THE STRUGGLE OF THE MAPPILAS AGAINST THE BRITISH RULE IN 19TH CENTURY
The treaty of Srirangapatam in 1792 had dragged Malabar, the land of spices to the yoke of colonial rule. The British hegemony had shattered all hopes of the community, which had been slowly stabilising its foots in the traditional agrarian structure of Malabar after the pathetic withdrawal from the lucrative spice-trade in the Indian Ocean Lithoral. Though the British can escape from the badmouth of crusading zeal and genocide which had been accused against the Portuguese, the emergence of the British was disastrous to the Mappilas, majority of whom were cultivating tenants, landless labours, petty traders and fishermen.

Prof. Dale observes that, “It not only destroyed autonomy of the Mappilas in the southern Taluqs but also made it possible to the landed Hindu castes to reassert their social and economic dominance of rural society”. Thus becoming a regulation state, Malabar witnessed a struggle for existence and augmented anti-colonial uprisings in the history of India.

**Mappilas in Colonial Malabar**

The introduction of colonial administrative system in Malabar had fragmented the existing traditional system of land settlement. The agricultural society was based

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1 Thomas Warden, District Collector mentions in 1803 out of 103 principal Jannies only 8 were Mappilas all the other except 1 who was a Tiyya, cf., K.N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State*, 1989, p.53.


on ‘fragmented feudalism’ in which the Jenmi[^4] [Landlord], Kanakkaran [Protector] and the peasant equally shared the produce on mutual understanding and dependence[^5].

In general the British followed Mysorean pattern of assessment and collection of land revenue. Previously the Sultans of Mysore had obtained the surplus of production from the Jenmis after they made the revenue settlement with the Kanamakkar. R.E. Miller commented on the Mysorean period that it “resulted in a temporary release from the shackles of that feudalistic system (of Malabar) for the Mappilas[^6]. It caused to changes in the attitude of Mappilas towards their land rights and “they habituated themselves to the idea of independent tenure”[^7]. However, the British rule replaced the existing system and they recognized the Jenmis as the absolute proprietors of the land and settlement was made with them after undermining the rights of Kanamikkar on land, majority of whom were happened to be the Mappilas[^8].

Moreover, the newly introduced colonial system of land revenue in Malabar was totally different in essence from the systems introduced in other parts of Madras Presidency by Lord Munro. While the status of ryot was extented to the labourer, farmer and landlords outside Malabar, Jenmis enjoyed absolute ownership of land in Malabar including waste Land, and with the disgraceful right to enhancement

[^4]: Janma means birth, jenmi is one who possess a birth-right on land, Kanam was a permanent tenure unless the Kanakkarar repeatedly failed on payment of rent.
[^6]: R.E. Miller, op.cit., p.97.
the Jenmis also had the right of eviction and imposition of renewal fees. Almost all British officials who enquired into the land tenures of Malabar perceived that traditionally Jenmi was the owner of the land and Kanamkkar as tenants. Logan’s observation that, in pre-British Malabar there was no ownership equal to the European *dominum* but only some rights, got little acceptance in colonial circles, and has been disregarded by other British officials.

‘The interpretation or translation of the word (Jenmi) will not make the jenmam property equivalent to a landlord property in England. After allotting, the land becomes the property of the Kanamkkar or cultivator than that of the Jenmkar, Dale Comments that they had used the terms Kanamkar, tenant and *ra’iyat* interchangeably. “Had this usage been accepted in the final decision on the ryotwari settlement many of the Mappila outbreaks might never have occurred”. This colonial policy in the land revenue settlement was fabricated with a secret intention of creating a social base for the colonial rule. Infact, they went to the extent of convening a meeting of the Jenmis and consulted with them about the norms of revenue collection and even the final settlement was made on the basis of the suggestions made by the landlords.

Thus the defeat of Tipu Sultan and the subsequent British land settlement policies in Malabar leading to the restoration of the social and economic position of

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12 MRP, Board of Revenue, quoted in S.F. Dale, *op cit*, p.106.
13 *Ibid*
14 S.F.Dale, *op cit*, p.106.
16 Innes and Ivans. cf., K.N. Panikkar, *op cit*, p.22.
the dominant castes, severely affected the position of Mappilas in South Malabar\(^\text{17}\). The British policy towards Mappilas was an amalgam of positive and negative factors. Certainly in the beginning the British rule was not favourable to the Mappilas, while it was quite favourable to the Hindus. The reason for this double stand was that the Mappilas were the supporters of Mysorean Sultans. Further it is asserted by the early reports of British authorities in 1790.

From the repeated treachery and notorious infidelity of the whole Mappila race, rigid and terrifying measures are become indispensably necessary to draw from them the execution of their promises and stipulations. Lenity has been found ineffectual\(^\text{18}\).

Conrad Wood asserts that, “Indeed it was the support extended to the high caste Hindu notables in the rural interior of South Malabar (Eranad and Walluvanad Taluks) by British rule and that was the source of Moplah resistance to the White man’s Raj from 1800-to 1922\(^\text{19}\).

General Robert Abercromby instructed his newly appointed Malabar Supervisor, “to preserve the rights of the superior class of subjects as far as it is consistent with the general good”\(^\text{20}\).

Thus the reason behind the so called banditti of the Mappilas in the areas of Mannarkad, Tamarasseri, Pulavayi, Vettattnad Chernad and Ernad, in the words of Logan is, “the mistaken notions prevalent with regard to ownership of the land appear

to have been to a large extend at the bottom of these disturbances, which assumed the aspect of faction fight for supremacy between Hindus and Muhamadans.\textsuperscript{21}

K.P. Pathmanabha Menon, the doyen of Kerala History comments.

The Mapilas who had been deprived of the great power they had exercised so recently resented the loss, while the Nayar followers under the protecting aegies of the Company set themselves up to seek revenge on their former despoilers. The result was awful.\textsuperscript{22}

Several years after the Malabar had been incorporated with the British, the Rayas (Jenmis) returned to Malabar in 1782. However they could not gain the position they had enjoyed before as observed by the British official, Walker. "Power of the Rajas had been nearly overwhelmed by the superior activity and number of the Mappilahs.\textsuperscript{23}

Though the settlement of September 1794 vested the Hindu aristocrats (Jenmis) with power of exploitation on the Mappila agriculturists they were incapable to recover themselves from Mappilas and regularly complained on this.\textsuperscript{24} Due to the presence of Tipu’s rule in Mysore and the possible threat of another attack on Malabar, the British was reluctant to press the Mappilas to vacate land holdings in favour of the Jenmis. This situation also forced them to follow an appeasement policy towards the Mappilas.\textsuperscript{25} Whereas, the news of the defeat of Muslim power in Mysore

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p.534.
\textsuperscript{22} K. Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala, op cit., p.268.
\textsuperscript{23} A Walker, observations on the Administration of Malabar during the year 1796-97, nd. Quoted in Conrad Wood, Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis, op cit., p.103.
\textsuperscript{24} Walker to Wilkinson, President Malabar Commission, 20\textsuperscript{th} December 1796, cf., Conrad Wood, ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Conrad Wood, Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis, op cit., pp.103-104.
in 1799 had an ‘electric effect’ on the rival castes (Jenmis) in Malabar, “inspiring the Nairs with hope as much as it depressed the Mapilahs”26.

Subsequently, the British explicitly followed their anti-Mappila policy. The assertion of British ‘law and order’ caused resentment and humiliation to the Mappila community. This resulted in the early Mappila ‘outbreaks’ in Malabar under the leadership of Unni Mootha, Manjeri Athan Kurikkal and Chemban Pokkar27.

Elambulasherry 28 Unni Mutta Muppan

He was a popular Mappila farmer (Kanamdar), who rose to high status in the district of Velatre [Waluvanad] during the Mysorean rule. After 1786-8729 along with his hundred followers he joined the service of Tipu Sultan. In 1789, he supported the Sultan in his campaign against the Travancore30 and in 1791, against the English East India Company. This made him powerful enough to challenge the colonial power. He built a loop holed and fortified house in the jungles at the foot of ghats at a place called “Tereangananore”31.

Tipu’s defeat made Unnimutha Moopan more aggressive, which is rather clearly perceivable in the message sent by him to a British officer who prevented him from collecting taxes in one part of Velatare.

For what reason you, your Nayars,head Chittis [A Hindu trading class], other Chitties and custom people had put a stop to my Makama [malikkana - a tax], [unless the status quo ante is restored], I will take

26 Ibid., p.106.
28 Is a village located about 40 miles East, North-East of Ponnani.
29 S.F. Dale, cites the year as 1784-85, op.cit., p.88
30 Ibid.
good care of you and your Chitties. Do not think that I have much fear either of you, your battalion people or guards.... I desire you take care that no harm happens in Muquaram\textsuperscript{32} to you or your Chitties. Have you not heard of the murder at Perinthalmanna? Even in your dreams don’t think to put a stop to what I do. Have you not heard of my bravery?\textsuperscript{33}

The insurgency of Unni Mutha evidently proved his contact with Tipu Sultan and he had received even a farman from the Mysore Sultan. Politically motivated, he acted as an independent chieftain than a subject\textsuperscript{34}. The pomp and show maintained by Unni Mutha embarrassed the British officials, as reported by Joint Commissioners of 1792-93.

What idea he has of obedience may be judged by his flags, his Nekareh\textsuperscript{35} and beating of Nobit\textsuperscript{36}. As well as having his pay exclusive of mappillas, several Carnatic sepoys\textsuperscript{37}.

The sovereign nature of Unni Mutha, in the words of Masud Khan\textsuperscript{38} "Oonee Mootah kept a faqvir (Faqir) to read Persian ..........He also maintained two Brahmanas with silver sticks who went about the country to gain intelligence. He beat the naqara [nagara] and was prayed for by all the priests of the country"\textsuperscript{39}.

He was not ready to co-op with the situation after the defeat of Tipu Sultan. He declined to submit unless he were granted a pension for maintaining his retenies\textsuperscript{40}.

\textsuperscript{32} Muharram-Arabic month.
\textsuperscript{33} Translation of Ola (Leaf writing) from Unnimutha to Mr. Melling Chap 9\textsuperscript{th} April 1798, quoted in Conrad Wood, Moplah Rebellion and Its Genesis, op cit., p.105.
\textsuperscript{35} A kettledrum used to beat as a mark of independence.
\textsuperscript{36} A musical instrument sounding at the gateway of a great man at intervals.
\textsuperscript{38} A former soldier of Unni Mutha
\textsuperscript{39} Joint Committee Report, Diary IV 1243, quoted in S.F. Dale op cit., p.89.
\textsuperscript{40} W. Logan, op cit., p.485.
British force under Major Dow made a second attempt in 1793 to finish Unni Mutha, which however, ended in failure. Captain Burchall took the lead and besieged his fortified house, but the immediate retaliation helped Unni Mutha to escape out of the British hands.\(^4\)

The utter disappointment and confusion which prevailed after this forced the colonial power to kneeldown before the Mappila rebel in 1793 AD.\(^5\) Finally they made an agreement on 8th May 1794 and offered the restoration of his estate of Elambulassereri and a cash allowance of Rs. 1000 per annum.\(^6\)

All these offers failed to pacify the Mappila leader and he demanded a share of revenue collected from his village. The British authorities offered an inam of Rs. 3000 for his capture. Thus army under captain Mac Donald surrounded and demolished his stronghold in the Pandalur hills near Malappuram. The other fortifications and houses of his supporters were also gutted and forced him to take shelter in the jungle of Wayand.\(^7\) Hydros, a strong supporter of Unni Mutha was captured after a confrontation at Ponnani and he was exiled.\(^8\) Then he followed the guerilla war technique and even joined with the Pazhassi Raja, and other dissident Rajas of the Zamorin of Calicut.\(^9\) Through his secret contact with Tipu sultan he obtained financial assistance in his campaign against the colonial power.\(^10\) Authorities continued their persuasion even through the Puthiyangadi Tangal to submit before

\(^{4}\) Ibid., p. 492.  
\(^{5}\) R.E. Miller, op cit., p.104.  
\(^{6}\) W. Logan, op cit., p.501.  
\(^{7}\) Ibid  
\(^{8}\) P. Sayed Muhammad, op cit., p.166.  
\(^{9}\) W Logan, op cit., p.522; K.K.N. Kurup, ‘Pazhasi’ in P.J. Cheriyan (ed.,) Perspectives of Kerala History, KCHR.  
\(^{10}\) S.F. Dale, op cit., p.99.  
\(^{11}\) An influential Arab Sayyid, Zamorin of Calicut granted the rent-free land in 1791 AD, W. Logan op cit., p.527.
He became more powerful and benefited from the prevailing hue and cry during the end of 18th century. Recognizing his credentials, both the Zamorin and British authorities in 1797 employed Athan Kurikal as the revenue officer (Darogha) of Eranad. Though very rarely heeded to the revenue demands of the two agencies Kurikal functioned as a local sovereign and the Mappilas resented to pay the revenue to their Jenmis. The causes of the Mappila unrest as noticed by Jonathan Duncun, lie in the persecution of the Mappilas by the Rajas and Nairs when they had been re-established in Malabar after the defeat of Tipu Sultan. As a remedy suggested the care and solicitude of a well-regulated civil administration i.e. the establishment of an impartial British judicial system to solve the ongoing disputes on land between the Mappilas and the Jenmis. Even the Mappilas were bound to pay a humiliating tax known as purushantram, a death duty to the Jenmis. Infact, the Zamorin was blaming the Mappilas for his inability to pay the revenue, though he himself manipulated the collection records.

In 1795, Athan Kurikal’s brother-in-law Muhammed Musliyar was hanged on charges of killing a Nair. It is said that Kurikal used the situation to arouse the

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55 Logan, Treaties and Engagements, *op cit.*, p.251, Treaty CXIII.
56 S.F. Dale, *op cit.*, p.100.
57 First Malabar Joint Commission 1792.
59 The disputes and hardships suffered by the Mappilas during this period can well perceive from the document left by the leader of 1849 Manjeri Rebellion, a descendant of Moyin Kurkikkal – See Correspondence of Moplah Outrages in Malabar for the years 1849-59, 2 Vols., Madras, 1863, Vol. I, pp.47-51.
sentiments of Mappilas and ‘justified his actions by putting them within the framework of general Mappila interests.\textsuperscript{63}

In contrast to the official pretensions, however, Kurikal championed as the protector of the Mappila community. He made many speeches to incite the Mappilas on the oppressive nature of the British-Jenmi coalition and the failure of the existing Nair dominant judicial system.

None of us are safe, someone or other will prefer complaints against us and the evidence of the Nairs shall be received and we shall be apprehended and hanged.\textsuperscript{64}

The official reports effort to undermine the general support of Mappilas to Kurikals favour. Walker reported, ‘they attempt to give this public colouring to their discontent...there is no proof that they produced the impressions they intended.\textsuperscript{65}

Yet Prof. Dale, referring to Walker cites the evidence of public support to the Mappila leaders saying that, ‘Kurikul probably reflected the sentiments of his audience and the evidences he collected testified to the case with which those Mappilas secretly caused’.

