themselves did not use to cultivate in their lands. They generally let out their lands to others on *kanam* (customary tenure or lease), *kuzhikanams* (customary lease of land without any advance to the landlord) or simple leases for cultivation. These lessees who formed the cultivating classes were thrifty and industrious. They clinged to their holdings with a fondness and tenacity perhaps unknown in other parts of the Presidency. But they were often unable to enjoy the fruits of their labour on the land. By the time, the land which they have reclaimed or improved or the trees which they have planted and protected begin to yield they were evicted from


\(^5\) Property of the temple.
their holdings. These unjust evictions on several occasions caused serious troubles and led to agrarian outbreaks.⁶

**Tracing the history**

The traditional agrarian structure in Kerala was based on a three-tier relationship between *janmis*, *kanakkars* (holders of kanam), and *verumpattakkars* (holders of simple lease).⁷ A noticeable feature in Malabar during the late 19th century and early 20th century was the rise into prominence of a section of the *kanakkar*.⁸ This small section who paid rent to the *janmi* and at the same time received rent from cultivators emerged as a socio-economic force since they extracted a higher rent from the actual cultivators than what they paid to *janmi*. Again when *janmis* were in need of money they borrowed from *kanakkar* who collected the share of the produce of the *janmi*. This growth and advancement of the *kanakkar* was noticed and viewed seriously by the *janmis* who resorted to several measures which would enable them to harm and eliminate the intermediary class.

To devise measures for improving this state of affairs the Government of Madras appointed more than one Commission in the past. On 25th January 1881 Mr. William Logan who was then the Collector of Malabar was appointed as Special Commissioner to conduct a thorough investigation into the general question of tenure of the land and the tenant right in Malabar. In June 1882 he submitted his

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⁶ M.Krishnan Nair, *op.cit.*


report to the Government containing several suggestions including a strong recommendation to grant occupancy right to the prevailing tenants of Malabar. “The landlord’s power of ouster must in the public interests be curtailed”, he said. He recorded that the tenants were in perpetual fear of eviction by the landlord, chronically in debt and were driven to the limits of starvation. Again the Government appointed a Special Commission in January 1884 with Sir T. Madhava Rao as President and Mr. William Logan, Mr. C. Sankaran Nair and others as members to consider the whole question of Malabar tenancy and advise the Government as to the lines on which legislative action should proceed. This commission submitted its report and a draft Malabar Tenancy Bill in July 1884. The report indicated the necessity for legislation. The draft Bill contained a provision for the grant of occupancy to the kanam tenants. The draft bill was referred by the Government for the opinion of the Judges. It may be stated that even Sir Charles Turnes, the then Chief Justice was not entirely against the grant of occupancy right. The Government appointed another Committee in 1885 with Mr. Master as President and Sir Madava Rao, Sir Subramanya Iyer, Sir C. Sankaran Nair, Mr. Ross and others as members. The majority of the members of this Committee were also of opinion that legislation for restraining eviction was necessary. The Government accordingly passed the Malabar Compensation for Tenants Improvement Act I of 1887 for awarding compensation for improvements to the tenants on eviction.

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10 Ibid., p.583.
11 M. Krishnan Nair, *op. cit.*
12 Y. Vaikuntham, *op. cit.*, p.11.
Subsequently the Government considered that further legislation was required to amend the whole law related to landlord and tenant in Malabar and placed Mr. Ross on special duty in 1896 with instructions to draft a Malabar Tenancy Bill incorporating therein the provisions of the Improvement Act. The unexpected death of Ross soon after this prevented the completion of his work. Nothing further was done in the matter till 1899 when a bill to amend the Improvements Act of 1887 was introduced in the Madras Legislative Council and after a great deal of discussion finally passed into law as Act I of 1900. It may, also be noted that Mr. Dance, the then Collector of Malabar with a view to restricting under certain conditions the power of granting melcharths, drafted in 1899, “the Malabar Melcharth Bill”. The Government however refused to act upon it and rejected it in 1901.\textsuperscript{13}

Thus the only practical result of all the Committees and Commissions mentioned above had been the passing of the Improvements Act I of 1900. This Act also could not give adequate protection to the tenants but only led to the increase in the number of the eviction suits in the Civil Courts of Malabar.\textsuperscript{14} The janmis, in order to circumvent this Act, adopted the bold methods of: (1) Renewal of a lease on higher rent and remitting a portion of the rent in advance, as surety, and (2) allowing tenants for few more years after the contract and the improvements made during the contract period were not brought under compensation.\textsuperscript{15} Subsequently Mr. C. A. Innes who was for a long time Collector in Malabar and whose knowledge of the conditions of the

\textsuperscript{13} M. Krishnan Nair, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Y. Vaikuntham, op.cit.
district was almost unrivalled had, in his report when he was the Collector of the district, recorded that the Improvements Act of 1900 has failed to achieve and can never achieve one of the principal objects with which it was passed, namely the prevention of capricious and arbitrary evictions. He recommended that ‘comprehensive tenancy legislation’ providing for fixity of tenure should be undertaken. But the Inne’s report of 1915 on the fixity of tenures was not accepted by the Board of Revenue, as it feared that the janmis would be alienated.  

While the Government of Madras had been hesitating to enact as per the report of Mr.Innes, the Governments of Travancore and Cochin, where conditions were similar to those in Malabar had solved the problem that related to the kanam tenants. The Travancore Government by a Proclamation issued in 1867 and the Cochin Government by a Regulation passed in 1914 confirmed occupancy right on kanam tenants. It was in this situation as the only remedy for removing the agrarian discontent that existed in Malabar that grant of permanency of tenure to tenants in their holdings was argued and Mr.Krishnan Nair introduced his Bill in the Council. 

In August 1922 Krishnan Nair applied to the Government of India for sanction to introduce the Tenancy Bill in the local Legislative Council. But the Government stated that they proposed to oppose it saying that the Government was not fully convinced of the necessity of such legislation. Krishnan Nair subsequently modified his original Bill and asked permission to introduce it. The Government’s attitude towards the Bill was discussed in Cabinet and it was decided that the

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17 M.Krishnan Nair, *op.cit.*
Government should not oppose motion for leave to introduce the Bill. Also it was decided that their further attitude towards the Bill would be settled after observing the attitude adopted by the Council towards this measure. It was also decided that with the dissolution of that Council it may be introduced as a fresh motion when the new Council assembles.\textsuperscript{18}

Although the Bill was passed after an elaborate discussion in the next Council, with some modifications, by an overwhelming majority, the Governor did not give his assent. Therefore, Krishnan Nair introduced again the Bill in the Council in 1927 which after several discussions and conciliations was later piloted as a Government Bill and passed and enacted by getting the Viceroy’s assent in 1930 December 1.

The proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor on 16\textsuperscript{th} February 1921 is self explanatory as to that the Government lacks an intention to make a legislation regarding the Tenancy Bill then.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} Letter No.2234, Law Department, 11-09-1922, RAC.

\textsuperscript{19} Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Madras-First session from 8-1-1921 to 5-3-1921, Council Meeting 16\textsuperscript{th} February 1921, RAC. The following were the questions of the members and answers of the Government pertaining to the tenant issue: Question:-Khan Bahadur Muhammed Usman Sahib Bahadur: To ask the Hon’ble the Law Member whether- (a)there is a great deal of agitation among the tenants of Malabar for a Tenancy Bill safeguarding their interests. (b) the Government contemplates introducing a Tenancy Bill for Malabar in the near future.Ans- (a) Yes, (b)There is no immediate intention to introduce the Bill.

Mr.K.Prabhakaran Thampan:- “Whether the agitation among the kanam tenants and the cultivating tenants was brought to the notice of the Government?. The Hon’ble Mr.C.G Tod Hunter”- “There was a representation made by a conference on the subject made in the course of last year”.

Diwan Bahadur M.Krishnan Nair:-“Are not the Government aware from a perusal of the newspapers that in Malabar within the last six months or one year there have been many meetings of tenants raising very loud complaints against the oppression of the janmis”?. The Honourable President:-“Is it a question for information?”
Thus even when the Government extends almost a deaf ear to Tenancy Bill, the Council member Mr. Krishnan Nair managed to make the Council recommend for the same Bill within a short span of one month. The proceedings of the Council in April 1921, throws a light upon that.  

K.N Panikkar says, “The tenancy question was the most debated issue in Malabar: the Malayalam press was replete with reports of landlord oppression and exploitation, tenants’ grievances and appeals for tenancy reform. Kerala Sanchari 15th October 1890 and 10th July 1901, Vyavasaya Mithram 30th December 1910 and Kerala Chandrika 26th October 1900 are some examples”.  

It is a fact that tenants were afflicted much in the hands of the janmis. Prior to its re-organization as a linguistic state in 1956, Kerala had the highest percentage of area under tenancy in India, and was perhaps the only state characterized by such a bewildering variety of land tenures which were ‘almost unique in respect of their complexity and multiplicity of incidence.’

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M.Krishnan Nair (Continuing)-“I only want to know whether the Government have received complaints and if they have not received complaints, are they at least aware of the fact from a perusal of the newspapers? The Honourable Mr. C.G Tod Hunter:-“I am not quite sure that the Honourable Law Member had read the newspapers. If he has not, I am sure he will lose no time in doing so.”

20 Procedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Madras, Vol. I B, April 1921, RAC. Appendix viii, “Occupancy rights to Malabar Kanam tenants”. The resolution of Diwan M.Krishnan Nair said, “This Council recommends to the Government that a Bill providing for grant of right of occupancy to kanam tenants in Malabar in their holdings be introduced in the near future”.

21 K.N Panikkar, Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921, New Delhi, 1989, p.120.

K.Vasudevan Moosad (K.V.M) in his biography narrates the pitiable condition of the tenants of Malabar especially the intermediary tenants called *kanakkar*, “Our family property was some land leased out from the *janmis* by *kanamcharth* (overlease of tenure). In those days the condition of *kanakudiyans* (holders of kanam right) like us was quite pathetic. All property including farm lands, garden lands, hills and valleys in the countryside belonged to the *janmis*. Namboothiri Brahmins, some *sthaani* Nairs who are *Naduvazhis* (local chieftain) and *Uralans* (Custodians) of certain temples were the owners of the whole land in the country. *Janmi*, *kanari* (*kanakkar*) and *verumpattakkaran* were the three groups who were related to land. Of this *janmi* had the birth right with full independence over the land, *kanari* was the intermediary and *verumpattakudiyan* was the one who actually cultivated the land. To speak about the unfortunate state of *kanari*, the intermediary, is like that of *Thrishanku* in Hindu mythology that is, in fact not here or there. *Kanari* was safe only if he could give Government tax, *michavaram* , (balance of *pattam* or rent after deducting mortgage interest), *onakkazhcha* (gift to the landlord during Onam festival), and *thirumulkazhcha* (present to the landlord) to the *janmi* from time to time. Except a few who kept under possession large area of land, most of the *kanakkudians* were not able to make subsistence with the income from the property they obtained. There were only two ways for the *kanakkudiyan* to keep the land permanently under himself. For this either the *kanakkar* would have been able to gather a big amount outside, for the tax, *michavarams* and for the *polichezhuth* (a deed on the periodical renewal of lease, a new bond) made during every twelve
years or he would have been able to do the farm works by himself.”

K.V.M continues, “Our family was not in a position to do either. In the family none had necessary savings and none was able to do the farm works by himself. Also if one was ready to till the land taking the yoke and plough then it was certain that he would be excommunicated from the caste. Thus there was no means to protect our kanam lands. What left to us was to entrust keezhkudiyans (sub-tenants) the land and get satisfied with what they give. It was because of this reason that kanari (kanakkaran) or the intermediary was compared earlier to Thrishanku. In fact the Thrishanku is remaining in an imaginary paradise. Kanakkaran is also like that. He may be entitled to get a bulk amount of paddy as lease. He incurs his family expenditure on the basis of that high stature in his mind. Enormous meals for obsequies and birthday celebrations, squandering money for choroonu (first meal of a child), marriage etc. were some examples of prodigal way of spending. Thus it is for the intermediary, a heaven everyday…. But in this style of life he will be forced to keep the janmi’s share as arrears from time to time. For that, interest and fine will accrue. The janmi will be patient onlooker until his dues accumulates into a big amount. When the kanakkaran is not able to remit the amount by onetime settlement for, him there is no other way but to mortgage the land. When two three times thus mortgaged he will be bound to execute a final deed. By the time the janmi will coerce him for a polichezhuthu. The term polichezhuthu is very much relevant in the sense because to facilitate this polichezhuthu the kanari has to give up all his possessions. It was in

such a situation when the landed property of our family was getting dwindled that I came to the forefront of life”.24

The land tenure system in Malabar was very much different from Travancore and Cochin until the beginning of the 20th century. In Malabar the whole land was the private property of a few of the janmis. Government had no other land in Malabar other than that became escheat by the deposition of the heirless land with the Government. The powers that vested with the janmi over both the land and tenant were unlimited. At any time the janmi could evict the tenant from the land without placing any genuine reason. Janmi had the discretion to make polichezhuth . He could also give melcharths as he liked. Much worse was the condition of the verumpattakkudiyans who were under janmi and kanakkar. The unlimited authority enjoyed by janmi over land affected every facet of the life of the tenant. It curtailed the freedom of the tenant even in the community and domestic matters. Any tenant who is bound to live in such a circumstance has certainly to fear the janmi. Besides, since the Government, that ruled over the country was overtly favouring the janmis there was no scope for the tenant to get any redressal of their grievances. The very specialty of the land tenure system and the consequent harassments were resulted out of a few judgments made by the British judicial officers who were not at all aware of the traditions and the ancient history of this land. To get emancipated from this pathetic condition the tenant leaders of Malabar endeavoured much from 1880 onwards.25

24 Ibid.

K.R Achuthan also describes the perilous life of the tenants. “The tenant has to pay another amount in the name of ‘signature right’ for the janmi, anantharavakasaham (nephew’s right) for nephews and thadasthavakasham (mediator’s right) for intermediaries while janmi executing the kanam deed. During the time of celebrations the tenant has to take to janmi’s house, plantaine leaves and vegetables as offerings. If one does not do like this the janmi will give the land to some other tenant as melcharth. It is very painful for these tenants that this property where they are born and brought up, their ancestors are buried and family deities are seated getting alienated by melcharth. Therefore the kanakkudiyan will succumb to any demand of the janmi to avoid such melcharth.26

Through the pages of newspapers

To find some solace for these troubles the tenants started manipulations in many a way. Though the vernacular newspapers were started only during the 1880’s, it seems amazing that the tenants started to pour their grievances through its pages in those days and made an attempt to make the world and the authorities know about their sufferings. Complaints from the tenants, often directed against Namboothiri landlords and their excesses, began to appear in the columns of newspapers on a regular basis.27 Kerala Mithram said, “The harsh and oppressive treatment to which the tenants are at present subjected by their land lords of whom Namboothiris form the majority

27 Kerala Mithram, 30th April 1881, MNNPR, TNA.
has no parallel that for every frivolous reason tenants will be punished with ejectment”.

