CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS AGITATION – 1936 – 1940

The teachers union went through intense agitations. Their popular resistance against arbitrary dismissal in different parts of the district actually made it an organized movement. When the union gradually strengthened and spread all over Malabar, the managers along with the department attempted to crush the union activities. At the same time the teachers along with their organizational work to strengthen their union got actively involved in the social, political and cultural life of Malabar. They opened reading rooms, arranged night classes, established close contact with the peasants and workers and also tried to mobilize them under their class organizations\(^1\). Thus the common people began to consider the teachers as their friend and guide in the villages. Consequently the slogan ‘Teacher–people unity’ began to be heard in the processions organized by the teachers. It proved to be a great support to their agitation against the private management. The teachers had been demanding their security of employment from the very beginning of the movement and they viewed it as their right. Hence the union decided to resist all arbitrary dismissals without prior notice and proper reasons. Now the managers realized that the teachers union was posing a real threat and challenge to their vested interest. So the managers with the support of the department began their attack on the leaders of the teacher’s union\(^2\).

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

\(^1\) *Adhyapakan*, October, 1939

\(^2\) V.V. Dakshinamoorthi, ‘Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam’ In *Chinda Rajatha Jubilee Pathippu*, (Trivandrum, 1988)
explanation, but did not take any action against the manager\textsuperscript{3}. The same thing occurred in July 1937. M.P.Krishnan Nair one of the teachers in the school refused to sign the acquittance with out getting his salary\textsuperscript{4}. Hence he was dismissed. The news of this episode also appeared in the newspaper. But the department continued their old policy of seeking explanation and kept away from such disputes. Moreover many teachers had already been dismissed from this school on flimsy grounds.

At that time T.C.Narayanan Nambiar was the headmaster of the school. He was an excellent teacher loved and respected by the students, teachers and the public. He was the president of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union and also the joint secretary of the M.A.T.U. Moreover he was a peasant activist and a leader of the National Movement. He too had to get arrears of the salary from the manager. Now the manager also refused to distribute the half yearly grant sanctioned to the teachers. They reminded him of the same again and again. The headmaster also made the manager aware of the seriousness of the issue. But the manager wished to dismiss the teachers. To make their dismissal easy, he decided to dismiss the headmaster first. Thus on 7\textsuperscript{th} December 1936, the manager gave him a dismissal order and asked him to go out of the school. But Nambiar refused to obey the order. Expecting the same, the manager had already requested the police to intervene. But before the constable could reach the place, the headmaster started the classes prior to the stipulated time. His brother who was the Adhikari of the area gave the manager help and guidance. Now the constable was asked to expel the teacher out of the school\textsuperscript{5}. But the headmaster refused to go. He said that they could take only his dead body out of the school. He also argued that as the classes had already been started it shouldn’t be disturbed till 4 o’clock in the evening. Nobody should enter the school without his permission and allowed himself to be arrested after the school hours. Thus the police had to wait till the evening.

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

\textsuperscript{3} The Mathrubhumi, December 17, 1936
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid, July 14, July 29, 1936
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid, December 17, 1936
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, December 13, 1936
colleagues and parents of the students rallied behind him. The union leaders like P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, Palakkal Anandan Nambiar and O.V.Govindan Nambiar reached the place. The teachers unions under P. M. Kunhiraman Nambiar led the agitation. Meanwhile the police constable advised the manager to settle the issue. The compromise talk went on till late and it was decided that they would resume the talk. But as the headmaster was not allowed to close the school, both the parties had to remain in the school itself. Meanwhile the constable was called back and the discussion went on in the next morning also. By the evening jatha of teachers, peasants and workers and common people reached the place. The manager who was very much alarmed at the unity of the teachers and the fury of the people decided to settle the issue amicably. He apologized before the union leaders and the public for his mistakes. He repealed his order and agreed to give the arrears of the salary to the teachers by January 1937\(^7\). Thus the first agitation of the teachers proved to be a great success.

The Kannadiparamb agitation proved the growing strength of the teachers union. The union in its statement published in Mathrubhumi reminded the teachers “Union is our strength; service is our motto”\(^8\). The success of this agitation was actually due to the support and cooperation rendered by the common people. This was highlighted by Keraleeyan who wrote a song stating that the teachers security of tenure was to be ensured not by the government and the department but by the common people\(^9\). Thus it gave the slogan of Teacher-people unity to the Teachers Movement. Now the teachers became aware of the real importance of popular support for their agitations. At the same time the presence of the police in this agitation showed that the Government was on the side of the management. Thus the teachers as well as the people realized that their agitation for security of tenure was a political one\(^10\). This victory was also a warning against the managers association and the department.

In the teachers conference held at Calicut in May 1937 a resolution had been passed urging the working committee to organize strikes where ever they were deemed necessary\(^11\). However Malabar D.E.O wrote ‘Elementary schools at

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\(^7\) Ibid, December 17, 1936  
\(^8\) Ibid  
\(^9\) Desabhimani 40\(^{th}\) Birth day special, (Calicut, February,1987)  
\(^10\) Vallathol Kumara Menon, Adhyapaka Prasthanam Utharakeralathil, (Trivandrum, 1978) p.27  
\(^11\) G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952,25\(^{th}\) April 1938, TNA
various centres particularly from north Malabar are occupied more with agitation against the management and the department than discharging their duties. Teachers are found organising *Jathas* and going about from place to place shouting slogans and trying to enlist public sympathy towards their cause. The managers began to oppress the teachers and adopted collective efforts to suppress their organisation. At the same time, the teachers of Malabar who expected much from the congress government in Madras, now realized that Rajaji was actually giving instructions to the Dept officers to render all help and assistance to the managers to suppress the organization of the teachers.

The managers could not tolerate the activities of the teacher’s union. Most of them wanted to keep the teachers as their servants. Some of them even made the teachers do their personal works. Sankaran Master, the manager of Madathil Higher Elementary school used his teachers to collect grass to feed his cattle, to purchase provisions for his house or to bring ‘*vannathimattu*’ for the women members of his family. On 30th September 1937, K.P. Padmanabhan, one of the Assistant teachers in his school was dismissed. K.P. Padmanabhan was a secondary trained teacher having three years of experience. He was also an efficient teacher who was very much loved and respected by his students, colleagues and the public. The manager has no personal complaints against him. He had not been warned even once. However he was given the dismissal order at 3.30 pm and was asked to clear out by four in the evening. It was stated that K.P. Padmanabhan had not completed his S.S.L.C. even after a period of three year. Secondly the inspection remarks on him were not satisfactory. Thirdly the strength of class attendance had not improved. These were the reasons that the manager gave for dismissing the teacher. He was dismissed without giving the arrears of his salary.

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

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12 *Ibid*
13 *Prabhatham*, Book 1, Vol 13, July 4, 1938
15 Interview with K.P. Padmanabhan at his residence in Quilandi on 30th March 1993
16 *The Mathrubhumi*, October 8, 1937
17 G.O.(Education) Madras, No.952,25th August 1936, TNA
wanted to dismiss him. It was argued that he was dismissed because he was an office bearer of the union. But this argument was not fully accepted because the manager had allowed the union meeting to be held in his own school building.\textsuperscript{18} Anyhow it is to be noted that the teacher was dismissed as soon as he was elected president of the teachers union. No doubt, the encouragement given by the Managers Association and the department played a prominent role in this dismissal.

The M.A.T.U decided to take up the issue and asked the manager to reinstate the teacher. The attempt made by P.R.Nambiar to settle the issue failed. Meanwhile a protest meeting of the parents and the public was held at mission school hall, Quilandy. Here P.R.Nambiar requested the support of the parents and the public and a five member committee under E. Kunhikannan Nair (a nationalist and a noted advocate) was constituted to settle the issue\textsuperscript{19}. The committee made sincere efforts to solve the problem. But it failed to obtain a favorable response. Hence there was a suggestion to open a new school, if necessary\textsuperscript{20}. On 7\textsuperscript{th} October 1937 five teachers of the school gave an ultimatum to the manager asking him to repeal the dismissal order. But the manager refused to do so. Then they left the school\textsuperscript{21}. At the same time the managers argued that it was their right to appoint and dismiss the teachers and also to fix their salary. They protested against the steps adopted by the teachers of Madathil school and decided to support the manager to run the school\textsuperscript{22}.

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

\textsuperscript{18} G.O.(Education) Madras, No.952, 25\textsuperscript{th} August 1936, TNA
\textsuperscript{19} The Mathrubhumi, October 7, 1937
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, October 16, 1937
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, October 9, 1937
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, October 7, 1937
asked the new teachers not to join in the school\textsuperscript{23}. In spite of all these developments, the manager refused to change his attitude. The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union submitted a memorandum to Rajagopalachari to highlight the seriousness of the situation\textsuperscript{24}. After protracted discussions, it was decided to restore the status quo. The Manager informed that he would declare the same in a parents meeting that was to be held on 15.10.37. But later he changed his mind and refused to attend the meeting\textsuperscript{25}.

Consequently a public meeting was convened at Quilandy on October 17, 1937. Here E.Kunhikannan Nair and C.K.Govindan Nair explained the efforts already taken to settle the issue and criticised the arrogant policy of the management. The parents of Quilandy had induced the union to start a rival school. Hence C.K.Govindan Nair presented the suggestion to open a new school. In spite of the opposition made by K.Manomohana Menon a seven member committee under E. Kunhikkannan Nair was constituted for the same\textsuperscript{26}.

The MATU decided to observe October 31, 1937 as a sympathy day to express protest against the policy of the management. The district union also issued a pamphlet entitled “Teachermar Orungiyirikkanam’ (Teachers be ready)\textsuperscript{27}. Attempts were made to observe the day in different parts of the district. As a part of it teachers were asked to organize public meetings at union centres and in places where there was no union to organize the same, it was to be convened with the support of the people. Here the teachers were to explain the grievances of the teachers, to point out how the managers were misusing the government grant, to pass resolutions on these points and send the copies of the same to the authorities\textsuperscript{28}.

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

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid}, October 19, 1937
\textsuperscript{24} G.O.(Education) Madras , No.952,25\textsuperscript{th} April 1938, TNA
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{The Mathrubhumi}, October 20, 1937
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid}, October 23, 1937
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid}, October 24, 1937
grievances to the attention of the public and also to pass resolutions on the Madathil school issue. *Jathas* were also arranged to the meeting places. Efforts were also made at Tellicherry and Kannur to organize public meetings in connection with the ‘Sympathy Day’ celebrations. As the General secretary of the MATU, P.R. Nambiar gave effective leadership to this agitation. It was not approved by the department. Hence based on an official remark he was dismissed from service. This dismissal actually strengthened the teachers agitation at Quilandy.

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

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29 Ibid, October 24, 1937
30 Ibid, October 29, 31, 1937
31 Ibid, November 5,6, 1937
33 *The Mathrubhumi*, November 6, 1937
At the same time the managers decided not to appoint the dismissed teachers and those who had resigned from their schools. The managers conference held at Quilandy protested against the propaganda made by public leaders against them. It also criticised the biased policy adopted by certain newspapers. But P.K. Kunhisankara Menon in his presidential address reminded the managers of the consequences of their policy of discarding public opinion.

In this backdrop, the manager decided to settle the issue. Thus a meeting of the parents was convened on November 7th, 1937. After a heated discussion it was decided to reinstate the teachers on certain conditions and the president was authorized to inform the same to the president of the District Educational Council.

However the teachers union Jathas and meetings continued to highlight the issues involved in the Madathil School agitation and protested against unnecessary dismissal.

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

34 Ibid, October 30, 1937
35 Ibid, November 5, 1937
36 Ibid, November 10, 1937
37 G.O.(Education) Madras, No.952, 25th April 1938, TNA
38 The Mathrubhumi, March 24, 1937
39 P.R. Smaranika, P.R. Anusmarana Samithi (Calicut, 1988)
40 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.29
security of tenure to teachers met with opposition in the council\textsuperscript{41}. However the teachers union tried its best to obtain recognition for the rival school. Teachers from different parts of the district gave financial assistance to the new school. Here the teachers maintained their school for one year even by suffering starvation. They could face all these difficulties because they were aware that they were fighting for the existence of the union and for their security of tenure\textsuperscript{42}.

The congress ministry was there in Madras at that time. The K.P.C.C under Muhammed Abdurahiman and EMS Namboothiripad was in favour of the teachers agitaion\textsuperscript{43}. According to the rule, the District Educational Council had to recognize the school. P.K. Kunhisankara Menon, the president of the council and a congress leader considered the teachers agitation as just and genuine. Moreover Dr.Subharayan, the minister of education, visited the school and attended a teachers conference there. However the department officers expressed their opposition in strong words. They threatened the District Educational Council that recognition given to a rival school would lead to more such demands in the future. But K. Kelppan and K.P.R.Gopalan made the council aware of the necessity of giving recognition to the new school\textsuperscript{44}. R.M. Statham, the Director of Education visited the school and made enquiries on the Madathil school crisis\textsuperscript{45}. At last, for the first time in the history of the Madras state, a rival school was given recognition\textsuperscript{46}. It was a severe blow to the managers association.

The Madathil school lost support of the parents and the public. Even then the manager continued to refuse salary to his teachers. Naturally the District Educational Council had to seek explanation for the same and gradually the school began to decline. Thus the teachers agitation against unjust dismissal demanding their security of tenure became successful due to the support rendered by the parents and the public. It could gain popular support in Malabar. The agitation gave a new impetus to the teachers movement. It revealed that the union had the strength to resist the arrogance of the managers. It inculcated a new spirit of self confidence among the union activist\textsuperscript{47}. It made the teachers more

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} The Mathrubhumi, December 8, 1937
\item \textsuperscript{42} P.R. Nambar, (ed) Keralaathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam (Trivandrum, 1982) p. 94
\item \textsuperscript{43} Ibid, p. 94
\item \textsuperscript{44} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{45} The Mathrubhumi, February 20, 1938
\item \textsuperscript{46} Ibid, May 27, 1938
\item \textsuperscript{47} P.R. Smaranika, P.R. Anusmarana Samithi (Calicut, 1988)
\end{itemize}
aware of the importance of organizing union activities along with the common people. The teachers resistance against unjust dismissal continued at various places in different parts of Malabar.

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

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

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48 K.P. Padmanabhan, 'Adhythe Rival School' in P.R. Smaranika (Calicut, 1988)
49 G.O.(Education) Madras, No.451, 23rd February 1938, TNA
50 The Mathrubhumi, October 30, 1937
51 G.O.(Education) Madras, No.952, 25th April 1938, TNA
52 P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)
53 The Mathrubhumi, November 5, 1937
The colleagues of P.R Nambiar requested the manager to repeat his order and to reinstate the teacher. It was also rejected. Then four teachers of the school decided to boycott the school. Parents and the people made several attempts on their own initiative to make the manager correct his mistakes. But failed. On 12 November 1937, a public meeting was convened near the school. The Puthuppanam congress committee and the association of the unemployed presented their reports. The meeting asked the manager and the DEO to reinstate the teacher. Here a committee was constituted to prepare a representation to be submitted to the manager and the DEO. A delegation of lawyers consisting of V.K Raman Menon, T. Gopalan and K.A Vasudevan was authorized to meet the DEO. Above all steps were taken to send a mass petition of the parents to the manager and the department. But the manager remained obstinate and made the situation worse. Thus on November 22nd 1937 four other teachers of the school were dismissed without clearing their salary arrears. Two of them were teachers with more than seven years of service. Two police constables were posted in front of the school. As the dismissed teachers were not allowed to address their students they had to bid farewell through mere gestures. The students wore black badges in protest and were really weeping in the class. This incident made the parents more agitated and many of them refused to send their children to the school. Students began to attend the class wearing black badges and some of them were dismissed. Now the issue grew worse. J.F Thadayas the Vice president of the District Educational Council visited the school and found that the number of students had decreased from 352 to 147. The attitude of the students and the parents revealed how much P.R Nambiar was loved and respected by them. Here it is to be noted that congress and Athmavidya Sangam were very active in this area during that period. These progressive elements rallied behind the teachers.