In 1802, William Macleod, observed that the ‘tacit support of the community at large’ as one of the reasons for the prolonged Mappila resistance.\textsuperscript{66} Infact, a majority of the Mappilas took part in the later ‘outbreaks’ as observed by Dale. He

\textsuperscript{63} S.F. Dale, op. cit., p.102.
\textsuperscript{64} Madras District Records, Political – 1800 p.268, SF Dale op. cit., p.103, K.M. Panikkar, Against Lord and State, op. cit., p.59.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid. p.281, cf., SF Dale op. cit., p.103.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
the British. However, when Colonel Wellesley was engaged with Mysore affairs, the turbulent Mappila chief joined with Pazhassi Raja at Kuttiyadi along with other landlords⁴⁹.

In June 1799 Unni Mutha’s brother was executed on pretext of ‘harbouring an outlaw and other heinous crimes’ and in October his own rice crops, arms and movable property were seized for the realization of revenue arrears⁵⁰.

Athan Moyin Kurikal

He was a Kanamdar under Manjeri Karnorpad Raja and possessed land in the village Payanad near Manjeri in Erand. He was a powerful chieftain and commanded wide support in his area. This forced the Myosre rulers to appoint him as their revenue officer. Since 1774 there existed a land dispute between Karnorpad Raja the landlord and Athan Moyin Kurikal. In 1784 this quarrelling took a new turn Kurikal made an attack on the house of Karnorpad Raja and burned the Manjeri temple which was under the patronage of the Raja⁵¹.

However Karnarpad Raja, being an ally and dependent of Tipu Sultan⁵² the attack on him, provoked the Mysorean commander Arshad Beg Khan, who attacked him in 1786. The Mappilas, however, defeated and killed the commander of the Mysore army. Consequently Tipu himself marched and Athan Moyin and his son were captured and imprisoned in Srirangapatem⁵³. In fact, he managed to escape within a short period and re-established his authority at Manjeri, his ancestral place.

⁴⁹ W. Logan, op.cit., p.528.
⁵⁰ K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State, op.cit., p.57.
⁵¹ S.F. Dale, op.cit., p.87.
⁵² Raja had paid half of his money to Hyder Ali and offered undisturbed rule in his land.
⁵³ Ibid., p. 88; R.E., Miller, op.cit., p.110.
says that, "these attacks certainly evoked the sympathy and admiration of large groups of rural Mappilas"\textsuperscript{67}.

It was, indeed, the feeling of conflicting interest with the Jenmis that invited enthusiastic support from majority of the Mappilas of Eranad to the rebellious leaders in 1800-1802\textsuperscript{68}.

**Chemban Poker**

As part of the appeasement policy adopted by the British, especially after their capture of Malabar from Tipu Sultan, the Mapilas were appointed in influential ports like the Darogha (Chiefs in charge of Police). Thus Chemban Poker assumed the power of revenue officer in Koyappa area of Shernad. Subsequently he became more powerful and utilizing the official position he ‘acquired a good deal of land’\textsuperscript{69}.

The post of Darogah was powerful enough to decide civil suits to the extent of Rupees 200 and inflicting corporal punishments. This service was beneficial to the oppressed Mappilas in their legal fight against their Jenmis. Thus Poker became an influential personality among the Mappila community and they often defied the British authority and were little bothered of the official punishment\textsuperscript{70}.

However, after being accused of bribery and extortion, the British authorities imprisoned Poker in Palaghat fortress\textsuperscript{71}. Nevertheless, he managed to escape in 1799 after returned to Shernad and regained his lost position. Receiving a complaint from

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid. p.104.
\textsuperscript{69} Conrad Wood, ‘First Moplah Rebellion Against British Rule’, op.cit., p.551, Foot Note 54.
\textsuperscript{70} Conrad Wood; *The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis*, op.cit., p.107.
Nairs of Shernad on Poker's oppressive behaviour, like 'plundering' of their property\textsuperscript{72}. Baber noted on Chember Poker that, "this man in particular is at this moment in possession of estates to a vast amount without any claim or title to the greatest part of them, while the real and original proprietors are suffering much distress and real objects of pity and compassion"\textsuperscript{73}.

In late 1799, a futile attempt was made to arrest by Baber, Shernard Assistant. Infact he was forced to take shelter in the jungles and his house was destroyed\textsuperscript{74}. In the beginning of 1800 Mappila chiefs, Unni Mutha, Athan Moyin Kurikal and Chamben Poker, allied secretly against the British persecution. And they persuaded others to join the rebellion and declared that the persecutors should 'not be protected but destroyed'\textsuperscript{75}. His early success over British army had encouraged Chemban Poker. So he made a bold attack on Mr. G. Waddel, the southern superintendent, on his way from Angadipuram to Orampuran\textsuperscript{76}. In this operation, Manjeri Kurikal secretly provided all the supports.

Consequently, British authorities resorted to a systematic military suppression on the Mappila insurgency. Later Major Walker was appointed to study the situation in southern districts of Malabar Presidency. He condemned the military activism of Baber and Waddel over the Mappila insurgents. Chemban Poker was pardoned after taking surety\textsuperscript{77} for good behavior\textsuperscript{78}.

\textsuperscript{72} Conrad Wood, 'The First Moplah Rebellion Against British Rule', op.cit., p.551, F.Note 51.
\textsuperscript{73} Baber to Waddel. 28\textsuperscript{th} Oct. 1799, Malabar Collectrate Records, quoted in Conrad Wood, \textit{The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis}, op.cit., p.110.
\textsuperscript{74} Report of Major Wales, p.3112, cf., Conard Wood, \textit{Ibid.}.
\textsuperscript{75} Ola addressed by Unni Mutha and Chemban Poker to the people of Ariacotta, cf., Conrad Wood, op.cit., p.551.
\textsuperscript{76} W. Logan, Vol. I, p.527.
\textsuperscript{77} W. Logan, \textit{Treaties and engagements}, II Treaty No. CCXVI, p.337.
\textsuperscript{78} W. Logan, \textit{Malabar}, I, p.529.
The immediate provocations to the Mappila leaders were personal. However, they allied for a common cause which was the safeguarding of the rights of oppressed Mappilas under the colonial rule, which had favored the *jenmis* and insisted Mappila subservience. While dealing the Mappila insurgency of 1800-02 British used the ‘Nair Corps’ under Captain Watson, who was able to suppress the Mappila enthusiasm. At last in 1802 Captain Watson’s army attacked and killed Unni Mutha and Athan Kurikal. In 1805 Chemban Poker also died in a confrontation with Captain Watson.

Even if the so called Banditti leaders were wiped out completely, this insurrection of the tyrannized Mappilas caused a complete breach of their relationship with the British rule. The extinction of these leaders, however, did not bring the situation under the British control, instead the Mappilas became more and more aggravated. Evidently it sowed the seeds for nineteenth and early twentieth century anti-European struggle by the Mappilas of Malabar.

**Sacerdotal Leadership and the Rebellions**

As previously discussed, beginning from the last decades of the 18th century, Mappila peasantry of Malabar rose in rebellion against the oppression of *jenmis* on the one hand and imperialism of the British on the other. The number of rebels in the so called Moplah Outrages varied from small groups of few persons to major battles of large number of people. Of the various revolts, one major revolt having reasons of its own culminated in the rebellion of 1921. Except in 1921 when the Mappilas were

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80 Ibid., pp.108-111.
highly influenced by the ongoing Khilafat-Non-co-operation and *Kudiyan Sangam* movements all others had many shared aspects. The participants conducted each attack as a religious act, *Jehad* or a war cry for Islam. The virtues of heaven and the endless bliss of the heaven have been the most motivating factor of the Mappila resistance. Though the society as a whole with some exceptions in 19th and 20th century Malabar was agonized and hurt by the claws of colonial powers, ‘the Mappilas alone were able to translate their discontent into organized action and it strongly underlines the religious context but not necessarily the religious content of the uprisings’. Here the *ulema* played a pivotal role in arousing anti-European awareness and resentment among the Mappilas of Malabar.

The ‘traditional intellectuals’, *ulema* in the words of Prophet Muhammad, “are the successors of Prophets”. It is unequivocally asserts the role of *ulema* in the society. The *ulema* were divided into three groups of professional functionaries like, *Tangals*, *Musliyars* and *Mullas*. *Tangals* are the descendants of Prophet Muhammad (known as Sayyids). They are usually well versed in Islamic teachings. *Musliyar*, less educated than Sayyids, acted as teachers and mosque officials. *Mullas* are generally performed local or household ceremonies. Generally they could read the

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84 The word ‘*ulema* is the plural of *alim*. It is an Arabic word derived from *ilm*. Literally the *alim* means knowledgeable but technically means a muslim who has completed his education in religious seminary and has studied subjects like the Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*), the science of the Prophetic tradition (*ilmul hadith*) jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and theology (*ilmal kalam*), see Mushirul Haque, *Muslim Politics in Modern India*, Meerat, 1970, p.3, Miracia Eliyode, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol.VII, p.115.
87 Emigrated from Arabia, Yemen and Hadarmaut, S.F.Dale, op.cit., p.111.
Quran and Arabic but a few of them understood what they were reciting. They performed their individual duties in the society and were influential not only in sacerdotal affairs of the Mappilas but in secular ventures also. Thus 'the militancy and love of martyrdom becomes the chief inducement of Mappila outbreaks till other national and global issues like freedom struggle and Khilafat Movement induced new ideologies to oppose British administration'.

As Gramci has emphasized it is difficult to comprehend 'the collective life of the peasantry and of the germs and ferments of development which exists within it' without taking into account of their linkages with movements among traditional intellectuals.

The arrival of the Europeans to the subcontinent widened the responsibilities of *ulema* in the scenario of European onslaughts. Mappila community looked hopefully to the *ulema* to assume the important role of political authority. Till then their *fatwa* comprised theological issues only and now they assumed importance in political spheres also. No doubt the *fatwa* doesn't carry the power of coercion and they would not deal with the whole range issues related to the state organization. In fact they were to become a vehicle for spreading even more detailed guidance to minute concerns of every day life of the individual as well as the society. *Fatwa* carries its political importance in declaring *Jihad* against the oppressors, the landlords.

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89 Kunhali, *op cit.*, pp.41-42.
91 *Fatwa* is a verdict or a decision on a point of law by the learned doctors of Islam. The *fatwa* document is a conventional form and varied little over the countries. It is headed by a pious invocation in Arabic often written in a very involved and stylized manner and varying from period to period, E.J. Brill, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1983, Vol. IV, p.867.
and the Europeans. They viewed the fatwa as a call to the meticulous Muslims to mobilize the community in the absence of any powerful warlord to excite them to challenge the foreign power.\(^{92}\)

Prior to the eminence of makhadums\(^{93}\) of Ponnani, except the scanty information available in *Rehla* of Battuta\(^{94}\), we lack authentic evidences about the religious leadership of the Mappilas of Malabar.

As already noted, Zain-ud-din Ibn. Ali [d. 928/1521-22) was the first Makhdum and the governing spirit of the Mappilas who fought desperately for 100 years against the savage of farangis. Through his treatise called *Tahriz*\(^{95}\) he motivated the Mappilas to fight against the enemies of Prophet Muhammad and to save the world and religion. Some of his instructions include;

To fight the enemies (Portuguese) is the duty of every Muslim who is physically fit and sound in financial provisions and war equipments.

God has commanded to wage war against enemies, more so in a war that removes the agony [of Muslims].

Then what will be the great reward awaiting him who relieves the hardships of an entire community by waging war.

He who spent his wealth for the holy war along with his physical participation will be rewarded seven hundred times as per the interpretation of the holy Quran\(^{96}\).

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\(^{93}\) *Makhdum*, an Arabic Word, means ‘one who deserve service’, It is the title given to the progeny of Shaikh Zainuddin b Ali (1521-22/928 AH) who had migrated to Ponnani from Kochi and established a religious seminary which later became the centre of religious leadership and learning of the Mappilas, Hussain Randathani (ed.,) *Maqdumum Ponnnaniyum* (Malayalam), Ponnani, 1998.

\(^{94}\) Ibn battuta., *op.cit.*, pp.331 ff.


\(^{96}\) *Tahriz Lines 26,35,40,51.*
We are unable to fix the date of compilation of his treatise. Probably it was compiled after the second arrival of Vasco-da-Gama in 1502 which witnessed the unscrupulous attack of the Portuguese on Mappilas.

He exulted the Mappilas to become shahids in the battlefield and quote the Quranic verse “Think not of those who are slain in Allah’s way as dead. Nay, they live, are finding their sustenance from their lord”.

So come on to sacrifice your life “Soul of the Shahids always wishes to return to their bodies, so that they may once again slain in the way of Almighty, because the reward of Almighty to the Shahids are unbounded and fascinating. Makhdum also describes the ill-fate of people who he keep away from holy war. He will be written as a renegade in the Book of God. He will be in failure here and hereafter. After mentioning the glory of paradise and celestial happiness, it deals with the ill-fate and wrath of God, met by those societies who neglected the cruelties of infidels.

The script of the Tahriz was sent to important rulers and mosques of Malabar, and even to the Kings of Egypt, Turkey and other Arab empires. Probably this treatise was written seventy years before the compilation of the renowned Tuhfat-al-Mujahidin by Shaykh Zayn-ud-din (Junior) [1531-1619]. Certainly this Tahriz is to

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97 Husain andathani, tahriz Oru Patanam in Maqdumum Ponnamym op. cit., p.124.
100 Ibid., p.126.
be considered as the earliest manifesto of anti-European struggle in Malabar, which
brought the Mappilas and their rulers to the warfront against colonialism\footnote{Ibid., p.127.}.

Zainuddin (Junior) in his \textit{Tuhfa} adds further on the verdict of \textit{Jihad} and
quoting the Quranic verses, prophetic traditions and notes from Islamic battles, he
incited the Mappilas for a crusade against the Portuguese.\footnote{See Chapter 3 for details.} Dale observed that, the
book explains “the havoc which the Portuguese had wrecked on the Islamic society of
Kerala”\footnote{S.F. Dale, \textit{op.cit.}, p.3.}.