*Kerala Shobhini* pointed out that apart from executing evictions and *melcharths* the *janmis* interfered in the social and domestic matters of the tenants and created dissensions among them for their own profit. Sometimes they do not allow the tenants to cultivate their lands at the proper season if they have any grudge against them.

The harsh treatment and threat of eviction discouraged the tenants from improving their holdings. The contemporary newspapers played the role in bringing to light the inhuman treatment and action directed against the tenants. One paper argued that *janmi* should be held entitled only to the interest on his capital expended in the cause of the land, and the tenant to all the rest of its produce as it is the tenant who works.

Another paper warned that the stage came when judicial intervention and decision was sought by the people to solve the confusion which prevailed. Government should take steps to put a stop to injurious practice in the interest of both landlords and tenants. The existing relation between the two is not so cordial. Large number of disputes reached the courts for solution. Every landlord has two *paras*, one bigger than the other. The bigger one is used to measure *paattam* paid by the tenants who in consequence suffer a loss of 10 percent.

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28 *Kerala Mithram*, 26th February 1881, MNNPR, TNA.
29 *Kerala Shobhini*, 9th July 1903, MNNPR, TNA.
30 *Kerala Pathrika*, 17th April, 1896, MNNPR, TNA.
31 *Kerala Sanchari*, 30th June 1896, MNNPR, TNA.
32 *Kerala Chandrika*, 15th December 1897, MNNPR, TNA.
In the early issues of *Kerala Sanchari* there are passing references about the oppression of the tenants. A correspondent says that the landlords of Malabar oppress their tenants by unnecessary evictions. Government should check such evictions by legislation.\(^{33}\) It also complains of the inequities committed by the *amsam menons* in assessing the crops in North Malabar. The correspondent adds that these *amsam menons* ask bribes from the tenants and if they are refused the assessment is made very heavy. The attention of the authorities is invited to the matter.\(^ {34}\)

The letters to the Editor published in *Kerala Sanchari* during the early days since its launching is an indication of the intensity of the tenant’s worry, anxiety and anguish about their land. A tenant from Chirakkal *Taluk* writes to the Editor, “Dear Editor, We, destitute are writing now with the intention of conveying the Government through you, our grievances and thus to get them redressed. If there was any wherewithal in these times none would borrow money at such exorbitant rates and bearing much difficulties engage in farm works by felling forest. We, unfortunate people who are doing farm works in somebody’s land are bearing unendurable harassments in respect of the *varam* (lease amount) to the *janmis* and bribes to their *karyasthans* (manager of the property of a landlord) and after giving them nothing will be left with a tenant. When the financiers pester us we will be forced to give even the seedlings. And this can be done somehow. But it is inexplicable the harassment made by the *menons*. Even if these people are given five or ten rupees to get some relief in the case of tax, without having

\(^{33}\) *Kerala Sanchari*, 17\(^{th}\) September 1890, MNNPR, TNA.

\(^{34}\) *Kerala Sanchari* 17\(^{th}\) January 1894.
satisfaction they further demand pumpkin, watermelon, curd etc. I am not telling now anything about the revenue inspectors. It is so wonderful that they do not study anything even by bitter experience”.  

Another tenant without mentioning his name writes a different letter to the Editor in the issue of Kerala Sanchari. “Dear Editor, I hope there will not be much harassment from the officials for sometime henceforward. But when will this harassment of the janmis come to an end? We cannot say in what way and how these janmis are exacting several types of rent from poor tenants like us. And if the tenant dares to start litigation against the janmis that will result in the ruin of the tenant. Then what else to do? There is no escape. One has to obey them fully if he wants to live in the land with some peace of mind. It is very painful that an educated tenant, dancing to the tune of an ignorant janmi. It would have been very nice if there is some way to bridle the authority of the janmi”- One Kudiyan”.  

Right from 1880’s there were some efforts from the part of administration, to bring some reforms in the land tenure system of Malabar. The article published in Kerala Pathrika throws light on this point. “The first article observes that the Committee at Madras engaged in considering the Malabar Land Tenure System has not decided on any of the important points on the subject and says that the people are eagerly expecting the issue of the Commission. The same article proceeds to say the insufficiency of the compensation generally awarded to tenants for their improvements on the lands they hold”.  

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35 Kerala Sanchari, 17th October 1888.
36 Kerala Sanchari, 21st November 1888.
37 Kerala Pathrika, April 1886, MNNPR, TNA.
Committee was formed, the *janmis* could ‘read the writing on the wall’ much early and understand that it is perilous for them. As a result they started to resist such initiatives and make uproar against it. “Class-based associations also emerged in the Malabar District during the end of the 19th century. In 1886, when the Madras Legislative Council took up for consideration a Bill for awarding compensation for tenants’ improvements, the landlords organized themselves to safeguard their economic interests”.38 Out of this concern came into being the Kerala Janmi Sabha, Dharmachara Sabha and Uttara Kerala Sabha. These associations held annual meetings, passed resolutions and submitted memoranda to the Government in an attempt to prevent legislative approval of the Bill.39

K.Vasudevan Moosad (KVM) reminisces in his biography, the early efforts of Namboothiris in forming an organization. “Namboothiri Yogakshema Sabha was formed in 1908 at the house of Chittumukku Vaidhikan Namboothiri in Aluva. Leaders of the community like Kuroor Unni Namboothiripad, Chittoor Narayanan Namboothiripad, Edappalli Shankar Raja, Kallingatt Vaidikanmar, Kaanippayyur Namboothiri-padanmar, Deshamangalam, Olappamanna Namboothiripadanmar, Poomulli Namboothiripad, Aazhvancheri Thambakkal and so on, were active participants during its early activities. It was originated at a special juncture when the institutions like family, marriage, mode of succession etc. which are the basis of a traditional social structure were facing a crisis and at the same time under the colonial rule the world of knowledge in which the

38 *Leg.Dept, G.O No.19 A, 10th May 1887*, TNA.
39 *Leg.Dept, G.O No. 76, 29th November 1887*, TNA.
Namboothiris had a sway was getting more and more democratic”. After the formation of Yogakshema Sabha a magazine in Malayalam Mangalodayam was also started. “This was regarded in the early period as the official organ of the Sabha”. Yogakshemam newspaper was started in 1909. It is this Yogakshemam which became the main weapon of the janmis in the fight against Tenancy Bill later.

Meanwhile the advocates of the bill, mainly the intermediary kanakkar did not form an association, but were more vocal and through the medium of vernacular press, succeeded in making it a public issue. These discussions and debates on marriage reform and land legislation initiated a new style of conducting public affairs in Malabar and a new awareness in public life. Even then, when the Committee at Madras started its sittings the tenants were really scared to give evidences before them due to the fear of the janmis. This is very clear in the report of Kerala Pathrika. “Several tenants in Malabar are afraid to give evidence before the Committee, for their landlords threaten them with evictions and melcharths, if they were to do so”.

But some of the janmis like C.Krishnan were against this kind of tyrannies unleashed upon the poor tenants. “The attention of C.Krishnan focused on the janmi-tenant issue also, as in other general matters of interest, even while he was making collegiate studies. While he was pursuing law in the Madras Law College he wrote an article in Madras

40 KVM, op.cit., p.53.
41 Ibid., p.56.
43 K.N Panikkar, Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921, op.cit., p.120.
44 Kerala Pathrika, 23rd May 1893, MNNPR, TNA.
Mail entitled Malabar Janmi in the issue of 22nd July 1900 in the name ‘K’. In that article he vindicated that as in Travancore the kanakkudiyans of Malabar also should be given permanent right in the land property”.45 After that he became an active participant in the Malabar tenant agitations. It was the Mithavadi that stood in the forefront among the papers that gave leadership for this struggle.46 To bridle the unlimited powers of the janmis, the then Malabar Collector Dance sent the ‘Malabar Melcharth Bill’ for the consideration of Madras Government in March 1901 but was decided not to implement that Bill”.47

No major legislation designed to protect and promote the interests of the oppressed and exploited groups can be ordinarily expected in the absence of persistent demands and protracted struggles. In agrarian societies land is the most important means of wealth and source of power and prestige, and rights in land are often hereditary with power and prestige tending to be ascriptive attributes. Consequently, changes in the institutional framework of agriculture, the pattern of ownership, control and use of land, or more briefly the land system will have far reaching effects on the land-based social order in such societies.48 Since peasantry constituted a major anti-colonial force in most of these countries in the period of the nationalist struggle, land reforms for the

46 N.K Damodaran, Mahacharithamala (Mal), Kottayam, 1984, p.35.
47 K.R Achuthan,, op.cit., p.216.
emancipation of the peasantry from feudal burdens became a necessary part of the process of national planning for economic development.\textsuperscript{49}

**Action and counteraction**

During those times when tenants intensified the initiatives to strengthen legally the agrarian laws, re-shaping the \textit{janmi}-tenant relations, that the janmi sabhas of Malabar and Cochin looked at the agitations made by the tenants with doubt and anxiety. As a counter-measure the \textit{janmis} started their own newspapers and magazines to propagate their ideas among the members of the fraternity. The Malayalam news magazine with the title \textit{Janmi} which was started in February 1908 was the first endeavour of that kind. Beneath the masthead of the paper in the front page there was the motto, ‘the only organ of the landlords’. \textit{Janmam} tenure, \textit{tarawads} of Malabar, English education of the Namboothiri Brahmins etc. were the contents of the first issue. It was made clear in the magazine that, a \textit{janmi} is one who holds \textit{janmam} land. It was also stated that the \textit{Janmi} magazine will try to serve the interest of every \textit{janmi} irrespective of caste.\textsuperscript{50} In the presidential speech of the Janmi Sabha held in Vatakara in 1908, Kozhikode Moonnarpada Raja said that earlier there was no unity between the \textit{janmis}. But due to the efforts of Janmi Sabha the \textit{janmis} from various lands have come here. The rights and authority of \textit{janmis} have been reduced much now. If we inform the Government these matters properly, the grievances may be redressed.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49} P.C Joshy, \textit{Land Reforms in India: Trends and Perspectives}, New Delhi, 1976, p.36.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Janmi magazine}, February 1908, (M.E 1083 Kumbham).

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Janmi magazine}, May 1908, (M.E 1083 Edavam).
Janmi magazine was always in the forefront in enlightening its members about the new legislations in any of the regions in Kerala. It serialized the report of the Janmi-Tenant Commission of Kochi with amendments, from second issue onwards\(^{52}\) and Marumakkathaya Bill of Travancore from the third issue onwards.\(^{53}\) It also published in the second issue the amendments that proposed and forwarded to the Madras Governor General by the Janmi Sabha, in respect of the Kuzhikkoor Chamayam Act (Improvement Act) of 1900.\(^ {54}\)

Janmis had started the campaign in their favour through Janmi news magazine right from the beginning itself. In the issue of 1085 Kanni (1910 September) there were quotes from various enquiry reports that justified the janmam right of the janmis.\(^ {55}\) At the same time it tried to take stock of its own pathetic condition. The newspaper lamented that not only the big janmis but also a sizable number of the small janmis are not able enough to look after their own affairs without somebody’s help. Many of the janmis don’t know how to write and calculate. Therefore the newspaper advised the janmis to appoint educated and competent karyasthans (supervisors) at a reasonably fair salary. It reminded the members that things have changed much at present. Now litigations against the tenants are on the increase. In the past there was no need of collecting evidences for making such litigations. It cautioned that due to the innovations like survey, settlement and janmam registration, land related affairs have become now complicate.\(^ {56}\) At this time with the

\(^{52}\) Janmi magazine, September 1910, (M.E 1085 Kanni).
\(^{53}\) Janmi magazine, October 1910, (M.E 1085 Thulam).
\(^{54}\) Janmi magazine, September 1910, (M.E 1085 Kanni).
\(^{55}\) Janmi magazine, September 1910, (M.E 1085 Kanni).
\(^{56}\)
intention to reform *Yogakshemam*, a newspaper of Namboothiri community was started and it was decided to make it the official organ of *janmis*. Later some *janmi* Directors of *Mangalodayam* company invited Kunhirama Menon (MRKC)\(^{57}\) to the post of Company Manager. But other than in literature he could not do anything for the *Janmis*.\(^{58}\)

At the same time during the early 20\(^{th}\) century the tenancy issue was not kept so live and vibrant as during the late 19\(^{th}\) century. The attempts in the next phase to protect the interests of the *kanam* tenants starts around 1912, when T.M Nair, a member of the Madras Legislative Council (MLC) and later one of the founders of the Justice Party, prepared a Tenancy Bill to confer fixity of tenure on *kanam* and *verumpattam* tenants. As Nair resigned from the council in 1913 his Bill had a premature death.\(^{59}\) The vernacular newspapers continued to highlight the issue in many a way. *Kerala Sanchari* wrote against the unjust *melcharths* and un-reasonable evictions.\(^{60}\) *Kerala Pathrika* dared

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\(^{57}\) MRKC is Chenkalath Kunhirama Menon, famous writer and editor. He is the nephew of Chenkalath Valiya Kunhirama Menon, the founder of *Kerala Pathrika*. It was in 1908 the Yogakshema Sabha was founded. From then onwards until the launching of *Yogakshemam*, reports of the proceedings of the Sabha were published in *Mangalodayam*. Mangalodayam press was owned by Desamangalam Mana and the monthly *Mangalaodayam* had been published from this press under K.V.M. The press was later transferred to Thrissur after purchasing the Kerala Kalpadrumam press and forming the new Mangalodayam company. Later it merged into the Yogakshemam Company with M.R.K.C as Manager.


\(^{59}\) P.Radakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.77.