54 Ibid, November 13, 1937
55 K.K. Damodaran, ‘Pirichuvittavar Keezhatangi’ in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988) They were E. Gopala Kurup, K.Gopalakurup, Vazhayil Kunchakkan and Pakkayil Gopalan
56 Vallathol Kumara Menon , Adhyaparute Adhyapakan in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)
57 The Mathrubhumi, November 17, 1937
58 Ibid, November 25, 1937
59 Ibid, November 27, 1937
60 Ibid, December 2, 1937
61 Dr. A. Padmanabha Kuruppu, ‘Priyappetta Ramunniettan’ in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)
A public meeting was held at Karimbanapalam on December 2, 1937. The Puduppanam congress committee president K.P.Govindan narrated the attempts already made to settle the issue and the uncompromising attitude adopted by the managers. A committee under C.K.Govindan Nair was authorized to meet the manager. The manager replied arrogantly that he had no time to meet them till December 28, 1937. Now the Puduppanam village congress committee organized a meeting of protest in front of the school. A resolution criticizing the policy of the manager who refused to see even the members of the Legislative Assembly was passed.

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

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

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

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62 The Mathrubhumi, November 28, 1937
63 Ibid, December 2, 1937
64 Ibid, December 4, 1937
65 Ibid, January 2, 1938
66 Ibid, December 7, 1937
67 Ibid, December 12, 1937
68 Ibid, December 19, 1937
69 Ibid, December 4, 1937
70 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.95
71 The Mathrubhumi, January 19, February 20, 1938
new school were supplied by the public\textsuperscript{72}. Even at this stage P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar met the manager and the president of their association. But failed to obtain a favourable response. Thus on march 4\textsuperscript{th} 1938 the rival school was opened by Kozhipurath Madhava Menon.\textsuperscript{73} P.R Nambiar and four other teachers of the school along with M.K.Raman Master joined the new school\textsuperscript{74}. The teachers of Vatakara branch union requested the government to recognize the Puthuppanam National Hindi school as a model school of the Wardha Scheme\textsuperscript{75}.

The teachers demand for security of tenure had a profound impact in the political circle. While the managers association stood behind the management, the public opinion turned in favour of the teachers agitation. The congress MLA's of Malabar and the congress members in the district board supported the teachers. More over, then the congress ministry was in Madras. C.J.Varkey, the Minister of Education had the impression that P.R Nambiar was dismissed because he happened to be the secretary of the MATU. He also believed that the then DEO had a hand in the matter. Hence he asked the director to make a thorough investigation in this case\textsuperscript{76}. Thus R.S Statham the director of education visited the Cheenamveedu Higher elementary school and examined the records. He talked to the manager who was called to the office of the deputy director\textsuperscript{77}. P.R. Nambiar also met him and explained all aspects of the issue\textsuperscript{78}. In this backdrop, the manager agreed for a compromise. P.R Nambiar and his colleagues were reinstated. Consequently the national Hindi school opened as a rival school was closed\textsuperscript{79}. Mean while on the basis of the director's report the government declared that the action of the manager was hasty and arbitrary and requested the District Educational Council to take this circumstance in to consideration in the assignment of teaching grant to the school\textsuperscript{80}. Thus the government gave a warning to the manager and issued orders to reduce the grant for the school. But as the teachers were already reinstated the order was withdrawn\textsuperscript{81}. This agitation was a severe blow to the management's attitude over

\textsuperscript{72} K.K.Damaodaran, op.cit
\textsuperscript{73} The Mathrubhumi, March 8, 1938
\textsuperscript{74} K.K.Damodaran , op.cit
\textsuperscript{75} The Mathrubhumi, March 24, 1938
\textsuperscript{76} G.O.(Education) Madras , No.451,23\textsuperscript{rd} February 1938, TNA
\textsuperscript{77} The Mathrubhumi, February 22, 1938
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, February 25, 1938
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, May 20, 1938
\textsuperscript{80} G.O.(Education) Madras , No.1436, 23\textsuperscript{rd} June 1938, TNA
\textsuperscript{81} The Mathrubhumi, August 4, 1938
the right of dismissal. For the first time in the history of aided elementary school teachers the government interfered in the question of teachers dismissal. In fact, it was the greatest achievement of this agitation. The teachers became more confident in their right against the management and the department. At the same time they realized the importance of popular support in their agitation.

Another stage of teachers agitation was opened in the Chirakkal taluk. The managers of Malabar used to dismiss teachers who had participated in the national movement\textsuperscript{82}. The same incident was repeated in St. Antony's higher elementary school, Thayyil, Kannur. Here teachers like M.V. Anandan, K.P. Karuvan, M.P. Achuthan and M. Kunhikrishnan were congress men who participated in Khadi propagation, toddy shop picketing and other activities\textsuperscript{83}. M.V. Anandan was the treasurer of Chirakkal taluk teachers union. As a congress man he was elected to the Kannur municipality\textsuperscript{84} and from there to the district education council. As a part of the management policy, on October 31\textsuperscript{st} memo was given to those teachers stating that their appointment was made temporary and their salary was reduced. M.V. Anandan who was the first assistant having 5 year experience was demoted and an untrained junior teacher was posted in his place. So they did not accept the memo and they asked for an explanation. Since the teachers refused to accept the memo, they were suspended from service on 1-11-38\textsuperscript{85}. A telegram explaining these developments was sent immediately to the secretary of the district teachers union. P.M Kunhiraman Nambiar and PR Nambiar rushed to the school to give necessary directions to the teachers\textsuperscript{86}.

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

\textsuperscript{82} Wardha Model UP School Suvarna Jubilee Souvenir (Kannur, 1990)
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid
\textsuperscript{84} The Mathrubhumi, November 4, 1938 & Kannur Jilla KAPT Union Onnamvarshika Souvenir (Thalipparamb, 1972)
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid
\textsuperscript{86} P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar, 'Vittuveezhayillatha Samara Dheeran' in P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)
Keshava Kammath, M. Vasudeva Kammath and M.C Kunhiraman was constituted. It was authorized to meet the manager and the department and to take necessary steps with constitution of the hajar committee\(^{87}\). The union leaders like OV.Govindan Nambiar, T.C Narayanan Nambiar and Palakkal Anandan Nambiar met the head master as well as the manager. However, for rejecting the memo and for propagandising against the manager and the school three teachers were dismissed from the school. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, P.R Nambiar and T.C Narayanan Nambiar met the manager J.A. Fernandes, but failed to get a favourable response\(^{88}\). The efforts made by the committee of the parents and the school attendance committee also failed. The teachers argued that they did not show any disrespect to the manager and had not made any propaganda against the school. They also sent a registered notice to the manager J.A.Fernandas stating that for dismissing them the manager would be responsible for their defamation and all financial loss in the future\(^{89}\). The attendance committee and the dismissed teachers sent representation to the director of education, divisional officer, DEO and the Chirakkal taluk Deputy Inspector\(^{90}\).

The Chirakkal taluk teachers union executive met at Kalliasseri Yuvajana Vayanasala and protested against the policy of the manager. At the same time it congratulated the institutions supporting the teachers, and decided to convene an urgent meeting of the teachers to discuss the issue\(^{91}\). The committee once again met the manager. But he was not ready for a compromise and the same was informed in writing. Thus another public meeting was held on November 27\(^{th}\) 1938. K.P.Ragahavan Nair (BA, BL), the secretary of the Tellicherry Municipal congress committee presided over the meeting. He reminded the manager of the dangers involved in opposing public opinion. The meeting passed the following resolutions.

1. To protest against the policy of the manager.

2. Inform the manager and the authorities that if the action taken against the teachers were not repealed unconditionally before 15\(^{th}\)

\(^{87}\) *The Mathrubhumi*, November 10, 1938

\(^{88}\) *Ibid*, November 11, 1938

\(^{89}\) *Ibid*, November 17, 1938

\(^{90}\) *Ibid*, November 24, 1938

\(^{91}\) *Ibid*, November 27, 1938
December, the parents would be forced to follow non cooperation against the school.

3. Make an enquiry on the issue and requested the director and the government to interfere so as to settle the issue\textsuperscript{92}

A special conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union was held on 3\textsuperscript{rd} December 1938 in the grounds in front of the Thayyil Baby Care Centre. P.R. Nambiar and T.C Narayanan Nambiar spoke on the occasion and emphasized the necessity of abolishing the management system as well as British imperialism which prevented the progress of elementary education. There after the teachers union council was held under O.V.Govindan Nambiar at Rammohan Reading room. Here Palakkal Anandan Nambiar presented the resolution condemning the unjust dismissal of teachers\textsuperscript{93}. V.Ramunni in his presidential address highlighted the policy of oppression adopted by the managers and the anti union approach of the inspecting officers and also emphasized the abolition of the private management system as well as British imperialism\textsuperscript{94}.

Even at this stage, the manager was not ready to cancel his order. Thus it was decided to open a rival school. At that time the union had been demanding the reorganization of elementary education based on the Wardha scheme. Moreover M.V. Anandan was a congress activist. Therefore it was decided that the instruction in the new school would be based on the new scheme. Thus the rival school was named Wardha Model school. The new school was inaugurated by Swami Ananda Tirta in January 1939\textsuperscript{95}. This school having 300 students and 13 teachers was run by a committee. However the resignation of Rajagoapalachari Ministry and the introduction of Governors rule made the circumstances favourable to the old school. Hence the teachers suffered much to retain the new school. However the public gave all assistance to them. The parents and the people made public collection to give the salary of the teachers. Their interest was actually due to their loyalty towards national movement. Even then the school had to wait till 1946 to get its recognition. From this experience

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, December 1, 1938
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, December 6, 1938
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, December 13, 1938
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid, July 29, 1939
\end{footnotesize}
the teachers union leaders realized that their agitations would be more successful and could achieve their objective more quickly under a popular government⁹⁶.

Another stage of teachers agitation was in Ponnani taluk. E. Moideen Kutty, the manager of Cherulal and Parakkal schools near Kalpakancheri in Ponnani taluk was a cruel oppressor of teachers. He compelled his teachers to sign the acquittance register without giving their salary. But the teachers refused and demanded their full salary. The manager got angry and the teachers were dismissed. The manager soon called the teachers to his room and two of them were beaten up with a cane⁹⁷. The head master remained a silent spectator. This incident rocked Malabar. Ponnani was a Muslim dominated area. There were no adequate transport facilities to reach the place. The manager was a very influential person in the locality and those who opposed him found it difficult to get even food⁹⁸. The union was not very active in this area. Above all due to the influence of the manager, the department remained silent on the issue. However, the union leaders like T.C.N Nambar rushed to the place and took up the case⁹⁹. Soon a petition was filed at Kalpakanchery police station and the union organized a strong agitation in this area. A meeting of the teachers of Edakkulam branch union passed a protest resolution criticizing the action taken against the seven teachers of Cherulal and Parakkal schools. It also asked all other teachers to submit their resignation¹⁰⁰. The MATU constituted a committee consisting of N.Poker, P.S.Varier and V.Kunhikrishna Menon to make an enquiry in this issue¹⁰¹. Mean while the police rejected the petition filed by the teachers on the ground that there was no evidence for the same. Under these circumstances, as per the direction of the MATU a joint conference of the teachers of Edakkulam, Alathiyur, Tirur and Kalpakanchery was convened on 15th January 1939¹⁰². The conference passed resolution protesting against the action of the management and the policy adopted by the police department. The manager tried to bribe the union leaders and asked them not to create further problems. But he was reminded that all of them were union activist with a sense of dignity¹⁰³. The manager was severely

⁹⁶ P.R. Nambar, op.cit, p.96  
⁹⁷ Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24,1938 & The Mathrubhumi, October 14, 1938  
⁹⁸ Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.32  
¹⁰⁰ The Mathrubhumi, October 18, 1938  
¹⁰¹ Prabhatham, Volume 32 , November 21 1938 & The Mathrubhumi, November 15, 1938  
¹⁰² The Mathrubhumi, January 20, 1939  
¹⁰³ P.R. Nambar, op.cit, p.22
criticised and finally he apologized and agreed to give full salary to the teachers. The common people congratulated the union leaders who dared to question the autocratic policies followed by the manager. Since this episode, teachers union began to gain strength in Ponnani taluk.

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

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

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

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104 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.32
105 *The Mathrubhumi*, January 23, 1938
106 *Ibid*, February 11, 1938
107 *Ibid*, February 27, 1938
108 *Ibid*, May 27, 1938
community\textsuperscript{110}. He also attacked the passive policy adopted by the department in this case. Under this circumstance, with an intention of attracting the attention of the government and the public, it was decided to observe a ‘Parassinikkadav Day’ all over Malabar. Thus MATU observed the day on 25\textsuperscript{th} June 1938 to express their protest. The public meetings convened on the day at places like Kalliasseri, Chirakkal, Azheekode, Cherukunnu, Katirur, Mayyazhi, Nadapuram, Kollam and Vallapuzha highlighted the arrogant policy of the manager\textsuperscript{111}. At the same time Chirakkal taluk teacher union criticised the steps taken by the MLA, District Educational Council and the department in this issue. Moreover the union decided to give notice to the rest of the teachers asking them to discontinue in the school or other wise they would take action against them\textsuperscript{112}. Thus the union could bring the issue to the attention of the people, public leaders and to congress expecting necessary action. A Parassinikkadav Day was also observed all over Malabar highlighting the corrupt practices prevailed in the school. But the managers remained obstinate and refused to give arrears of the salary to the teachers. Now the union realised that the District Educational Council was following a policy favourable to the managers\textsuperscript{113}. The taluk teachers union protested against such a policy and decided to strengthen their agitation. But the managers association meetings protested against the encouragement given by the government to the rival school and the delay in the payment of school grant\textsuperscript{114}.