Qazi Muhammad bin Abdul Aziz [d. 1025/1616], wrote the treatise \textit{Fath-al-
Mubin}\footnote{\textit{Fath-al-Mubin li Samiriyya ilde Yuhhb-al Muslimeen} compiled between 1578-79, Translated to
English. M.A. Mueed Khan and Malayalam translation by Prof. Mankada Abdul Aziz,
Kozhikode,1996.}. He praises the Zamorin’s patronage to Islam and Muslims, who even
enforced the rules of \textit{shariat} and permitted to recite the Friday sermon in the name of
Turkish Sultan\footnote{Ibid., Lines 14, 15,16,17.}. The poet himself participated in many battles against the
Portuguese and described the Portuguese atrocities. Some of his instructions are;

\begin{quote}
They destroyed Islamic buildings and basic principles of Islamic
tradition.
How many Muslims are chained in their prison and how many are
tortured with several trials !
How many were orphaned by their homicide and how many girls and
women were made widows !
How many ships they set on fire and how many vessels they sunk in
the sea !
\end{quote}
Qazi Muhammad provides a picturesque description on the battle of Chaliyam, in which Mappilas of neighbouring districts of Calicut enthusiastically participated and the ultimate victory against the Portuguese was also the result of the whole hearted support of the Zamorin of Calicut\textsuperscript{106}. The arrival of the Portuguese with the reminiscence of the crusades war against Islam doubled the responsibility of the \textit{ulema} to the Mappila community. As observed by Dale;

It was largely Mappilas who carried on fight against the Portuguese Dutch and British and the history of Malayali Muslims from the second decade of 16\textsuperscript{th} century is largely a history of the indigenous Muslim Community\textsuperscript{107}.

\textbf{Umar Qazi}

He was born in 1757\textsuperscript{108} in a family reputed for religious learning, in the village of Veliyankode, four Kilometers south of Ponnani. His father Ali Musliyar was a scholarly person and his mother was Amina of Kakathara family. He attained his early education from his father who died when Umar was only ten. He continued his studies at Tanur and completed under Mammi Kutty, \textit{Qazi} of prestigious Makhdum family of Ponnani.

He served as a religious teacher in the mosque at Ponnani between 1793-1802, Veliyankode during 1802-1820 and at Tanur Mosque till 1840. Later he acted as \textit{Qazi} in Veliyankode and continued his service as a religious teacher till his death in 1854.

\textsuperscript{106} See chapters III for a detailed description.
\textsuperscript{107} S.F. Dale Op.Cit., p.46.
His concerns however were not confined to religious issues. He was also famed as a social reformer of the time. He was the first man who started the non-tax campaign and agitated against the newly imposed oppressive and heavy taxes of British administration. He issued fatwas to make his followers aware of the defects of colonial rule and criticized the British administration. He decreed that, it is haram to accept employment under the white Christians.

He was widely believed as a divine with miraculous power. When Umar Qazi refused to pay taxes on his land, police had arrived to arrest him. However a large mass defended the British officials and they were forced to withdraw. Later he was arrested and it is believed that he disappeared from the police lock-up and the officials were charmed to act according to his wishes. When Calicut collector issued order to arrest Qazi, he presented himself before the collector. The Collector tried his best to persuade Qazi to remit the taxes. He was adamant in his decision. Qazi responded by saying.

You (the British) deceptively occupied our country; I will never pay tax on God's land.

The collector respected and requested him to accept a short term imprisonment for violating the law. Meanwhile a large number of Mappilas from the locality assembled at the court. When the authorities decided to imprison the Qazi the situation became tense. The magistrate sought the help of Muhyaddin, the Qazi of Calicut to pacify the people. He reached the spot and persuaded the people to disperse. Umar Qazi himself asked them to keep patience. Thus he was imprisoned on 18th December 1819. From the jail he sent a message to his spiritual preceptor Sayyid

Alavi of Mamburam, describing his plight and lamented that the authorities had jailed him without any specific reason.

He wrote;

I did no crime enough for an imprisonment, but intentionally they put baseless allegations up on me and that Liar (Maggistrate) is responsible for my imprisonment. ..... Due to the persecution of English my life has become miserable like that of a parrot locked in the cage.

He consoled himself by saying

God has created the human beings to die and to die in the way of God is a virtuous deed for rightly guided people.

The authorities caught the message and it failed to reach Sayyid Alawi. When the news, however reached Sayyid Alawi he made an appeal to the District Collector for the immediate release of the Qazi. Realising the seriousness of the situation collector released him immediately. E. Moidu Moulavi an exponent of Khilafat Movement in Kerala observed that;

Umar Qazi was a bitter enemy of the British and an obdurate lover of freedom. He was the first among the Keralite to start non-taxation movement.

Sayyid Husain Tangal of Panakkad (1239/1823-24 to 1302/1884-85)

He was another influential personality who fostered sedition against colonialism and imperialism of the British. He was born to Sayyid Ali Shihabuddin

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110 E.P. Kunhammed, op.cit., pp.59-60. See Appendix-IV for a full text of the letter.
111 Ibid., p.61.
and completed his learning at Malappuram, Tanur and Ponnani. Being a contemporary of Sayyid Fazal of Mamburam, an ideological supporter of anti-imperialistic struggle, he affiliated himself with the endeavour to throw the yoke of imperialism. And he issued fatwas to instigate the people with anti-European feeling. The iron hands of the authorities and even the deportation of Sayid Fazal in 1852 could not deter him from his activities. He continued his blessings and instigated the rebels and there is evidence of his involvement in the outbreak of 1882 commanded by Kalangadan Kutti Hussan. He was sentenced for lifetime imprisonment and spent his remaining life till death in the Vellure Central Jail.\(^{113}\)

**Mamburam Sayyids**

In the context of 19\(^{th}\) Century Mappila resistance against the colonial hands of English, the Thangals of Mamburam Sayyid Alawi and his son Sayyid Fazal played important role\(^{114}\). They belonged to *Ba-Alawi\(^{115}\)* sufi orders spread by Shaikh Jifri [1726-27-1807-08] of Calicut\(^{116}\), who came from Tarim in Hadramaut of Southern Arabia. They were direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima and Cousin Ali. Sayyid Alawi also came from Tarim in 1183/1769-70 as an orphan of 17 and settled at Mamburam, where his maternal uncle Sayyid Hasan Jifri was a religious teacher. Very soon, his mystic contemplation earned him the title

\(^{112}\) E. Moidu Moulwi, *Charithra Smaranakal* (Malayalam), Calicut 1981, p.62, See also K.M Panthavoor, Umar Qazi (Ra) Charitram (Malayalam).


\(^{115}\) *Ba’Alwi* is the family name of Shaikh Jifri and the Sufi Order they followed became famous by their name. But it is an offshoot of Qadiri Order.

**Qutub-al-Zaman** [The Pivot of the Age]. The Mappilas held him in high respect and he became the spiritual head of the Mappilas and came to be known as Mamburam Tangal\(^{117}\).

In stimulating an anti-British consciousness among Mappilas he played a significant role. He was a very keen observant of the implications of colonial British administrative changes and in this he shared the feelings of Umar Qazi of Veliyankode\(^{118}\). His strong antipathy to the British rule is evidently reflected in his fatwa of *Saif-ul-Battar ala man Yuali al Kuffar* [The Sharp Sword on those who take Unbelievers as Protectors] \(^{119}\).

The *fatwa* is connected with the Ottoman rulers and the obligation of Muslims to obey them. At the same time it commands the Muslims of every country not to take Christians as protectors\(^{120}\). Quoting Quranic verses and *Tuhfa* of Ibn Hajar, the author insists that, if an Islamic Country is captured by the *Harbis* [Christians or Kafirs] it should be considered still as an Islamic State [Dar-ul-Islam]\(^{121}\) and it is incumbent on all Muslims irrespective of their age and gender to defend the enemy with all efforts to save the country\(^{122}\). The author considers the Europeans (*afranji*) as the worst disbelievers\(^{123}\) and warns the Muslims against appointing the Christians as domestic


\(^{118}\) K.N. Panikkar, Against Lord and State, *op.cit.*, p.61.

\(^{119}\) His son Sayyid Fazal [1240/1824-1318/1901] included this Fatwa as the second chapter in his *Uddat al Umara wal Hukkam li lhanat al Kafarati Wal Abadat al Asnam* [Preparation to Judges and Leaders to Undermine the Idolaters and Unbelief] Egypt, 1273/1856.

\(^{120}\) It is probable that the Fatwa, *Saif-ul-Battar* was compiled by Sayyid Abdullah bin Abdul Bari Al Abdal, a contemporary of Sayyid Alwi, but issued by Manburm Tangal. Husain K., *Uddat-al-Umara*; A compilation of Religious Decrees on the Mappila peasant Revolts of the 19th Century p.4, F.n.16.

\(^{121}\) According to Muslim Jurists a state where Muslim are protected by the ruler, Muslim or Non-Muslim is *Dar-ul-Islam* opposite of *Dar-ul-Harb* (country where Jehad is compulsory).


\(^{123}\) Ibid., p.28, *op.cit.*, p.4.
servants (*Ahilla*) because they will not be loyal to their masters\(^{124}\). The Muslims, who remain as subjects under the Christian rule and are satisfied with it, are sinners and are liable to exemplary punishment, even though they seek the welfare of the Muslims through Christian rule. Also to praise the Christian rulers, to pray for their welfare is a sin, which requires remorse, and if a Muslim glorifies the Christians than him, he is a *Kafir*, that a Muslim cannot glorify a debauchee (profligate)\(^{125}\).

As far as the direct participation of Sayyid Alawi Thangal in the armed resistance against British and Hindu landlords, scholars are of different views. Prof. Dale observes, 'he doesn’t appear to have actively organized armed resistance to the British or the Hindu Society'\(^{126}\). Alawi Thangal miraculously appeared on a horse back in the Cherur battlefield and even was wounded by a shot of the enemy on his thigh\(^{127}\). It is probable that *Saf-ul-Batar* would have been compiled after the Cherur battle. From this fatwa it appears that, he bitterly hated the British and ‘offered his sanctified prestige’\(^{128}\) to the anti-British and anti-Landlord struggles of Mappilas during his period\(^{129}\). The first instance of involvement of Sayyid Alawi Thangal evidently was by the arrest of the supporters of Manjeri Athan Kurikal, with his sword bearers in the Tirurangadi Mosque (Mamburam Mosque) in the 1801 uprising led by Unni Mutha Muppan, Manjeri Kurikal and Chemban Poker\(^{130}\). The reluctance of the British officials to arrest Thangal was due to a possible protest riot\(^{131}\). In April 1817 Collector James Vaughan reported to the Madras Government.


\(^{125}\) *Ibid.*, pp 30-31

\(^{126}\) S F Dale, *op cit*, p 116


\(^{128}\) S F Dale, *op cit*, p 116

\(^{129}\) Advocated fight against the British till the end C N Ahmad Maulavi, *op cit*, p 178

\(^{130}\) *Ibid*

\(^{131}\) S F Dale, pp 16-17
any attempt to seize the Tangal by force would be attended with the most dreadful consequences, no less than a general rise of the Mappila population, every one of whom have a common use of a long and dangerous knife...  

The relationship of Kurikal family and Mamburam Tangals was further noticed by the British Officials in 1817, when the son and relatives of Manjeri Athan Kurikal attempted to occupy their ancestral land which was escheated to the Government after the 1801 revolt. Even after the suppression of the revolt 1817 collector feared that the involvement of Thangal would lead to later consequences. Unlike the earlier rebellions in which religion had played only a minor role, the scholastic interpretation of Alawi Thangal to the Colonial exploitation of Mappila society created the moral base for “Suicidal Jihad”. About Sayid Alawi, who is also known as Tarammal Tangal and Tirurangdi Tangal the Malappuram Collector comments;

Tirurangadi for many years past been the cause of Mappila fanaticism and the Mamburam or Taramal Tangal had been its high priest.

The personality of Alawi Tangal, as observed by K.N. Panikkar;

Tangal’s call for a jihad against the British did not; however reflect his general religious attitude towards non-Muslims, his relations with Hindus, among whom he had a large number of friends and admirers.

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133 S.F. Dale, p.117.
134 Conrad Wood, Early Mappila Rebellion 1800-1802, these were economically and socially inspired rather the cause of Holy War.
137 C.A. Innes, op.cit., p.79.
138 Against Lord and State, op.cit., p.61. also see K.K. Muhammed Abdul Kareem, Sayyid Alavi Tangal, op.cit., p.28.
And he dismisses the official view, that he was an ‘Arab fanatic of the worst description’\(^\text{139}\).

Also we lack evidence on his hostile attitude towards non-Muslims, while there is evidence to prove that, he had employed a Hindu as his manager\(^\text{140}\). He emphasized *Jihad-al-nafz* (self purification) essential for the advancement of the community. He was highly concerned on the purification of religious practices and making a sense of solidarity among Muslims\(^\text{141}\). He died on 29\(^{th}\) January 1844, and was buried at Mmburam.

Sayyid Fazal Pookoya Thangal [1240/1824-1318/1901] son and successor of Sayyid Alawi, vigorously followed his father’s policy of antagonism towards the colonial power. After establishing the famous congregational mosque at Mamburam, in his Friday sermons he directed people to purify their life based on the Quranic teachings and attacked the unislamic practices. He collected and compiled the Quranic verses and traditions of Prophet Muhammed and named “*Al Qawl-al-Mukhtar fil Man’ an Takhyir-al-Kuffar* [The Selected Statements to Prevent the Preference to the Infidels]\(^\text{142}\). He also propagated the *Saif al- Battar*, fatwa of Sayyid Alawi and his disciples were sent to different parts of Malabar to spread the doctrine of jihad. He unequivocally declared that “It was no sin but a merit to kill a *jenmi* who evicted a peasant from his land”\(^\text{143}\).

\(^\text{139}\) *Ibid.*
\(^\text{142}\) Sayyid Fazal (ed.,) *Uddat-al-Umara, op cit.*, pp.92-165 See Appendix-XIX for the Photo of Sayyid Fazal Pookoya Tangal
Sayyid Fazal also issued *fatwas*, intented to the social reformation, in a period when a large number of lower class people converted to Islam. Of these injunctions, three were caused to increase the uneasiness felt by the Hindus as noticed by the district collector. Thus he forbid the use of honorific ‘you’ (in the plural- *achara vakku*) when addressing Nairs, and eating the remains of ‘food prepared at the numerous festivities of the richer Hindu’ and not to plough on Fridays for the better observance of Muhammadan Sabbath. Dale observes, Sayyid Fazal “attempted to heighten their awareness of their Islamic identity and increase their independence from the dominant Hindu castes”.

In performing the duty of the *Ulema* in Islamic Society, however, Sayyid Fazal attempted to purify the new converts from lower castes, who had continued their old customs and practices without any change. Certainly these changes posed a “challenge to the authority and the position of the powerful class of Nayar jenmis and officials”. It is also probable that the reformist movement in Islamic world during the nineteenth century, ideas of the universal Muslim brotherhood and Pan-Islamism might have influenced Sayid Fazal during his visit and stay in the holy cities. The revivalist and agrarian movements like Faraidis of Bengal and Wahabis under Sha Waliyullah preached the puritanical ideology of revivalism. Kunji Koya Tangal, who participated in the 1849 Manjeri outbreak along with Athan Kurikal had

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145 Ibid.
146 S.F. Dale, *op cit.*, p.130.
149 Kunhali, V. *Ideology and Peasant Uprising in Malabar*, *op cit.*, p.44.
intimate relationship with Sayyid Fazal. His father gives his testimony on his visit to Mecca along with Sayyid Fazal\textsuperscript{151}.