\(^{60}\) *Kerala Sanchari*, 21\(^{st}\) April, 1915, MNNPR, TNA. A correspondent in the *Kerala Sanchari*, points out that “unjust *melcharths* and un-reasonable evictions are the natural mania of some of the *janmis* and observes that the tenants are eagerly waiting to see our benign Government who occupy the position of a father to us all, passing a measure into law, regulating the relations between the
to abuse even the High Court order which was against the interests of the ordinary public.\textsuperscript{61}

Subsequent attempts to stir up the issue up to 1920’s remained almost at the level of occasional meetings. The editor of \textit{Mithavadi}, Adv.C.Krishnan, a Thiyya advocate and one of the few non-Nair tenant leaders had recorded two such meetings. In August 1919 he met the new Malabar Collector Hole and apprised him of the problems of the tenants. In October 1920 he participated in a meeting of the tenant leaders convened at Calicut at the residence of K.P Raman Menon, a prominent lawyer and tenant leader, and contributed Rs.100 towards organizational needs.\textsuperscript{62}

Krishnan’s venture, the \textit{Mithavadi} had one of the foremost places in Malabar among the newspapers that pioneered the tenant agitations. While launching \textit{Mithavadi} as a weekly, Krishnan wrote in the first issue (3\textsuperscript{rd} January 1921), “For the public to experience the benefits and virtues of a responsible Government, they should have the ability to work independently. In British Malabar to materialize that, there should be some change for the present situation of the \textit{janmis} and tenants. Here \textit{janmi} thinks that the tenant is a slave who is supposed to surrender to

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\textit{janmis} and the tenants”.\textsuperscript{61}

\textit{Kerala Pathrika}, 24\textsuperscript{th} April1915, MNNPR, TNA. \textit{Kerala Pathrika} says that the recent decision of the High Court that a \textit{janmi} is entitled to evict a tenant even before the expiry of the period for which the property has been leased out to him, in case it is proved that the latter is causing damage to it. If such decisions become final and authoritative, and if the subordinate judiciary will decide cases in accordance with these decisions, High Court decision alone will be sufficient to meet the requirements of the people, not only in the matter of land tenure in Malabar, but also in several matters which require special legislation.

\textsuperscript{62} K.R Achuthan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.222.
him and obey what he says. To develop love and trust between them, the system in which janmi can evict the tenant and giving the property by melchartth without the consent of the tenant should end. To bring forth such a situation we will do the best through Mithavadi whatever is possible for a newspaper”.63 The committed works of Adv.Krishnan towards the cause of tenants has been lauded by many of the newspapers then.64

It was from 1916 onwards that the District Conference of the Congress was started to be convened. Between 1916 and 1920, the tenant leaders gradually captured the control of the Malabar Congress, by ousting the janmis who dominated it till then. With this, the demands of passing resolutions of the janmi-kudiyan relations was voiced in each of the District Conference.65 The last district conference of the Congress was held at Manjeri on 28th and 29th April 1920.66 The tenancy and Khilafat issues attracted a large number of Mappilas to the conference,

63 Ibid., p.218.
64 Mithavadi, October 1920, Vol.viii, No.9. In the wake of elections to Madras Legislative Council in 1920, the papers like Westcoast Spectator published news items supporting the candidature of Adv.C.Krishnan. One such report carried in Westcoast spectator which was further quoted by Mithavadi is an example. “Mr.C.Krishnan has a particular aim on the confidence and support of the tenants of Malabar for more reasons than one. At the outset, we are in a position to state that the representations Adv.Krishnan has been making off and on to the authorities on behalf of the tenants have already had the effect of exciting interest in them in the matter the common people of Malabar are deeply interested in. This is a matter the tenant voters should not overlook. If they have gratitude enough, they must vote for the man who has been labouring incessantly to get the many and varied wrongs of the tenant redressed. We may confidently expect that the man who has done so much will also succeed in getting some relief for the anxious situation created by the tenancy laws”.
most of whom ‘had just come from the plough and the farm’. In the Manjeri conference, K.P Raman Menon pushed through a resolution demanding tenancy reform legislation, despite stiff opposition from the *janmis*. Janmis vehemently resisted it. Some of the landlords who attended the conference submitted a note to the president recording their strong protest against passing the resolution. Yet the resolution was passed. Thus with a massive rural participation, the obstructionist policy of the *janmis* was defeated and the tenants’ case first found a public platform. In fact, practically in every regional conference since 1920 when any significant political activity began to take place in Malabar, tenancy reforms figured as a major demand. The first Kerala State Political Conference held at Ottappalam in 1921 wanted to evolve harmonious agrarian relations between the land lords and tenants.

Subsequent to that, due to the enthusiasm of K.P Raman Menon and others a Kudiyan Samgham was constituted at a meeting in Calicut and also took the decision to begin such Kudiyan Samghams in all the places in Malabar. K.P Gopala Menon, P.K Kunhirama Menon and C.K Nair were its Secretaries. The famous ‘Kudiyan pledge’ also was approved there. Without delay a few Kudiyan Samghams were started in Malabar. The emergence of this phase of the struggles has to be

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72 K.Madahavan Nair, *op.cit.*, p.91.
73 Ibid.
understood in the context of the spread of English education in Malabar from the second half of the 19th century. Because of their privileges and pre-eminence in Malabar society for a long time the Namboothiris considered English education an anathema, thanks to their false notions of aristocracy and social rank. This was, however, not the case with the Nairs, especially those from the *kanakkar* families. The new education opened to them the doors of British bureaucracy in Malabar, offered them its power and influence, and made them assertive and aspiring.\(^74\)

When the *janmis* saw the tenants’ uproar from various quarters they could not remain idle. To think about the measures to counter them the *janmis* also called conference. *Yogakshemam* reports about the Tellichery conference. “Just now a meeting of the *janmis* was convened at Thalassery. In the conference it is seen that they decided to send a representative delegation to inform the Government that it should not make any legislation restricting the authority and powers of the *janmis* and the hue and cry that the tenants make is meaningless. Six gentlemen

\(^74\) E.M.S Namboothiripad, *A Short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala*, People’s Publishing House, Bombay, 1943, p.4. Yet sometimes their situation was lamentable. E.M.S Namboothiripad comments about this. “The new class of educated young-men and officers were politically and culturally far more advanced than their landlords who however were economically and socially dominant in the countryside. The very state which made them politically independent of the *janmis* made them much more dependent economically on those same *janmis*. A *Tahasildar* or a police inspector or a sub-judge is part of a machine which deals with *janmis* as with any other citizen but individuals who are appointed to these posts are socially and economically dependent on some of these *janmis*. The officer has innumerable opportunities of bossing over the *janmis* as over the rest of the people, but the *janmi* can evict his family from the house in which he lives. The educated and professional man with a wide outlook and a sturdy sense of self-respect has to humiliate himself before the narrow minded and conceited ignoramus who is his landlord”.
including Chirakkal Valiyaraja, Vengayil Nayanar and so on have been selected members of this delegation”. 75

**Tenancy Movement becomes vibrant**

Meanwhile when the Justice Party formed the first ministry in Madras in 1921 after the first election to the Reformed Council, some of the lawyers of the Pattambi Munsiff court thought of finding a solution to the tenancy problem through legislative means. An immediate result was the formation of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham (MKS) at Pattambi in 1922 with T. Ramakurup, a prominent lawyer of the Pattambi bar as President and lawyers M.M Kunhirama Menon and P.A Raman Menon as Secretaries. This was followed by the launching of the newspaper, *Kudiyan* (Tenant) with lawyer N.Kunhirama Pathiyar as Editor. In December 1922 the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham organized the first Malabar *Kudiyan* Conference at Pattambi presided by C.R Reddy, member of the Madras Legislative Assembly and a prominent member of the Justice Party. The organizers of the Conference had given adequate publicity to their venture and to the oppression of the *kanam* tenants by the *janmis*. This conference marked the beginning of the organized agitation of the *kanam* tenants. 76 This conference was a major break through. Mannath Krishnan Nair, K.P Raman Menon and so on were present. 77

The main resolution of the convention was that considering the public opinion, Mannath Krishnan Nair will prepare a Tenancy Bill in which there will be the proposal for giving permanent rights for all

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75 Yogakshemam, 24th June 1921.
76 P.Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.78.
kanakkudyans and verumpattakkudyans who have been keeping the land under possession for not less than six years and this Bill should be passed in the floor of the Madras Legislative Council. Krishnan Nair although introduced the Bill it was not passed in the Council. The Malabar Kudiyan Samgham had to employ various means to create public opinion in favour of the Tenancy Bill by doing campaign works in and out Malabar. No political movement, however just or reasonable can hope to be completely successful if it is not adequately reinforced by public opinion. As a part of the campaign, the leaders of the Kudiyan Samgham made contacts with the editors of important newspapers of Kerala, Madras and Delhi and sought their help.

The hard core of the tenants’ agitation consisted of a few lawyers, intellectuals and journalists from prominent kanakkar families in and around Calicut. The methods of articulation were in keeping with their social and professional background. These involved the publication of articles and reports on tenancy issues in leading newspapers such as the Madras-based The Hindu, Justice and Madras Mail in English and the Calicut-based Kudiyan, Mathrubhoomi and Mithavadi in Malayalam; periodic meetings with the editors of The Hindu and the Madras Mail for apprising them of the need for tenancy legislation; fighting elections on tenancy issues, seeking the patronage of important political leaders and inviting them to preside over Malabar Kudiyan Samgham conferences and so on.

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78 Ibid., p.223.
80 P.Radhakrishnan, op.cit., 1989, p.79.
It was at this juncture Mathrubhoomi was born. Right from the beginning, it started to embrace the cause of tenancy movement. In the fourth issue Mathrubhoomi sarcastically wrote that seeing the scene in which the janmis and tenants of Malabar kneeling before a foreign power for the solution of the issue we are reminded of the fable where two cats went before a monkey to get a loaf of bread shared. This tenancy discord is intertwined with many other things and it will further weaken the strength of our beloved country. It is sure that until a judicious decision regarding the dispensation of land there will be no prosperity and peace in the District.\footnote{Mathrubhoomi, 22nd March 1923.} The very next day Mathrubhoomi again carried a statement of K.Madhavan Nair of Calicut. In it he highlighted that until some enactment is made in respect of janmi-tenant issue, we cannot expect to have peace or prosperity in Malabar. The permanent right of the tenants is, of-course a genuine need. Even though there are hard-hearted janmis it is not good, or beneficial or desirable to abuse the janmis in general and a community in special.\footnote{Mathrubhoomi, 23rd March 1923.}

In a way, at that particular period the very aim of Mathrubhoomi was to lead the tenancy movement so as to be beneficial to the tenants. When the elections to the Madras Legislative Council were held in 1923 Mathrubhoomi was taking the initiative to decide the candidates of the Kudiyan Samgham. In the report published on 5\textsuperscript{th} June 1923 it intimated the readers about such a meeting. “A general meeting of the Kudiyan Samgham will be held on 17\textsuperscript{th} June 1923 at Pattambi. The agenda was
mentioned as to choose two candidates of the Samgham to the Legislative Council”.  

At the same time the Janmi-tenant Acts in Cochin and Malabar coerced the rich group of the Yogakshema Sabha to change according to changing times. The Janmi-tenant Act promulgated by the Government of Cochin was the item on which the immediate attention of the Sabha was focused. About this Unni Namboothiri wrote, “Oh, janmis, you might have understood the danger behind the third and fourth chapter of Tenancy Regulation. Our condition has now become very pathetic. Independent authority over land is the basis of all our qualifications and worthiness. But it is to be controlled by the Regulation from this 8th Thulam onwards. And there ends all our worthiness…” It was in regions like Cochin and South Malabar, quite different from Travancore, where separate agrarian relations existed, that Yogakshemam concentrated its activities. Therefore it gave more weightage to the interests of the Malabar and Kochi janmis. “In those days there were publications like Vasumathi and Janmi to protect the interests of the janmis. Regarding the Janmi-tenant issue of Malabar Vasumathi could only make some noise favouring the side of the janmis. The janmis met in kovilakams, manas and oottupuras, ate enormous meals and discussed about their rights. And later the report of those discussions would be published in Vasumathi”.

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83 Mathruboomi, 5th June 1923.
84 Unni Namboothirippad, in Unni Namboothiri, Voi.iv, Issue 8, 1923, pp.146-151.
85 KVM, op.cit., p.156.
The election to the second Reformed Council in October 1923 witnessed the first active phase of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham. It was in the Congress convention held at Delhi in September 1923 that the resolution allowing Congress members to contest the elections to the Legislative Council was passed. As a result a new importance came up for the elections to the Madras Legislative Council and Council of State, scheduled to be held in the coming month. It was a time when a new vigour and vitality was rampant throughout the land as a result of the agitations made by the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham. In the previous Council Diwan Bahadur Mannath Krishnan Nair had introduced a Tenancy Bill which was not at all discussed in the floor since the tenure of the Council ended early. It was the next Council to be formed after the elections that could do something. Therefore this election was something very crucial for the tenants who comprise a major population of Malabar.

Among the 140 members in the Madras Legislative Council Malabar was represented by only five. One among this five is a representative of the janmi. And among the other four general seats, two were reserved for Muslims. For the passing of the Tenancy Bill it became very important for the tenants to ensure the election to the above four seats, persons who are in favour of the Bill. Kollangottu Raja Vasudeva Raja and Kuthiravattath Prabhakaran Thampan were the contestants to the janmi seat. And to the two unreserved seats Ambatt Sivarama Menon, Kollangottu Madhava Raja, Diwan Bahadur

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M. Krishnan Nair and K.P Raman Menon were the active candidates. Malabar Kudiyan Samgham supported and made large scale campaigns for both M. Krishnan Nair and K.P Raman Menon. In an annexure report published in *Mathrubhoomi* on 9th October 1923 under the heading “Malabar Tenant, Coming Elections” a statement of G. Sankaran Nair, the founder Secretary of Malabar Kudiyan Samgham was published in which he had explained the necessity of electing young Krishnan Nair and K.P Raman Menon for the satisfactory solution of tenancy issue. Sankaran Nair had also given a warning such as the tenants should be very much aware of the strategies of the *janmis* who want to make Madhava Raja win the elections utilizing their influence among the tenants. He also said that some tenants are helping Madhava Raja in the above endeavour considering some vested interests. The contest became intense and tough as the day for the election approached. In the newspapers there appeared the requests of the candidates explaining their qualifications both as advertisements and news items. Elections became a mortal battle not only due to the vigour of the campaigns but also considering the general importance and unprecedented vigilance and encouragement that came up among the public.⁸⁹

Of the three candidates who contested the election, claiming to represent the tenants, namely Mannath Krishnan Nair, K.P Raman Menon and Ambattu Sivarama Menon, the first two were quite popular among the tenants….⁹⁰ *Mathrubhoomi* depicted in brief but in simple style the background of the election, the situation of the constituencies and the virtues and vices of the candidates: “Candidates four: voters

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more than 33000. Among them some favour the candidates; some are interested only in the immediate gains. Janmis coerce the tenant voters to cast their votes in favour of Madhava Raja as single vote. The number of contestants staged by Kudiyan Sangham is two. But saying that this is unjust, Kudiyan newspaper (edited by Kunhirama Pathiyar who was an office-bearer of Malabar Kudiyan Sangham) fielded another candidate Ambatt Sivarama Menon. This is the situation prevailing now. In this context how can we elect two qualified and competent candidates? If not possible what would be the future of the tenant world”?91

Newspapers like Mathrubhoomi favoured much the Kudiyan movement and gave wide publicity for its work. Even it published as a news item the request of Mannath Krishnan Nair, a candidate for the Legislative Council elections, under the heading, “Election to Legislative Council, Request to Voters”. The text of the request was like this, “Although I introduced a Bill in the Legislative Council proposing permanent rights for all kanakkudiyans and verumpattakkudiyans of Malayalam District, since the tenure of the Council ended early it could not become a matter of discussion in the Council. But I can move this Bill again in the new Council. Therefore, to enable me for the same I request every voter to vote for me in the forthcoming election”.92 Usually this kind of requests was carried only as advertisements since they would create an impression that the paper is supporting that side only. But for Mathrubhoomi it was not a problem since it was vehemently in support of the tenancy movement.