All these agitations proved that the department was on the side of the management. It was made more clear by the Pallikkara Girls Higher elementary school crisis which attracted the attention of the teachers as well as the public. Here due to certain bad practices of the manager, people boycotted the school. They opened a new school and many teachers came to serve there\textsuperscript{115}. At the same time about 200 parents sent a petition to the authorities asking them to take necessary actions. C.K.Govindan Nair and K.P.R.Gopan visited the school and found only very few students there\textsuperscript{116}. The sub Assistant Inspectors and the president of the District Educational Council also reached the place and

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, June 24, 1938
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, June 30, 1938
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, July 27, 1938
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid, August 20, 1938
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid, September 4, 1938
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, September 3, 24, 1937
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, October 24, 1937
understood the worse situation of the school\textsuperscript{117}. Thus it was decided to withhold the grant and also to reconsider the recognition of the school. V.Sankara Narayana Menon, J.F.Thadayas, K.Kelappan and K.P.R Gopalan supported this move. On the other hand the DEO threatened to take action against the teachers who encouraged the students to join in the new school\textsuperscript{118}. But the new school inspectress who visited the school advised them to give some more time for the manager\textsuperscript{119}. Based on her note the council postponed its decision. It clearly showed that a democratic body was used as a mere tool in the hands of the department officers, and the maintenance of the school had become the birth right of the manager. It also showed how recommendation and lobbying can make a public opinion ineffective. P.R. Nambiar met the president and criticised the policy of the council. He argued that the school never deserved the continuation of its recognition and sent telegrams to the director to give instructions in this regard\textsuperscript{120}. Soon a public meeting was held near the school. It demanded necessary action at the earliest. Here P.R Namibar argued that it was the support given by the department that encouraged the manager to neglect public opinion\textsuperscript{121}. At the same time the policy adopted by the school inspectress was criticised in teachers union meetings. On 16\textsuperscript{th} September 1938, the 6\textsuperscript{th} circle inspectress visited the place and found the school closed. So she went to the new school. Mean while attempts were made to collect students from the neighboring areas. Two bullock carts full of students reached the place and they were provided food in the school. Complaints were also raised of kidnapping students from other schools. This biased inspection created much dissatisfaction among the people\textsuperscript{122}. Teachers union meeting in different parts of Malabar expressed strong protest against the policy of the 6\textsuperscript{th} circle inspectress and requested the government and the director to take immediate action\textsuperscript{123}. A public meeting convened by the congress committee at Patiam criticised the policy adopted by the department\textsuperscript{124}. K.Kelappan who visited the school on 26-09-38 realised that the inspection was

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid, January 12,26, 1938  
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, February 4, 1938  
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, March 25, 1938  
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, July 31, 1938  
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, August 4, 1938  
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, September 18, 1938  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, September 23,28, 1938  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, September 29, 1938
actually a farce. Under these circumstances V. Sankara Narayana Menon presented a resolution in the District Educational Council to withdraw the grant and the recognition given to the school. When K.P.R Gopalan supported it K.S.Ramaswami Ayyar, the DEO and the school inspectress and others opposed the same. However the resolution was passed. Thus the Grant and recognition of the school were withdrawn.

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

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

125 Ibid
126 Ibid, October 5, 1938
127 G.O.(Education) Madras, No.1280,6th June 1939, TNA
But V.V. Sankaran Marar and K.V. Chindan, two teachers of this school demanded the arrears of their salary. The manager refused to concede and the teachers resigned from service. But very soon they withdrew their resignation and the matter was informed to the manager as well as the department. The manager who could not accept the same sought police help and got the teachers arrested while they were taking classes in the school. T.C. Narayananan Nambiar met the police officer and argued that actually the manager forced the teachers to resign. But he was told that even if they had not resigned they would have been dismissed by him on the basis of the bad remarks on them made by the deputy inspector. The manager himself had certain complaint against V.V. Sankara Marar. He had refused to sign receipt for unreceived salary. He was also an active member of the local congress committee. Therefore the manager emphasized the new government order and declared his activities illegal. Thus he was making use of an opportunity while using the remarks of the inspecting officer. And he was dismissed from the school.

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

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

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

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129 *The Mathrubhumi*, June 16, August 17, 1939
130 Ibid, June 18, 1938
131 P.R. Nambiar, ‘Manegarude Veettile Velakkarano’ in *P.R. Smaranika*, (Calicut, 1988)
132 Ibid
133 *The Mathrubhumi*, July 7, 1939
134 Ibid, July 27, 1939
135 Ibid, August 17, 1939
of the taluk are being oppressed both by the department and the managers. This meeting views with anxiety all these issues especially the crisis at Kunnaru school. The defective policy of the authorities, their undesirable approach and their reluctance to implement the new education rules actually prevents the progress of elementary education. In this situation the poor peasants of this taluk expressed their sympathy to the teachers and requested the KPCC and the ministry to settle these issues urgently.”

At the same time there was wide spread protest against the government order which actually led to the teachers agitation at Kunnaru. Not only the teachers but even the peasants came forward to oppose the order. In another resolution the Chirakkal taluk Karshak Sangam found the order issued by the Madras Congress Ministry preventing aided school teachers from joining congress and other political organizations and also from participating in election as highly objectionable. The Madras Congress Ministry was asked to repeal this order. Peasants in other parts of Malabar protested against the order. Students conference and youth associations criticised this order against the teachers. The Kannur municipal council requested the government to repeal the order. Congress committees in different parts of Malabar requested the KPCC and the AICC to advise the Madras ministry to repeal the order. The KPCC under Muhammed Abdurahiman and EMS Namboothiripad expressed strong protest and demanded the repeal of the order. Congress interfered in the issue. At last the order was amended and the teachers were allowed to take primary membership in Indian National Congress. The dominance of the leftists of the KPCC actually prompted the government to make such an amendment. Mean while the manager had filed a tress pass case against V.V Sankaran Marar and K.V.Chindan. The Chirakkal taluk teachers union took up the case. The trial clearly showed the attitude of the department towards the teachers. The deputy inspector stated in the court that a manager could dismiss the teachers as a house owner appointed
and dismissed his servants. He was not required to have any written order in this regard\textsuperscript{146}. Thus the two accused teachers were punished\textsuperscript{147}. Consequently the new school named Desabandhu Vidhyalaya was formally inaugurated on December 1\textsuperscript{st} 1939\textsuperscript{148}. The statement of the deputy inspector emboldened the managers and T.C. Narayanan Nambiar was asked to resign from the congress by the employer\textsuperscript{149}. The teachers agitation at Kunnaru attracted many teachers towards left wing politics and socialism. Against such harassment the teachers raised the slogan “Teaching is national service and national service is the aim of life”\textsuperscript{150}

The growth and spread of the teachers union prompted the managers to dismiss its activists all over Malabar. The manager of Karimbuzha elementary school was a land lord as well as the local chief of the area. Three teachers of this school under Kongasseri Krishnan began to participate in the activities of the teachers union. The manager Ramayyar who could not tolerate it dismissed these teachers. The teachers and the common people protested against the policy of the manager and opened a rival school. The teachers meeting held at Ottappalam as a part of the Valluvanad teachers propaganda \textit{jatha} passed resolution criticizing the policy of the manager. In this meeting, Raman Nair one of the dismissed teacher explained the episode in detail\textsuperscript{151}. Thus a committee was constituted to settle the issue. In spite of the popular support the rival school failed to get the necessary recognition and had to be closed. Kongasseri Krishnan later became a communist leader.

Another instance of teachers dismissal took place at Chalil, Kannookkara school in Kurumbranad taluk. Here T.Chathu an untrained teacher demanded his full salary. Then the manager tried to dismiss the teacher without giving proper notice\textsuperscript{152}. The constable arranged by him asked the teacher to leave the school. The teacher informed the issue to the deputy director, the president of the District Educational Council and the MLA. A complaint was also lodged against the police

\textsuperscript{146} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.59
\textsuperscript{147} The Mathrubhumi, November 28, 1939
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, December 13, 1938
\textsuperscript{149} K. Gopalan Kutty, \textit{The National Movement in Malabar, 1930, 47} ( The unpublished Phd Thesis , Jawaharlal Nehru University, (New Delhi, 1985) p. 200
\textsuperscript{150} Interview with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28 March 1993
\textsuperscript{151} The Mathrubhumi, October 7, 1938
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, August 5, 1938
constable who threatened to use force to expel the teacher out of the school. The
police department made enquiry and took statements from the manager, teachers
and also from M.V Kannan, the president of the Panchayath Board153.

Onchiyam village congress committee convened a public meeting at
Kannoookkara154. K.A. Damodaran presided over the meeting. The district union
secretary of the teachers union emphasized the necessity of union interference in
the issue. Thus a 6 member committee constituted under M.Kunkan Panikkar was
authorized to take necessary step to settle the issue. A joint conference of the
teachers of Chombala, Edachery, Iringannur and Vallikkad held at Vallikkad
passed a resolution protesting the policy of the manager155.

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

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

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

153 Ibid, August 28, 1938
154 Ibid, August 12, 1938
155 Ibid, August 17, 1938
156 Ibid, September 16, 1938
157 Ibid, December 4, November 27, 1936
158 Ibid, December 10, 1936
159 Ibid, January 14, 1937
160 Ibid, May 2, 1937
this issue\textsuperscript{161}. By that time the Chirakkal taluk teachers union had settled more than 19 cases and constituted a committee to settle the issue at Chaliyam School at Karivellur.\textsuperscript{162} The Head master of Avala North Mappila school was rebuked openly by the Deputy inspector. The teachers union expressed strong protest against the same\textsuperscript{163}. The head master of Trikkotur Girls school was suspended. The Payyoli teachers union demanded immediate enquiry\textsuperscript{164}. K. Unni Adiyodi was dismissed in Kurumbranad taluk. Karayi Othenan was dismissed in Kottayam taluk. The union authorized the taluk secretaries to make enquires and to take proper action. The MATU also decided to prepare a statistics of the teachers dismissed in different parts of the district\textsuperscript{165}. There were some other instances of teachers oppression in Kottayam taluk. One manager came with goondas and forced a teacher to sign the acquittance. At another place a mistress who refused to sign false acquittance was dismissed\textsuperscript{166}. The manager of Cherural and Parakkal schools in Ponnani assaulted the teachers who refused to sign for a higher amount\textsuperscript{167}. Salary disputes led to the dismissal of teachers at Naravoor and Nannammukku schools also\textsuperscript{168}. The head master of Vengara Mappila school was dismissed without notice\textsuperscript{169}. Two teachers of Puzhathi East School were dismissed without sufficient reasons\textsuperscript{170}. At Parichakam School in Ponnani taluk the manager seized the union membership book and tore it to pieces\textsuperscript{171}. Two teachers, R. Kunhirama Panikkar and A.C Chandu Kutty Nambiar were dismissed. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar rushed to the place and the union took up the issue. Finally Karappan, the managers of the school reinstated the teachers\textsuperscript{172}. The manager of Kudakkad aided boys school refused salary to his teachers. The Parapanangadi teachers union formed a committee to make enquiry of it\textsuperscript{173}. At Kottkatappuram School in Kurumbranad taluk M.V.Chathu was assaulted and dismissed by the manager. The taluk union

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, June 10, 1937
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, June 30, 1937
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, September 15,19, 1937
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, September 19, 1937
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid, January 6, 1937
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, July 18, 1937
\textsuperscript{167} Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24,1938
\textsuperscript{168} The Mathrubhumi, August 19, 1938
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid, October 6, 1938
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid, November 19, 1938
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid, December 18, 1938
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid, February 26, 1938
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid, May 29, 1937
The management of Hidayathul Islam school reduced the salary of their teachers. They made complaints to the union. Thus Kongattil Parameswara Menon was dismissed. The Kozhikode taluk teachers union formed a committee to make an enquiry. It discussed the issue with the management. But failed. The urgent conference of the teachers held at Calicut town hall criticised the department for the policy of deliberate silence in this case. T. Sekharan the head master of Athamabodhini Higher elementary school, Elathur and the President of the taluk union was dismissed. The union expressed its strong protest. The teachers of Saraswathy Vilasam school in south Malabar demanded their full salary. The manager Kunhambu dismissed the union leaders. K.V.Govindan Kutty Nair, P.V. Sekhara Kurup and C. Madhava Menon. The manager adopted an oppressive policy towards P.V. Kunhikrishnan, K.Narayanapanikker and K.Gopalan. Eranad taluk teachers union protested and formed a committee to make enquiries. The manager of Edayur Hindu elementary school Valanchery suspended K. Balakrishanan Ezhuthachan from his school. The other teachers protested and refused to sign the attendance register. At the same time the manager opposed the union interference. The Valanchery teachers union convened a public meeting near the school to invite public attention. V. Padmanabha Menon in his presidential address narrated the grievances of the teachers under private management system. The meeting passed resolution against the policy of the manager and sympathised with the suspended teachers. At the same time another meeting convened by the parents, advised the manager to dismiss these teachers. At Annoor school near Payyanur, Kanapoduval was dismissed. The Payyanur teachers union convened a public meeting. The union leaders O.V.Govindan Nambiar, C.K Panikker and the KPCC
member A.V Kunhambu spoke on this occasion\textsuperscript{184}. The manager of Valayam Cherumoth School dismissed P. Sankaran from his school. A parents meeting was convened and a committee was authorized to meet the manager. But he was not ready to reinstate the teacher even though the school recognition was repealed\textsuperscript{185}. At Melady Hindu elementary school, N.K. Kunhiraman was dismissed. The attempt made by P.R. Nambiar to settle the issue failed\textsuperscript{186}. The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union meeting protested against the policy of the manager\textsuperscript{187}. The manager of Velikad school near Ezhakkad kicked out a teacher while he was teaching in the class room. The union took up the case and the manager was forced to resign his post\textsuperscript{188}. K. Ambukutty was dismissed from Patiyam Girls Higher elementary school. A public meeting was held and a resolution criticizing the policy of the manager was passed. At last P.R Nambiar and other union leaders met the manager and settled the issue\textsuperscript{189}. Another teacher was dismissed at Cheleri elementary school near Kanndiparamb. The Chirakkal taluk teachers union passed resolution criticizing the dismissal and the attitude of the manager who refused to meet the union leaders as well as public leaders. The passive policy adopted by the department was also criticised\textsuperscript{190}. The manager of Mamiyur Aided Mappila school dismissed a teacher from his school. Soon a rival school was opened near the school. The Chavakkad aided teachers union convened a public meeting to explain the background of the issue and protested against the policy of the manager. Finally, the manager agreed to reinstate the teacher\textsuperscript{191}.

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

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{184} Ibid, February 11, 1939
\item \textsuperscript{185} Ibid, February 11, 1939
\item \textsuperscript{186} Ibid, March 8, 1939
\item \textsuperscript{187} Ibid, March 15, 1939
\item \textsuperscript{188} Ibid, March 11, 1939
\item \textsuperscript{189} Ibid, April 19, July 19, 1939
\item \textsuperscript{190} Ibid, June 2, 1939
\item \textsuperscript{191} Ibid, June 30, August 8, 1939
\end{itemize}
should not be members of unrecognized unions\textsuperscript{192}. Meanwhile the north Malabar DEO declared that the MATU was not a recognized union. On this basis Sarvothama Rao, the manager of the school gave memo to Ramunni and asked him to resign the presidency of the union. He was ordered to retain only one post either that of the head master or the president of the union. It was viewed as an attempt to crush the union. The teachers conference held at Calicut town hall demanded that immediate attention of the Government in this matter\textsuperscript{193}. But on 16\textsuperscript{th} December 1938, when Ramunni came to rejoin duty after leave, he was dismissed from service\textsuperscript{194}. The teachers union organized a strong agitation in response to this. The demand for security of tenure became very intensive. The union took measures to get it registered and the demand for recognition was raised. The teachers conference at Ottappalam passed resolution against the dismissal and demanded the recognition of the union\textsuperscript{195}. The issue was also raised in the Madras legislative assembly\textsuperscript{196}. The all Malabar peasant conference held at Chevayur passed resolution supporting the teachers. It observed “This conference view with anxiety the oppressive policy adopted by the department even under a congress ministry against MATU which is an anti-imperialist movement aimed at the abolition of the private management system for the progress of elementary education”\textsuperscript{197}. The peasants declared their support to the elementary school teachers and requested the government to accept their urgent demands by recognizing their union. But as the right wing leaders of the congress were on the side of the management, the Madras government refused to do anything against the oppression\textsuperscript{198}.