In the peasant movement of Kerala and Bengal David Hardeman notices the influence of religion, which “helped to forge bonds of solidarity against largely Hindu landlords”\textsuperscript{152}.

However, the British administration while enquiring into the causes of the outbreaks in the first half 19\textsuperscript{th} Century maintained the influential role of Sayyid Fazl and his deportation from Malabar\textsuperscript{153}. Meanwhile the District Collector H.V. Connolly succeeded in persuading Sayyid Fazal to migrate to Arabia on 19\textsuperscript{th} March 1852\textsuperscript{154}. Connolly’s action enraged the Mappila community, who have been already suppressed and humiliated by enforcing the strict rules of War Knife Acts\textsuperscript{155}. Thus Connolly was murdered in his well-guarded bungalow at Calicut on 11\textsuperscript{th} September 1955 between 8 and 9 clock\textsuperscript{156}.

Contrary to the antagonistic policy of Mamburam Tangals against the British, successor and nephew of Sayid Fazal, Sayyid Abdulla Koya Thangal (d.1908) maintained a policy of reconciliation to end the outbreaks. Like Karamat Ali in Bengal Abdula Koya tried to reform the community with the support of the British. Thus his Arabic Malayalam journal \textit{Idayat al Ikhwan}, preached the importance of Modern education and urged the Mappilas to compromise with the British authority\textsuperscript{157}.

\textsuperscript{151} CMO, Vol. I, p.139.
\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.67-68. See also S.F. Dale, \textit{op.cit.}, p.157.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Ibid.}, p.572.
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ibid.}, 574, CA Innes, \textit{op.cit.}, p.80.
\textsuperscript{157} C.K. Kareem, \textit{Kerala Muslim Charitram}, \textit{op.cit.}, p.248.
Sayyid Sanah-ulla-Makti Tangal, [1847-1912]

Born in a family with scholarly background in Veliyenkode, his father was a disciple and co-worker of Umar Qazi. After his early education from his father he joined the higher elementary school at Chowghat. He also pursued his religious studies in different centers of learning and completed at Ponnani. He was well versed in Malayalan, Arabic, Hindustani, English, Urdu, Persian and Tamil. He joined the British service as an excise inspector, but he preferred the life of a defender of Islam, against the Christian missionary activities. He delivered number of speeches and issued journals and pamphlets questioning the authority of Christianity. Open debates and speeches were conducted to counter Christian missionary activities and published a series of treatise challenging the Christian beliefs and ideology. In his efforts Hindus supported him morally and materially in several places. In his works, *Katora Kutaram* and *Parkaleetha Porkalam*, he questioned the base of Christianity and challenged the missionaries to disprove his arguments. That his challenge was not attended by any one, rather offer of a reward of Rs. 500 seemed to carry conviction with his people.

He was not an orthodox Ulema, his reformative thoughts, however, invited criticism from the orthodox section of the society. Makti Tangal issued a pamphlet containing thought provoking ideas, like Muslim participation in the outbreaks visa vis the existing deplorable condition. He advocated female education and

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159 Complete works of Maki Tangal have been collected and published by K.K. Muhammad Abdul Kareem, *et al*, *Maki Tangalude Sampurna Kirikal* (Malayalam), Kerala Islamic Mission, Tirur, 1981.
161 Is the first work written in Malayalam by a Mappila.
164 *Sampurna Kirikal*, *op cit*, p.726.
criticized the then prevailing reluctance to learn Malayalam and English. The orthodox Ulema criticised English language as *naraka Bhasha*[^165]. When was he asked whether it was not irreligious to learn such a language, he replied that it would be good to learn it as it would be useful when they reached hell[^166].

He made many speeches in the rebellion hit areas and preached the need for supporting and obeying the British and cited the Quranic verse[^167], “Obey God, the Prophet and those who are in authority amongst you”[^168]. Thus his works brought progress and prosperity in the Mappila society which was reluctant to face the new-socio-political situation in Malabar.

Other than the above mentioned *ulema*, there were several others like, Oukaya Musliyar, Sayyid Hasan Tangal, Bukhari Tangal and Mayenkutty Elaya etc., who provided ideological background and religious sanctity to the Mappila uprisings.

Since the establishment of Colonial rule the traditional society of Malabar under the valiant Mappila leaders gifted a hot-bed to the colonizers till its suppression in 1802. Later a series of outbreaks by Mappilas started in 1836 till the culmination in 1921 estimated into 33[^169].

The question arises why the Mappilas alone revolted against their oppressive *Jenmis* who backed the newly introduced British legal system. The answer lies in the existing caste based society[^170]. Infact, Hindu tenants were incapable of revolting against the *Jenmis* [Lord of land] because the rebellion against the lord of land, who

[^165]: Language of hell.
[^167]: The Holy Quran, 4:59.
[^168]: *Sanpurna Kirtikal*, op cit., 722-23.
[^169]: Include only actual attacks and after adding the suspected incidents, Gopalan Nair numbered it as 52, *The Moplah Rebellion*, Calicut, 1921, Appendix I, pp.2-15.
was also the *Bhudevan*, was considered a sin against religion which invited the Brahmin’s Wrath (*Brahma Kopa*). Thus the rebellious Hindu tenants were liable to heinous punishment of excommunication. In contrary, the Mapilas who carry the legacy of three centuries long militancy and the sense of freedom gifted by the Mysorean interlude could not tolerate the oppression. As referred early religion and *ulema* played ideological role and provided leadership and legitimacy to take up arms against their oppressors either the landlords or the colonial administration. In fact, the Mappila outbreaks of Malabar were violent expressions of rural tensions and the poor Mappila peasants were the core of all the nineteenth century uprisings.

Evidently, the second wave of outbreaks shares with earlier in its basic motives. Nevertheless it differs in its way of execution. Obviously there were the attempts to kill persons, who were understood to be the immediate enemy in economic, social, or religious spheres and to die fighting rather heroically against the troops and attaining martyrdom.

Interestingly, except the 1852 rebellion, which occurred in the North Malabar all others were in Eranad and Valluvanad taluks of South Malabar. Detailed analysis of the outbreaks leads to the conclusion that the assailants belonged to lower class section of Mappila community. Amongst them were the tenants who were petty cultivators with barely one acre, usually much less to farm, followed by agricultural

\[175\] S.F. Dale., *op cit.*, pp.120-123.
\[176\] K.N.Panikkar, *op cit.*, p.86.
laborers, petty merchants and unemployed\(^1\). The victims, however, were Hindu landlords and British administrative and legal authorities and in one case a Mappila family\(^2\).

The Mappila resistance to their oppressors during the period 1836-1840 is not documented in detail. It does not mean that during this period the Mappila-British relationship was cordial. We notice, however, the "smouldering antagonism" of Mappilas to the British rule. In 1822 Madras Governor General Sir Thomas Munro ascribed Mappilas as the "worst race in Malabar" and the "Most hostile" to the British administration\(^3\). "Malabar Manual" of Logan describes an incident of 26\(^{th}\) November 1836 in which Kallingal Kunhalan of Pandalur killed a Chakku Panikkar (astrologer) and wounded three others and subsequently escaped. He was later killed in an encounter with the police party under Tahsildar on 28\(^{th}\) of the same month at Nemini in Walluwanad Taluk\(^4\).

In another attempt in Kalpeta, Changara amsam on 15\(^{th}\) April 1837 a Mappila named Ali Kutti attacked and casually wounded an oppressive and overbearing jennu Chirukaranimana Narayana Mussat. He resorted to fight with the British force and took shelter in the nearby shop of the victim. And on the next day he was encountered and killed by the police\(^5\).

On 5\(^{th}\) April 1839, Kelil Raman of Mankada was attacked and killed by Thorampolakal Attan of Pallipuram and in this task he was assisted by other

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\(^1\) S.F. Dale, *op cit.*, p 233
Mappilas. After firing on temple he was encountered and killed in another nearby
temple.\footnote{Ibid.}

In Mankada Mambathodi Kuttiyathan severely injured one Kotakat Paru
Taragan on 6\textsuperscript{th} April 1839. Subsequently he confronted with an administrative team
headed by two Tahsildar and other officials, who were preparing report of a previous
outbreak. He killed one peon among the officials, however, he was captured and tried,
and later deported.\footnote{Ibid; W. Logan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.555.}

Odayath Kunhunni Nayer an overbearing \textit{jenmi} of Irumpuzhi was attacked and
severely wounded on 19\textsuperscript{th} April 1840 by Parathodiyl Ali Kutty. After burning
Kidangazhi temple he took shelter in his own house for final confrontation with the
police. He was encountered by a Tahsildar and his force, and put to death in the
succeeding day.\footnote{Ibid}

On 5\textsuperscript{th} April 1841, Perumballi Nambutri and another were killed at Pallipurom
by eight Mappilas led by Tumb Mannil Kunyunniyan. They burnt the houses of the
\textit{jenmi} and his dependents. The rebels took shelter in a Brahmin's house. On 9\textsuperscript{th} April
36\textsuperscript{th} Regiment of Native infantry under Mr. Silver encountered the Mappilas, and they
fought valiantly in open front and were killed.\footnote{Ibid, W. Logan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.555.}

In all these encounters, however, the victims either killed or wounded were
Hindus, of whom three were \textit{jenmis}, an astrologer, two \textit{nairs} and a government

\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid; W. Logan, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.554-555.}
\footnote{Ibid; W. Logan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.555.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
employee, and in all probability the other two were jennies and remaining one of his dependants\(^{186}\).

**Multiyara Rebellion: (13\(^{th}\) - 17\(^{th}\) November 1841)**

This rebellion had its seeds in a long standing dispute on land. Kaidotti Padil Moideen Kutty, Pathyl Valia Kunhalan and others killed Tottesseri Kelu [Thachu] Panikkar and a peon on 13/14 November 1841 in Mannur village near Pallipuram of Walluwanad Taluk. The circumstances leading to the uprising had well been described in a note written before the revolt to the Tehsildar by Kunhalan. It comes as follows:

Kundachenakkal Parambu\(^{187}\) was taken on Kanom from Tottachery Kelu [Pachu] Panikkar. In 1820/21 a Kolam [tank] and shop were erected thereon and sirkar nigudi [Govt. Tax] was paid. In 1821/22 a well was dug. In 1822/23 Jenn right was purchased from the said Panikkar. In 1832/33 a mosque was built and in 1841 when a mud wall was raised around the mosque, Tottachery Panikkar went and made a false representation at the talook cutchery. You [the Tehsildar] then without any consideration of the state of things sent a Choondan [Peon] with four or five others with direction to seize and drag the nine of us to talook cutchery. Accordingly the said choondan came to the mosque at half a nazhika before sunset of the 28\(^{th}\) day of our fast, abused us and called us out. We told him that we would go with him after we shall have broken the fast and taken out Kanji [rice gruel] on which the said Kolkar [peon] and the said Panikkar laid hold on the right hand of Moideen Ikkakka, owner of the mosque, and dragged him near the well, when himself and the Panikkar were tying him up, the

\(^{186}\) Ibid., pp.554-555, CMO, I., p.400.

\(^{187}\) Name of a coconut plantation.
rest 8 of us, with the weapon kept ready for the Panikkar, on his return from the talook cutchery, did what has been done.\textsuperscript{188}

The exorbitant action of the peon ‘dragged one of the Mappilas out of the mosque’ invited the criticism of the higher authorities and itself caused his execution.\textsuperscript{189} They took post in the Mosque and with the support from the Mappilas of neighborhood they set the police at defiance for three days, and three more rebels joined with them. On 17\textsuperscript{th} 40 Sepoys of Native Infantry under lieutenant Shakespeare with Mr. Patel surrounded the mosque. And they refused to surrender to the force and decided to become Shahid (martyr).\textsuperscript{190} Thus in the serious battle fought subsequently all the Mappilas including Kaithakal Moideen Kutty fought valiantly and attained martyrdom.\textsuperscript{191}

The unwelcome action of the army however, invited the displeasure of a large gathering of Mappilas. It is probable that, the officials in order to avoid the veneration of the tombs of Martyrs, took away the dead bodies to Tirurangadi and it was further heard about the humiliate burial of their bodies with a dog.\textsuperscript{192} This annoyed and enraged an estimated 2000 Mappilas who forcibly brought the dead bodies, which was under the guard of army to Muttiyara Mosque and offered a martyr’s burial. Twelve of the Mappilas were convicted and punished by the officials.\textsuperscript{193}

On 27\textsuperscript{th} December 1841 Talappil Chekku Nair, adhikari’s son and another of Pallipuram village were killed by a rebellious Mappila gang of seven under

\textsuperscript{188} MJP, 21 Dec., 1841 No 5 India Office Records, quoted in K.N.Panikkar, op cit., p.69.
\textsuperscript{189} W. Logan op cit., p.556.
\textsuperscript{190} K.N Panikkar, op cit., p.70.
\textsuperscript{191} T.L. Strange, op cit., pp 400-401; W. Logan, op cit., pp.555-556; K.N. Panikar, op cit., p.70
\textsuperscript{192} K.N. Pannikkar, op cit., p.70.
\textsuperscript{193} T.L. Strange, op cit., p.401; W. Logan, op cit., p.556.
Melmanna Kunyattan. Subsequently they halted in a house of adhikari with an intention to become martyrs (Shahid) in fighting the British authority. On 28\textsuperscript{th} the regiment under Tahsildar fought with them and all of them were put to death, their bodies were taken to Calicut and buried there\textsuperscript{194}.