91 V.R Menon, op.cit., p.82.
92 Mathrubhoomi, 7th July, 1923.
Mathrubhoomi was injecting inspiration into every tenant to persuade him to vote for the candidates of the Kudiyan Samgham. With that purpose they carried various news items which would instill self-pride in the heart of every tenant who may come across that. In the supplement of 9th October 1923 the election was the main thread of discussion. It said: “We are now standing at a juncture in the history of the Malabar tenancy. A new inspiration and vigour is visible in the land, consequent to the agitations in respect of tenancy issue. The tenant world which was enslaved so far, feels an air of freedom and a new awareness about rights. This topic which was hitherto confined to Malabar District is now fascinating the attention of the whole of Presidency. The Government which so far kept silent in this issue is also aware of the fact that it cannot remain idle without doing something. In the last Council Diwan Bahadur M.Krishanan Nair had introduced a Tenancy Bill. But since the Council was terminated early it will be discussed again only in the next Council formed after the election”. 93

The report continued: “It is a must that janmi-tenant relations of Malabar are to be restructured in a reasonable way so as to protect the genuine rights of both. To materialize this objective we have to get the sympathy and favour of Madras Legislative Council. Out of the 140 members in the Council, Malabar has a representation of only five. Among this one is reserved for the janmis. Out of the other four seats two each are reserved for Hindus and Muslims. Since among the public, the brutal majority being the tenants and since the Government has shown overt injustice in the allocation of seats to Malabar, as a sweet revenge we have to ensure the success of the tenant candidates to the

93 Mathrubhoomi Supplement, 9th October, 1923.
Council. Especially since our grievances are to be redressed by the next Council the above four members should be our genuine representatives. Among these four we have to think about the two Hindu candidates. There is no doubt that the Government is unjust in the allocation of seats to the Council. It is funny that besides reserving one seat for the janmis the Government has also allowed them to contest in the general seats. Under the guise of the above clause Kollangottu Madhava Raja has filed nomination. This is a subject which the tenants of Malabar have to seriously ponder over. It is most funny to see Madhava Raja as a candidate before the public, who have been suffering from the torments of the janmis for quite a long time. This justifies the general thinking of the janmis that these tenants are some abominable creatures lacking even a bit of self respect or dignity. In order to retaliate the impudence of the janmis the tenants should be able to exercise their franchise in a manly manner. We should remember that if a janmi goes to the Council getting our votes, as our representative, what we have done all these days for the welfare of the tenants will be in vain. Many of the janmis using their influence among the tenants, are trying to canvass votes for Madhava Raja. Some tenants are also conniving with these janmis for reasons of vested interest. We have to be careful in dealing both these groups”.

An advertisement which was centre-spread in the front page of Mathrubhoomi conveys the importance it attached for the canvassing works of the candidates of Kudiyan Samgham contesting to Legislative Council elections. (See appendix-II). But although Mathrubhoomi

94 Ibid.
95 Mathrubhoomi, 25th October, 1923.
fought with the same energy and vigour just as the candidates, Krishnan Nair alone could win the elections, since it was the early beginning of Kudiyan Samgham and as a result much unity and solidarity were not cemented among the tenants. K.P Raman Menon was defeated by a janmi Kollangottu Madhava Raja. Among the seats reserved for Muslims Moidu and Uppi Sahib made success. Subsequent to the elections Mathrubhoomi wrote an editorial under the heading “Certain lessons from Election”. In the editorial they said, “On the basis of votes it is very evident that the candidates of the Kudiyan Samgham are the most agreeable ones. Yet one of their candidates lost the election due to some feud within the organization”.

Despite the partial defeat of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham, the election provided ample opportunities for building up a tempo on tenancy issues both through the press and the platforms. Indeed Kudiyan newspaper was partial. But Mathrubhoomi which was started just on time for the election propaganda with one janmi (Kurur Nilakantan Namboothirpad), five lawyers and one doctor as directors devoted considerable space to lengthy editorials and debates on janmi-kudiyan relations and to election appeals of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham and its candidates. Every election meeting was also used for highlighting the tenancy issues. Meanwhile Kerala Kesari, the newspaper of Moyyarah Sankaran welcomed the activities of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham and wanted to consider the case of verumpattakkar also. The

96 Malayala Vishwa Vijnanakosham, p.288.
97 V.R Menon, op.cit., p.83.
98 P.Radhakrishnan, op.cit., p.81.
99 Kaviyoor Rajagopalan, Moyyarah Sankaran, (Mal), Trissur, 1965, p.43.
resistance mounted upon by the ruling authorities and the *janmis* troubled *Kerala Kesari* much which gave active support simultaneously to both National Movement and Tenancy Movement. The pressures became intolerable such that it was forced to shift its office from Kannur to Calicut. In Kannur due to the harassment of the police none of the presses was ready to print the paper which ultimately resulted in the closure of the publication.100

When the tenants started campaigns the *janmis* also could not remain idle. They too started the enlightening works using the print media. The article by Kaanippayyur Sankaran Namboothiripad in the *Yogakshemam* under the heading ‘The responsibilities of Janmi Sabha’ is an example for this. He said, “I don’t think even the tenants have any difference of opinion in the fact that *janmis* have absolute freedom in their property. It is with the idea that, may these poor tenants live in comfort, that many of the land owners have given them land by *charthts* and allowed them to continue there and to keep it under their possession. Thus in fact the *janmis* have so far been protecting the tenants…But forgetting all these now the tenants want the permanent rights over the land enjoyed by the *janmis*. Is there any ingratitude more intense than this? If we think on another line, we will be bound to say that it is the foolishness of the *janmis*, the reason for all. If the tenants were not allowed to enjoy this much of property for such a long period this kind of ‘avarice’ would not have engendered in their minds. This kind of greed would not have born in them if they were paid the coolie as cash down at the moment they do the farm work. The root cause for all these

troubles is the fact that the janmis allowed the tenants to enjoy their land like janmam for a meagre consideration of paddy called michavaram.”

Kanippayyur continued, “The only solace of the janmis so far was that the Madras Government will not favour the tenants in their unjust move. But in the introductory speech of the Governor it is seen as he said that tenancy legislation is also under consideration. Therefore if the janmis remain idle they will have to bear hardships….if large scale chaos break out in the land the Government also cannot remain without fear. Therefore it is the Janmi Sabha that has to do further in this matter. For this the Janmi Sabha has to collect four or five lakhs rupees by borrowing from the Government or from some other sources. And let the janmis know that they don’t give anymore land by way of charth, but start litigation to evict the existing tenants without fearing to remit the compensation for improvements and for that there is sufficient money to be collected by Janmi Sabha. Now it is neither due to any lack of desire for profits nor any lack of knowledge regarding the ingratitude of the tenants that the janmis have not evicted them so far but for lack of money to start litigation and pay compensation for the improvements”.

He suggested further, “Therefore the Janmi Sabha has to do this thing alone on an emergency basis. Janmi Sabha can be given the evicted land as collateral security for the money they lend to the janmi. However, we look, all the lands released thus will not be required as collateral security for the amount that janmi borrows. Thus the janmis will have some balance land under their possession for enjoyment even

101 Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboothirippad in Yogkshemam, 5th December 1923.
102 Ibid.
after giving a portion of the property as collateral security for the amount they borrow from Janmi Sabha. The result is that the tenants won’t trouble them hereafter. If four or five *janmis* like Kollangott, Olappamanna, Nilambur, Poomulli and so on, come into a contract and form a company they can collect not four or five lakhs but crores of rupees”.103 *Yogakshemam* by separate news bits also tried to inspire the *janmis* about the works started by the tenants and thereby to take counter measures to defend the same. Also it gave advance information about Diwan Bahadur Krishnan Nair’s move seeking permission for introducing the Malabar Tenancy Bill in the forthcoming Legislative Council.104 Learning about the advent of Tenancy Bill in the Council *Unni Namboothiri* lamented that the Tenancy Bill and the ‘Charitable Institution Bill’ will make the Namboothiris to dispossess of their *Dharmaswam* and *Dewaswam*.105

The period between 1926-30 witnessed the most active and vocal phase of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham, centering around the Malabar Tenancy Bill and the Government’s opposition to it. Krishnan Nair had begun his efforts to formally introduce his Bill in the Madras Legislative Council soon after the second Reformed Council was constituted. The Bill, was eventually introduced in the Council in August 1924. The Select Committee headed by C.P Ramaswamy Iyer issued a dissenting note stating that the Bill was so defective that it was incapable of being improved even by amendments. And the task of framing these amendments was entrusted to F.B Evans, its second Secretary whose

103 Ibid.
104 *Yogakshemam*, 5th December, 1923.
anti-tenant views were so notorious that tenants throughout Malabar felt it necessary to protest immediately against his appointment. According to Evans the Tenancy agitation in Malabar was not due to any change in the economic situation that occurred since the Government decided against Tenancy Legislation in 1918. He regarded the agitation as communal, Nairs versus Thiyyas in North Malabar, Namboothiriris versus Samanthans in South Malabar, and a combination of both in Calicut.\textsuperscript{106}

In the wake of the impending Bill of Mannath Krishnan Nair \textit{Yogakshemam} was eager to publish the report of every meeting of Kerala Janmi Sabha. The resolution passed by the special meeting of the Janmi Sabha held at Payyanur was carried in \textit{Yogakshemam}. “This Sabha is of the opinion that the Legislative Council should not allow Sri Diwan Bahadur Mannath Krishnan Nair to present the Malabar Tenancy Bill which is supposed to grab the genuine, inherited and ancient rights of a group of people and give it to another group which is irrelevant, unnecessary, detrimental for Malabar and which may result in the enhancement of litigations considerably”.\textsuperscript{107}

\textit{Yogakshemam} took diplomatic stand when it appeared necessary, showing some sympathy for the tenants. In the report entitled “Congress Workers and the \textit{Janmis}” it took a bi-forked stand attacking the Congress workers and at the same time showing compassion towards the tenants. “Now the important persons like K.P Raman Menon who have recently joined the Congress in Malabar uphold a policy such that the powers and rights enjoyed by the \textit{janmis} are to be exacted and

\textsuperscript{106} P.Radhakrishnan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.83.
\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Yogakshemam}, 26\textsuperscript{th} January 1924.
subsequently bestowed upon the tenants with the same. And thereby the fruits of the hard work of the tenants may be made enjoyable by some ‘upstarts’. In Congress janmis are a few, but tenants or those who are favouring the tenants are more in number. Now it is difficult for the small janmis to release their outdated possessions from the tenants….Our ancestors have entrusted the tenants their lands without getting sufficient security or registering marupattam (the counterpart of the pattam deed which the janmi keeps by him). Now it is very much comfortable for the tenants since the courts in their judgments give the tenants a consideration for their improvements even greater than that of the janmam cost….As a result the tenants can enjoy the property as if his janmam land without giving either the janmam price or the periodic increase in taxes. ..But in most of the cases the poor tenant who worked hard is not in a position to enjoy the fruits. Because the ‘men who have made new fortunes’ ultimately swindle the land by lending 10 rupees and adding to it two three times the interest and compound interest. Subsequently it is he who gets the janmam. If he evicts the tenant there is no grievance. But if the janmi evicts him for not giving the lease amount for 12 years consecutively, then the tenants organize and put the janmi in trouble so as not to enable him to evict the tenant. For getting the meagre lease amount, it will cause unbearable expense for the janmi to go to court”. 108

Another report in Yogakshemam entitled “The Basis of Malabar Tenancy Act” accused the Government for its lack of zest in collecting information, and the Council members for its lack of dynamism. It called for making a scientific study of the tenancy problem. “The tenant

108 Yogakshemam, 23rd February 1924.
side puts forth very many reasons for the legislation of a Tenancy Act in Malabar. But nobody has collected any material evidence to substantiate these claims. Details regarding how much is the number of kanakkudiyans, how much is the number of kudiyirupps (consideration, a tenant used to pay to the owner, for land taken for building alone) under janmis and kanakkudiyans, how many verumpattakudiyans are there, whether it is the janmi or the kanakkudiyans that have filed more number of eviction suits etc. are of urgent necessity now. When Mr.Gopala Menon requested the Madras Government to collect such details the reply of the Law Member was that such information won’t help. Though it needs some labour the reluctance of the Government to collect these necessary details cannot be justified at all”.

The meeting of the Janmi Sabha held at Kottackal in 1924 also cautioned the janmis against the Tenancy Bill of Mr.Krishnan Nair. It was presided over by K.C Sree Veera Rayan Raja known as Nedathralppad Thampuran. He explained in his speech the troubles and difficulties for the janmis and tenants that may result if the Bill comes into force and warned the janmis that it is their duty and responsibility to see that such a legislation is not at all made. The following resolution was passed unanimously. “It is seen that the Tenancy Bill to be piloted in the Legislative Council by Diwan Bahadur Krishnan Nair will turn upside down the permanent rights of the janmis which have been agreed by the British Government and also by their predecessors and thereby protected and strengthened by the judicial courts”.

109 Yogakshemam, 29th March 1924.
110 Yogakshemam, 2nd April 1924.
Yogakshemam while fighting for the cause of the janmis it was very enthusiastic in attacking the reports and policies of Mathrubhoomi which was unfailingly favouring the tenants. The report entitled ‘Mathrubhoomi’s Model’ published in December 1924, in which the works of Mathrubhoomi is ridiculed, is an excellent example. “Some newspapers like Mathrubhoomi are indisposed to hear the news that a college is necessary for the janmis to get necessary education so as to enable them to exercise their duties and obligations in the capacity as the owners of the land in Kerala. We don’t understand why these people cannot digest a situation, in which the janmi governs his estates judiciously and efficiently without somebody’s help and without allegations. In this country there are separate colleges for engineers, doctors, lawyers and agriculturists. Is it the formation of a special college where the curriculum has subjects helpful for estate management that has annoyed them? Or is it adding some janmi sound along with the name of the college that has caused for their discomfort? Or, is the reason for this venom the desire that there should not be any difference between janmi and tenant among the public? Or, is it the stand of Mathrubhoomi that the word janmi might not be used henceforward other than not seeing in some records or books or dictionaries….That equality and equal rights about which people use to speak right from the genesis of the world and even now speaking, has not so far come into force but rests only in the heads of scholars like the Editor of Mathrubhoomi. Editor and reader, Government and subjects, officials and subordinates, leaders and followers, courts and clients, master and servant, rich and the poor, land owners and landless people all exist then and now. Nowhere else there is a country or a people as shown by
Mathrubhoomi’s model. Even Mahatma Gandhi has not made any
endeavour to bring equality and socialism as to say that there should not
be *janmis* or that there isn’t any necessity of the word *janmi*. It is to be
experimented to find out the difference between Mathrubhommi’s
model and Gandhiji’s model. If we can accept the economic principle of
Mathrubhoomi such that a newspaper establishment can be run by
collecting money from the subscribers, our principle of giving education
by collecting money from *janmis* also can be accepted. If so it can be
generally accepted that economic principles can be employed in any
way….We totally agree with the opinion of Mathrubhoomi that there is
considerable difference between Mathrubhoomi’s model and our
model”.