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

\textsuperscript{192} Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.35
\textsuperscript{193} The Mathrubhumi, December 13, 1938
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, December 18, 1938
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, January 3, 1939
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid, March 30, 1939
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid, December 21, 1938
\textsuperscript{198} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.99
the district union leaders were advised to open unions in places where there was no union at all. C.K. Panikker emphasized the presence of permanent activist in each taluk and the rapport between the union activist and the people. The activists who failed to attend the union meeting were replaced by others. The demand for propaganda for unionization was highlighted again and the union settled several dispute between the teachers and the managers. The union organized propaganda jatha to form new branches and to raise a union fund to help teachers. Its members were asked to wear Gandhi caps and also to bear their personal expenses. They visited schools and organized public meetings where grievances of the teachers, defects of the management system, the policy of the department and the duty of the parents were highlighted. People including poor peasants and workers gave their share to the union fund. Efforts were also made to reorganize the branch unions. Initially, only those teachers who signed the pledge to accept the directions of the union and were ready to make any sacrifice for the same was given membership. But many of the teachers were yet to join the union. The union activities were found inactive in some taluks. At several places branches had not been opened. The organizational defect was the reason cited for it. Earlier branches were opened with teachers association as its centre. It led to the emergence of unions on religious and gender line. As it created much difficulty for the union work it decided to give up this practice and to reorganize the branches. They knew that it was better to form a union with 30 schools with a Higher Elementary School as its centre. Each branch was to elect their representatives to the taluk union on the basis of one for 30 members and the taluk unions were to elect 10 representatives to the district council. The branch unions were advised to convene their annual meeting to gain popular support. It was decided to collect 4 annas as annual subscription; 20% of the

199 The Mathrubhumi, May 20, 1936
200 Ibid, December 12, 1936
201 Ibid, January 7, 1937
202 Ibid, March 25, June 30, 1937
203 Ibid, November 10, 13,14, 1937
204 Ibid, November 6, 1937
205 Ibid, November 17, 1937
206 Ibid, June 2, 1938
207 Ibid, February 1, 1938
208 Ibid
209 Ibid, April 3, 1938
210 Ibid, January 20, 1937
211 Ibid, June 38, 1938
same should go to the district union, 40% to the taluk union and the remaining 40% to the branches. The union fund was divided on the following lines, 50% to the district union, 25% to the taluk union and 25% to the branch unions. As per the direction of the taluk union, efforts were made to open taluk union offices. Taluks were often divided into several Farcas. In Chirakkal taluk efforts were also made to open branch offices. The district union office was located in north Malabar. Therefore the union activities often failed to reach the southern part of the district. Hence the union activities in the south Malabar when compared to the one in north Malabar were slow. Hence propaganda jatha were organized to make the union more active and also to collect subscription for the journal of the union. The lack of clear evidence often helped the inspecting officer to escape from charges of malpractices levelled against them. Therefore it was decided to organize vigilance committee in all taluks. Efforts were also made to arrange refresher course to train the union activists. The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union decided to open these centres at Payyoli and Villiappally. The MATU decided to open centres for refresher course in all taluks to provide training to at least 50 activists in each of these centres.

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

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

\[1\text{12} \text{ibid, July 23 1938} \]
\[1\text{13} \text{ibid, July 31, 1938} \]
\[1\text{14} \text{ibid, July 31, 1938} \]
\[1\text{15} \text{ibid, July 7, 1939} \]
\[1\text{16} \text{ibid, June 2, 1938} \]
\[1\text{17} \text{ibid, July 15, 1939} \]
\[1\text{18} \text{ibid, August 19, 1938} \]
\[1\text{19} \text{ibid, November 10, 1939} \]
\[1\text{20} \text{ibid, November 22, 1939} \]
\[1\text{21} \text{Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.22} \]
\[1\text{22} \text{Cherukad, Jeevithapatha (Trivandrum, 1977), p.241} \]
the town hall in bold letters. Dr. Subarayan, the Minister of Education who participated in the meeting vehemently criticised these slogans and called up on the youngsters to keep away from it\textsuperscript{223}.

The fourth annual conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union passed a strike resolution and advised district union to take necessary steps for the same\textsuperscript{224}. The third annual conference of the Kottayam taluk teachers union reminded the members of the policy adopted by the management and the department and asked the union to prepare for a strike\textsuperscript{225}. The same demands were raised and the teachers were asked to get ready for a strike in the fourth annual conference of Kurumbranad taluk teachers union\textsuperscript{226}, the second annual conference of Ponnani taluk teachers union\textsuperscript{227} and the Kozhikode taluk teachers union conference\textsuperscript{228}. The teachers union demands were endorsed by the KPCC and a resolution for the abolition of private management system and the take over of the elementary schools by the government was passed in a meeting\textsuperscript{229}. The Kerala state political conference held at Calicut also passed a similar resolution\textsuperscript{230}. The North Malabar political conference passed the same resolution and appealed the people to give all help and co-operation to the proposed strike of the teachers\textsuperscript{231}. The resolutions demanding the abolition of private management system were passed in various political conferences in different parts of Malabar\textsuperscript{232}.

The second conference of the Chirakkal taluk Karshaka Sangam held at Kattambally, advised its branches to give all help to the teachers agitations. It demanded the abolition of private management system and the take over of schools by the government. It offered all help to the teachers in the event of a strike in Malabar\textsuperscript{233}.

\textsuperscript{223} The Mathrubhumi, December 1, 1937 & Mathrubhumi Weekly, January 31, 1938
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid, January 11, 1938
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid, January 25, 1938
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid, February 16, 1938 & Mathrubhumi Weekly February 21, 1938
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid, February 17, 1938
\textsuperscript{228} Mathrubhumi Weekly April 4, 1938
\textsuperscript{229} The Mathrubhumi, February 9, 1938
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid, April 27, 1938
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid, May 18, 1938
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid, May 19, June 8, June 24, 1938
\textsuperscript{233} Ibid, May 10, 1938
Under these circumstances the Madras government decided to take certain measures to improve the condition of elementary school teachers. The teachers union had presented a memorandum to the prime minister of Madras on 16th October 1937. Thus direction was given to draft amendments to the rules under Madras Elementary Education Act to improve in certain respects the condition of service of teachers in aided elementary schools. The draft amendment was published in February 1938 which contained the provision of teaching license to all elementary school teachers. It aimed to control the management and also to ensure the security of tenure and proper payment of salary to the teachers.

Accordingly each teacher was to get a license from the concerned DEO. The amount of teachers salary and the period of appointment were to be recorded in it. It should be examined and signed by the deputy inspector. There should be no deduction from the teachers salary except fine. Even the same should be recorded in the fine register. If the non payment of salary was reported by the deputy inspectors, the grant of such schools could be withheld. The managers were instructed to disburse 90% of the grant to the teachers and were allowed to retain 10% for the management expenditure.

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

234 G.O.(Education) Madras, No 2449,20th October 1937
235 G.O.(Education) Madras, No 423,21st February 1938
236 The Mathrubhumi, March 9, 1938
237 Ibid, March 4, 1938
238 Ibid, March 24,27,29, 1938
239 G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2270, 4th September 1938, TNA
240 The Mathrubhumi, March 27, 1938
241 Ibid, March 24, 1938
the teachers. They demanded nothing but the abolition of private management system by bringing them under government service\textsuperscript{242}

On their part the managers also opposed the scheme. As the amount of grant, the number of classes and the attendance of students were uncertain, it was not possible for them to record the period of appointment and the amount of salary in the license\textsuperscript{243}. In spite of the terms in the license, they claimed the right to dismiss teachers for poor work and irregular attendance. Besides, it was not possible to run the schools with 10%. So they demanded 25% of the grant for school maintenance.

An urgent conference of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar was held at Edward Memorial Town hall, Kannur, on April 20\textsuperscript{th} 1938\textsuperscript{244}. P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar in his welcome speech said “We have been given great promises. But now we are given the license, which is not acceptable without amendments. If the demand for monthly salary is not accepted and the management oppression continued, we will be forced to organize a satyagraha struggle\textsuperscript{245}. The meeting declared that the provisions for the teachers license are unwarranted and unnecessary as they did not naturally improve the condition of teachers\textsuperscript{246}. Hence it was decided to oppose any measure imposed upon teachers without the consent of the union. The conference demanded the abolition of private management system, introduction of the service register, increase in salary, monthly salary through the head master, training selection based on service, open enquiry on the cases of the dismissed teachers and the necessity of a democratic institution with teachers representation to control education\textsuperscript{247}. The government was requested to take measures based on these suggestions. Thus the license system was criticised both by the teachers and the managers.

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

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid, March 27, 1938
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid, March 20, 1938
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid, April 23, 1938 Teachers jatha came from Azheekode, Narath, Kallliassery, Karivallur and Chirakkal. They rallied in the street using placards on which was written ‘Down with management system’
\textsuperscript{245} Ibid, April 23, 1938
\textsuperscript{246} G.O.(Education) Madras, No.2270,4\textsuperscript{th} September 1938, TNA
\textsuperscript{247} The Mathrubhumi, April 23, 1938
number of trained teachers, the school had to maintain 2:1 ration in the appointment of trained and untrained teachers. Under this circumstance the MATU decided to observe August 3rd 1938 as 'Untrained teachers day'. On that day teachers were asked to convene public meeting. They were advised to pass resolutions demanding provision to end the irregularities in trading selection and increase in the number of seats and classes in training schools. Thus the untrained teachers day was observed all over Malabar by organizing public meetings.

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

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

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

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248 Ibid, July 28, 1938
249 Ibid, August 6, 1938
250 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.34
251 The Mathrubhumi, July 23, 1938 & Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 15, July 18, 1938
252 Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 13, July 4, 1938
253 The Mathrubhumi, August 19, 1938
254 Ibid, August 26, 1938
255 Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 25, October 3, 1938
visited several places and explained why the union has to be anti-imperialist\textsuperscript{256}. At the same time the managers began to criticize the union activist for injecting the seeds of revolution in the minds of the students and requested the government to declare the hartal illegal\textsuperscript{257}. They also adopted measures to defeat the hartal\textsuperscript{258}.

The proposed hartal compelled the government to take certain urgent steps. Provisions were made for ensuring the security of tenure and monthly salary of teachers. Thus in September 1938 the government issued an order which contained the provision for a service register, monthly salary and other elementary school reforms\textsuperscript{259}. It was viewed as the first governmental interference in the administration of aided schools and was hailed as a ‘Charter of Authority’ for both the teachers and managers\textsuperscript{260}. The government adopted these measures to reform elementary education in the state of Madras. When the managers began to oppose the same, C.J. Varkey, the Minister of Education declared that the new measures would be harmful to the bad managers but not for the good managements. Hence the managers were advised to improve their schools or to give up their managements\textsuperscript{261}. It contained certain provision to ensure teachers security of tenure, proper payment of salary and school administration\textsuperscript{262}. The main aspect was the introduction of a service register. As practiced in board and government schools, It was decided to introduce a service register for teachers in all elementary schools. Each teacher had to give Rs 1 for the same. As provision was made in it to prevent unnecessary dismissal, it was hailed as the teachers charter of right that ensure their security of tenure. It should contain in precise terms the conditions under which the teacher is entertained, the period of appointment, salary, scale of pay etc. Teachers should not be dismissed without sufficient reason. The divisional inspectors were to supervise the same. Teachers should not be dismissed with out 3 months notice except for urgent disciplinary matters. It should obtain the sanction of the divisional inspectors. If it was reported by the inspecting officers that a teacher was dismissed without sufficient reasons, the recognition of such school would be withdrawn. Measures were also

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[256]{The Mathrubhumi, September 22, 1938}
\footnotetext[257]{Ibid, September 4, 1938}
\footnotetext[258]{Ibid, September 15, 1938}
\footnotetext[259]{G.O.(Education) Madras , No.2270,4\textsuperscript{th} September 1938, TNA}
\footnotetext[260]{The Mathrubhumi, September 28, 1938}
\footnotetext[262]{The Mathrubhumi, October 1, 1938}
\end{footnotes}
adopted for the proper payment of salary to the teachers. It was directed to record
the amount of salary or the scale of pay in the service register. No deduction from
the salary except fine and PF amount was permitted. If the salary of the teachers
was not properly and regularly paid with out making other deduction, the grant and
recognition of such schools could be withdrawn. If it was reported that the
teachers were not regularly paid and that there were unnecessary deduction then
such teachers would get their salary directly from the DEO. However it was
declared impossible to distribute salary directly to the teachers. But instead of
giving school grant through the District Educational Council or the proposed
institution, it was decided to give monthly salary to the teachers through the DEO.
The new rule also provided for the division of the grant between the manager and
the teachers. 85% of the grant was to be paid to the teachers and the balance to
be retained by the managers as maintenance expenditure. The teachers service
register could be withdrawn by the higher authorities, if their character, conduct or
performance of duty were found unsatisfactory\(^{263}\). The teachers were not allowed
to leave the school without prior 3 months notice. At the same time government
declared that it was not possible to take over all elementary schools\(^{264}\).

These reforms, which retained the ugly management system, were viewed
as unsatisfactory. No provision was there to enhance the salary to the teachers or
to remove the uncertainty created by the managers and the inspecting officers.
Reluctance on the part of the governments to take the responsibility of giving
salary to the teachers was viewed with concern. Hence the teachers demanded
clear and separate salary scale. P.R. Nambiar welcomed the condition of security
of tenure, but asked the teachers to continue their agitation for increased salary
scale\(^{265}\). The managers also refused to accept the new rules\(^{266}\). They argued that
it was not possible for them to run the schools based on the new order\(^ {267}\). Hence
they decided to take necessary steps to withdraw from school management\(^ {268}\).

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

\(^{263}\) G.O.(Education) Madras, No.2270, 4\(^{th}\) September 1938, TNA
\(^{264}\) The Mathrubhumi, October 1, 1938
\(^{265}\) Ibid, October 6, 1938
\(^{266}\) Ibid, October 11, 1938
\(^{267}\) Ibid, October 12, 1938
\(^{268}\) Ibid, October 21, 1938
unnecessary dismissal would really improve their service conditions. It was also viewed as a government replay to the demand for making their hartal illegal. The Teachers also felt that it contained a vague promise of new scheme of elementary education. Above all they understood that with one-day hartal it was not possible to make amendments to the new rules. Thus the teachers decided to postpone their programme of direct agitation. Thus on 30th September 1938, the teachers union council was held at the KPCC office Calicut and the provisions of the new order was examined. It declared that these measures did not give full satisfaction. But in order to make the teachers agitation strong and to end the government support to school business, teachers accepted these concessions and postponed their programme of agitation. The committee put forward the demands they had raised in the resolution taken on 6-08-38 and warned that the elementary teachers of Malabar would be forced to keep away from all educational matters in case the government did not accept their demands immediately. At the same time they asked the teachers not to be satisfied with these little gains but to continue their agitation to abolish the private management system.