**Cherur Rebellion (19\textsuperscript{th} – 24\textsuperscript{th} October 1843)**

This was the outcome of indignant religious, economic and social sentiments of the Mappilas. On 19\textsuperscript{th} October 1843 five rebellious Mappilas under Kunnancheri Ali Athan murdered Kaprat Krishna Panikkar, the former adhikari of Tirurangadi. He was the landlord of the area. Empowered with the British administration he disgraced the feelings of Mappilas, most of whom were low class converts\textsuperscript{195}. They placed their grievances before Sayyid Alawi Tangal with whose blessings they took to fight against Panikkar. The matter of insult on the newly converts had already been brought to the notice of the District Collector and he made an enquiry. Panikkar was found guilty and removed from the post: Unaware of this they killed Panikkar and another adhikari. The rebels took shelter in the house of another Nair in Cherur. Later they were joined by another rebel. On 24\textsuperscript{th} a contingent of 5\textsuperscript{th} Native Infantry was deputed to the task of dealing with the rebels\textsuperscript{196}. But ‘when the Mappilas rushed out, the sepoys were panic struck and took to flight’. It is believed that Sayyid Alawi Tangal himself waged the battle on horse-back. Three Sepoys and one Subehdar were killed and captain Leader himself and five Sepoys were wounded. Besides these causalities

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} Dale attributes the rebellion to the result of teachings and reformative efforts of Sayyid Fazal. *Ibid.*, pp.130-31, K.N.Pannikkar, however summarily rejected the teachings as the cause for the Cherur revolt on the contention that the orders of Sayyid Fazal was only issued after 1852, *Ibid.*, p.63.
\textsuperscript{196} T.L. Strange, *op.cit.*, p.401; W. Logan; *op.cit.*, p.557.
to the regular troops, 7 peons were wounded, 3 of them seriously. Though all the seven Mappilas who participated in the rebellion were killed, it was a complete disaster to the British force and administration. Mappila Historians attribute the British causalities up to twenty.197 Those sepoys who fled from the battlefield were later tried in Military court at Cannanore. Military officials took away the dead bodies of Mappila martyrs to Tirurangadi with an intention of cremating them. Enraged Mappilas took the dead bodies and buried them at Mannathiparamba near Tirurangadi. Infact the authorities prohibited the Mappilas from visiting the graves198. The seven Mappila martyrs were, Poovadan Moideen, Punadakkapuram Moideen, Punthirundi Ismail, Pattarakkadavil Husain, Mussakkutty, Ali Hassan and Cholakkal Bukhari199. Based on the theme of Cherur battle songs were compiled in praise of the heroism of Mappila martyrs. And it was in high circulation and a source of inspiration to the Mappilas of Malabar during their fight against the oppressive colonial administration200. On 4th December 1843, one Nair labourer was found dead with ten deep wounds and his murder was believed the work of some parties of Mappila men201.

In another incident on 11th December 1843, in Pandikkad, Karukamanna Govinda Musad a jenmi and the adhikari, and his Nair servant were killed by ten

References:

197 C.M. Muhammed Maulawi, Britente Parajayam Athava Cherur Chinth, Published by the Author n.d. pp.2-23.
199 Ibid.
200 Some parts have been translated and published by Logan, op.cit.; also see F. Fawcett, ‘A popular Mappila Song’ IA, XXVIII (March 1899), pp.64-71; ‘Warsongs of the Mappilas of Malabar’, IA, XXX(November-December 1901), pp.499-508 and pp.528-37. See Appendix-V for a list of martyers of the Malappuram Battle in 1738, mentioned in ‘Malappuram Padapatt’ written by Moyin Kutty Vaidiyar.
201 T.L. Strange, op.cit., p.401.
rebellious Mappilas under Anavattath Sulaiman. After defiling two temples they sheltered in a nearby house.\(^\text{202}\). The reason behind this ‘outbreak’ was the overbearing nature of the *jenmi* empowered by the British Judicial System. This aspect was well explained in the Warrola Chit [anonymous writing] left in the house where the rebels took shelter for the information of Walluwanad Tahsildar. It complains that, “it is impossible for people to live quietly while the *Adheekarees* and *Jenmis*... treat us in this way.”\(^\text{203}\).

Though the first military detachment from 19\(^{\text{th}}\) regiment of Native Infantry arrived to deal with the situation, they were insufficient and withdrew from the task. Reinforcement by two companies of the same regiment under major Orbourne arrived from Palaghat. On 19\(^{\text{th}}\) when the combined forces marched towards the hideout of the Mappila outbreaks, they made desperate attack on the army. Finally they were defeated and attained martyrdom.\(^\text{204}\). After analysing the second wave 1836-43 of the uprisings, K.N. Panikkar suggests two shared aspects of them.

1. The outbreakers were recruited from the downtrodden section of Mappila community.

2. The method of operation by the rebels, which the District Magistrate described as ‘that of rabid animals than of creatures possessing a spark reason’\(^\text{205}\) were remarkably similar.


\(^{204}\) W. Logan, *op cit.*, p.559.

\(^{205}\) *MJP*, quoted in K.N. Panikkar, *op cit.*, p.70.
Almost in all cases they exclusively aimed at British officials and *jennies* and their dependants\textsuperscript{206}.

The first aspect, however, had well highlighted in the Pallipuran rebellion of 1841. A court order evicted the leader, who was a petty tenant with seventeen dependants. Among the rebels were one blacksmith, three labours, one unemployed and a minor boy of fifteen years old\textsuperscript{207}.

The third wave of incidents between 1849-52, the Mappila ‘outbreaks’ became a matter of serious concern to the British authorities. Thus the colonial administration, by putting all their means and efforts, made pains taking enquiry on the causes and characteristics of these outbreaks. Their efforts facilitated in bringing the volumes of official reports\textsuperscript{208}. Though they carry official prejudices, we are highly dependant on them.

The first incident during this period was on 26\textsuperscript{th} May 1849; in which the assailant Chakkalakkal Kammad with a strong intention to become *Shahid* had visited the mosque which erected in honour of the martyrs of 1841 ‘outbreak’. He, after having food from a nearby Mappila house, grabbed a knife from a Teerman (toddy worker), cut down a Nair youth whom he had never seen before and took refuge in a mosque. The Tehsildar being a Muslim proceeded towards the mosque in the hope of inducing the murderer to surrender. He rushed outside with a knife. The peon who was in the Company of Tehsildar encountered him and put to death\textsuperscript{209}.

\textsuperscript{207} *Ibid.*
\textsuperscript{208} Correspondence of Moplah Outrages in Malabar for the years 1849-59, 2 Vols, Madras, 1863.
Manjeri Rebellion (26th August - 4th September 1849)

It was the second largest uprising in the 19th century and can be taken as a paradigm of the ‘outbreaks’ as a whole. Under the competent leadership of Athan Moyin Kurikal and Kunhi Koya Tangal, sixty three Mappilas fought against the tyrannical colonial rule. Except Athan Moyin Kurikal and his five relatives, Kunhi Koya Tangal and his two sons and Nenmini Musliyar all other rebels were poor tenants and labourers. They came from very poor circumstances with nothing to hope [for] and nothing to lose. Athan Moyin Kurikal belonged to the Anikode branch of Kurikal family settled at Manjeri.

He was a protector of the oppressed and destitute, especially the Mappilas who lived under the onerous jenmies and British administration. He maintained a band of armed retainers and often acted as an arbitrator between jenmies and the Mappilas. Once a village accountant (Menon) of Chembrasseri was forced to return thirty rupees which he had obtained from a Mappila woman as bribe. He intervened in the arrest of a Mappila and even threatened the life of an Adhikari who over taxed a Mappila peasant. In another instance when a poor Mappila Karata Unnyayin was accused of stealing paddy from the house of a landlord, Kurikal evaded the punishment by persuading the jenmi to withdraw the complaint and held himself as surety for his future behaviour.

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210 Son of Sayed Hussain Tangal of Mamburam, CMO-I p.139.
211 Minute by D. Elliot, Member of Governor’s Council. CMO I, p.139.
212 They possessed a long tradition of revolt against oppression even one of his ancestor fought against Tipu Sultan (1784-85) and against British (1800-02).
213 CMO I, p.66.
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid., p.75.
The authorities however perceived his actions as a threat to their power and prestige\textsuperscript{216}. He was brought under strict law and forbade his movement and maintenance of armed retainers. It affected his source of income for 'he had no sort of ostensible means of livelihood, except the fees collected for teaching the use of firearms, the proceeds of sports and the contribution in money and grain he could collect from the various Nairs, Nambudiris and bazaars he visited\textsuperscript{217}. Though he obeyed the orders, he was accused of a grand robbery, which led to a raid on his house, even his aged father was taken to Cuchery and his own arrest was ordered\textsuperscript{218}. Realizing the probable dishonour and harassment, he resorted to open defiance to the British authority. Though the immediate provocation for his revolt was personal disgrace he was hurt by the grievances of the Mappila society as a whole. This can be well noticed from his statement to the Collector which he left at Manjeri temple.

The Government is ignorant of the weight of the grievance which the Mussalman inhabiting the land part of Malabar have been suffering of late years; since the country has been under their rule, the majority of the public servants being of the Hindoo caste they as well as the landlords of the Malabar and the Rajas, who are also landlords are from the beginning connected as fathers and sons, as also dependants, such as \textit{pattola achens} [hereditary accountants] \textit{Karyasthans} [managers] \textit{adiyars} [vassals] and tenants. Thus leagued they have been preferring false and vexatious complaints in the \textit{adalat} and police against several wealthy Mussalmans who held land on mortgage, fee simple rights which were the means they had of supporting themselves and family, which complaint, the \textit{Sirkar} with out knowing the real

\textsuperscript{216} He 'left the Magistracy helpless' \textit{Ibid.}, p.68.
\textsuperscript{217} Statement on 26\textsuperscript{th} August 1849 addressed to the Collector and left in Manjeri Temple by Athan Kurikal, \textit{Ibid.}, p.65.
\textsuperscript{218} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.70-71. See Appendix-VI for the full text of the letter.
merits of the case, decreed against them, upon the arguments (false pleas) brought forward in support of them and afterwards thus passed, were enforced. In many instances property of great value were by stratagem set down as worth little. Some people [Mussalman] in order to avoid complaints of this nature have been under the necessity of giving large sums, as bribes and presents, the consequence of all these has been, that many Mussalman have been reduced to a state of beggary, so much so that they find themselves unable to represent, and prove to the Sirkar, the real state of matters, with the view of putting a stop to such practices. Hence, the cause of the events which took place before this, in this part of country; when some of the landed proprietors and their adherents were cut down and put to death, the perpetrators of which after setting the public authority at defiance, were punished by the Government\(^{219}\).

This statement explores the condition of Mappila peasants under colonial rule during the first half of the 19\(^{th}\) century. K.N. Panikkar observes;

It was not simply a post facto justification for his action. Even before the revolt he had intervened on behalf of poor Mappilas who were unjustly treated by government officials and landlords\(^{220}\).

Moreover, he was well aware of the fact that the Mappilas could not benefit from the existing system of administration, so he plunged to open rebellion for the immediate redressal of the problems of Mappilas.

Here in this revolt, ideological support was rendered by Kunhi Koya Tangal, an associate of Sayyid Fazal. Taking Kunhi Koya Tangal’s active participation in the revolt as a proof, Dale answers to the question, why the insurgents did not visit

\(^{219}\) Ibid., pp.48-49.
\(^{220}\) K.N. Panikkar, op cit., p.73.
Mamburam and performed the other usual ceremonies before the performance of 'Jihad'? Kunhi Koya Tangal himself stated:

My reason for joining these people arises from the dictates of religion; for where a member of Musalmans are in trouble and danger it is for us, Sayeds to join and die with them. Seeing this grievous state. I, thinking of the face of God joined them. If after this necessary is not made, and caused to be made and the grievances of the remaining Musalman redressed, and themselves protected recurrences of the present events will take place every time they are oppressed and distressed.

Athan Kurikal gathered fifteen Mappilas in the Ainikode village. It included Kunhi Koya Tangal and his two servants, seven poor tenants, three coolies and two others indulged in minor thefts. On 26th August, they marched from Anikode to Manjeri via Pandikkad. On their way they killed Panditodi Teyyuni, a Nair cultivator on whom one of the group members Torengal Unniyan kept a grudge with him.

On their way at Pandikkad their aim was Marat Nambudhiri, a wealthy landlord and money lender. Nellengara Ali, a gang member had a long standing dispute with him on land which he held on Kanam from the Nambudhiri. On being informed about Mappilas intention, he escaped and his gatekeeper who engaged with the rebels had been killed.

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221 S.F. Dale, op cit., p.189.
222 Statement of Kunhi Koya Tangal, CMO I, p.53.
223 Ibid., p.110-17.
225 Nellengara Ali’s father Komu after paying Rs.28.9 annas, 1 paise mortgage amount and 100 paras of paddy as rent, occupied a land of 100 para as Kanam. After falling the rent into arrears, in 1846/7 the eviction filed by the Nambudhiri effected to increase the rent into 150 paras of paddy and deprived him from kanam right and become verumpattamdar and enabled the Nambudhiri to renew the lease charging renewal and increasing the rent every year, Ibid., p.76.
226 Ibid., pp.26,76.
The next target of the Mappilas was Manjeri Karnopad Raja. Two factors caused to bring Raja to the grudge of Mappilas. Firstly, Kurikkal’s family had a long-standing feud with the Raja. Secondly the extortive nature of Raja towards his tenants.

On 27th August morning they occupied the Manjeri temple, where the Raja was in his birthday ceremony. The rebels fired in the air and let every one to decamp without further trouble. Dale, however mentions that on 28th ‘as usual Mappilas sought to kill as many Kafir as possible in striving for martyrdom’. Nevertheless, Robinson observed, ‘had their object been slaughter of Hindus the carnage might have been fearful’. But none except a deaf Nambudhiri priest ‘who in confusion briefly hesitated and was killed’. Till 3rd September rebels encamped in the temple, meanwhile they defeated two companies of Native infantry, caused 5 causalities to British including officer Mr. Ensen Wyse, a Jemadar and four sepoys and one from Mappilas. Encouraged by this success thirty three new rebels joined the gang and number rose to sixty five. Then they left to Walluvanad Raja’s temple at Angadipuram.

As Connolly observed ‘the rebel’s primary object in moving was to secure a fair field for a hand to hand fight with the army’. Secondly, to feed large number

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227 See Appendix -IV; S.F. Dale, op cit., pp.141-42.
228 Ibid., p.51.
229 Ibid., p.77.
230 Ibid., p.143.
231 CMO. I, p.77.
232 When the local Mappilas resented on the murder of the priest, Athan Kurikkal expressed his regret and described it as the unwarranted work of the ‘boy’ done with out his consent’, Ibid.
233 Ibid., 28.
234 Bhagavati Kavu temple, the rebels after occupied, destroyed all the documents and accounts stored there, S.F. Dale., op cit., p.144.
235 Ibid., p.29, also because the British troops largely reinforced and manjeri temple was not suitable for an open fight.
of rebels, they did not have enough provision at Manjeri temple and it is believed that
Angadipuram temple had a well stored granary.236

K.N. Panikkar, observes on the intention behind the occupation of temple by
the rebels, ‘in almost all cases occupation of the temple’ was indeed ‘primarily
motivated by the necessity of a strong place for defiance or for procuring
provisions’237.

He adds rejecting the notion ‘the destruction and defilement of a temple’238
“Had they intended to defile temples and destroy the idols and property of Kafirs,239
they had ample opportunity of doing so during those seven days when, ‘the country
had lain in a manner, at their mercy’240.