Meanwhile the tenants had advanced much, in respect of the
Tenancy Bill. Yet the *janmis* were not much aware of the impending
danger. At this juncture the Yogakshemam takes initiative to awaken the
*janmis* from their slumber. The call of Muthiringod Bhavathrathan
Namboothirippad, ‘To *Janmis*’ is an awakening article. He says,
“Perhaps everybody might have known that due to the earnest effort of
Mannath Krishnan Nair a Tenancy Bill for the benefit of the tenants of
Malabar is allowed to be presented in the Madras Legislative Council
and it will be discussed in the meeting of the Council scheduled to be
held in coming August. There is no doubt that if the Bill becomes a
legislation it will be detrimental to much more number of *janmis* here
than that in Travancore and Cochin. My impression is that in Cochin
and Travancore *kanam* alone comes under the parameter of the Act. But
here in Malabar, if the Bill is passed for *verumpattam* it will also fetch

111 Yogakshemam, 5th December 1924.
janmam right along with it. I feel that the janmis of Malabar are not aware of the impending danger when I see them remaining idle. A huge memorandum demanding the legislation of the Bill, signed by 30,000 tenants has reached the Government…Oh, janmis, if you stare well soon, you may perhaps be able to at least see your ancestral wealth.“112

At the same time during this period, we witness some sporadic efforts from janmi side to entice the British. The letter of Mannarghat Moopil Nair published in The Madras Mail containing some veiled threats is an example. It explains the difficulties of the janmis on one hand and tells frankly on the other hand that if the janmis are no more, then that will be a heavy loss for the British. The letter says, “The Revenue Department says that the Pattadar (Malabar janmi) is responsible for the land revenue of the land included in his patta (title deed). They do not seem to recognize the middle men (kanamdars) in the matter of revenue collection. The janmi’s movables are attached by the Revenue officials for the due amount of the land held under ‘kanam’. What is then the janmi to do? He is to borrow from a money lender, perhaps at high rate of interest, the amount of money sufficient to meet the demand of Revenue officials. If so how is the janmi to realize the amount? He is to file as many civil suits as there are kanam tenants. If he has hundred kanam tenants he is to file hundred suits paying the increased rate of court fee in civil courts. In this situation the Malabar janmi requires immediate protection. He has status to wield power and influence, which is now and ever will be which he can use to help the British Government in all possible ways; which has to be considered as an asset of the British. If the power is taken away from

112 Yogakshemam, 9th July 1924.
him or if he is deprived of power it may safely be considered that it is a loss to the British Government. One of the ways to bring him back to his former position is to allow him to realize his dues from his tenants without pushing him into civil suits, by reviving the Rent Recovery Act viii of 1865 applicable to Malabar.”

Despite the multifarious efforts of the Janmi Sabha the Tenacy Bill was presented in the Council. Learning this Unni Namboothiri, an organ of the youth wing of the Namboothiri community, lampoons, advises, chastens and whips the elders through its pages. This is evident from the various reports and editorials of the time. In the article entitled ‘Publication Project, Endeavours of Tenants’ Unni Namboothiri darts multi-pronged attacks. “The janmis of Kerala instead of trying to gain what they want by the might of their money, they are spending everything for discussion, cohabitation and eulogy without any thriftiness which in turn becomes the manure for the fast growth of the poisonous tree of ‘tenant might’. Tenant endeavours or otherwise the ‘Janmi hatred’ which is born in Travancore and ramified in British Malabar through Cochin has grown to the pinnacle by even reaching the Madras Legislative Council. We cannot say that the tenant agitations in Malabar are not at all beneficial to the janmi. At least the janmis may have studied the lesson, that the system in which they entrusted their ancestral wealth, was not with the deserving people but it was with anybody who came into their sight, and janmis were enjoying so far what these tenants have been giving them with benevolence, and will not henceforward work smoothly”.

113 The Madras Mail, 15th January 1925, NMML, New Delhi.
114 Unni Namboothiri, 1925 July.
It was when the Bill was passed in the Council that the *janmis* got a new enlightenment. Many of the *janmis* who kept away from the meetings of the Janmi Sabha suddenly turned up in the meeting held in July 1925 at Ottappalam. The next issue of *Yogakshemam* appeared with a self-criticism and evaluation of the above meeting. “From the increased attendance of the *janmis* in the meeting of the Janmi Sabha held at Ottappalam under the presidentship of Kottackal Valiya Raja, it is very evident that the unjust victory of the tenants has made the *janmis* at last a little more responsible. But it cannot be said that what they did there is something admirable or beneficial because such a big meeting of the prominent *janmis* of Malabar was just making a humble request and forming a petition committee. Only by hard work the *janmis* can bring a fruitful outcome in which they too get a place in the formation of public opinion in Malabar. It has become very necessary at least for the triumph of ‘ethical jurisprudence’ that the Tenancy Bill should be vetoed by the Governor. It is very gladdening that prayers for the same originate from the heart of every *janmi*. Our belief is that the *janmis* will not be reluctant in coercing the British Government for exercising its judicial mind at the time of final disposal of the Bill too, which it has exhibited at the time of debates in respect of the Bill earlier”.

When the *janmis* were making campaigns for their cause, some newspapers like *Al-Ameen* in the opposite side highlighted the stepmotherly treatment of the Madras Government in the case of Tenancy Bill. It even argued that Malabar, to get justice, should be made an independent province de-linking it from Madras Province. While the activities of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham was making an active

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115 *Unni Namboothiri*, 1925 July.
momentum Adv.C.Krishnan spearheaded the tenancy movement in his own unique way by utilizing the support of Thiyya community and cooperation of Malabar Kudiyans Samgham and the support of his newspaper *Mithavadi*. The resolution passed in the very big Thiyya Convention held at Kuzhalmandam, chaired by *Mithavadi* Editor C.Krishnan was this: “This convention requests the Government and Legislative Assembly either to pass the Tenancy Bill of Diwan Bahadur M.Krishnan Nair at an earlier date or to introduce and pass a Bill moved by the Government in its initiative giving permanent right to all tenants”.

Noted scholar G.Priyadarshan in his column in *Bhashaposhini* reminisces C.Krishnan’s bold writings in the special supplement of *Mithavadi*. Priyadarshan says that C.Krishnan, a wealthy janmi sincerely argues in favour of the kudiyans. In the first special supplement of the *Mithavadi* published in 1924 he wrote an article entitled ‘Malabar Kudiyayma Bill’ in which he argued successfully that the Bill introduced by Mannath Krishnan Nair in the Madras Legislative Council

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116 *Al.Ameen*, 23rd August 1925, MNNPR, TNA. The *Al-Ameen* said that it is becoming increasingly difficult to carry Malabar affairs through the Madras Legislative Council, that the latter body does not attach any importance to Malabar problems and that the Government themselves are showing only a stepmotherly interest towards Malabar. The Malabar Tenancy question affords a first class example of this attitude. It is difficult even to explain to them the meaning and application of such terms as kanam, verumpattam etc. It can undoubtedly be asserted that the ignorance of the Legislature is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of passing the Malabar Tenancy Bill. The Council depends on Tamils and Telugus. And they of course attach to their own affairs and not to Malabar……..In view of these and various other examples (not mentioned) of the anomalous position of Malabar, it is necessary for making it a separate province. It is advisable to have linguistic provinces with a Central Government for dealing with all India questions.

117 *Mathrubhoomi*, 5th April, 1923.
may be passed. Krishnan was of the opinion that there is not any difference between passing that Bill and releasing a slave from fetters. In fact the *janmis* are making our growth negative.\(^{118}\) Krishnan criticized the Madras Government for the slow efforts in dealing with tenancy reforms. *Mithavadi* was in the forefront in dealing with *kudiyan* problems. Though Kerala was hailed as ‘God’s own country’ there was cruel and unjust exploitation of the *kudiyans* who were humiliated and brutally oppressed by the *janmis* in the name of *melcharth*. In the 1925 annual of the *Mithavadi*, C.Krishnan said, “While calling Kerala as Parasurama’s gift, the Brahmins and people of *dewaswams* and *janmis* who possess land and wealth were exploiting and forcing *kudiyans* to obey them for their livelihood”.\(^ {119}\)

At this time the publications like *Yogakshemam*, *Unni Namboothiri*, *Vasumathi* and *Janmi* made a parade on the *janmi* side and newspapers like *Mathrubhoomi*, *Mithavadi*, *Kerala Kahalam*, *Al-Ameen* etc. extended whole hearted support to the tenant cause. *Mathrubhoomi* was the most vehement voice of the tenants. It also advised the tenants and gave repartee to its rivals at the apt time. It even abused the stand of Government’s Law Member C.P Ramaswamy Iyer in his deplorable stance regarding the Tenancy Bill.\(^ {120}\)


\(^{120}\) *Mathrubhoomi*, 25\(^{th}\) February, 1926. In the news item “Malabar Tenancy Bill: The undesirable policy of the Law member, the strong abuse of the tenants” *Mathrubhoomi* says, “In the tenant meeting held at Vadakara last day more than 300 tenants including Muslims and Thiyyas assembled. It was presided over by Adv. K.V Krishnan”. After that G.Sankaran Nair spoke about the present state of the Malabar Tenancy Bill and about the obligations of the tenants. Mr.Chathu presented a resolution:-“This meeting expresses strong opinion that the Government’s Law Member C.P Ramaswami Iyer, by his deed so far made, and by the opinions and views expressed, regarding the bill, has become so
published a notice inviting the tenants for a meeting at Calicut on the same day.\textsuperscript{121}

\textit{Mathrubhoomi} was very active and vigilant in informing the tenants each development in respect of the issue and to make it a thread of discussion. It reserved separate space to publish ‘Malabar Tenancy Matter’ under a separate logo. It was not reluctant to criticize even the Special Officer Mr. Evans when he seemed to be leaning towards the \textit{janmis}. In the report entitled “Government’s overt partiality, Mr.Evan’s menace” \textit{Mathrubhoomi} gives an ‘on the spot study’ of the way of Mr.Evans taking the evidences regarding the Tenancy Bill. “Mr.F.B Evans, the Special Officer in respect of Malabar Tenancy Bill held discussion about the Bill on 9\textsuperscript{th} March at Hajur Kacheri with the main leaders of the \textit{janmis} and tenants of this district. The important persons who participated were Kollangottu Valiya Nambidi, Diwan Bahadur M.Krishnan Nair, Rao Bahadur Appu Nedungadi, Nilambur Valiya Raja, Rao Saheb Chandan, T.Chathu, Kottiyyathu Krishnan and so on. In fact what we witnessed there was the prolonged debate between Mr.Evans and the tenants’ representative Sankaran Nair. From the way in which Mr.Evans treated the representative of Malabar Kudiyan Samgham it is very clear that the Government is not going to include undeserving to win the trust and confidence of the tenants of Malabar”. The resolution was passed unanimously.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Mathrubhoomi}, 25\textsuperscript{th} February, 1926. The text of the matter under the heading “Notice” was this: “A meeting of the tenants is to be held today (February 1925) at 5.30 p.m in Town Hall, Calicut. The meeting will ponder about the Malabar Tenancy Bill and the policy of the Government towards it at present. It is requested that all the tenants should be present in the meeting”. Beneath the notice the names of the persons inviting were also given as ‘Rao Saheb P.A Krishna Menon, C.Krishnan, K.Madhavan Nair, U.Gopala Menon and G.Sankaran Nair’.
anything other than the amendments he may propose and so the Government is not going to review the needs like permanent rights of the tenants….It doesn’t amaze us why the janmi delegates kept silence in the conference. Because Mr.Evans was sitting there as a representative who can satiate any janmi who is even conservative to the core. But the sight that majority of the Kudiyan Samgham members keeping mum indeed amazed us”.  

When the partiality of C.P Ramaswamy Iyer and Mr.Evans became very explicit Mathrubhoomi cautioned the tenants to be beware of the above persons, through a news item entitled “The tenant conference of North Malabar”. In it the paper said, “The respected people should know about the meeting of the Kudiyan Sabha scheduled to be held in coming April 14\textsuperscript{th} at Thikkodi. The unfavourable attitude of Sir C.P Ramaswami Iyer very much exhibits the lack of sympathy of the Government in the matter of Malabar Tenancy Bill. Besides that Mr.Evans has been deputed to enquire about the tenant problem. The opinion of Mr.Evans will be same as that of the janmis since he has a leaning already towards janmi side. Now it has become necessary for the tenants of Malabar to think about the matters in which they have to work jointly. Therefore we invite all the tenants of North Malabar to be present in this meeting and request to extend all help for the smooth conduct of the Sabha”.

When the Special Officer Mr.Evans published his report Mathrubhoomi carried the next day its crux under the logo “Malabar Tenancy Matter”. Evan’s report said that permanent rights will not be

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Mathrubhoomi, 11\textsuperscript{th} March, 1926.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Mathrubhoomi, 20\textsuperscript{th} March, 1926.
\end{itemize}
given to the tenants in the land. Janmi can evict as he likes. There is no objection for him to give melcharth. He can enhance the michavaram. The powers of the janmi are not at all cut off”.

Infuriated by Evan’s appointment and amendments, protest meetings of tenants were organized in different parts of Malabar. Of them a meeting held at Thikkodi in North Malabar in April 1926 was probably the most significant. It was presided over by the Mithavadi Editor C. Krishnan and was attended by tenants from different parts of North Malabar and tenant leaders from South Malabar. In organizing it both the Nairs and the Thiyyas worked jointly overlooking their caste differences. More important is that it was organized with the help and co-operation of the younger members of janmi families in the area. Their involvement was very significant, symptomatic of the larger changes in Malabar society under the influence of modern ideas and education. Apart from a lengthy editorial Mathrubhoomi reproduced Krishnan’s presidential address almost in one full page. In his presidential address C. Krishnan declared, “We shall not budge an inch in the fight for the rights which belong to us under every consideration of law and equality. We shall continue to agitate till we secure for ourselves these rights...The principle of permanency of tenure is based upon justice and it must prevail”. He wholeheartedly supported the efforts of M.Krishnan Nair for introducing the Malabar Kudiyan Bill in the Madras Legislative Council.