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

269 Ibid, September 28, 1938
270 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.97
271 The Mathrubhumi, October 2, 1938, & Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 26, October 10, 1938
272 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.35
273 The Mathrubhumi, October 15, 1938. Delegates from different parts of Malabar attended the meeting. Several Jathas of teachers with tricolor flags came to the place and merged in the conference.
274 Prabhatham, October 24, 1938
you continue to think about Hartal, I will be forced to bring more efficient teachers from Tamil Nadu\textsuperscript{275}. It provoked the teachers. They responded with great protest and cried “Shame, shame”. P.R. Nambiar presented a resolution regretting and protesting against the statement made by the minister\textsuperscript{276}. Actually it was a warning against those who dared to injure the self respect of the teachers of Malabar. The conference endorsed the statement made by the district committee on the new rules. Admitting the best intention of the government order, the conference passed a resolution withdrawing the proposed hartal of 31\textsuperscript{st} October 1938\textsuperscript{277}. But it pointed out that the basic objectives of the union could not be achieved without abolishing imperialism that produces poverty and misery. Therefore it was decided to cooperate with all anti-imperialist movements. The conference admitted that the union failed to achieve the 6 demands raised in the hartal resolution. But argued that the government was forced to formulate certain measures because it could see that the union representing 13000 teachers of Malabar was getting popular support. In this backdrop the conference decided to strengthen the congress ministry. But adopted certain steps to organize their agitation more efficiently mobilizing popular support with a view to obtain the real objectives of the union. Thus the following measures were adopted.\textsuperscript{278}

1. Admit all elementary teachers of Malabar in the union by 30\textsuperscript{th} November 1938

2. Form vigilance committees to resist the malpractices followed by the authorities.

3. Open reading rooms and night schools in all branches to propagate literacy and to strengthen contact with common people.

4. Co operate with all efforts in the mobilization against imperialism

5. Form a volunteer group based on the programme formulated by the district union

\textsuperscript{275} T.C. Narayanan Nambar. ‘Polinjupoya Ujjualatharam’ in \textit{P.R. Smaranika}, (Calicut, 1988)

\textsuperscript{276} \textit{The Mathrubhumi}, October 15, 1938

\textsuperscript{277} \textit{Prabhatham}, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24,1938

\textsuperscript{278} \textit{Ibid}
The conference presented a memorandum to the minister expressing gratitude over the new rules. At the same time it demanded certain amendments in the provisions ensuring security of tenure and payment of salary. Besides these certain other demands were also raised. They wanted proposed council to be constituted democratically instead of the District Educational Council.

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

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

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

279 The Mathrubhumi, October 19, 1938
280 Ibid, September 28, 1938
281 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.98,215
282 The Mathrubhumi, October 2, 1938
283 Ibid, December 13, 1938
284 Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 30, November 7, 1938
285 G.O.(Education) Madras, No.1120, 18th May 1939, TNA
registered under the Societies Registration Act before the assistant registrar of Joint stock companies at Tellicherry.  

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

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

287 K.Karunakaran Nair, Who is Who of the Freedom fighters of Kerala, (Trivandrum, 1975)


289 The Mathrubhumi, October 19, 1937

290 Ibid

291 Ibid, November 6, 1937

292 Ibid, September 29, 1938

293 Ibid, September 10, 1938

294 Ibid, February 11, 1938
P.R. Nambiar made it clear that unless poverty was rooted out, there will not be any progress in education. So it was the duty of the teachers to vote for congress which was trying to eradicate poverty. Thus the union actively worked for the success of the congress candidates. Some of the union activists were even punished for participating in election propaganda. The teachers requested amendments in educational rules for permitting them to participate in politics. The union welcomed the Wardha scheme of education. It passed resolution attacking Japanese imperialism and expressing sympathy with China. At the same time the congress protested against the order preventing teachers and students from political activities. The KPCC passed a resolution asking the government to repeal the order preventing the use of elementary schools for political purpose. Another resolution presented by K.A. Keraleeyan demanded the abolition of private management system and the take over of elementary education by the government. Peasant organizations and political conferences also emphasized the abolition of private management system, the take over of elementary education by the government and also the implementation of free and compulsory elementary education. The congress committees promised to support the proposed teachers hartal of October 31st, 1938. At the same time the congress leaders depicted the British imperialism as the common enemy of the people and reminded the teachers that unless it is rooted out, the ministry could not do anything to redress their grievances. This anti-imperialist ideology propagated by the congress profoundly influenced the teachers. Thus the teachers moved more and more towards the national movement and their movement was characterized as a part of the anti-imperialist movement. This anti-imperialist trend among the teachers was intensified by an article entitled ‘Teachers union oru Samrajya Viroda Prasthanam’ (Teachers union: an anti-imperialist movement). Through this article T.C Narayanan Nambiar tried to

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295 Ibid, February 10, 1937  
296 Ibid, January 25, July 27, August 17, 1938  
297 Ibid, March 29, September 29, 1938  
298 Ibid, January 11, March 25, 1938  
299 Ibid, August 16, 1938  
300 Ibid, May 10, 18, 19, June 8, 24, 1938  
301 Ibid, August 18, 1938  
302 Ibid, February 17, 1938  
303 P.R. Nambiar, ‘Adhyapaka Prasthanavum Swathandrya Samaravum’ in Swathandrya Samara Smaranika (Kannur, 1982)  
304 Prabhatham, Volume 26, October 10, 1938
show that the teachers movement was a part of anti imperialist movement. He narrated the pathetic condition of the poverty stricken children of the elementary school of Malabar who had no sufficient food or clothing and pointed out the helplessness of their parents who were crushed by feudal oppression, capitalist exploitation and imperialist appropriation. Then proceeding to a pathetic story of a Muslim lady at Kalpakanchery who asked the judge to take her child itself as fine for not sending him to school, T.C.Narayanan Nambiar wrote “Illiteracy is the sister of poverty. Imperialism is the cause of poverty. There fore like the mother at Kalpakanchery, the Union believed that in order to attain educational progress and eradicate poverty, we have to eradicate imperialism, which feeds an officer who gets 8 annas as bata in a minute must be rooted out..... When a mass movement was developing the teachers who had intimate relation with the country and its people could not keep away from it. He knows that education, which he expects, will grow only in the funeral ashes of imperialism..... He had promised to destroy imperialism which lead teachers and the country to slavery and poverty.  

The right left conflict in the congress had sharpened during this period. The association of teachers with peasants, labours and student movements were strongly opposed by the right wing congress leaders. They wanted no other organization than the Indian national congress. Hence they were moving against the teachers union. At the same time as per the intelligent direction of P. Krishnapillai a smooth strategy was adopted within the teachers union. Due importance was given to all shades of opinion. They decided to act on the basis of a trade union. Thus the right wing congress leaders like P.S. Varier and active congress socialist like T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and V.Ramunni came to the union leadership. P.R. Nambiar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar were the bridge between these two groups. It had the objective of organizing a strong teachers movement incorporating all sections of teachers. But the ideological split in the national movement had its own impact on the teachers. The article written by T.C.Narayanan Nambiar had great repercussion inside the union. P.S. Varier the activist of the Gandhi Seva Sangham organized by the right wing congress group was the vice president of the teachers union. He vehemently opposed the article

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305 Ibid, Volume 26, October 10, 1938
306 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.33
and viewed it as a conspiracy of the leaders to make the teachers union a communist association\textsuperscript{308}. Hence he wanted the union to pass a resolution dissolving the article and to publish the same in new papers. Otherwise he threatened to resign from the union. It became a subject of heated discussion throughout Malabar. Consequently an executive meeting of the teachers union was held at Quilandi. Majority of the working committee members were congress activists. But a large section of the union members were not members of congress. P.S.Varier presented the issue. But there was nobody to support him. P.R. Nambiar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar tried their best to avoid a split in the union. Finally it was decided that the article was totally in line with the policy of the teachers movement. The publication of this article helped much to make majority of the teachers anti-imperialist. It helped much to rally the teachers of Malabar against British imperialism. It actually provided them a clear perspective and intensified the anti-imperialist feeling among the teachers\textsuperscript{309}. There after the teachers movement was considered as an anti-imperialist bloc in the national movement\textsuperscript{310}.

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

The governments decision to introduce the service register created a new spirit among the teachers. They raised the slogan “teaching is service to the nation: service to the nation is the aim of life”. This slogan was heard in the teachers jatha and the meetings reflected the change appeared among the teachers\textsuperscript{311}. However the managers association as well as the reactionary elements in the department did not welcome this change.

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

\textsuperscript{308} Ibid
\textsuperscript{309} V.V. Dakshinamoorthi, ‘Keralathile Adhyapaka Prasthanam’ In Chinda Rajatha Jubilee Pathippu, (Trivandrum, 1988)
\textsuperscript{310} P.R. Nambiar, ‘Adhyapaka Prasthanavum Swathandrya Samaravum’ in Swathandrya Samara Smaranika (Kannur, 1982)
\textsuperscript{311} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.98
nation is the aim of life’ actually had a political tinge. Thus the teachers movement
revealed the nature of an anti-imperialist movement and maintained close contact
with the political leadership in Malabar. They also maintained a close contact
with the trade union movement, peasant movement and students movement in
Malabar. Teachers union opened reading rooms, adult education centres and
arts clubs to inculcate anti-imperialist feeling among the people. Leaders like
P.Krishnapilla, A.K.Gopalan, K.P.R Gopalan and E.P.Gopalan participated in the
agitation of teachers. All these attracted the union towards anti-imperialist
movement. The right left split in the congress was clearly exposed during this
period. The right wing leaders and the newspapers accused the union for moving
towards left wing politics and socialism. The ideological split in the congress had
its own impact in the union. On one hand it was argued that the victory of the anti-
imperialist struggle is inevitable for the progress of education and therefore
teachers were to participate in it. On the other hand it was argued that the
teachers movement had no political objective other than their economic demand.
It was in this context that T.C.Narayanan Nambiar wrote his article in Prabhatham
stressing the anti-imperialist nature of the teachers movement. The controversy
and discussion on this issue provided a clear perspective to the teacher movement
and made majority of the teachers anti-imperialist. At the same time the managers
made a propaganda that the teachers of Malabar had joined the left wing politics.
The right wing congress leaders supported them. The department officers who
were against politics also supported the management.

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

\[312\] Ibid, p. 215
\[313\] Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.33
\[314\] P.R. Nambar, op.cit, p.290
\[315\] Ibid, p. 98
\[316\] The Mathrubhumi, December 31, 1938. The teachers jatha from Kannur under T.C. Narayanan
Nambiar and the cycle jatha from Chirakkal under V.Ramunni reached Ottapalam. And the jathas
of teachers from Karimbughaza, Mannarkad and Sreekrishnapuram merged with it at Cherpulasseri.
The joint jathas reached the venue of the conference. Several other jathas from place like
Valancheri, Cherukkara and Parali had reached the place and the meeting began with the hosting
of the tricolor flag.
politics will not be beneficial and advised them to stick to constitutional methods[^317]. So he opposed the resolution against the federation adopted by the subject committee of the conference. As he considered it a politically motivated one, he vacated the chair[^318]. But the meeting continued with Ramunni as the president. Now P.R. Nambiar argued that Indian freedom is inevitable for the growth of national education in India. So the congress demand against federation is an educational demand. Thus the resolution which supported the slogan of the national movement was unanimously adopted by the conference. T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and V.Ramunni made earnest efforts to mobilize the support of the teachers in favour of this resolution[^319].

The resolutions passed at the conference high lighted a variety of issues. It pointed out that the episode in Kuthiravattam higher elementary school and St.Antony's schools had completely shattered the expectation given by the government order[^320]. About 100 branch unions had sent their resolutions supporting a general strike to face the urgent situation. They were actually inspired by the agitators organized by the peasants and workers of Malabar[^321]. These resolutions passed by the branch and taluk union clearly revealed the unrest among the teachers. A committee was constituted to study the possibility of a general strike[^322]. But the conference assured that it would be used only as a last weapon. At the same time they asked the union to take immediate steps to obtain the following demands[^323].

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

[^317]: Ibid, December 31, 1938
[^318]: Ibid, January 3, 1939
[^319]: Quilandi Taluk APT union, Randam Varshika Souvenir, (Quilandi,1960)
[^320]: The Mathrubhumi, January 3, 1939
[^321]: Ibid
[^322]: Ibid
[^323]: Ibid, January 3, 1939
4. Adopt measures to prevent irregularities in training selection

5. Recognize the Malabar aided teachers union

6. The first statement of the director on teachers security of tenure was made on 5th June 1937. Hence all teachers dismissed after the same should be reinstated.

7. Distribute the annual grant of 1938-39 by March 31 itself. The conference requested the government to make an official statement recognizing these moderate demands of the teachers. At the same time the conference proposed certain measures to make the union more effective.

1. The agitation against the private management system should be made a state issue

2. Publish a monthly order of the auspices of the union w.e.f February 1939.

3. Form a sub committee to prepare a report of the plan of action to be adopted in case of a strike.

4. No teachers shall retire from any school without the prior consent of the union.

5. To propagate the decision of the conference, it was decided to observe 22nd January 1939 as a union day through out Malabar by organizing public meetings and processions. Above all KPCC and SITU were requested to cooperate with the activities of the union.

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

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

324 Ibid, January 3, 1939
325 Prabhatham, Book 1, Vol 28, October 24,1938
welcomed the Wardha scheme. Above all it demanded the demolition of the Hitchcock memorial which retained the memory of a person who ruthlessly suppressed the people of Malabar\textsuperscript{326}.

The conference appealed the teachers to organize a strong agitation for getting their union recognized. They decided to observe January 22 as the Union Recognition Day. This was done all over Malabar by organizing public meetings\textsuperscript{327}. It demanded the recognition of their union and reinstatement of V.Ramunni, who was dismissed from the service for being the president of an unrecognized union. The issue of the union recognition was raised in the Madras Legislative assembly. The teachers agitation had its own result. On February 24\textsuperscript{th}, 1939 the government issued orders containing provisions for the recognition of the union\textsuperscript{328}. Accordingly on June 30\textsuperscript{th} 1939 the MATU the only association of aided elementary school teachers of Malabar was recognized by the director of Education\textsuperscript{329}.

Meanwhile teachers oppression continued in different parts of Chirakkal taluk. The department officers had an important role in the oppression of the teachers in the taluk. They instigated the managers to violate their agreements with the teachers\textsuperscript{330}. They issued orders prohibiting the participation of teachers in politics and in elections. The police often came to the classroom to arrest teachers. The District Educational Council was replaced by taluk educational advisory committee with non congress majority\textsuperscript{331}.