However, the encounter with the army under Major Dennis on 4th September 5
p.m. took place and all the rebels were killed241. The 1849 out breaks as observed by
Dale, ‘revealed almost the full spectrum of the kind of personal, social and economic
and religious motives which contributed to the outbreak phenomenon during the 19th
and early 20th centuries’.242

In another episode on 5th January 1851 a native Government clerk, Raman
Menon was attacked and wounded by Choondyamoochikkal Attan in Payyanaad near

236 Ibid., p.29.
237 K.N. Panikkar, op cit., p.76.
238 S.F. Dale, op cit., p.141.
239 And it is reported that Athan Kurikal, after breaking the boxes “where there was an abundance of
gold, but would not touch or allow to be touched a particle of it” CMO I, p.275.
240 CMO I, pp.28,88; Panikkar also summarily rejected Dale’s notion that “the most convincing reason
behind the sudden move” was to avoid captured and thwarting their desire to become Shahids”. pp.143-44, See K.N. Panikkar, op cit., F. Note. 136.
242 S.F. Dale, op cit., p.146.
Manjeri\textsuperscript{243} Menon, a village accountant was appointed to monitor and fix the Government share on the gingili oil seed cultivation of Athan’s wife\textsuperscript{244}. However, the over-assessment by the officials enraged Athan and he resorted to fight against the injustice done by the administration and to become a \textit{Shahid}. Thus after inflicting a serious attack on Menon he took shelter in the house of revenue inspector for the final confrontation with the police. The Tehsildar being a Mappila (Rawtar) persuaded him to submit; indeed he refused to agree and declared his intention to become a martyr. Thus he threw himself out and fired the sepoys. Subsequently he was shot dead\textsuperscript{245}.

\textbf{Kulathur Rebellion (22\textsuperscript{nd} - 27\textsuperscript{th} August 1851)}

It is rather interesting to note that, unlike the Manjeri uprising, Kulathur Mappila rebels had no leader. They came from Mankada. Six\textsuperscript{246} Mappila tenants killed Kotuparambath Komu Menon and his servant on 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 1851 on his way from Mankada Kovilakam of Walluvanand Raja\textsuperscript{247}. He was the \textit{Karyasthan} of Walluvanad Raja and former \textit{adhikari} of Mankada village. He was very influential and powerful enough to evict Mappila tenants from their lands. Thus he acquired a large tract of land under his authority. One of the assailants Kundathodiyyil Unnirayin was enraged when Komu Menon escheated a large part of his land. He was aware that Komu Menon’s next action would eject him from the remaining land and put him in a position of ordinary labourers\textsuperscript{248}.

\textsuperscript{243} \textit{CMO I}, p.159.
\textsuperscript{244} \textit{Ibid.}, p.160.
\textsuperscript{245} \textit{Ibid.}, W. Logan, \textit{op cit.}, p.560.
\textsuperscript{246} K.N. Panikkar suggest only 4 two tenants and their two labours, \textit{Ibid.}, p.77.
\textsuperscript{247} W. Logan, \textit{op cit.}, p.562.
\textsuperscript{248} H.V Connolly to Pycroft, 30\textsuperscript{th} September 1851, \textit{CMO I}, p.181.
The immediate cause of the ‘outbreak’ undoubtedly was hatred entertained against Komu Menon, ‘Addicted to intoxication and in both his drunken and sober hours, his behaviour to those about him was generally overbearing and abusive’ especially towards the Mappilas\(^{249}\). Nevertheless in 1845, six years before the murder, District Magistrate Connolly had removed him from the post of Adhikari; after he received a complaint that he insulted the Mappilas by forcing one of them to ‘substitute the call to prayer’\(^{250}\) as ‘a call to eat swine’s flesh’\(^{251}\). Infact, he would have been killed five months before by the enraged Mappilas under Illikot Kunyunni. However, the intervention of Assistant Magistrate saved him from their endeavor\(^{252}\).

Meanwhile they were joined by three other Mappilas. Thence they proceeded to Komu Menon’s house. On seeing Komu Menon’s brother armed with a gun and a war knife they moved towards their next target and victim Ittunni Rama Menon, another brother of Komu Menon, who was taking bath in a nearby tank\(^{253}\). He was also hated by the Mappilas, ‘being an usurer and hard in his dealings with the poor’. He was an ‘extremely avaricious man and lent money and grain to a large extent and often on most usurious interest…… and it was expected his death would release many a man of their [Mappila] caste from a heavy responsibilities’\(^{254}\). Two of the rebels were indebted to him and another who joined them later had borrowed twenty five paras of paddy from him at an interest of 40 percent for a period of eight months\(^{255}\).

\(^{249}\) Ibid., pp.172-73, 187.
\(^{250}\) Azan. (Bank).
\(^{251}\) Ibid., pp.187, 195, 196.
\(^{252}\) W. Logan, op cit., p.562.
\(^{253}\) Ibid., CMO I, p.177.
\(^{254}\) H.V. Connolly to Pycroft, 30\(^{th}\) August 1851 CMO I, pp.170, 188-89.
\(^{255}\) Ibid., pp.182-83.
After finishing the two oppressors Mappila rebels killed Kadakottil Nambudhiri, a landlord who was sitting in Rama Menon’s house. They fired Rama Menon’s house after leaving the inmates untouched. Meanwhile, three more Mappilas joined them and they turned to the house of Mundangara Rarichan Nair, a friend of Komu Menon, and ‘like him was dissipated and at times equally abusive and offensive to Moplahs and in consequence nearby as much disliked’, wounded and subsequently died of his wounds. Another moneylender Chengara Varier was their next target. However seeing the Mappilas he took hide in the field, though his house was burnt.

When the Mappilas fulfilled their immediate task, they looked for arms and shelter for the expected encounter with the army. This led them to Kuruva, there they searched for arms and provisions at the house Edavattat Ramu Menon, a rich Nair landlord and Adhikari of Kuruva Amshom. On their way to Kuruva they were joined by eight other extremely poor Mappilas. However, ‘they did not make any attempt to attack them’.

It is probable that, after joining the new band of Mappilas, they formed their next target at Kulathur. On 23rd Morning between 7.30 – 8.00 a.m., passing five miles they arrived at the house of Kulathur Varier. He was a powerful landlord and
possessed land in Walluvanad, Eranad and Palaghat Taluks, and received Rupees 20,000 annually as rent^265.

During British settlement, he regained the power and prestige which he had lost in the wake of Mysorean invasion. Mappilas being the sympathizers of Mysore Sultans, his relationship with them was not cordial^266. Moreover, it is clear from the conversation between Wallunwanad Tahsildar and the Mappila rebels that a dispute on land for mosque had existed between Mappilas and the Varier.

It follows;

What is the loss to the Nairs and Nambooris, if a piece of ground capable of sowing five parahs of seed allotted for the construction of a Mosque? Let those hogs [the soldiers] come here, we are resolved to die^267.

This fact further corroborated from the report of Assistant Magistrate, that 'the intention of going to Kolatur Varier's house is a consequence of his opposition to the erection of a Mosque^268.

After entering the house, 'All the women and children were told by the Moplahs to go away', though one servant was shot but escaped. Junior Varier was not present and another young Varier escaped with slight wound^269.

In the end, the old Varier aged seventy nine was taken to the people who had assembled outside the gate of the house from all sides on hearing of the attack. Here

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^265 ibid., p.191.
^266 ibid., p.191.
^267 By Atha dated 28th August, 1851 CMO I p.197.
^268 CMO I, p.178 the rebels entered the house of Varier, shouted, "where are the Ameen sent by District Munsif to attach the land on which the mosque was being erected and the Kolkars and the pig who oppose the erection of the mosque". ibid., p.179.
^269 ibid.
two other Mappilas joined the gang. They hacked him to three pieces and his body was thrown into the paddy field. And they burnt all account books and property registers of Variers. Subsequently they waited for an encounter with the British military.

On 24th the first encounter was under the command of Ensign Turner of Malapparam detachment. However, when the Mappilas rushed out to fight, the sepoys felt panic and ranaway and caused three causalities. Mappilas valiantly followed them and collected muskets left by sepoys on their escape and they returned to the house of Varier keeping the army in one mile distance. In the words of Mr. Collect, the operation was “a complete disaster.” Thus the European detachment from Calicut under the command of Captain Rhodes arrived on 27th. A sudden attack was made by Mappilas under the cover of firing and smoke on the newly arrived Europeans force. It caused much confusion among British force and the officials were only, ‘by dint of exhortation, managed to rally their men’. The fight of the Mappilas in the words of Connolly was very brave ‘the Check was very unhappy one cannot be denied’. In the second encounter British force lost four of their European soldiers and a native Subehdar. Thus in the final confrontation 17 Mappila rebels had attained martyrdom.

A notable aspect of Kulathur rebellion, as observed by K.N. Panikkar was that the rebels “had not sought the blessings of a tangal or Maulavi before embarking on their course of action.”

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270 Number increased to 19, Ibid.
271 CMO I, pp.170-171.
274 T.L. Strange, op cit., p.402; W. Logan, op cit., p.565, One of the Mappila rebels who died after the injury of the encounter on 24th August, Ibid.
275 K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.78.
He adds that, "two factors - the influence of religious teachings and the manipulation of rich Mappilas who stood to benefit from the destruction of their Hindu adversaries - were common in most of the uprisings" in the 19th century\textsuperscript{276}.

**Mattannur Rebellion (4th - 8th January 1852)**

It was the only ‘outbreak’ occurred outside the so called “fanatical zone” of the Mappilas,\textsuperscript{277} it also provided evidence to the Government on the direct involvement of Mamburam Tangal in the Mappila ‘outbreaks’\textsuperscript{278}. Further it demonstrates the fundamental question, the ownership of land which had been in air at least for more than half a century since the end of Mysorean hegemony over Malabar. As the official report noticed, ‘the assailants of Irrikur were inspired from the success of the recent Kulathur uprising’\textsuperscript{279}.

The Mappilas of Mattannur rose in rebellion on 4th January 1852 under Choorot Mayan against an oppressive and unpopular landlord, Kallattil Brahmin. Initially the movement was brought up by a group of nine Mappilas of two families, Chooryot and Thayyil of Mattannur. Within the last twelve months, ‘he was unjustly involved with both the families; his principal Moplah tenants’\textsuperscript{280}. The Chooryot family was largely indebted to the Kallathil Brahmin whereas he had filed an eviction suit against the Thayyil family\textsuperscript{281}. Thus both the families were against him. Being a landlord, moneylender and the prominent pepper merchant, his dealings with the tenants were very severe. He used to raise the rent arbitrarily and had levied heavy

\begin{footnotes}
\item[276] Ibid., p.77.
\item[277] CMO I, p.302.
\item[279] Ibid., p.302.
\item[280] CMO I, p.301.
\item[281] Ibid., p.304.
\end{footnotes}
*Ponnam Varom*\(^{282}\) indiscriminately and his ‘general management was extracting and not invariably just towards his tenants’\(^{283}\). There was a long standing feud and difference of opinion on occupying land in Mattannur between the wealthy Mappilas and Kallatil Kesavan, the Brahmin *Jenmi*. Kottale was a wealthy and powerful Mappila family, and its members attempted to extend their landholdings in the area. All their efforts in the past, however met with failure in judicial procedures, which had always been influenced by the Kallathil Brahmin *Jenmi*\(^{284}\). The power to challenge the greedy and oppressive *jenmi* had increased the prestige and influence of Kottale family among the Mappila community. They were looked as a Messiah for the oppressed Mappila peasants\(^{285}\) as the Kurikkals of Manjeri in Eranad Taluk\(^{286}\). Therefore, it was possible for the Kottale family, as Panikkar observed “to channelise peasant discontent to help them achieve what they could not through judicial institutions”\(^{287}\).

Though Kottale family was accused of personally motivated interests, as suggested by Robinson’s report,\(^{288}\) they were highly sensitive to the cause of Mappila peasantry. Even they financially assisted\(^{289}\) the nine Mappila rebels, in their visit to Sayyid Fazal of Mamburam to get moral sanction for their struggle against the oppressors\(^{290}\). Pilgrimage to Tiruangady (Mamburam) was a ‘bold innovation’

\(^{282}\) Landlord’s share on hill cultivation, majority of the cultivators was Mappilas and they suffered from the exploitation of officials and landlords.

\(^{283}\) *CMO* I, pp.300-301.


\(^{286}\) They fought against Manjeri Kamorpad Raja, the prominent *jenmi* for the cause of Mappila peasants.

\(^{287}\) K.N. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p.80.

\(^{288}\) *CMO* I, pp.302-303. It was the practice of the British officials that in order to undermine the cause of peasants they always attribute their (Mappila peasants) protest to personal feuds.


designated and instigated' by the Cottale family291. It is unquestionably proved that the Mappilas decided to destroy the Kallathil Brahmin before their journey to Mamburam292. As it is in wide circulation in Mattannur that the pilgrimage was under-taken in preparation for the murder of Kallathil Brahmin.

The severe oppression of Kallattil Brahmin can be seen reflected in the words of a rebel, Ayar Kunyaen.

I am determined to die as Shahid, the Kallathil Brahmin has forged deeds against me, and has filed a suit, and looks to ousting me out of my parambu293 and I will not live no longer294.

The 'discontent' of the Mappilas hatched on the night of 4th January 1852. Thence they were engaged in groundwork for their anticipated rebellion, ‘moving about in the society of their co-religionists, gaining recruits, widening their plans, and watching their opportunity for perpetrating their projects’295. They enjoyed the sympathy and were ‘supported by their relations and neighbours’296. It is noteworthy that, the Mappila sympathisers supported the rebels ‘with the fullest knowledge of the ultimate intention’297.

4th January was the day of Moulid298 and the rebels attended the prayer and feast [maulid] at Pattot Mosque299. On 5th morning the nine rebels after recruiting six

291 ibid., p.308
293 A piece of gardenland.
294 Affidavit of Ayar Kunyaen on 4th February 1852, Ibid., 298.
295 ibid., p.307.
296 ibid., p.308.
297 ibid
298 Birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammed 12th Rabi-ul-Awal (Lunar Month)
299 ibid., p.309.
others\textsuperscript{300} with the support of a mass\textsuperscript{301} of Mappilas marched to the residence of their oppressor, Kallattil Keshavan. In the attack followed, they killed seventeen\textsuperscript{302} including the servants and the rebels destroyed all the documents of deeds on landed property worth about rupees 50,000-70,000. Large areas of pepper and rice crops were also destroyed\textsuperscript{303}. The rebels dug up the floor in search of concealed jewels and valuables and gutted the house and obtained an amount of rupees seven thousand in cash\textsuperscript{304}.

After the successful completion of their primary task they destroyed the house of Kanambitta Brahmin. Meanwhile instigated by Valappillagat Hassan Kutty, a wealthy Mappila of Irikkur village, the rebels attacked Kuliet Anandan’s house on 8\textsuperscript{th} October. He was the head of the richest Hindu land owning family in the village\textsuperscript{305}. However, the rebels were encountered by 300 armed retainers and in the subsequent fighting all rebels were killed\textsuperscript{306}.

The spectrum of motives behind the attacks as Dale observes, “acted as Muslims revenging themselves upon Hindus for economic exploitation.” and “outbreaks in which martyrdom appears to have been an end in itself”\textsuperscript{307}.