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124 Mathrubhoomi, 27th March, 1926.
125 P.Radhakrishnan, op.cit., p.83.
126 K.Sabukuttan, op.cit., p.32.
It was under the leadership of *Kerala Kesari* newspaper that the first tenants procession to Madras was organized. Under the leadership of K.V Reddy large tenants’ convention was held at Puthuppanam of Vatakara. The procession under the leadership of Moolayil Kurumban, an 80 year old man was held to convey and convince the ruling authorities at Chennai about the growing debts and difficulties of the farmers of Malabar. It has been noted by N.E Balram that *Kerala Kesari* not only welcomed the activities of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham but also asked to consider the case of *verumpattakkar* also.\(^{128}\)

Meanwhile the Bill was debated in the week-long meeting of the Madras Legislative Council, in July 1926, when most of its sections were passed after rejecting Evan’s proposals as they came up, after significant changes in the Select Committee’s draft and more importantly, after frustrating the attempts of Ramaswamy Iyer to stall it.\(^{129}\) At the same time Vasudeva Raja of Kollengode convened a meeting of *janmis* in July 1926, presided over by Kottackal Valiya Raja, where more than a hundred *janmis* from different parts of Malabar participated. The meeting requested the Governor not to pass the Bill.\(^{130}\)

In the Legislative Council *janmi’s* representative Prabhakaran Thampan delivered speeches underlining the reasons that justify not to pass the Bill, and those were carried in *Yogakshemam* in full text. “..This council can never forget the fact that *janmis* are the absolute owners of the land for the last centuries. Also they had in the past the

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\(^{128}\) Kaviyoor Rajagopalan, *op.cit.*, 1965, p.43.

\(^{129}\) P.Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.83.

\(^{130}\) P.Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.83.
freedom to get back the rights like kanam by evicting as they like. Not only have the judicial courts of this land but even the Privy Council made judgments ratifying the above right. Due to the belief that the janmis have the above right, it can be seen that so many thousands of people have purchased this janmam right. On this basis even the Government has disposed the janman rights of escheat lands. In such a context is there any justice in taking away such rights in one moment so as to bring the ruin of one group? Also genuine reasons for the enactment have not been shown by the one who has introduced the Bill….I can daringly say that this Bill will not make even an iota of change in the case of lower classes. It is with the intention to get their votes that this kind of excuses is being presented. By this Bill the Council intends to give all the tenants of Malabar the permanent right. So that nobody is left without the right for permanent right. If so there is no difficulty to get the right of the land tomorrow for even the one who bought the right yesterday”.

In the next issue of Yogakshemam also Thampan’s speech continued. “.. I feel this Council has a wrong impression that all the janmis are rich. Let me make it clear that there are only very few who have additional income more than needed. Most of the janmis are poor. If anybody of you goes to Malabar you can see that even some ladies who are getting Malikhan (pension) are leading their life by doing farm works in the field. …If this Bill is passed there is no doubt that the janmam price will come down considerably. ..It was William Logan who said for the first time that janmis should have some kind of permanent right. During the discussion of Kuzhikoor Chamaym Act,

131 Yogakshemam, 18th September 1926, MNNPR, TNA.
Justice Sundarayya who belonged to Malabar said that when considering the fact that *janmis* have spent much money on land property recently, any Act that takes away the right without remuneration is illogical. All the officials who have worked in Malabar have unanimously expressed the same opinion”.  

At this stage ‘to be or not to be’ was the prospect of the Bill. On the Government side there were strong attempts to stall the Bill and it was very conspicuous. Also there were strong moves on the tenant side to pass it in the Council. Then *Yogakshemam* wrote a report of double dealing nature in which they presented the pending Bill as something which the tenants can encash in the coming elections. “If the Bill be passed, it will count for votes at the ensuing election. On the other hand if it is vetoed by the Governor there will be an opportunity for the tenant leaders to condemn the ‘satanic Government’”.  

**The Fight Continues**

Eventually overcoming all the hurdles mounted up by the *janmi* side the Tenancy Bill was passed by the Legislative Council. Krishnan Nair’s Malabar Tenancy Bill got 44 votes as against 23. Then the *janmi* side again started to block the smooth forward movement of the Bill. The *Yogakshemam* carried a report of the resolution of the Namboothiri community meeting held at Cheruthuruthi which requested the Governor not to give assent to the Bill. But when the Bill was

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132 *Yogakshemam*, 25th September 1926, MNNPR, TNA.

133 *Yogakshemam*, 14th July 1926.


135 *Yogakshemam*, 18th September 1926. Through the resolution the meeting requested the respected Madras Governor never to give assent to the “Malabar
finally passed by the Council on 2\textsuperscript{nd} September 1926, and when the tenants were celebrating their victory by organizing meetings in different parts of Malabar and felicitating Krishnan Nair and Sankaran Nair, came the news that the Governor had withheld his assent to it.\textsuperscript{136}

The decision of the Governor made the \textit{janmis} jubilant. Subsequent to that in the \textit{Yogakshemam} there was a report justifying the action of the Governor. “…In this Bill, some clauses that deny the rights enjoyed by a group for the last 75 years, are incorporated, even rejecting the judgments of the judicial courts. It is seen that according to the Bill there is no provision to provide adequate compensation. Governor has felt that this enactment that prevents the natural justice and basic reasons of private rights, without showing genuine reasons is not at all judicious. Besides this Bill doesn’t provide a satisfactory solution to the anomalies as said to exist in Malabar”.\textsuperscript{137}

In the same issue there was another report warning the \textit{janmis} not to be relieved of fully by the present developments and advising the tenants not to be carried away by false promises. “There is no reason for the \textit{janmis} of Malabar to sit in peace due to the fact that the Governor has vetoed the Bill. Sometimes the Government may introduce again this Bill. We vehemently say that \textit{janmis} have to jointly work hard…We have to say that the tenants of Malabar should not sacrifice the love and

\textit{Janmi-Tenant Regulation}” called the “Exaction Act” which has been passed by the Madras Legislative Council ignoring the inherited and permanent rights of the minority group called \textit{janmis}. In that issue there was also another resolution requesting the Governor to reject the Bill since it is one which may nip the rights and authority enjoyed by the \textit{janmis} and may destroy the amity between the \textit{janmis} and tenants and may even distort the financial situation of Malabar.

\textsuperscript{136} P.Radakrishnan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.84.

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Yogakshemam} 8\textsuperscript{th} November 1926.
affection towards the *janmis* for the sake of a few. Those who need your votes for their vested interests may give you many promises which may intensify your desires. Don’t succumb to such things. It is the *janmi*, your most intimate relative. Don’t give your votes in favour of those who try to make discord between *janmis* and tenants. And by that don’t give any chance for them to represent you and to do something that is detrimental to your interests”.

To express their exuberance the 19th annual conference of the Namboothiri Yogakshema Sabha held at Kumaranellur passed resolution congratulating the Governor and the same was published in the *Yogakshemam*. “This meeting heartily congratulate the Governor who denied permission for the *Janmi*-Tenant Bill which was earlier passed by the Madras Legislative Council by artificial majority and without giving consideration to the genuine grievances of the *janmi* side. We also congratulate Raja Sir Vasudeva Raja, the *janmi* representative, K.Prabhakaran Thampan and so on also who put up tremendous work in this topic”.

The Governor’s refusal to give assent to the Bill drew the ire of the tenant leaders and the tenants. On 1st September 1926, the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham secretary Sankaran Nair issued a lengthy ‘open letter’ to the Governor with copies distributed to the public, the Indian Government, the British Government and members of Parliament and reproduced it in full in *Mathrubhoomi* and *Mithavadi* as well. In another letter M.Krishnan Nair appealed to the tenants for mobilizing

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138 *Yogakshemam* 8th November 1926.
139 *Yogakshemam* 5th January 1927.
140 P.Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.84.
public opinion for the Bill through meetings, newspapers, letters to the Government, meetings with members of the Madras Legislative Council, and men in public life for starting a newspaper (Kudiyan was defunct by then), and for building up a Kudiyan Fund for the purpose through contributions.\textsuperscript{141}

Meetings held in different parts of Malabar, strongly protesting against the Governor’s action, passed resolutions demanding the resignation of Ramaswamy Iyer and recall of the Governor and reaffirmed faith in Krishnan Nair, Sankaran Nair and the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham.\textsuperscript{142} On 25\textsuperscript{th} November 1926 C. Krishnan presided over a meeting of tenants in the Town Hall at Calicut to protest against the veto of the Tenancy Bill by the Governor of Madras. When Government and janmis together resisted the attempt of kudiyan leaders to convene a conference, Krishnan came forward and held such a conference on 11\textsuperscript{th} February 1927 at the premises of his tarawad house at Mullasserry (in Ponnani taluk).\textsuperscript{143} This was probably the 5\textsuperscript{th} annual Conference of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham. It was presided over by L.K Tulasi Ram, a prominent member of the Madras Legislative Council and was attended by about thousand tenant leaders from different parts of Malabar including Krishnan Nair and Sankaran Nair. There were as many as nine resolutions thanking Krishnan Nair for his work for the tenants, accepting his appeals mentioned earlier, indicting the Governor, expressing lack of faith in the Madras Government and its Law Member Ramaswamy Aiyar, requesting Krishnan Nair to introduce

\textsuperscript{141} Mathrubhoomi 7\textsuperscript{th} December 1926.

\textsuperscript{142} P.Radhakrishnan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.85.

\textsuperscript{143} K.Sabukuttan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.32.
another Bill without delay and so on. Seconding, one of the resolutions Sankaran Nair stated that in the history of Malabar tenancy, two names would be remembered forever: that of Krishnan Nair as a selfless person who worked for the progress of the tenant and Ramaswamy Aiyar as an enemy of the Malabar tenants who worked for their ruin…Apart from an Editorial *Mathrubhoomi* published lengthy reports on the conference on two consecutive days of about one page each out of its total space of eight pages.\(^{144}\)

In the editorial *Mathrubhoomi* expressed its anguish in the inability of the organizers to chalk out a creative programme to retain and carry forward the tempo of the people’s agitation. It noted that the success achieved by the strength of the crowd and by their mindset has been nullified by the above lapse. The decision of the conference was that the tenants may withdraw the co-operation to the *janmis* after tarrying for some time.\(^{145}\) But in the editorial of the next day *Mathrubhoomi* lashed out at the organizers. “Whoever is responsible for this resolution, it reveals the lack of readiness to accept a pragmatic action plan. For whom is the tenants should wait? Is it for the Government, or the *janmis* or the leaders? The situation of the tenants becomes difficult and complex by each day’s waiting. Action, at the earliest has become inevitable. Only by such deeds, great works can be done in this world….The duty of the leaders is to enlighten the tenants regarding the above truth and make them ready for the struggle. To fulfil that, it needs real courage and commitment. If the leaders are not

\(^{144}\) P.Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, pp.85-86.

prepared for that, let them concede the fact and withdraw from the posts”.  

In the wake of mounting pressures from the tenant side, the Governor appointed a Committee in September 1927, with Diwan Bahadur T. Raghaviah Pantalu as President and six others as members to inquire into the matter and to report upon the disabilities that were pressing hard on the tenants of Malabar in general and on the extent of unjustifiable evictions by the *janmis* in particular, and how far the *Kanamdar* (one who holds land on *kanam* tenure) as such was in need of any protection. Out of the seven members of this Committee six were either *janmis* or those who favoured the *janmis*. After nominating the first six members the Government invited Mannath Krishnan Nair as the seventh, and as the tenants’ representative. Krishnan Nair declined the invitation just like any other citizen may do in that situation. But Sir C.P Ramaswamy Iyer bridged that gap appointing Kottiyath Krishnan, a nominated member in the Legislative Council.

Though the *janmis* were very happy when the Governor vetoed the Malabar Tenancy Bill passed by the Legislative Council, they became impatient and intolerant when they came to learn the news that the Government is going to appoint a Committee to look into the subject again. Consequently there was an outburst of the *janmis* in the Kerala State Conference of the *Janmi Sabha* held at Calicut. The nutshell of the speeches and resolutions about Malabar Tenancy Bill made in the above conference was published in the *Yogakshemam*. “If Hindu-Muslim unity

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147 P.Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, p.86.
is the most vital issue for India, it is the Bill that stipulates clauses pertaining to *janmi*-tenant relations is the most important issue for Malabar….Towards this end, though a Bill was passed by the Legislative Council after making discussion for six years the Governor annihilated it using his extraordinary veto power. Six months passed since that. But now it is learnt that to discuss again this topic, the Government is going to form a Committee consisting six *janmis* and six tenants. It is almost 50 years since the Government has started pondering over the tenant issue. During this period it appointed many Commissions, collected many evidences and prepared Reports and Bills. At last all those were put in waste baskets. To ponder more about this the Government needs a Committee…This Committee will not be effective if the members are not the genuine representatives of the *janmis* and tenants and its president the retired judge, a fellow with little bipartisan spirit.”¹⁴⁹

Just as in the case of nomination of the members to the Committee, the terms of references put for its consideration were also of anti-tenant in nature. A meeting of the tenants was convened on 22nd July 1927 under the presidency of C.Krishnan. Since most of the members of the Raghaviah Committee were *janmis*, Krishnan and other *kudiyan* leaders decided to boycott this Committee.¹⁵⁰ It was decided by the Government to convene a meeting of the Raghaviah committee on 18th of next month at Calicut *Hajur Kacheri* and Malabar Collector H.R Pate invited Krishnan on 13th to participate in it, as the tenant

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¹⁴⁹ *Yogakshemam* 28th April 1927.

¹⁵⁰ K.Sabukuttan, *op.cit.*., p.32.
representative. But Krishnan wrote to Collector denying his invitation.\textsuperscript{151} When the Committee came to Calicut in the middle of August to collect evidences they were convinced of the seriousness of the boycott. Then the Government expressed its willingness to include two more representatives of the tenants in the Committee. But the Kudiyan Sangham rejected that proposal too. In the three successive editorials Mathrubhoomi highlighted the interests of the tenants and provided them with strong support and leadership. It was because of the gravity of the boycott that the Governor later became ready to see a petition committee of the tenants.\textsuperscript{152}

In October 1927 the \textit{Malabar Kudiyan Samgham} sent a deputation under the leadership of C. Krishnan to Ootacamund and apprised the Governor of the absence of its nominee in the Committee.\textsuperscript{153} In the face of total non-co-operation the Governor adopted a conciliatory attitude, added a tenants’ representative as a member of the Committee, held discussions with a delegation of the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham and assured that he would hold a round-table conference of \textit{janmis} and tenants to discuss the recommendations of the Committee. This was a clear victory for the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham.\textsuperscript{154}

At this time \textit{Yogakshemam} set the stage to motivate the \textit{janmis} to give evidences so as to vindicate their side during the visit of Raghaviah Committee. The report entitled “Malabar Tenant Committee Bill” was

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{151}] K.R Achuthan, \textit{op.cit.}, P.224.
\item[\textsuperscript{152}] V.R Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p.154
\item[\textsuperscript{153}] P.Radhakrishnan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.86, K.R Achuthan, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.24-26.
\item[\textsuperscript{154}] P.Radhakrishnan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.86.
\end{itemize}
very much calculated so as to incite the sentiments of each *janmi*. “Madras Government has appointed the Raghaviah Committee to draft a report making enquiries as to whether it is necessary in Malabar a Tenancy Bill or Bills…It is to be said that the *janmis* have to work in unison while this Committee collect evidences in Malabar. It is sure that Malabar Tenancy Act may be passed in accordance with the report of this Committee. Therefore the *janmis* have to do all possible endeavours collectively so as to enable the Committee to get the correct and necessary details while they make the tour in Malabar. If there is any chance we should be able to convince them with proper records, the grievances of the *janmis*. For many of the *janmis* it is easy to present before the Committee, the documents which can effectively prove wrong the argument that *janmam* right was established only 75 years back. In kovilakams like Punnathur, documents that belong to A.D 900 may be available. The book of Rajasaar Vasudeva Raja contradicting the arguments of Diwan Bahadur M.Krishnan Nair will be helpful to all those who go before the Committee to give evidences. This is a time when the *janmis* of Malabar have to wake up”.