It was under these circumstances that the executive committee of the MATU was held at Calicut on 9\textsuperscript{th} September 1939. It decided to boycott the meetings of the teachers association and promised to co-operate with the same only if their reform proposal of 11-10-38 was adopted by the government. Based on this decision some of the association secretaries resigned\textsuperscript{332}. But very soon the union reconsidered its decision and decided not to start such an agitation at the moment. On the other hand it was decided to organize a one-day hartal of teachers. As a first step it was decided to organize the agitation only in Chirakkal

\textsuperscript{326} The Mathrubhumi, January 3, 1939
\textsuperscript{327} Ibid, February 26, 1939
\textsuperscript{328} G.O.(Education) Madras, No.416,24\textsuperscript{th} February, 1939, TNA
\textsuperscript{329} The Mathrubhumi, July 5, 1939
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid, August 17, 1939
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid, September 23, 1939
taluk, and to extend the same throughout Malabar later, if necessary\textsuperscript{333}. Thus the union called up on the teachers to observe a hartal on 25\textsuperscript{th} September 1939 all over the Chirakkal taluk\textsuperscript{334}. Actually it was a mark of protest aimed to bring the attention of the government to the grievances of the teachers and the upliftment of primary education\textsuperscript{335}. Branch meetings of the teachers union welcomed the decision and decided to make it a success\textsuperscript{336}. Teachers unions in other taluks promised all help and co-operation to the proposed hartal\textsuperscript{337}. Though the decision was made known to the government, the union failed to get a reply. Hence the union decided to make an intensive propaganda for the hartal and all regular activities of the union was suspended for the time being and strike committee was also constituted\textsuperscript{338}. At the same time the managers association opposed the hartal. The managers asked the public and the government to take urgent steps to prevent the hartal activities\textsuperscript{339}. They also requested the authorities to give necessary instructions to deal with the situation.\textsuperscript{340}

Meanwhile an urgent conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union was held at Edward Memorial Town hall on September 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1939. The meeting was attended by large number of people including more than many teachers. This meeting presided over by Swami Ananda Teerta passed resolutions raising the following demands\textsuperscript{341}.

1. Each teacher should be given a definite salary scale and the same should be distributed monthly through the Head Master.

2. Managers should be given separate grant for school building rent and expenditure.

3. Repeal the right of the managers to incorporate any provision of his choice in the service register.

4. The Government should have control over the appointment and dismissal of teachers.

\textsuperscript{333} Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.40
\textsuperscript{334} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.102
\textsuperscript{335} The Mathrubhumi, September 27, 1939
\textsuperscript{336} Ibid, August 17, 1939
\textsuperscript{337} Ibid, August 26, September 6, 1939
\textsuperscript{338} Ibid, September 14, 1939
\textsuperscript{339} Ibid, September 17, 1939
\textsuperscript{340} Ibid, September 20, 1939
\textsuperscript{341} Ibid, September 27, 1939
5. Provisions should be made to protect the interest of the teachers who are dismissed unjustly.

6. Prevent the irregularities in training selection through definite provision and protect the untrained teachers from the exploitation of the managers and inspecting officers.

7. Teachers should be given the right to serve their mother land with pride and self respect.

8. Ensure the upliftment of education by developing a healthy relation between the teachers and the inspecting officers.

The conference protested against the attempt made by the inspecting officers to make the hartal a failure and expressed anger over the managers who are acting as their puppets. It decided to resist any attempt on the part of managers and department to victimize those teachers who take part in the hartal. Above all in order to compensate the regular work of the hartal day, October 7th was decided to be a working day\textsuperscript{342}.

On 25\textsuperscript{th} September 1939 the teachers of Chirakkal taluk successfully observed the hartal\textsuperscript{343}. All teachers except some teacher managers, managers relatives and some others who were not conscious of the union, rallied behind the union. But the management and the department tried to defeat the agitation. The managers and the inspecting officers used all sorts of threats and promises to discourage the teachers from hartal activities. Commenting on the same Adhyapakan observed "The inspecting officers worked more than the managers to defeat the hartal. ... They brainwashed many managers and turned them against the teachers\textsuperscript{344}. But the teachers withstood all their measures adopted by the managers and the department. In 500 schools more than 1800 teachers observed hartal\textsuperscript{345}. Thus 70\% of the teachers participated in it. Most of the schools remained closed. The teachers who refused to participate in the hartal were picketed in 52 centres. Consequently 8 schools were forced to observe hartal\textsuperscript{346}. The police were present everywhere. The managers and the inspecting officers

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid, September 29, 1939
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid, September 26, 1939
\textsuperscript{344} Adhyapakan, Volume 2, October 1939
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid
\textsuperscript{346} The Mathrubhumi, September 29, 1939
tried their best to break the hartal. The taluk senior deputy inspector tried to conduct the annual inspection of the Kuttikkav South school at Edakkad centre on the hartal day. But he was picketed by the teachers\(^\text{347}\). Even in the absence of teachers, schools were kept opened by the managers. They took the attendance of the students and then allowed them to return home\(^\text{348}\). The managers suspended or expelled teachers in different parts of the taluk some of them who were parents of teachers expelled them from schools as well as from their homes\(^\text{349}\). But the hartal had great support. There was an instance of parents rebuking the teacher who refused to participate in the hartal\(^\text{350}\). Thus the teachers hartal at Chirakkal taluk proved to be a great success.

The teachers union in different parts of Malabar congratulated the Chirakkal union for the hartal and asked the government to accept the demands in the hartal memorial\(^\text{351}\). The district Teachers union sent a telegram seeking government interference stating that other wise the union would be ready for an agitation\(^\text{352}\). The MATU council met at Kannur asked the government to stop teachers oppression or the teachers of Malabar will be forced to go on a strike. It authorized the executive committee to organize a strike all over Malabar or taluk after taluk by giving one-week notice to the government to get the unions demands accepted\(^\text{353}\). The teachers of Kottayam taluk union expressed their happiness over the success of hartal but protested against the oppression of teachers who participated in it by the managers and the department. It requested the government to issue an order before 31st October by accepting the teachers demands in the hartal memorial and also by repealing the actions taken against the teachers, or else the teachers of Kottayam taluk will organize a strike\(^\text{354}\). The Kurumbranad and Kazargod taluk aided teachers union expressed happiness over the hartal victory and invited the attention of the congress ministry on the teachers

\(347\) Ibid
\(348\) Ibid, September 30, 1939
\(349\) Ibid, September 29, 1939
\(350\) Ibid, October 25, 1939. The teachers of Edachovva school who signed the hartal pledge refused to participate in the hartal. The parents and the public criticised their stand. They argued that education of their children under such teachers would be injurious to their future and therefore refused to send them to the school. Thus the teacher apologized and promised in writing to obey the instruction of the union in future
\(351\) Ibid, September 29, 1939
\(352\) Ibid
\(353\) Ibid, September 27, 1939
\(354\) Ibid, October 3, 1939
oppression due to the hartal\textsuperscript{355}. A meeting of the North Malabar District congress committee under K.T. Kunhiraman Nambiar brought the attention of the Government in Chirakkal hartal and asked to accept the demands of the teachers\textsuperscript{356}. But the government in a reply to Swami Ananda Teerta expressed dissatisfaction over the teachers resorting to hartal as a method of agitation\textsuperscript{357}.

In spite of the measures adopted by the managers and the inspecting officers, the teachers hartal proved to be a great success. Majority of the schools remained closed practically on that day. It really infuriated the managers as well as the department officers. The Chirakkal taluk managers association asked the teachers to apologise or to face legal action\textsuperscript{358}. K.V. Kannan Nair president of the Association blamed the union for organizing hartal without consulting their association\textsuperscript{359}. But T.C. Narayanan Nambiar in his reply argued that the hartal was not against the managers and that the teachers were ready to make elementary education more effective even when the schools were closed by the managers\textsuperscript{360}.

The teachers who gave leadership to the hartal were punished. P.M. Kuhi raman Nambiar, the president of the Teachers union was suspended from Azhikode south Higher elementary school\textsuperscript{361}. Three other teachers of the same school were also suspended. But the remaining teachers of the school demanded that the teachers should be reinstated or else they would go for a strike. They failed to get a reply. Thus 17 teachers including the head master and three women teachers struck work. The manager refused to turn up. The school had a strength of 700 students. The head master handed over the key to the public. As the school remained closed, the people asked the students to return home\textsuperscript{362}. O.K. Raman Nambiar, the president of the Azheekode branch was suspended from Azheekode west School, P.V. Kunhiraman the secretary of the union was dismissed from Kiayafat Ul Islam Madrassa. Teachers struck work in both these centres\textsuperscript{363}. A rival school was opened against he Kiayafat Ul Islam Madrassa. At Azheekode, Vayal higher elementary school, M. Ragavan and P.Chathu Nambiar

\textsuperscript{355} Ibid, October 11, 1939
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid, October 4, 1939
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid, October 6, 1939
\textsuperscript{358} Ibid, October 12, 1939
\textsuperscript{359} Ibid, October 13, 1939
\textsuperscript{360} Ibid
\textsuperscript{361} Ibid, October 7, 1939
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid, October 8, 1939
\textsuperscript{363} Ibid, October 10, 1939
were suspended. The remaining seven teachers refused to apologise and struck work. A parent meeting demanded the repeal of the order. But the manager refused to accept it. Thus a committee was formed to bring the matter to the attention of the government and efforts were made to open a rival school. From Azheekode North higher elementary school P. Gopala Sarma was suspended. Here three other teachers struck work. A public meeting under Potheri Madhavan demanded the repeal of the suspension. But the manager remained obstinate. Thus another meeting was convened and demanded that the teachers be reinstated before 12th November or decided to take steps to ensure the education of the students. Consequently here also a rival school was opened. The policy of punishment and the resistance of the teachers and the public continued.

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

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364 Ibid, October 18, 1939
365 Ibid, October 25, 1939
366 Ibid, November 12, 1939
367 Ibid, November 24, 1939
368 Ibid, October 11, 13, 18, 25 and December 21, 1939.
369 Ibid, October 3, 1939
370 Ibid, October 11, 1939
371 Ibid, October 4, 1939
expressed their sympathy over the teachers oppression in Chirakkal taluk. They demanded changes in elementary education rules and declared that otherwise teachers would be ready for a strike\textsuperscript{372}. The Ponnani taluk teachers union supported the Chirakkal hartal and expressed their willingness for a strike\textsuperscript{373}.

The teachers hartal proved to be a great success. But a large number of teachers were either suspended or dismissed. Several teachers were given notice for certificate suspension for organizing picketing on the hartal day\textsuperscript{374}. In Azheekode branch alone 51 teachers were expelled\textsuperscript{375}. As a result of the hartal 65 teachers of 20 schools were suspended or dismissed\textsuperscript{376}.

Teachers in different parts of Malabar demanded that the policy of oppressing teachers should be stopped. Various unions of taluk passed resolutions for strike. Majority of the people of Chirakkal taluk which was the cradle of left movement, stood behind the teachers. The situation became very critical. Meanwhile R.M Statham visited Kannur to enquire about the hartal. He had discussions with T.C. Narayanan Namibiar at Choyees sea side Hotel on 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} October 1939. He promised to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the teachers\textsuperscript{377}. C.J.Varkey, the education minister reached Kannur and promised to take steps to stop the teachers oppression. He agreed for a compromise talk to admit the demands of the teachers\textsuperscript{378}. But before that the Rajaji Ministry at Madras resigned.

Adhyapakan, the journal of the teachers union evaluated the impact of the hartal as follows\textsuperscript{379}. The hartal made those people who never cared for the grievances of the teachers more active. Common people rallied behind the teachers and this rapport with the people instilled a spirit of self confidence among the teachers...... The Adhyapakan concluded. “The civil and criminal cases registered after hartal have shown that the teachers could not work under the private management system. They realised that a struggle is inevitable to change

\textsuperscript{372} Ibid, October 11, 1939
\textsuperscript{373} Ibid, August 26, October 26, 1939
\textsuperscript{374} Ibid, December 3, 1939
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid, October 13, 1939
\textsuperscript{376} Ibid, November 4, 1939
\textsuperscript{377} Ibid, October 7,11,39, 1939
\textsuperscript{378} P.R. Namibiar, ‘Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodathu’ In Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi, (Quilon,1975)
\textsuperscript{379} Adhyapakan, Book 1,Vol 2, October, 1939
the existing evils in the education Act to spread literacy with pride and peace. It also inspired them to sacrifice their life to obtain the objective.  

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

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

The union clearly realized the necessity of an agitation against the government. They wanted to show the department and the government the unity and strength of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar. The union also realized the importance of mass support for their agitation. It was pointed out that a strike would hinder the education of the students for a long period. The advice given by political leaders and mass organization was also on the same line. They were looking for a method of agitation, which would not effect the education of the students. Thus a new technique of agitation was designed. The boycott of teachers association meetings (Gurujana Samajam) which was the very symbol of British bureaucracy was adopted as a method of agitation. This method that would not affect the regular work in the school was supported by majority of the
As per department direction, the elementary school teachers of all categories - labour, board and aided - used to meet compulsorily at different centres. These meetings were called teachers association or Gurujana Samajam. These meetings were convened by the department officers in any one of the Saturdays in a month. Hence it was also know as the Durbar of Deputy Inspectors. Teachers of about 50 schools attended the meeting and majority of them who participated in these meeting were aided elementary school teachers. As the meeting day was scheduled on a working day, absence was illegal. So it was compulsory for the teachers to participate in these meetings. The department and the management had the power to take action against the teachers who refused to attend the meeting.

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

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386 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit
387 The Mathrubhumi, July 18, 1936 & August 4, 1938. The deputy inspector would preside over these meetings and would make a long speech in a wide variety of subjects. In his absence one of the teachers, very often a board teacher presided over the meeting. But when the inspector come, he was bound to vacate the chair, otherwise he will be punished. The meeting usually began with a prayer. Before 1930 it was the recitation of Bhupalamangalam. The front seats of the meeting were reserved for the Board school teachers. The government orders and circulars were read and explained to the managers and teachers. After that one of the teachers would take a model class and another one would present an essay on which others expressed their opinion. Sometimes there would be entertainment programmes
388 Thikkodiyan, Aranqu Kanaatha Natan (Kottayam, 1991). p. 69
389 The Mathrubhumi, November 9, 1937
390 Interview with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar at his residence in Kannur on 28 March 1993
Now the teachers union decided to administer very intensively their decision to boycott the teachers association meeting. And committees were formed to enforce the same^391. Thus the aided elementary teachers of Malabar came forward to start the first agitation against, the British rule during the war period^392. The boycott of teachers associations began on 7th October 1939. The office bearers of the association began to resign their post as per the direction of the union. They argued that this association proved inefficient in achieving its objectives and were retained with teachers contributions but denied their right to elect its president^393. The department and the managers got ready to face the new situation. Efforts were made to discourage the teachers and also to inform the authorities about the new developments^394. The association meetings were boycotted at Tellicherry and Kozhikode. In the Hindu range meeting at Tellicherry out of 203 only 53 teachers attended. Thirty one among them were managers and their relatives. In the mappila range out of 90 only 27 teachers attended the meeting. There were teachers picketing in both these centres^395.