\textsuperscript{300} The 6 new recruits – 2 from neighboring village of Kallur. Chavasheri Kallil Pocker and Chavasheri Vayalil Mayen were tenants in dispute with their land lords, Kallattil Brahmin and Kanambatta Brahmin, \textit{iibid.}, p.305. 3 others – Vardoyan Kutty Ali, Mundrady Kadava Kunyami and Ackaramel Kunjayan cane from Shivapuram village. Vardoyan kutty was evicted from his land near the Pallot mosque by Kanambatta Brahmin, in fact Kunyami and Kunjayan joined the group after influenced by him, \textit{iibid.}, 301. The other Kutchery Mutha Kunjamed was influenced by Seedy Ahmad. They were recruited from the Mouldi Ceremony conducted in the neighbouring village, \textit{iibid.}, p.309.

\textsuperscript{301} 200 Mappilas were helped the rebels in destroying the compound wall of Kallattil Brahmin, \textit{iibid.}, pp.309-10, 311.

\textsuperscript{302} \textit{iibid.}, pp.311-13

\textsuperscript{303} \textit{iibid.}, p.298.

\textsuperscript{304} \textit{iibid.}, p.305.

\textsuperscript{305} \textit{iibid.}, p.280.

\textsuperscript{306} \textit{iibid.}, pp.280-81.

\textsuperscript{307} See \textit{CMO I}, pp.163-168; S.F Dale, \textit{op cit.}, p.86
During his tenure as Malabar Collector between 1840-1855, H.V. Connolly witnessed dangerous Mappila outbreaks. For the first time it was he who paid attention to the root causes of these outbreaks. He proposed an enquiry on them and his suggestion was accepted\(^\text{108}\).

In 1852 Thomas Lumsden Strange was appointed to enquire 'into Mappila disturbances, their causes and remedies'\(^\text{309}\). He investigated the incidents retrospectively, his report submitted on 25\(^\text{th}\) September 1852\(^\text{310}\) enumerated the Mappila 'outbreaks' since 1836 as 31, and he analysed its nature and causes. Though Strange was 'specifically charged to ascertain the causes of the outbreaks and to make special enquiry into the question of agrarian disputes', it was with the caveat that the 'grand object' of his appointment was to secure to Nairs and Brahmin population the most ample protection and safety possible against the effects of Moplah fanaticism\(^\text{311}\). His report undermined the idea that the outbreaks were due to agrarian disputes, or more particularly to the oppressive landlords'. Instead he attributed the outbreaks to the 'religious fanaticism' of the Mappilas\(^\text{312}\). He, suggested severe repressive measures, like "escheating the property and deportation of those guilty of fanatic outrage, fining the Mappilas of the Districts and disarming them, especially of war-knives and forbidding the building of Mosques and even the formation of a force exclusively composed of Hindus"\(^\text{313}\). However, before the submission of the report by Strange, Sayid Fazal about whom and about his conduct was his 'earliest

\(^{108}\) CMO I, p.268; W. Logan op cit., p.566.

\(^{309}\) CMO. I p.271; Innes, op cit., p.81; First Malabar Special Commission to enquire the rebellions appointed on 17\(^\text{th}\) February 1852.

\(^{310}\) Submitted to Pycroft Government Secretary Judicial Department on 25\(^\text{th}\) September 1852, CMO I, pp. 399-474.

\(^{311}\) CMO I, pp.271, 273; W. Logan, op cit., pp. 566-77; S.F. Dale, op cit., p.158.

\(^{312}\) Though later Logan found the reality in his visit to the affected districts. op cit., pp.566-67.

\(^{313}\) W. Logan, op cit., p.572
consideration’ was deported along with his 57 inmates to Arabia on 19th March 1852. It was the result of a negotiation mediated by the District Collector H.V. Connolly314.

Though the last clause of his suggestions were summarily rejected as ‘extreme views’, the policy of repression came in the form of Moplah Outrages Act of 1854. The Clause XXIII, of the Act was meant for ‘fining localities disturbed and for dealing with persons suspected’315 and Clause XXIV was meant for ‘rendering illegal possession of war knife’. The latter clause came into force by 1st February 1855316.

Strange, however, in his conclusion and supplementary letter,317 highlighted the agrarian tensions and conflicts in the rural society of Malabar. Infact it reflected an abrupt and complete reversal of his previous attitude and policy. ‘The Moplahs as I have noticed, complain of Hindu landlords ejecting them at shorter intervals than what is prescribed by the ancient usage of the country, and this is an evil which to some extent prevails’318.

He made two suggestions to avoid the potentially explosive agrarian disputes.

a) Registration of deeds to prevent false litigation and decision of tenure conflicts through execution by collector.

b) Alteration of the method of assessment on hill cultivation.

Usually hill lands were assessed yearly by the village officials, many of them were Hindus, and the hill cultivators were Mappilas. This resulted in extortion under

314 CMO I pp.272, 357, 360.
315 Continued by Act of XXIV of 1859.
316 W. Logan, Ibid., Also See CMO I, pp.399-474. See Appendix-VII for the full text of the revised Act of 1859.
317 Dated 28th September 1852, CMO I, pp.474-77.
the threat of over assessment. However, 'it gives rise to so much dissatisfaction and brings the lower class of Moplas into consistently recurring contact with Hindu officials...... that I would propose that ...... the lands in question should be permanently assessed'.

In fact, he failed to acknowledge the role of oppression by landlords as one of the major reasons of the uprisings. Thus the suggestions, except the 'registration of deeds', were not accepted by the legal administrators.

The period between two commissioners showed a drastic decline in the Mappila outbreaks. Regarding the reasons for this decline scholars maintain different views. According to Dale the deportation of Sayyid Fazal was as major reason for the decline of the outbreaks. He gives only secondary importance to the Moplah Outrages Act. Conrad Conrad Wood, dismissing the suggestions of Dale, depends on the introduction of Moplah Outrages Act of 1854. While Dale took shelter under the fact of deportation of Sayyid Fazal to Arabia and give secondary importance to the Acts.

However, the period witnessed stray incidents of outbreaks in 1853, 1855, 1864, 1873, and 1880.

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318 Moplah Outrages Correspondence, IV, p.451, quoted in S.F., Dale, op. cit., p.162.
319 MOC IV.475, quoted in SF Dale, op.cit., p.162.
320 CMO I, p.475; S.F. Dale, op.cit., p.163, though they did not undertake the reforms.
321 Second special commission under W. Logan appointed on 5th February 1881.
323 S.F. Dale, op.cit., p.104
324 Ibid., 164.
Murder of Connolly

The attack and murder of H.V. Connolly by Mappilas was an open defiance of British authority. It also demonstrated the spitefulness of Mappila antipathy to the arrogant British rules and systems. On 4th August 1855, Valasseri Emalu, Puliyankunath Tenu, Chemban Moiden Kutty and Vellattadayatta Parambil Moideen escaped from Calicut Jail. After the regular practice of visiting Mamburam, Tarammal Kunhi Koya Thangal a descendant of Sayyid Fazal on 24th August they conducted a nercha on 10th September in the house of Mammu, situated three quarters of a mile east of Connolly’s bungalow. They murdered Collector Connolly on 11th September between 8-9 at night. Escaping from the force they reached Morayur where they were shot dead on 17th evening. Two Hindus were also killed; one accidentally shot and the other by the Mappilas when they took shelter in the house. It is interesting to note that the murderers of H.V. Connolly were ‘universally received with sympathy’ and ‘were feasted, paraded, carried to the mosque with honour, prayed with and every honour that it is possible to show them was accorded’. The 1854 Act (Clause XXIII) was implemented for the first time. Though only three villages were actively involved in the murder, 719 people belonging to nine villages were fined with a total of Rs.38,331 and 8 Annas. The authorities paid Rs. 30, 936 and 13 Annas, 10 paisa to Mrs. Conolly as compensation.

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325 W. Logan attributes personal grudge of the assailants and probably a revenge on deportation of Sayyid Fazal, Ibid., p.575, S.F. Dale, op cit., p.164
326 A feast when vowe is made, Maulid and other war songs were recited.
327 W. Logan, op cit., pp.573-75.
328 CM0 II, p.184.
329 Ibid., p.393.
K.N. Panikkar observes the impact of mass fining as, “a major source of resentment and instead of curbing violence contributed to its recurrence”\textsuperscript{331}.

**The 1857-Revolt; A Mappila Allegory**

The Mappilas of Malabar had rendered their share in the first War of Independence in 1857, which had shaken the colonial administration in India. On 3\textsuperscript{rd} September 1857, Vanji Cudorat Kunji Mayan, a relative of the Kottayam Tangal used seditious and inflammatory language against British administration in the public streets of Tellicherry. He induced the Mappilas to subserve from the ongoing all India struggle against British and to overthrow and to get liberated from the colonial rule. It was not a lonely initiative of an individual, rather it reflects the antipathy of a whole community to the colonial authority. Logan observes, “The excitement caused by Mayan’s preaching was so great as to induce the Brigadier commanding the provinces to adopt precautionary measures at Cannanore and Tellicherry and to place the former station in a state of defence”\textsuperscript{332}. After his arrest and trial, he was brought under the Mappila Outrages Act of 1854. Subsequently the authorities deported him and jailed at Trichirappalli where he received the final verdict, death\textsuperscript{333}.

The ripples of the first War of Independence can also be observed in the actions of the Mappilas of Ponmala in Eranad Taluk. The recalcitrant Mappilas under Puvadan Kunyappa Haji rendered a hot-bed to the British authority. At the end of August 1857 they excited the people to plunge in thwarting the government when the whole Indians were rising against the colonial power and it was on the verge of fall.

\textsuperscript{331} K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.100.
\textsuperscript{332} W. Logan, *op.cit.*, p.576.
The *Ulema* had composed and circulated the Mappila ballads which deal with heroic right and valiant engagement of Mappilas at Cherur on 19th October 1843. The plotting of the Mappilas, however suppressed and seven of them were convicted under the Moplah Outrages Act and later deported\(^{334}\).

In another incident, on 17th September 1865 three Mappilas, under Muhammed Kutty, killed Shangu Nair of Nenmini Amsam in Walluvanad Taluk\(^{335}\). He was usurious and oppressive towards his tenants and debtors. As usual, before venturing into the action the rebels attended the *maulid* ceremony conducted at the house of Muhammed Kutty in which a large number of Mappilas from the neighbourhood were present\(^{336}\). And in all probability they were aware of the intention of the assailants and they had offered a nod to their campaign.

**Tutakkal Rebellion (7-8th September 1873)**

In this incident dispute on the possession of land and religion as the ideological factor played its role\(^{337}\). Evidently, the contention was started over the land on which the mosque was constructed in Tutakkal village in Paral amsam of Walluwanad Taluk. The piece of land was leased from Karambara Nair, a wealthy landlord by Nellaya Kunhaman, the *adhikari* of Tutakkal village\(^{338}\).

Panikkar observes the construction of mosque as a ‘clever stratagem’ of the Mappilas which they had ‘often resorted’ to escape from any *in posse* eviction\(^{339}\).


\(^{335}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{336}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{337}\) K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.83.


The threat of a possible attack held back the jenmi from legal proceedings against the construction of mosque. Jenmi owned a temple located on the other side of the Thuta River. He misemployed the vellichehapad of his temple to arouse religious sentiments among Hindus against the mosque and the Mappilas. In the pooram, the oracle declared ‘the deity was offended by the proximity of the Moplah mosque and the cries to prayer audible at the pagoda’. And he preferred to recover the mosque site by the landlord after destroying the mosque. Vellichahapad announced the cause of the recent spread of smallpox in the area, especially of Mappila bazaar as the wrath of deity on the mosque and declared that, even if others were afraid to join him, he could alone achieve the destruction.

Infact, the public call to destroy the mosque had provoked the Mappilas. Nine Mappilas under Kunhippa Musliyar, the Mukri of the mosque hatched their retaliation with the support of Mappila adhikari. In the late night of 7th September 1873, the Mappila band reached the house of the Velichehapad, Chattara Nair, called him out pretending to seek aid for their fellow traveller, who had been bitten by snake, and they killed him. Subsequently after killing the landlord Karambara Nair, they travelled twelve miles and arrived at Kulatur the next day.

At Kulatur, there target was the present head Varier, a member of the District board Varier was absent. However, they met two other younger Variers. One of them

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340 Oracle.
342 Annual Festival.
343 Azan.
344 K.N. Panikkar, Ibid.
345 L/P & J/3/1412, 1873, IOR, cf., K.N. Panikkar, Ibid.
346 Priest at the mosque.
347 W. Logan, op cit., p.578.
348 K.N. Panikkar, op cit., p.87.
349 Scene of the glorious rebellion of August 1851.
was mortally wounded and the other escaped with out injured. Thus the nine Mappilas stood for a final encounter with the British army. A contingent of Oxford Shine Light Infantry under captain Vissey arrived by evening. The rebels armed with swords, spears, knife and choppers engaged in a valiant confrontation with the European soldiers. The leader Kunhippa Musliyar, a man of great determination even after he was injured with two bullets on chest, inflicted severe wounds on two soldiers and later he was killed by a third soldier. All the rebels except a fifteen year old boy attained martyrdom in this encounter.

The Anonymous Petition and Logan’s Commission

On 14th October 1880 British Government at Madras received an anonymous petition purporting to come from ‘certain Mussalmans, Nayars, Tiyyars and men of other castes inhabiting Malabar’. It brought the grievances of the peasantry especially of the Mappilas.

That a terrible outbreak is going to occur immediately in Malabar ...... the native officials of the district take bribes and oppress the ryots.... the severity of the oppression of the Malabar landlords will lead to great disturbance at which a great numbers of people will have to lose their lives....... 

It also suggested that the Mussalmans are

are the people committing riots..... due to their being oppressed by landlords and the Nayar officials who side with them...... the demolition of mosques, religious persecution, cruel oppression and

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350 W. Logan, op.cit., p.578.  
351 Report of Mr. Mac Gregore (Dist. collector) Government F. No. 84, dated 12th September 1873, cf., Logan, Ibid.  
352 Ibid., K.N. Panikkar, op.cit., p.84.
ejection of Mussalmans by landlords are causes that have led to Moplah outbreaks in Malabar......

The petition also requested the deputation of an efficient and impartial commission to inquire into the complaints against landlords.353

The Government forwarded the petition to the officiating District Magistrate H. Wigram to pass it with comments to the District Collector Logan.

He among other things commented that;

The Moplah is as great a conservative as the Nair. Nothing will induce him to immigrate from Malabar. Where his father and grandfather lived and died, there he must live and die. Inability to pay his rent is his misfortune but does not, in his eyes, justify his eviction from the land which his ancestors held.354

He also criticized that ‘Strange gave far too little weight to the agrarian discontent as the cause of the outbreaks’.355

Later the memorandum was forwarded to Mr. A. Mac-Gregor, British resident in Travancore and Kochin. An experienced officer as the District Collector of Malabar during the Kulathur rebellion of September 1873 A.D, he generally agreed to the previous comments and stated that he is ‘perfectly satisfied’ as to the essential nature of Malabar Moplah outrages, that they are agrarian. ‘Fanaticism is merely the instrument through which the terrorism of the landed class is aimed at’.356

353 See a full text of the petition in Appendix-VIII.
Further discussions brought to the conclusion that, W. Logan the Collector of Malabar be appointed as the Second Special Commissioner of Malabar on 5th February 1881 AD.\(^{357}\) He was entrusted to inquire into and report upon

a. ‘The general question of the tenure of land and of tenant right in Malabar, specially the compensation offered by landlords for improvements’

b. ‘The question of sites for mosques and burial’ and to suggest means to redress valid grievances\(^{358}\).