Towards the above developments *Mathrubhoomi* was not a patient onlooker. In *Mathrubhoomi* published a news item making a meticulous observation of the movements of the Bill. “It is known that the Malabar Tenant’s Committee has submitted the Government their Report. In it, the most important one is whether to give or not, permanent rights to the tenants…It is also known that Malabar Collector H.R Pate has submitted a special report. He, one among the British civilian officers who is supposed to be the guardians of the people, is of

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155 *Yogakshemam*, 29th June 1927.
the opinion that legislation of any kind is not necessary at present and even if it needs something, a Bill giving protection to the verumpattakkaran who actually do the agrarian works is enough. It is also known that as decided earlier this Bill and Report will be discussed in a joint conference of both the janmis and tenants. There is no doubt that Krishnan Nair’s Bill also be discussed along with this. We are anxiously waiting to know more details”.156

Without much delay Mathrubhoomi published the nutshell of the dissenting note submitted by the then Malabar Collector H.R Pate. In the news item Mathrubhoomi had mentioned that this piece of news was received from Ootty as a telegraphic message from the Special Correspondent of The Hindu. 157 By this time Unni Namboothiri was able to ‘read the writings on the wall’, and as a result it warned the members of the community to take advance measures to face the tribulations of life in the post-Tenancy Act period. By a political article it cautioned its community. “The coming age will not be like one that is already gone. The intensity of the life-war and the difficulty to live are increasing gradually. In the forthcoming period we won’t get meals if we remain idle, thinking that we are Brahmins, the bhoodevan (Lord of the land). However we shout, it is certain that the janmi-tenant Bill will be passed. Then one’s belly will be full only if he works hard. In future none will ask for Gayathri mantras (chantings). Other communities, who were our markets in the past, have decided that those are not

156 Mathrubhoomi, 22nd March 1928.
157 Mathrubhoomi, 5th June 1928. The crux of Pate’s report: (a)This Bill only facilitates an assurance for the rights over the property subject to the conditions prescribed and compensation to the liabilities. (b) Never give permanent right in the sense as used in other tenancy regulations.
necessary things to be purchased and even if necessary they may themselves chant. Therefore such kind of things cannot be sold. We can fetch money only if we can have commodities needed for today. Nobody will be enticed by the unfolding of our old baggage. Therefore you have to gather the men and weapons to make a valiant fight so as to win the life-war”.

Meanwhile the Raghaviah Committee Report was published. Soon *Unni Namboothiri* totally agreed with the above Report and called everyone to accept its recommendations. It said that none can disagree with the fact that Raghaviah Committee has drafted its report attaching much seriousness to the impleadings of both *janmis* and tenants of Malabar proposing solutions as far as possible. The stipulations of this Bill which is fairly large can be abridged like this in a few sentences: It can be said that provisions are included in it, like to give permanent rights to all tenants in the property, to enable the *janmi* who is the owner of the land to get a compensation for that, to stipulate *pattam*, *polichezhuthu* etc. in order to protect the freedom of the tenants in their *kudiyiruppu lands*, to bridle the *janmi* to obtain their due rights, to limit the cost of improvements, the *janmam* cost and the interest of the *kanam* amount, to reduce the number of the litigations etc….It is quite reasonable that both parties should honour this report which is not at all detrimental to either side than that at the present. If there is any clause in their draft Bill unfavourable for either *janmi* or tenant it can be amended in due course and legislation can be made in the Council”.

158 *Unni Namboothiri*, 28th June 1928.

159 *Unni Namboothiri*, 1927.
During this period some other incidents occurred in favour of the tenants. In April 1928 the tenure of Ramaswamy Aiyar as Law Member expired and in his place M.Krishnan Nair was appointed. Sankaran Nair went to Delhi, apprised the Congress Party High Command and persuaded them to allow the Congress members to participate in the discussions on the Bill in the Madras Legislative Council by either opposing the Government Bill or making necessary amendments in it. The consent thus secured was considered a great gain by the Malabar Kudiyan Samgham.\textsuperscript{160} More importantly the attitude of the Government towards the Kanakkar had undergone a favourable change because of the fact that the agitation was championed by the educated middle class consisting of lawyers and Government servants, and so the belated realization of the political necessity of conceding to their demands. As a result of these happenings, the subsequent events followed in quick succession.\textsuperscript{161} The English newspapers of Madras also took active interest in the tenancy issue. The Madras Mail published an editorial favouring the tenants’ cause.\textsuperscript{162}

\textit{Mathrubhoomi} continued its inspiring reports. It was still motivating the tenants to fight a mortal battle against the \textit{janmis}. The report entitled “Malabar Tenant Convention, The obligatory deed of Tenants” is an example. “..It is learnt that Government proposes to present the Bill drafted by Raghaviah Committee in the Legislative Council. There is no doubt that if the Council passes the same, without


\textsuperscript{161} P.Radakrishnan, op.cit., pp.86-87.

\textsuperscript{162} Govt.of Madras, (Law) Dept. G.O. 2692 dated 11.08.1928-RAC
change, the tenants of this district will as such perish. If we can convey
the Government, people and the Legislative Council this truth we can
make them amend the Bill properly.....If the seven year old Malabar
Kudiyan Samgham with less money and a few workers could do this
much, there is no doubt that we can make them pass a Bill that caters to
our needs provided a small percentage of the tenants of Malabar is ready
to toil for sometime with courage, unity and commitment. Therefore
tenant brethrens, don’t get dejected, but believe in yourselves. Don’t
retreat until you reach the aim. You may come in groups for the
convention on 20th January”.163

As agreed earlier, the round-table conference was held at Madras
in 1929 from 7th to 10th and on 26th January, with seven *janmi*
representatives and seven tenant representatives. It was inaugurated by
the Governor and presided over by the Revenue member Norman
Marjorie Banks who was also a tenant sympathizer. Based on this
conference, the Government prepared a Tenancy Bill and presented it in
the Madras Legislative Council in 6th August 1929 which was
reconsidered by a Select Committee subsequently.164

When the Malabar Tenancy Bill became the matter of discussion
in various realms and levels different versions were spread among the
*janmis* as well as tenants. Therefore everyone wanted to get an exact
picture. They were not satisfied with the newspaper reports. Also since
the newspapers backed either of the two sides nothing was found totally
impartial. It was in this circumstance Deshamangalam Moothedath
Krishnan Namboothiri wrote a letter to the Secretary to the Govt. of

163 *Mathrubhoomi*, 1st January 1929.

164 P. Radhakrishnan, op.cit., p.87.
Madras (Law Dept.), Ootacamund, requesting the Malayalam version of the Report of the committee.\(^{165}\) Considering requests like this, when the Bill was introduced in the Council the Government wanted to give publicity for the provisions in it. Towards that end, the Malayalam version of the Bill was soon made available throughout the District. The Law (General) Department directed the Collector of Malabar for sale, printing and supply of Malayalam translation of the Bill. \(^{166}\)

It was at this time *Mithavadi* raised the demand to nominate Sankaran Nair to the Legislative Council until passing the Malabar Tenancy Bill. In the news item *Mithavadi* said that the British established their rule in the land and it was they, and not Parasurama that distributed all the lands in Malabar among a few families. Ever since people became conscious of the troubles in the country which

\(^{165}\) Letter of Moothedath Krishnan Namboothiri to the Secretary to the Govt.of Madras(Law Dept.) dated 27\(^{th}\) June 1928, RAC. The letter says: “Sir, It is learnt from the newspapers that the Committee appointed by the Government regarding the Malabar tenancy which has become the topic of introspection of all Malayalis alike, has submitted its report. I request you to arrange to publish the correct translation of this report in Malayalam since many people do not know the details of this report. I also request the Government to publish immediately as extraordinary gazette in Malayalam also the bills, orders etc. related to tenancy. Yours faithfully, Moothedath Krishnan Namboothiri, Deshamangalam Post, (Via) Shornur, Malabar.”

\(^{166}\) G.O No 3589 dated 13-09-1929, Law (General) Dept.-Memorandum NO.3376 A2 dated 12-08-1929, RAC. The G.O says, “The Collector of Malabar is informed that the Government have introduced the Malabar Tenancy Bill in the Legislative Council on 06-08-1929. The Government desire that wide publicity should be given to the provisions of the Bill in the Malabar District. They have accordingly directed the Superintendent of Govt. Press to print and supply the Collector with 1000 copies of the Bill in Malayalam for sale to the public. The price of each copy is fixed as low as possible at one *anna* 6 paise a copy so that it may be within the reach of all. The Collector is requested to arrange that copies of the Bill, and to make available for sale at all *taluk* offices in the District and to inform the tenants and *janmis* of this arrangement- To the Collector of Malabar”.
resulted from this, the tenants have been protesting till now with very little effect. .....The paper suggests that G. Sankaran Nair who has hitherto advocated the cause of the tenants with diligence should be nominated by the Government as the tenants’ representative in the Legislative Council for the duration of the consideration of the Malabar Tenancy Bill. The tenants of Malabar will not be satisfied unless this is done”.

When the impression was getting intensified regarding the passing of the Tenancy Bill in the Legislative Council, one of the newspapers on the janmi side, Vasumathi tried to highlight the defects of the Bill showing that it is detrimental to the janmis. It wanted to put off considering the Bill to the next session of the Legislative Council. Manorama which is another newspaper that favoured the janmis also sought a protraction of the Bill saying that it will rebound the interests of the tenants.

Though Yogakshemam was the official organ of the janmis in general, and that of the Namboothiris in particular, it was generous enough to cover the meetings of the tenants also. It published a brief but splendid report regarding the tenants’ conference held at Pattambi. “A

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167 Mithavadi, 22nd July 1929, MNNPR, TNA.
168 Vasumathi, 2nd August 1929, MNNPR, TNA. Vasumathi in the report said that if it be passed in the present form there is no doubt that a great majority of janmis of Malabar will soon be reduced to unexpected suffering and misery. In order to give time to study it, the Government should postpone it to the next session of the Council.
169 Manorama, Calicut, 3rd August 1929, MNNPR, TNA. Manorama says that the Government’s Malabar Tenancy Bill has not only not met the demands of the tenants but also gives room for the apprehension that it might cause more hardships and troubles to them than before, if it is to be passed in the present form.
meeting of the tenants was held at Pattambi Board School on Chingam 1st, in the presidency of K.P Raman Menon. There the discussion was mainly on the amendments made by the Select Committee in the case of Malabar Tenancy Bill. The conference noted that the Tenancy Bill drafted and piloted by the Government and amended by the Select Committee is in many a way detrimental to the rights of the tenants and although some concessions are allowed, it is outweighed with several liabilities and so this meeting abuses the same. The meeting also wanted to lessen the amount to be remitted by the tenant for policezhuthu right, to take the law applicable in all cases where there are litigations for eviction pending, to ensure conditions to avoid unnecessary and unjust evictions and to make a satisfactory decision in tenancy issue which has been enraging Malabar for one century. The meeting requested all tenants to do campaign works by going to Madras and elsewhere to bring necessary amendments in the Tenancy Bill. Mr.Kunhirama Pathiyar who moved the first resolution said, “The Bill may have many defects. Yet it bridles the wanton powers of the janmis. That itself is an achievement. Therefore for the enactment of this Bill every one should try in all possible ways. We got at least this kind of Bill due to our struggles”. 170

Though the Bill was defective it was something better than not having anything was the opinion of the tenant leaders including C.Krishnan. He wrote in Mithavadi. “…It will greatly reduce litigation, particularly in respect of eviction as proved by the experience of Cochin after the new Tenancy Bill was introduced there…The present Bill may lead to some confusion and trouble, but even then it is welcome in the

170 Yogakshemam, 21st September 1929.
sense that something is better than nothing”.\textsuperscript{171} C.Krishnan was enthusiastic in welcoming the clauses of the Tenancy Bill and he observed in the \textit{Mithavadi} that the present law was a blessing to the people of Malabar in so far as it had relieved them of their slavery to \textit{janmis”}.\textsuperscript{172}

The discussion of the Malabar Tenancy Bill in the Council was indeed shocking for the \textit{janmis}. Already deserted by the Government there was practically none to help them there. It was a scene in which all the amendments brought by the \textit{janmi} members were getting rejected while those of the tenants were getting accepted. It is this state of despair that prompted the \textit{Yogakshemam} to make a reasonable analysis of the present state of things and to advice the \textit{janmis} to be ‘down to earth’ in future, through its editorial. “The future of the \textit{janmis} seems to be bleak, is the general emotion evolved in the minds of those who follow closely the debates in the Madras Legislative Council regarding the Malabar Tenancy Bill. What our two or three \textit{janmi} members say in the Council ends as a ‘cry in the wilderness’. When looking at the votes polled for the \textit{janmi} amendments every time it is seen that there are only six or seven members out of the 26 to speak in favour of the \textit{janmi} side. Since this is a Bill piloted by the Government, it tries to prevent the attempts to bring amendments. At the same time it is also seen that since the Government has not the sufficient strength to prevent the amendments from the tenant side majority of them are getting passed. The Government earlier rejected the Bill of Krishnan Nair saying the excuse that it has the responsibility to protect the \textit{janmis} who are a

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Mithavadi, 23rd} September 1929, MNNPR, TNA.
\textsuperscript{172} \textit{Mithavadi, 21st} October 1929, MNNPR, TNA.
minority. But such policy of the Government is now changed. *Janmis* must know that this is a period in which not only the middlemen in respect of Malabar Tenancy issue but also the middlemen among the public of the country (that is the middle class) wholly are prepared to kick down those who are in the upper ladder. It should be understood that the strength of the people have been increased and representative institutions like Legislative Council are now under their control. A state has come in which the Government itself cannot resist their power”. 173

The report continued as an advice to the *janmis* as to what they should do in future: “This is a crucial stage when each *janmi* has to think seriously as to how the present state of the *janmis* can be maintained. Before the implementation of the Act we have to think of some wherewithal. Though a minority, by the power of unity we can manifest many things. Deterioration will be faster if we continue the management of our land properties as we did in the earlier method. Many of the *janmis* do not know where and which are their land properties. Few are the *janmis* who have some legal knowledge. Therefore if competent persons are not entrusted with the estate management, then it is sure that the burden of the management of the properties will not sustain long. And finally it has become very necessary that the *janmis*, considering the future safety of the family, should engage in agrarian works. Ignore what others do, but at least do farm works in some plots of land which is enough to make you lead a life without poverty.” 174.