The Kurumbranad taluk teachers union welcomed the decision to boycott the association meetings^396. The Palakkad taluk teachers union decided to begin the boycott movement^397. Thus the boycott and picketing spread to various centres of Malabar such as Vallikkad, Mandaratur, Thiruvallur, Perambra, Cheruvallur, Rayiranallur, Kadachira and Madayi^398. Managers began to take disciplinary action against those who boycotted Samajams. Teachers began to be suspended and some of them were given dismissal notice^399. M.P.Krishna Menon, the joint secretary of the MATU and the president of the Ponnani taluk teachers union and his collogues K.Kutty Sankaran Nair were dismissed from Chembra Coronation Higher elementary school^400. The MATU executive meeting held at Malappuram asked the authorities to stop teachers oppression and decided to intensify the boycott movement^401. The Valluvanad taluk teachers union asked the

^391 The Mathrubhumi, October 3, 1939
^392 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit
^393 The Mathrubhumi, October 10,24,26, 1939
^394 Ibid, October 7,10, 1939
^395 Ibid, October 10, 1939
^396 Ibid, October 11, 1939
^397 Ibid, October 20, 1939
^398 Ibid, October 18,24,26, 1939
^399 Ibid, October 11, 1939
^400 Ibid, November 4, 1939
^401 Ibid, October 26, 1939
teachers to be prepared for an agitation and decided to boycott their association meetings. The Eranad Taluk teachers union decided to organize a strong propaganda for the boycott movement. In this backdrop, the government withdrew the recognition given to the MATU on the ground that it inspired the teachers to involve in undesirable activities such as hartal, strike and boycott of teachers association meetings. It was declared that the recognition was repealed on the basis of the provision in the government order. It was also declared that teachers who continue as members of unrecognized union were to be prevented from serving as teachers in recognized schools.

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

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402 Ibid, November 3, 1939
403 Ibid, November 1, 1939
404 Ibid, November 8, 1939
405 G.O.(Education) Madras, No.416, 24th February 1939, TNA
406 Mathrubhumi Weekly, November 12, 1939
407 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.105
408 Fortnightly report, Second Half of December 1939
409 Fortnightly report, First Half of December 1939
410 The Mathrubhumi, November 16, 1939
411 Ibid
412 Ibid, November 22, 1939
including two women teachers boycotted the meeting. At Ramanattukara, 33 teachers boycotted the meeting, organized a picketing at the gate and then went to attend the taluk conference. At Changaram Kulam Hindu centre in Kuttiadi, out of 51 members only 7 Board teachers and 4 teacher managers attended the meeting. At Mannur centre out of 35 members 26 teachers boycotted and therefore the meeting didn't take place. At Panur Hindu boys range, out of 230 members only 64 attended the meeting. Among them there were only 15 elementary teachers. At Koodali centre, out of 74 members only 5 Board teachers attended the meeting. Here it is to be noted that all 14 teacher managers boycotted the meeting. At Nadapuram Chalappuram Girls centre out of 49 members only 21 teachers attended. 3 among them were board teachers and two teachers were teacher managers

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

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

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

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413 Ibid, November 23, 1939
414 Ibid, November 22, 1939
415 Ibid, November 8, 1939
416 Ibid, November 18, 1939
417 Ibid, November 22, 1939
Chidambaranath Higher elementary school for involving in the boycott movement\textsuperscript{418}. It was also declared that the Director or the Divisional Inspector has the right to suspend the certificate of teachers who refused to attend two consecutive association meetings\textsuperscript{419}. The south Malabar DEO and the deputy inspectors warned the teachers about the consequences of their action and required a statement that they would not boycott the association meetings\textsuperscript{420}. As per the advice of the school inspectress, the certificate of K.M.Krishnan, a Girls school Teachers got suspended for one year. It made the teachers further furious and they began to boycott the meetings of Girls school also\textsuperscript{421}. Meanwhile the director had discussion with the leaders of Valluvanad taluk union. He sympathized with their demands except that of monthly salary. The union leaders promised that they would try their best to end the agitation\textsuperscript{422}. But as the oppression of teachers continued all over Malabar, the Valluvanad teachers conference held at Cherpulasseri gave up their earlier promise and decided to intensity their agitation\textsuperscript{423}.

The teachers agitation became more active. At Mattannur Mappila centre, out of 38 members only 7 teachers attended the meeting\textsuperscript{424}. The boycott and picketing spread to several centres such as Chengalayi, Mayyil, Kannadiparamb, Echur, Kadachira and Madayi\textsuperscript{425}. At the Vatakara girls centre meeting, out of 140 members only 50 teachers attended the meeting, that too were board teachers. Here the teachers organized a picketing at the gate by lying on the ground. The teachers of Ganapathy Vilasam girls school stepped over their bodies to enter the Hall in front of the public. The public meeting held at Kottapparamb protested against it and refused to send children to their school. Consequently all 138 students except one boycotted the school\textsuperscript{426}. The Kozhikode taluk teachers conference gave the warning that they would be forced to start a strike from 4\textsuperscript{th} June 1940 if the department continued oppression of the teachers\textsuperscript{427}. The Ponnani
taluk teachers union decided to intensify their agitation428. The situation in Malabar became worse. At one place a teacher who came to attend the meeting was ridiculed and scolded by the union activist. They accompanied him with burning torch in the daylight making all sorts of sounds. At another place the deputy inspector stepped over the bodies of the teachers volunteers to enter the Hall429. The police also resorted repressive measures against the teachers. At Thalipparamba, the police plucked off the moustache of Govinda Varier a Higher Elementary teacher of Akiparamb School430.

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

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

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

428 Ibid, December 3, 1939
429 Ibid, December 14, 1939
430 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.219. Police justified their action by asking whether it was the right for an elementary teacher to have such a long moustache
431 The Mathrubhumi, December 13, 1939
433 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.220. The teachers raised the slogan “Certificate pullanu” teaching is service to the nation and service to the nation is the aim of life”
Vellinezhi, Kulukkallur, Vilayur, Vallappuzha and Rayiranellur. Police presence was there in all these centres. At Rayiranellur out of 57 teachers 14 teachers boycotted. At Vilayur Mappila centre out of 50, 40 teachers boycotted the meeting\(^{435}\). Association meetings were boycotted at Vengara, Thirurangadi, Cheruvallur and Kongad\(^{436}\). The boycott and picketing lead to the arrest and imprisonment of teachers. The first arrest took place at picketing centres like Chovva, Thiruvellur and Pannur. Thus several teachers were arrested and put behind the bars. K.K. Kunhirama Panikker, M.P. Achuthan, K.K Naryayanan Nambiar, N.Chathukutty, K.C. Sreedharan, T.K Raman, K.V.Govinda Menon, P.C Ramachandran, C.K.Kunchanbu and P.V. Kunhiraman were arrested at Chovva centre in Kannur\(^{437}\). They were the first batch of volunteers who were arrested for boycotting and picketing in Chirakkal taluk. They were given 4 months rigorous imprisonment\(^{438}\). The union journal published a special note congratulating these teachers\(^{439}\). P.V. Kunhiraman one among them was a Teacher manager as well as secretary of the branch union. Here it is to be noted that there were many such teacher managers at that time who were against the private management system and loyal to the teachers movement\(^{440}\). Several teachers were arrested in Kurumbranad taluk also\(^{441}\). The students of Karakkad Hindu boys school observed hartal, when their teachers P.V. Pokinan was arrested\(^{442}\). All these teachers were given three months rigorous imprisonment and also a fine of Rs 25 or two weeks simple imprisonment\(^{443}\). There was intense picketing at Panur centre in Kottayam taluk leading to arrest\(^{444}\). When K.K. Velayudhan Adiyodi was arrested, his students, in spite of their examination marched to Panur with black flags to participate in a protest meeting\(^{445}\). There was wide spread protest against the

\(^{435}\) The Mathrubhumi, December 24, 1939

\(^{436}\) Ibid

\(^{437}\) Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.43

\(^{438}\) The Mathrubhumi, December 21, 1939 & Adhyapakan, October 1939

\(^{439}\) Adhyapakan, Book 1, Vol 2, October, 1939

\(^{440}\) P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.105


\(^{442}\) Ibid

\(^{443}\) Ibid, December 27, 1939


\(^{445}\) Ibid
policy of oppression towards the teachers. The parents arranged protest meetings in different parts of Malabar against the arrest of teachers. Thus meetings were convened at various places like Uralungal, Kannukkara, Kunnummakkara, Onchiyam, Karakkad and Panur\(^\text{446}\). Highlighting the arrest and imprisonment of teachers Adhyapakan wrote “The imperialist Government hiding behind the managers and the department officers had been preventing the educational upliftment of the land. Now it appeared in its real form to prevent the progress of the teachers union….. The attempt to enforce police rule in the holy temple of education prove that the government was determined to ruin the education of the little kids of the land\(^\text{447}\).

The department and the management tried to suppress the agitation. But the teachers stood firm. Hundreds of teachers were there in all picketing centres. Common people began to assemble there to assist the teachers. Those who picketed were arrested and Managers began to take disciplinary action against those who boycotted Samajams. To defeat the picketing some managers tried to keep teachers in the meeting hall at night. But the people reached the centres early in the morning before the volunteers came, got the teachers out and led them to their house\(^\text{448}\). Some of the inspectors also used such techniques to save themselves from picketing. But they were compelled to return escorted by people with burning torches even in the day light making all sorts of sounds. The DEO C.V.Govindan Nambiar had to face this situation several times\(^\text{449}\). A large number of teachers were arrested and put behind the bars. The teachers led jathas singing songs depicting their arrest and imprisonment. Their agitation acquired popular support.

The government and the management continued their policy of oppression towards the teachers. The recognition given to various taluk teachers union was cancelled\(^\text{450}\). The suspension, dismissal, certificate cancellation, arrest and imprisonment of teachers also continued. 123 teachers were arrested and punished\(^\text{451}\). Thus T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar were

\(\text{446} \) Ibid, December 24, 1939  
\(\text{447} \) Adhyapakan, Book 1,Vol 2, October, 1939  
\(\text{448} \) Thikkodiyan , op.cit. p. 123  
\(\text{449} \) P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.220  
\(\text{450} \) The Mathrubhumi, December 24,29, 1939  
\(\text{451} \) Ibid, December 1939, January 1940 & Fortnightly report, Fist half of January 1940. See appendix IV
put in Jail. 79 Teachers got their certificate suspended or cancelled. Thus union leader like P.M.Kunhiraman Nambiar, T.C.Narayanan Nambiar, P.R Nambiar, V.Ramunni and C.C.Nair lost their Certificates. Many teachers were suspended. A large number of teachers were suspended or dismissed in different parts of Malabar. About 800 teachers lost their job. Thus altogether more than 7000 teachers were punished. But the union stood firm in the agitation. Teachers meeting in different parts of Malabar asked the union leadership to declare a strike at the earliest. As it was the war period, the agitation got the active support of the national movement. K.Damodaran promised the support of the workers to the teachers agitation. Peasant meetings sympathised with the teachers movement and passed resolutions requesting congress to begin agitation against the government. The AICC was requested to interfere in the issue because it was complained that the teachers were encouraged to resort to direct action.

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

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452 Ibid, December 1939, January 1940. See appendix V
453 Ibid, October, November, December 1939, February, March 1940. See appendix VI
454 Ibid, November, December 1939, January, February, March 1940. See appendix VII
455 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.106
456 Ibid
457 The Mathrubhumi, November 29, 1939
458 Ibid, December 13, 1939
459 AICC Papers, p.12, 1939,40,(Nehru Memorial Museum and Library,New Delhi) Hereafter NMML New Delhi.
460 The Mathrubhumi, December 22, 1939
461 Ibid, December 27, 1939
Palakkad teachers was held at Pattambi on 24th December 1939. This meeting under V.Ramunni welcomed the strike decision and congratulated the teachers persecuted in their agitation. The third regional conference attended by teachers of Eranad and Kozhikode taluk was held at Ramanattukara on 30th December 1939. This meeting under H. Manjunadha Rao welcomed the strike decision and informed their willingness to do the same.

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

Prominent leaders came forward to end this agitation in Malabar. V.R.Nayanar, the secretary of the servants of India society invited MLAs, MLCs, DEOs, District board president and the representatives of managers association and teachers union for a meeting to discuss the issue. This meeting was held at Chalappuram PSV Hall on 30th December 1939. Swami Ananda Teertha and leaders like Potheri Madhavan, A Chandu, E. Kannan, P.Madhavan Nair, K.A Damodharan Menon and P.R.Nambiar attended the meeting. A large number of teachers and managers were also there for the meeting. C.K.Govindan Nair presided over the meeting. This meeting asked the teachers to stop their boycott and picketing and requested the government to release the teachers, to restore their certificates and to redress the grievances of the teachers. P.R. Nambiar promised to stop their agitation, if the government was ready to give a favourable
response. S.D. Ramanuja Ayyankar who reached Calicut also gave a talk in this
meeting. A committee consisting of K. Kelappan C. K. Govindan Nair, E. Kannan,
and P. Madhavan Nair was constituted under the leadership of V. R. Nayanar to
begin the compromise talks and to end the agitation. The teachers union also
supported this compromise move. The union president in his statement showed
how the teachers agitation in Malabar became a state issue that could gain the
sympathy of teachers Association in different parts of the state. It asked all
teachers associations and guilds in the Madras state to convene meetings before
10th January 1940 to request the government and the director to redress the
grievances of the teachers especially the teachers of Malabar and also to advise
the teachers of Malabar to stop all their direct actions\textsuperscript{469}.

At this stage, the Malabar collector C. F. V. Williams advised the teachers to
desist from strikes and to bring grievances if any, before the authorities in an
orderly and constitutional manner\textsuperscript{470}.

Under these circumstances the strike committee of the union met at Calicut
on 6th January 1940. It evaluated the situation. The SITU and the educationalists
in Malabar made sincere effort to end the agitation. The public and the news
papers showed great interest in the matter. Moreover the Malabar collector
showed sympathetic attitude towards the teachers. All these prompted the union
to postpone the strike which was to take place on 10th January 1940\textsuperscript{471}.

Though the proposed strike was postponed the teachers continued their
boycott and picketing. Thus arrest and imprisonment continued in different parts
of Malabar. Efforts were made to strengthen the agitation at several centres\textsuperscript{472}.

There was widespread protest against the teacher oppression. Public
meetings were held at places like Quilandy, Chokli, Panniyannur, Kannur,
Mattannur, Nadapuram, Trikitiri, Thirur and Vettath Puthiyangadi\textsuperscript{473}. Several school
observed hartal to protest against the arrest of teachers\textsuperscript{474}. Kottayam taluk
congress committee protested against the suspension, dismissal, certificate
cancellation and debarring and the arrest and punishment of teachers. At the

\textsuperscript{469} Ibid, January 5, 1940

\textsuperscript{470} Ibid

\textsuperscript{471} Ibid, January 9, 1940 & Fortnightly report, First Half of January 1940

\textsuperscript{472} Ibid, January 6, 1940

\textsuperscript{473} Ibid, January 9, 10, 11, 1940

\textsuperscript{474} Ibid, January 11, 12, 1940
same time the union was asked to stop strike so as to enable the peoples committee to take up the compromise talks.  