Being the special commissioner he extensively toured to the nook and corner of Malabar District (except Wayanad)\(^{359}\). On his visit he had received 2200 petitions presented by 4021 individuals of whom 2734 [above 67\%] were Mappila tenant cultivators, who belonged to South Malabar. Of the 2200 petitions, 1876 were received from the four southern taluks\(^{360}\) i.e. the petitioners 3854 out of total 4021 (above 89\%) came from these taluks of these 2608 [72\%] were Mappilas\(^{361}\).

After analyzing the received petitions and a thorough study of the judicial records between 1862-66 and 1877-80, came to the conclusion that evictions were very common complaint. And number of suits filed increased by 244\% and eviction decrees rose to 441\% (from 1891- to 8335). It further clarified that while 27\% of the agriculturists were Mappilas more than 37\% of the eviction decrees had been passed against them. Dale attributes the large number of Mappila petitions to their ‘relative

\(^{357}\) W. Logan, \textit{op cit.}, p.581.
\(^{358}\) Malabar Special Commission 1881-82, \textit{Malabar Land Tenures}, Madras, 1882, I, iii, cf., \textit{ibid.}
\(^{359}\) He submitted the report on 16th June 1882.
\(^{360}\) Ernad, Walluvanad, Palaghat and Ponnani.
\(^{361}\) \textit{Ibid.}, Appendix III, the register of petitioner received, pp.1-387, cf., D.N. Dhanagare, \textit{op cit.}, p.125.
freedom from social and religious sanctions' comparing to their co-religionists. Thus he indirectly answers to the question, why the Mappilas alone rose in rebellions than the Hindu tenants. However, Dhangare, analyzing the crime statistics between 1865-1880, found the doubling of crimes in Malabar District especially in southern taluks and the Hindus were in highest number of those convicted for gang robbery. From this he concludes that both the Hindu and Muslim peasant cultivators were rebelling, but the rebellion had taken different forms.

Logan also criticized the existing judicial system and the recognition of *jenmi* as the real owner of the land equal to the European *dominum*.

Logan observed that these evictions were the causes of the 'Moplah outrages' and described these Mappila outrages as an organization designed to counter act the overwhelming influence of the *Jenmis* who were backed by the British courts in the exercising of the novel powers of ouster and of raising of the rent.

During his visits he had come across the deplorable financial condition of Mappilas. He also criticizes the Act – XXIII of 1854 introduced after Strange Commission. According to him the indiscriminate fining had a boomerang effect. It added to the general poverty, which prevailed among them (Mappilas), and diminished *protanto* their fear of being again fined. He noticed the inapplicability

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363 The matter had already been discussed. See pp.134-35.
365 W. Logan, *op cit.*, p.582.
366 ibid, 584.
of the Act. It 'is an admirable instrument' when the people are wealthy 'but it fails of its purpose' when the large Mappilas were drowned in poverty\footnote{368}.

His recommendations were 'permanent occupancy right, the right to sale or transfer of interest in land and the right to one-third of the average annual net produce to the actual cultivator – be a Kanakkaran or a Verumpattakaran,' but he deliberately exempted the Kanakkaran because, 'they were investors of money and who contributed nothing to the wealth of the country\footnote{369}.

Infact the findings of Logan embarrassed the landed class and the judicial and revenue officials. Till 1855 the report had remained in files. The appointment of Malabar Land Tenure Committee in 1885 had failed to look into the basic question of occupancy right of the cultivator, but granted a 'safe burial' to the 'most exhaustive and authoritative reports on agrarian relations produced by British officials in any part of India' Here it is noteworthy to quote Dale's comment, which he recorded while discussing the Malabar land tenures and the \textit{jenmi and dominum}:

\begin{quote}
Had this usage been accepted in the final decision of the \textit{ryotwari} settlement many of the Mappila outbreaks might never had occurred\footnote{370}.
\end{quote}

\textbf{Malappuram – Trikkalur ‘Outbreak’}

This rebellion was a clear evidence for the readiness of Mappilas in protecting their “pearl-like faith”. Initially religious sentiment of Mappilas was hurt when the British government sanctioned Rupees 1000 to Kannancheri Raman, an apostate as

compensation for a death attempt on him ventured by the Mappilas when he renounced Islam\(^{371}\). On 18\(^{th}\) June 1884 three Mappilas, Avarankutty; Koyamutty and Kunhi Muhammad Mulla, seriously wounded Raman near his house, on his way to work in Malappuram Barracks. Subsequently they were arrested, tried and sentenced to deportation for life\(^{372}\). However, the District Magistrate Mr. Galton executing the XXIII – Act of Moplah Outrages law of 1854, fined rupees 15000\(^{373}\) on the Kilmuri amsam. The proposal to grant rupees 1000 to Raman was viewed by Mappilas as 'covert attack on the cherished dogma of their religion – “an apostate should suffer death”\(^{374}\). Mappilas held that the stigma caused on their faith could only be washed out in blood. Nevertheless they failed to find the champions of their cause among themselves.

Infact, twelve Mappilas under Kolakkadan Kutti Hasan from the neighbouring village took the cause of the Mappilas. On 27\(^{th}\) December 1884, after 4 a.m. they reached at the house of Choyikutty, brother of the apostate Raman, in search of the latter. When they failed to locate Raman, they shot Choyikutty and gutted the thatched roof of the house. Thence they marched through Malappuram town, on their way they fired and mortally wounded one Brahmin who resented to give way to them\(^{375}\). After marching twenty one miles and 4 furlongs they crossed the hilly jungle and reached the Beyapore river. After taking food and rest they crossed the river and took possession in the Trikkalur temple\(^{376}\) for their final confrontation with the army\(^{377}\).

\(^{374}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{375}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{376}\) Located in Urangattiri Amsom of Eranad Taluk.
Mr. W. Logan (The Dist. Magistrate) and Major F. Hole (Police Superintendent) on information about the rebellion at Calicut had reached at Kondoty by the evening. On 28th about 10.30 a.m. they came near the temple on the eastern side. The officials through the local Mappilas tried to induce the rebels to submit, which ended in failure. The rebels stuck on to their demand and replied.

K. Raman committed an offence worthy of death by becoming an apostate. You not only did not punish him for this offence, but you actually proposed to reward him with rupees 1000\(^{378}\).

When members of the Mappila delegation had joined the rebels, they number went up to twelve. Later they burnt two neighbouring houses in order to force them to supply food and provisions. By 2 p.m. a detachment of 28 of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry under Lieutenant Day and Surgeon Major Joseph Heath had arrived. Mappila rebels took shelter behind a massive bolted wooden door, stone walls and thick tiled roofs with a 'spacious inner square'. In the initial firing Lieutenant Day had lost his life and the force was compelled to retire. Further re-enforcement came from Malappuram under Lieutenant Cardew of Oxfordshire. The brisk firing from the rebels forced the army to withdraw and they kept the temple under strict vigilance the whole night. Meanwhile many Mappilas attempted to join the rebel gang but failed due to the interference of the army\(^{379}\).

The situation was too alarming to the British authorities. Mr. Twigg, the special Assistant Magistrate arrived from Madras and Captain Curtis brought a dynamite to break the wooden door. However, none of them was familiar with the dynamite and it

\(^{378}\) Dispositions of rebels quoted in W. Logan, Ibid.

\(^{379}\) Ibid., p.589.
left the whole British camp under serious confusion. After a series of experiments the British succeeded in using the dynamite. During the interval the rebels prepared loopholes on the wooden doors and started serious firing on the army, causing much panic among them. A reinforcement of fifty men from Calicut came under captain Heron Maxwell.\(^{380}\)

The combined forces strategically planned their action and started continuous firing on the wooden doors targeting the rebels who kept behind and engaged in firing through the loopholes. After the end of firing they employed 3 cartridges (dynamite) which had struck the door. It was for the first time that the British army used the dynamite in Indian warfront. Meanwhile British suffered one causality.

In the subsequent final confrontation, on 29\(^{th}\) December, the Mappilas protecting themselves behind the bullet-proof parapet of the upper storey, fought valiantly and all twelve of them attained martyrdom\(^{381}\). The British suffered two causalities and one seriously wounded.

The use of abundant firearms by the Mappilas directed the authorities to adopt a disarmament policy in the three Taluks resulting in ‘the descent of troops, their swift and sudden seizure and firm hold of all the important places, the sudden and widespread issue of the demand for surrender of all arms’\(^{382}\). The operation was started from the surroundings of Malappuram. The search was too troublesome to the Mappilas; the force rushed to the Mappila houses, molested the ladies, harassed the children and plundered the wealth. The Mappilas fled from their houses to save from

\(^{380}\) Ibid., pp.589-590.

\(^{381}\) District Magistrate report, No. 1871, dated 1\(^{st}\) May 1885, cf., W. Logan op.cit., p.592.

\(^{382}\) Ibid.
the British persecution\(^{383}\). In fact ‘the arms of all kinds collected were very large, 17295 of which no less than 7,503 were firearms of different kinds\(^{384}\) Dhanagare looks this sophisticated fire arms as the “extent of the Moplas’ preparations to combat the growing dominance of the landed elite”\(^{385}\).

The period between 1886-1894 witnessed no ‘outbreaks’\(^{386}\). However, the Mappilas of Vellengat in Pandikkad and Chembrasseri in Tuvur Amsom rose in rebellion in 1894 and 1896. In the first instance thirty four Mappilas rebelled against their oppressive *jenmi*. They were all poor tenants and labourers and twenty of them belonged to a single family. Infact the reason was purely agrarian. Of the seven victims five were Nairs, one Cherumar and one Hindu. Out of the thirty four rebels thirty two attained martyrdom and two were captured alive\(^{387}\). But the succeeding rebellion of 1896 surpassed it in the participation of larger number of rebels.

**Chembrasseri Rebellion: (25\(^{th}\) February- March 1896)**

It was “by-far the largest and most extensive with ninety nine active participants and thirty two collaborators drawn from sixteen villages spread over ‘one hundred square miles of wild, hilly jungle covered country”\(^{388}\). The victims were two Nairs, One Jenmi, one land agent and one anonymous. The reasons for the rebellion as stated by a participant, Kaithavalappan Kunholan who was caught alive at Manjeri temple were:

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\(^{383}\) P A Sayed Muhammaed, *op cit.*, p.176  
\(^{384}\) W Logan, *op cit.*, p 592  
\(^{386}\) R H Hitchcock. *op cit.*, p 13  
\(^{388}\) K N Panikkar, *op cit.*, p 84
(a) Apostates and their behaviour

(b) Destruction of a mosque.

(c) Torturing after the 1894 rebellion, especially on women folk.

(d) Imposing *melcharths by jenmis* on poor tenants\(^{389}\).

As noticed the immediate provocation was the apostasy of a *Tiyya* woman, but the later developments clearly suggest the general discontent of the poor Mappila peasantry, who belonged to the down trodden section of the society. There were 39 tenants and fifty one labourers, one petty merchant, one Mullah, one thief, four others who lived from hand to mouth\(^{390}\). The statement of rebels, Aruviralla Mutha and Puzhiti Kunyayu reflects the volume of anti-British sentiments among the Mappilas as a whole;

There was ‘much oppression at the hand of the white folk’ a *niskarapalli*\(^{391}\) at Payanad had been demolished by them and a *Tiyya* woman (the apostate) had been given protection by the collector. There is no room for Mussalmans in the country, we Mussalmans cannot abide here\(^{392}\).

The study of Panikkar brought out the level of agrarian grievances aroused out of eviction, *melchart* and excessive rent. He depicts the pathetic story of Ambat Hydros, who survived in the rebellion.

With a family of eight children to look after his only source of subsistence was the land he had been cultivating for twenty years on


\(^{390}\) Judicial Department, G.O. No. 791-92, 30\(^{th}\) April 1896, cf., K.N. Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.84.

\(^{391}\) *Mosque*

verumpattam, paying an annual rent of three hundred paras of paddy. His inability to pay a hundred rupees as advance rent led to his ejection. His efforts to lease land from other landlords, who forced him to pay exorbitant rent, only landed him in debt. Finding no way out, he chose to put an end to his life by joining the revolt.

Finally, the truth comes through his (Ambat Hydros) statement,

I cannot stand the disgrace of these people filing suits and putting me in jail. There are some who are preparing to die as shahids. I will go and join them and make an end of it.

Valiya Mannil Check corroborates the fact of British oppression through his discourse with the rebel leader, Manjapalli Ahmad Kutti. He discloses;

I did not intend to die. I have been driven to it by the anonymous letters and by the wrong of the chief people of the place.

The aforesaid utter religious and agrarian grievances and the discontent of the Mappilas had been escalating and finally broke-out on 25th February 1896 in Chembrasseri of Tuvur amsam.

As noticed agrarian discontent and religious sentiments prepared the ground for the rebellion. The sacredotal leadership was held by a Musaliyar, who had been insulted by the Nayar Adhikari of Tuvur Amsam. He compelled the Musliyar, formerly a Cheruman who had converted 25 years ago, to remove the chappels when he passed by adhikari as practiced by the lower classes. Insulted by this he began to preach anti-British and anti-jemni sentiments in his locality and in the Tuvur

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393 K.N. Panikkar, Ibid., pp.84-85.
395 Statement of Valia Mamil Check on 25th March 1896, Ibid.
396 S.F. Dale, op.cit., p.150.
Mosque. His subsequent speeches aroused serious agrarian and religious grievances of Mappilas under the colonial rule\textsuperscript{397}.

Thus the Mappilas attacked and terrorised their oppressive Jenmies, and money lenders and collected their food and provisions and arms, and in the course of events some temples were also desecrated\textsuperscript{398}.

Four days the area was left to the mercy of the rebels. The military reinforcement had forced the rebels to move to Manjeri, and on 1\textsuperscript{st} March, they took stand in Karnorpad Rajas' temple at Manjeri,\textsuperscript{399} which had thrilled the rebels with the memories of the glorious triumph of Mappilas in 1849. When the military had started firing as the practice they came out to get the desired martyrdom, 'howling, shouting, waving their arms and firing off their guns', Thus fifty two of them attained martyrdom in this encounter and by 13\textsuperscript{th} march the remaining seven were arrested and shot by the police\textsuperscript{400}.

\textsuperscript{397} Ibid., pp.150-51.
\textsuperscript{398} R.H. Hitchcock, \textit{op cit.}, p.13.
\textsuperscript{399} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{400} Ibid., p.13.