173 Yogakshemam, 26th September 1929.
174 Yogakshemam, 28th September 1929.
Even when the *janmi* side was getting vanquished in the Legislative Council, campaigns to highlight their cause still continued and reports were published. The report of the Malabar Janmi Association in *Yogakshemam* is an example. The report said, “A campaign meeting was held at Thalipparamba under the auspicious of Malabar Janmi Association on 3rd October 1929. The prominent *janmis* were present. The difficulties of the *janmis* and the impending adversities that may arise out of the *Janmi*-Tenant Bill were explained. The meeting opined that even when there are many evidences to prove the absolute ownership of the *janmis* over the land, it seems very unjust that Malabar Tenancy Act which is detrimental to the above ownership, and which amounts to pilfer their wealth and which reduces considerably the ‘*janmam* price’ of the land was presented in the Legislative Council and have rejected all the amendments proposed by the *janmi* members. The meeting requested the respected Madras Governor to veto the above unjust Bill. To intimate the Madras Government about this resolution the Malabar Janmi Association Secretary was authorized. It was also decided to revive the ‘*Vasumathi*’ newspaper which is supposed to speak in favour of the *janmis*.”

At last the Bill was finally passed by the Council in October 1929. While the Bill was awaiting Governor’s assent, both the *janmis* and tenants made representations to him through deputations and other means. *Mathrubhoomi* expressed its rage in the act of the Governor in delaying the consent for the Bill and questioned his rights for that, in the report entitled “Malabar Tenancy Bill”. “It was stated in the last issue

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175 *Yogakshemam*, 9th October 1929.
176 *G.O 4111, Law (General)*, 23rd October 1929, RAC.
that it is difficult to understand the policy of Sir Marsh Banks, the Governor who instead of giving assent to the Bill, invited a petition delegation of the *janmis* to submit in the proper way their plaints. This invitation of the Governor has caused anxiety in the minds of the tenants. What is the right for him for any doubt in the case of the Bill, for the head of a Government which drafted it, controlled it through the Council and strongly supported even in the last speeches by the Government members. Sir Marsh Bank does not deserve to say that the Government members forwarded the Bill up to this stage without his knowledge or favour. As such, if he sends back the Bill for review, it will cause not only for much anticipation improper of him and his Government but also will engender a situation so crucial for this District”.

In the context of passing the Tenancy Bill by the Legislative Council, the *janmis* started looking for the loop holes to overcome the mandatory provisions in the Bill. It was then that Kavalappara Mooppil Nair found out a wherewithal by ceasing *polichezhuth* and apportioning the land into blocks. *Mathrubhoomi* in its report entitled “Is the reply to Tenantcy Bill: Strong resistance of Kavalappara Nair” strongly chastised Mooppil Nair. “After the passing of the Tenant Bill in the last meeting of the Madras Legislative Council Mr.Kavalappara Mooppil Nair called all his estate managers and *menons* (accountants) and after discussing with them it is learnt that he has stopped *polichezhuth*. If the Bill becomes an Act taking the advantage of its provision that tenants can be evicted from the land for own use, he intends to get back all the land and apportioning it into blocks of 25 acres, he wants to entrust a

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177 *Mathrubhoomi*, 19th October 1929.
salaried employee each block for doing farm work. Mooppil Nair owns paddy fields of 4000 acres in Palakkad taluk and 2000 acres in Valluvanad taluk…These lands were under the tenants for the last few centuries on the basis of kaanamcharth. If such lands are evicted and farm works are being done there, according to the provision in the new Act, so many families will become landless, houseless and suffer poverty….If the janmis are able to do this much things by the recently passed Tenancy Bill, it is to be pondered over then that what use is there for the tenants by this Bill. In this case the immediate attention of the tenant leaders and Government is to be focused. We request that if there is a defect like this in the Bill that is to be rectified and remedied soon. Otherwise there are chances that most of the janmis will follow Mooppil Nair.”

At the same time, witnessing the set backs on the janmi side regarding Tenancy Bill Yogakshemam lamented at the lustre-less and bleak performance through one of its editorials. “Madras Tenancy Bill will come for further discussion in the meeting of the Madras Legislative Council scheduled to be held in this January……We have to try not to pass in the Council the amendments proposed by the Governor. The expert member of the Council Mr.E.S Unni had requested in those days itself through media, that canvassing works are to be intensified towards the above end. It is now to be said that unless encouragement and assistance are obtained from the janmi folk of Malabar the janmi members of the Council can do little… I had earlier seen a notice of the Janmi Sabha Secretary stating that a meeting of the janmis will be held at Edakkunnu. It was mentioned in it that the

178 Mathrubhoomi, 12th December 1929.
important *janmi* leaders of Malabar will reach there. But unfortunately we could not hear the voice of the Janmi Sabha at all there. Whatever be the reason for this, it is an indication of the pathetic inability of the *janmis*. It seems very pathetic”.

It is a truth that due to lack of strength in the Legislative Council the *janmis* could not block the forward march of the Tenancy Bill. But still they made a last attempt to block it using their influence. About that last endeavour also *Yogakshemam* reports. “It is seen that a deputation consisting of Kollangott Raja Sir Vasudeva Raja, Mr.E.Sankaranunni, Mr.K Prabhakaran Thampan, Mr.Kavalappara Mooppil Nair and Punnathur Raja met the Governor and submitted a petition requesting not to give his assent for the Malabar Tenancy Bill which has been again passed in the Legislative Council. This Bill in which earlier there was a clause allowing the *janmis* to initiate steps to collect the *pattam* was deleted. Also many clauses beneficial for the *kanakkudiyan* were included not taking into account the grievances of the *janmis*. These have scared the *janmis* of Kerala. The deputation yesterday brought to the attention of the Governor these lapses and requested him to make a review before giving consent to the Bill. The deputation was led by Kollangott Vasudeva Raja. Governor said them that he will think about the grievances”.

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179 *Yogakshemam*, 4th January 1930.

180 *Yogakshemam*, 15th February, 1930.
Dreams Materialized

Learning that the janmi’s deputation met the Governor, the tenant representatives also requested the Governor to meet their deputation too. To create an impression that he is neutral the Governor accepted that request also. Yogakshemam wrote about this. “It is learned that the Governor will meet the deputation consisting of kudiyan representatives K.P Raman Menon and G.Sankaran Nair. It is heard that they will request the Governor to give his assent to the Bill at the earliest”. Thus while the Bill was awaiting Governor’s assent both the janmis and tenants made representations to him through deputations and other several means. At last after modifications by the Council as suggested by the Governor, the Bill got his assent in March 1930 and was sent for the Viceroy’s assent. Not to be outdone, the janmis engaged Ramaswamy Aiyar to represent their case. The Malabar Kudiyan Samgham leaders lost no time in protesting against the unfairness of allowing a former Law member with considerable influence on officials to lead a deputation on behalf of the janmis. Following this, the janmis were forced to engage another person to lead their deputation. Sankaran Nair stayed at Simla for seven months countering the machinations of the janmis. Though the Bill was returned twice to Madras due to pressures from the janmis, after hearing the deputations of both the janmis and the tenants, the Viceroy eventually gave his assent to it. The Malabar Tenancy Act XIV of 1930, which came into force on 1st December 1930, was the outcome. According to this Act which gave protection for the tenants from unjust evictions and melcharths and from

\[181\] Yogakshemam 15th February, 1930.
\[182\] GO4111, Law (General), 23rd October 1929, RAC.
escalation of michavarm, the verumpattakkaran and kuzhikkanakkaran need to give henceforward only the general lease amount as stipulated in the law. Rules to control the manusham (the consideration for the land), the right for polichezhuth and the janmam right for kudiyirupp, rule to give the tenant the right to purchase the janmam of kudiyirupps from the janmi etc. were the other benefits allowed to the tenants by the Act which came into effect on 1st December 1930.\(^{183}\)

When it became certain that Tenancy legislation will be implemented Mathrubhoomi published an article of Adv.G.Madhavan Nair entitled “Malabar Tenancy Bill” aimed to enlighten the tenants about their rights and duties. “It is confirmed that Malabar Tenancy Bill will become an Act from 1st December onwards. Thus here ends a struggle prolonged for almost 75 years. Malabar District is now entering into a new epoch. I regard this new Tenancy Bill as the greatest event since the beginning of the British rule. I am very much aware of the defects of this Bill. Yet it is to be said that this is a great success of the tenants and their main grievances are addressed by it…My belief is that due to the new enactment a peaceful revolution in the financial and social sectors of Malabar will take place…The tenants may use the rights bestowed upon them by law only as a last resort. They may endeavour to go with janmis in unity and love as far as possible. I request the janmis to regard the welfare and satisfaction of their tenants as their main strength….Since there are a lot of misunderstanding about the new legislation throughout the land and also since the Malayalam translation of the Bill is not easily digestible for many, to construe them the new rights, and the means to protect them I would like to make in

December a journey throughout Malabar. I request you to inform us those who are ready to hold meeting in each place”.\textsuperscript{184}

G.Sankaran Nair, the main architect of the Malabar Tenancy Bill qualified it as the most important event in Malabar since the British rule started. He said, “My belief is that the Bill is a grand success of the tenants, by this all of their important grievances are addressed, generally looking it is doubtful whether kanakkudiyans may ever get a legislation better than this; and in the future not too distant, as a consequence of the new Act a peaceful revolution may occur in Malabar in financial and social sectors. Looking back to the history of this prolonged agitation in Malabar for the Tenancy Act with some pride he continued: “Many great men have associated with tenancy movement since it started in Malabar. But it is felt that nobody like me has been lucky enough to associate with this movement so much. I have devoted my last eight years of life fully for this movement giving up all other works. Meanwhile I suffered many difficulties. I was sad in many failures and set backs. Now I am happier than all others, in the success won today. Usually those who work in public affairs are not lucky enough to witness the fruits of their works during their lifetime. Therefore I have especially more gratitude in the success of Tenancy Bill”.\textsuperscript{185}

\textit{Mathrubhoomi} at last won the campaign and subsequently commented about the success of the enactment in its report. “Janmi-Tenancy Bill is of course a great achievement. The outcome of the legislation may be more spiritual than financial. We can be more relieved by the fact that henceforward the ferocious sound of \textit{janmi} will

\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Mathrubhoomi}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 1930.

\textsuperscript{185} V.R Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.282-283.
not have that much strength as in the past which had enslaved most of the people of this district for generations. It is the young worker G.Sankaran Nair who is actually responsible for this new Act. What we understand from this is that, it is the youth who is responsible for endeavours of any kind now seen in Malabar not only in political affairs but in other public matters also”. Although the secret of the success behind the Tenancy Bill is the collective work of several newspapers the role of Mathrubhoomi needs special mention. Right from its inception, the Mathrubhoomi championed the cause of the kanam tenants and clamoured for the enactment of Tenancy Bill. When the Malabar Tenancy Bill was passed in 1929, Mathrubhoomi justifiably congratulated itself.

As soon as the Viceroy gave the assent to the Malabar Tenancy Bill and it became an Act various publishing agencies got the Act printed in Malayalam and English and they started to sell. On 2nd December 1930, the very next day since the Act came into effect Mathrubhoomi started selling the Malayalam version of the Act publishing an advertisement about the sales. The publishers ‘Higgin

186 Mathrubhoomi, 3rd December 1930.
188 Prabhatam, 21st January 1935.
189 Mathrubhoomi, 2nd December 1930. The text of the advertisement: “Malayalam Tenancy Act: Now ready for sale, the Malayalam translation of Malabar Tenancy Act which has come into effect from this December 1st onwards. Those who want, can purchase the book by sending orders enclosing stamp for 2.5 annas (cost of the book 2 annas and postal charge half an anna) in the address ‘Manager, Mathrubhoomi, Kozhikode or directly from the Mathrubhoomi agents throughout Kerala”.
Bothams’ also advertised about the sales of the copies of Malabar Tenancy Act in *Mathrubhoomi*.  

By the enactment of the Malabar Tenancy Bill though the tenants of South Malabar gained much, what the farmers of North Malabar achieved was little. In his biography *Aranootandiloode* (Through half a century) P.Narayanan Nair depicts the picture of North Malabar in the post-Tenancy Act period. “By the *Kanakkudiyan* Bill of Sir M.Krishnan Nair, although a section of the farmers of South Malabar got some relief, the majority of the tenants of North Malabar got little benefit. The predominant cultivations of this area like pepper and hill cultivation are outside the parameters of the Act. In the eastern region which is a fortress of landlordism, the *janmis* are engaged in despotic rule. They can evict as they like. Lease is measured using bogus *para*. Farmers are not allowed to wear *dhothi* below knees. Also they have to give the fruits and vegetables they make, as offering to the *janmis*....In such a situation farmers who have some self esteem and vigour have no other way but to organize and start struggle”.

While the enforcement of this Act marked the close of the second phase of the peasant struggles in Malabar, the events in this phase raise a number of important issues. Malabar is one of the few places in India where land relations were intensely and effectively articulated by an educated middle class as early as in the first quarter of this (20th) century.

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190 *Mathrubhoomi*, 12th December 1930.
It is because of this education and literacy the media got a role. Thus the press played a decisive and crucial role in the genesis, evolution and the successful conclusion of the Tenancy Bill. The early vernacular newspapers like *Kerala Pathrika* and *Kerala Sanchari* highlighted the seriousness of the situation by drawing a thumb-nail sketch of the problem of tenancy through its various reports. Upon the shoulders of the predecessors the newspapers like *Mithavadi* carried forward the mission by penetrating into the misdeeds of the *janmis* that perturbed and pestered the hapless tenants. *Mathrubhoomi*, *Al-Ameen* and *Kerala Chandrika* fought to the finish by building up new strategies to subvert the intrigues of the *janmis*. When observing with a democratic sense *Yogakshemam* and *Unni Namboothiri* played the role of opposition. Though they stood for the *janmis*, at last they were able to understand the realities and they made endeavours to guide the *janmis* to prepare for the life sans the fortunes.