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

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

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

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475 Ibid, January 9, 1940
476 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.107
477 The Mathrubhumi, January 13, 1940
478 Ibid
479 Ibid, January 13,14,17,18,23, 1940.
480 Ibid, January 17,19, 1940
481 Ibid, January 18, 1940
Under these circumstances, the MATU strike committee met at Calicut on 16\textsuperscript{th} January 1940. It concluded that the promise of a sympathetic consideration of the grievance of the teachers held out in the government communiqué was substantiated in the amicable attitude shown by the authorities in dealing with the teachers association meeting through out Malabar except Kizhal and Thalipparamba. This change in the government attitude towards the teachers agitation was acknowledged. It also viewed the efforts made by SITU and Malabar committee as highly encouraging and so considered their appeal to end the boycott movement. So the union wanted to give an opportunity to the SITU and the Malabar committee to make their efforts successful\textsuperscript{482}. The MATU suspended all direct action including picketing and boycott of teachers association on 16\textsuperscript{th} January 1940\textsuperscript{483}. Thus the teachers agitation which continued for a long period of 101 days came to an end. As a result of this agitation several teachers were arrested and imprisoned. Many of them lost their certificates. A large number of teachers were suspended or dismissed. Most of the union leaders were among them.

The Director of Education had promised to redress the grievances of the teachers and also agreed to accept a memorandum of their actual grievances. The SITU president Yajna Narayana Ayyar and its secretary S.D Ramanuja Ayyankar reached Calicut on 20\textsuperscript{th} January 1940. They had discussion with prominent public leaders like V.R. Nayanaar, C.K Govindan Nair, and K.Madhava Menon and also with the managers and the union leaders of teachers. They attended the meeting of the Nayanayar Committee held at the DMRT office and gave all necessary help to prepare the teachers memorandum to be submitted to the government\textsuperscript{484}. The union submitted the memorandum containing their immediate demands and showed their willingness to discuss their problems. But the director refused to talk with the union as it was not a recognized one. He argued that as an unrecognized union, the MATU had no right to submit a memorandum to the government. He declared that if the teachers who had been punished apologized and gave a guarantee of good conduct in future, immediate steps would be taken to consider their case personally\textsuperscript{485}.

\textsuperscript{482} Ibid, January 18, 1940
\textsuperscript{483} Fortnightly report, Second Half of January 1940
\textsuperscript{484} The Mathrubhumi, January 23, 1940
\textsuperscript{485} G.O.(Home) Madras, No.1270,12\textsuperscript{th} March 1940, TNA
The union viewed it as unfortunate because such a statement would endanger the emerging spirit of compromise\(^{486}\). As per the statement the teachers were asked to approach the department directly and not through their association. It was viewed as an attempt to crush the union and also to weaken public interference. It is to be noted that the Director had had discussions with the union in 936, when it was an unrecognized one.

However the department and the government continued their policy of oppression. M.V. Narayanan Nambiar, K.V.Narayanan Nambiar V.Kunhiraman Nambiar, and C.Achuthan Nambiar who were arrested at Mayyil were given 3 months rigorous imprisonment and one month simple imprisonment\(^ {487}\). Five of the teachers arrested at Trikkitiri were given 3 months rigorous imprisonment. One month simple imprisonment and also a fine of Rs 10. K.Keshavan who was fined Rs 15 refused to remit the amount. How ever he was let free\(^ {488}\). The teachers who were arrested for picketing at Thiruvallur submitted an appeal but their punishment was retained\(^ {489}\).

The managers supported all these measures of teachers oppression. Two teachers of Pernjanam East Hindu Higher elementary school were dismissed for boycotting the teachers association meetings\(^ {490}\). V. Kumaran Nair the Head master of Kottpadam Hindu elementary school and his colleagues P.Unnikrishnan Nair and K. Balakrishna Menon boycotted their association meeting. The manager asked them to apologise to the department. But they refused and got dismissed\(^ {491}\). T. Kunhikrishnan Thangal was dismissed in Mandaratur elementary school\(^ {492}\).

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

\(^ {486}\) Mathrubhumi Weekly, January 28, 1940
\(^ {487}\) Mathrubhumi, February 3, 1940
\(^ {488}\) Ibid, February 4, 1940
\(^ {489}\) Ibid, February 6, 13, 1940
\(^ {490}\) Ibid, January 28, 1940
\(^ {491}\) Ibid, February 3, 1940
\(^ {492}\) Ibid, February 7, 1940
were dismissed. Teachers were asked to resign from the union. But they refused to obey the order. Thus V.Kelappan Nambiar, T.Ananda Varier, T.V.Govinda Varier and K.V. Krishanan were dismissed at Thalipparamba, Trichanbalam East school. Twelve teachers of Puliyanchery girls school, Kuruvangad Hindu boys school, Puliancheri Hindu Boys school, Muchukunnu North Hindu boys school and Puduppanam boys school in Kurumbranad taluk were dismissed. The Deputy Inspector demanded monthly report containing the details of teachers who were members of teachers union, congress and the Muslim league. The managers were also asked not to employ members of unrecognized union in recognized schools. Thus the news of the dismissal of teachers spread wide. At Kollam women teachers like T. Tirumalakutty, Kousu and Madhavi were dismissed. At Tellicherry T.K.Chandupanikker and M Sarada were dismissed.

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

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

Thus a large number of teachers were dismissed for becoming members of an unrecognized union. Based on the written instruction from the inspecting officers hundreds of teachers were dismissed in 6 taluks of Malabar. Teachers
were forced to apologize to retain their profession\textsuperscript{503}. Some of them were forced to resign from their union\textsuperscript{504}. Public meetings were organized at several places in Malabar such as Alanallur, Valanchery, Chengottukav, Kuruvaangad, Poyilkav, and Edakkara to express protest against the teachers oppression and also to ask the government to redress their grievances\textsuperscript{505}. In certain schools students observed hartal against the dismissal of teachers\textsuperscript{506}. At Chemanchery east school, E Kunhappa Nambiar who was not a member of the teachers union resigned his post in protest against the dismissal of teachers\textsuperscript{507}. More than 500 teachers were thus dismissed. At several places like Sreekrishnapuram, Madai, Vatakara, Chemanchery and Iringath schools were closed. Thus 15 schools were closed and more than 100 school were effected. Rival schools were opened in certain places. The whole educational activities in Malabar were thus paralyzed\textsuperscript{508}.

When the oppression of the teachers spread all over Malabar V.R. Nayanar took active steps to mobilize public opinion in favour of the teachers. These efforts at the time of governor's rule in Madras were also supported by the congress leaders\textsuperscript{509}. The KPCC meeting held on February 15 1940 under Muhammed Abdurahman unanimously passed a resolution on the teachers agitation in Malabar\textsuperscript{510}. The KPCC secretary P. Narayanan Nair made a statement highlighting the teachers oppression in Malabar even after the withdrawal of their agitation. Thus the KPCC asked the government to stop these measures and to recognize the teachers union. It also demanded the dismissed teachers to be reinstated, release of teachers from jail and the redressal of the basic grievances of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar. Above all it was decided to observe a teachers day all over Kerala on 24\textsuperscript{th} February 1940 to highlight the necessity of ending the teachers agitation in Malabar\textsuperscript{511}. The day was observed throughout Malabar. Public meetings were convened at several places like Nilambur, Tirur, Engandiyur, Kuttattur, Elathur, Onchiyam, Chokli, Prapram, Kathirur, Edakkad, Pappinisseri, Thalipparamba, Azheekode, Kayaralam, Mayyil, Kodokkad, and

\textsuperscript{503} Ibid, February 8, 1940  
\textsuperscript{504} Ibid, February 3,9,24,March 1, 1940  
\textsuperscript{505} Ibid, February 8,9, 1940  
\textsuperscript{506} Ibid, February 9, 1940  
\textsuperscript{507} Ibid, February 17, 1940  
\textsuperscript{508} Ibid, February 29, March 1, 1940  
\textsuperscript{509} Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.46  
\textsuperscript{510} The Mathrubhumi, February 17, 1940  
\textsuperscript{511} Ibid, February 21, 1940
Karivellur and passed resolutions requesting the director to interfere in the issue to redress the grievances of the teachers. These meetings protested against the arrest and oppression of the teachers. It demanded the release of teachers, cancellation of punishments, recognition of the union and the redressal of the teachers grievances.

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

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

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512 Ibid, March 1, 1940
513 G.O.(Home) Madras, No.1270,12th March 1940, TNA
514 The Mathrubhumi, February 9, 1940
515 Ibid
516 Ibid, February 14, 1940
517 Ibid, February 23,24, March 1, 1940
518 AIICC Papers, p. 12, 1939,40, (NMML, New Delhi)
government. It was responded sympathetically. It was informed that as the boycott and picketing was over the government had stopped the suspension of teachers certificates. It was also declared that the taluk teachers union would be recognized on certain conditions and teaching grant would be sanctioned to the teachers who were members of the union. More over inspecting officers were given instructions to prevent the dismissal of teachers and promised to distribute the school grant of the current year by March 31\(^{st}\) itself. All these steps reflected the sympathetic attitude of the department and the government\(^{519}\). P.R. Nambiar welcomed the government stand and requested the redressal of the basic grievances of the teacher and also asked to release the teachers from jail\(^{520}\). Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Eranad, Valluvanad, and Ponnani taluk requested for union recognition\(^{521}\). As a result of these developments the Coimbatore region Deputy Director RM Savoor reached Calicut and discussed the teachers problems with V.R Nayanar and P.R Nambiar\(^{522}\). Now the government agreed to release all teachers except the leaders of agitation based on a written apology for the past and an undertaking for the future\(^{523}\). All teachers except 4 rejected the offer\(^{524}\). P.R. Nambiar and V.Ramunni were acting as the leaders of the strike committee. All other leaders were in Jail. Meanwhile leaders like T.C.Narayanan Nambiar and P. Anandan Nambiar came out of the jail\(^{525}\). Thus points of compromise were thoroughly discussed. Consequently an executive committee of the MATU was held at Calicut on 25\(^{th}\) and 26\(^{th}\) February 1940\(^{526}\). The present situation was reviewed and the following points were noted. It was the sympathetic note reflected in the collectors statement, government communiqué and the assurance given by the SITU and the Malabar committee that prompted teachers to stop their direct action on January 16\(^{th}\) 1940. But as per the written instruction of the inspecting officers, teachers were dismissed in 6 taluks of the district. They were forced to resign from the union. The Nayanar committee brought the matter to the attention of the government. Consequently department stopped the policy of oppression. Instructions were given to stop the dismissal of

\(^{519}\) The Mathrubhumi, February 21,23,24,March 1, 1940  
\(^{520}\) Ibid, February 27, 1940  
\(^{521}\) Ibid, March 9, 1940  
\(^{522}\) Ibid, February 28, 1940  
\(^{523}\) Fortnightly report , First Half of December 1939  
\(^{524}\) G.O.(Home) Madras , No.1270,12\(^{th}\) March 1940, TNA  
\(^{525}\) The Mathrubhumi, February 27, 1940  
\(^{526}\) Ibid, February 29, 1940
teachers for being members of the union. Steps were taken to give recognition to the taluk unions. It was promised to give the teaching grant before 31st March 1940. Assurances were given on issues such as monthly salary and security of tenure. Above all union leaders were permitted to meet the authorities. Under these circumstances the union felt that it was not necessary to revive their agitation which was stopped on January 16th 1940. Thus the strike committee was dismissed and it was declared that the union had no intention to adopt illegal programmes. The taluk unions were advised to deny membership to those who violate this decision. At the same time the union requested the government to release the teachers from jail and to reinstate all teachers who lost their job due to hartal, boycott, picketing and also for being members of the union. The union also requested the government to give recognition to their taluk unions. At the same time the union requested the support of the SITU the Nayanar committee and other public organizations for getting their grievances accepted. Thus the compromise effort to settle the teachers agitation ended successfully.

The boycott of teachers association meetings was a thrilling episode in the history of the teachers movement in Malabar. This agitation prompted the government to adopt a series of measures favourable for the teachers. It was a severe blow to the arrogance and power exhibited by the department. The salary of the higher trained teachers and secondary trained teachers were increased to Rs 14 and Rs 18 respectively. The recommendation from the managers was not needed anymore for selection of teachers for training. 85% of the teaching grant was to be distributed among the teachers and the managers were asked to get the salary register signed by the teachers. The manager lost his right to dismiss teachers without giving 3 months prior notice and salary. The school grant to the managers who had to clear the salary arrears was reduced. The department sent the salary arrears directly to the teachers even in their jail address. In fact it was really a new chapter in the history of the elementary school teachers of Malabar. However the department refused to consider the case of teachers who were in jail. The Malabar collector demanded written apology from the teachers. But it was ignored. Hence the compromise talks continued. By the end of March 1940 V.R Nayanar

527 Ibid. V.R. Nayanar and Ramanuja Ayyankar played a remarkable role to make it a great success
528 Ibid. March 9, 1940
529 Ibid. March 19, 1940
530 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.47
531 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.108
and P.R Nambiar once again met the deputy Director R.M Savoor at Coimbatore. Accordingly he agreed to restore the certificates of teachers and also to recognize the taluk teachers unions. Managers were advised to reinstate the teachers who were dismissed. More over it was decided to give salary directly to the teachers in cases where it was not paid regularly. Twelve such schools were identified\(^{532}\). The MATU executive meeting held at Calicut welcomed these measures and advised the teachers to send request for the restoration of their certificates. It also decided to consult SITU for linking the taluk union with the district Teachers council\(^{533}\). The teachers agitation and the compromise efforts made by the public leaders had a profound impact. Hence the teachers continued to get more concessions. Thus the teachers of Wayand area got 50% increase in their salary\(^{534}\). Another amendment was made to the government order of 1939 which prevented the teacher from participating in politics and election. The first amendment had allowed the teachers to be members of political parties. But the present amendment permitted the secondary teachers and college teachers to participate in elections\(^{535}\). Even then the elementary teachers were denied such a right and this injustice was brought to the attention of the government\(^{536}\). The government also accepted a very important demand raised by the teachers for a long period. The 8\(^{th}\) standard examination was conducted and certificates were distributed by the inspecting officers. Here corruption bribery and nepotism had prevailed. The teachers union had been demanding since 1935 to make it a public examination. Hence the government decided to make the ESLC examination a public examination\(^{537}\). Above all attempts were made to reform the teachers association meeting\(^{538}\). The teachers agitation in Malabar had its own political results. The teachers of the villages came very close to left politics. P.R. Nambiar wrote, “Teachers began to have more respect towards the left leaders especially the communist\(^{539}\). The teachers movement emerged as a second front of the agitation against the British imperialism\(^{540}\). The teachers of Malabar were the first to

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\(^{532}\) The Mathrubhumi, March 19, 1940  
\(^{533}\) Ibid, March 22, 1940  
\(^{534}\) Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.47  
\(^{535}\) The Mathrubhumi, May 22, 1940  
\(^{536}\) Ibid, May 24, 1940  
\(^{537}\) Ibid, May 9, 1940  
\(^{538}\) Ibid, April 4, 1940  
\(^{539}\) P.R. Nambiar, ‘Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodatuthu’ In Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi, (Quilon, 1975)  
\(^{540}\) Thikkodian, ‘Oru Koodikkazhayude Orma’, P.R. Smaranika, (Calicut, 1988)
organize an agitation of civil disobedience against the British rule during the war period and emerged as strong stream of anti-imperialist movement\textsuperscript{541}.

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

\textsuperscript{541} P.R. Nambiar, ‘Malabarile Adhyapaka Prasthanam Engane Partiyodatuthu’ In \textit{Indian Communist Party Golden Jubilee, Janayugam Visheshal Prathi}, (Quilon, 1975)