CHAPTER TWO

EFFECTS AT UNIONISATION

During 1930’s Malabar became the centre stage of agitations. The Sree Narayana movement and the freedom struggle under Mahatma Gandhi had awakened the educated youth especially the village teachers of Malabar. The cruelty of the caste system and untouchability confronted by them and the message of Sree Narayana Guru had its own impact on them. The elementary school teachers were also attracted towards the ideology of nationalism\(^1\). Many of them participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The reports of the political agitations under Indian National Congress, the movements against untouchability and landlordism generated a new spirit among the teachers. It created a stir among teachers\(^2\). They could also see that various sections of the people were organizing themselves and were on the path of agitations. The aided elementary school teachers were the ‘subaltern’ class in the teaching community of Malabar. Their salary was extremely deplorable. Only those who did not get even the post of police constables or peons became teachers in elementary schools\(^3\). Hence it was demanded that the salary sanctioned by the local boards should be given to the aided teachers also\(^4\). The gains of unionisation in the postal department were highlighted and the teachers were advised to form their own union\(^5\). These teachers who used to teach the maxims that ‘Unity is strength’ to their kids day by day realized that only through union could their grievances be redressed. Thus they began to think of forming their own associations.

It was in 1930’s that the Aided Elementary school teachers started their efforts at unionization in Malabar. The Teacher Managers of the area had already formed their own association. Through their meetings and conferences, they used to ventilate their grievances before the Government\(^6\). At that time a demand was made to incorporate the aided elementary school teachers also in their

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\(^1\) P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar, ‘Vittuveezchayillatha Samara Dheeran’ in P.R. Smaranika, P.R. Anusmarana Samithi (Calicut, 1988)

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

\(^3\) Sahithya Keralam, February, 1930

\(^4\) Gurukulam, November, 1924

\(^5\) Ibid, December, 1924

\(^6\) The Mathrubhumi, April 3, 1924, January 25, 1927 and December 17, 1927
associations\textsuperscript{7}. It became a topic of discussion among teachers. But the demand was rejected as there was no provision for the same in the Educational Act of 1920\textsuperscript{8}. Consequently the teachers of Koothuparamba began to think of forming their own union\textsuperscript{9}. Thus a meeting was convened there under the leadership of K. Krishnan Nambiar and the North Malayalam District Teachers Association was formed\textsuperscript{10}. He demanded the regular payment of salary to the teachers and their security of tenure. Resolutions were passed in this meeting on issues such as representation of teachers in the Legislative Assembly and District Educational Council, increase in teaching grant, quarterly grant, P.F benefits to all teachers, the system of transfer certificate, service register and the formation of an ‘Aikya Nanaya Sangham’. Teachers meetings were convened at several places in Kottayam Taluk and representations and telegrams to the department and the Government were sent\textsuperscript{11}. The aided school teachers conference held at Thiruvangad was attended by more than 500 teachers. It emphasized the necessity of teachers union and appealed for the formation of an All Malabar Aided School Teachers association\textsuperscript{12}.

During this period people of Manappuram area of south Malabar were suffering from all sorts of caste violence and exploitation. The village teachers of this area, inspired by the ideas of Sree Narayana Guru came forward to fight against this injustice and exploitation. They also felt the need for organizing themselves and made a strong campaign among the teachers. It actually prepared the ground for the formation of the first union of aided school teachers of South Malabar. Here V.K.Kunhimamu, an elementary school teacher convened a meeting of teachers on 16 November 1931\textsuperscript{13}. It was attended by 26 teachers. Soon with the help of teachers like M.S.Nair, M.Achuthan Nair, P. Padmanabhan Nair and T.V. Narayanan Nair, the Manappuram Aided Elementary School teachers union was formed. This organization later developed into the Ponnani Taluk Aided Elementary School Teachers Union.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, August 29, 1929
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid, October 19, 1929
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid, August 29, 1929
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, February 1, 1930
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, May 27, 1931
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, June 28, 1931
\textsuperscript{13} Adhyapakan, October 1955
The political conference held at Payyannur in 1929 under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru really inspired the people of North Malabar. It had great impact on teachers as well as the students. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 further strengthened their national fervour. Several teachers had participated in the Satyagraha movement. Most of them who took part in the salt Satyagraha *jatha* under K.Kelappan were teachers. Many students gave up their education to participate in the movement. Several others joined the movement along with their studies. The acute unemployment among the educated classes offered emissaries of Civil Disobedience a wide field of recruitment. When the movement was withdrawn, some of them remained in the main stream of political life. But majority of them became aided elementary school teachers.

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

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14 *The Mathrubhumi*, April 16, 1930  
15 File No. 5-81/32 Home Political, C.D.M Madras, National Archives of India, New Delhi, Hereafter NAI, New Delhi.  
16 T.M.Vijayan, The DMRT and its foundation in Malabar in Dr.V.Kunhali (ed) *Kerala Society Historical Perceptions* (Calicut, 2002) p. 137  
18 *South Indian Teacher*, September, 1931  
19 No. D. Dis 648/34 Education Dept. Dated 30-05-34 State Archives, Trivandrum
convene one or two meeting of the teachers. Some of the elementary school teachers actively participated in the political conference held at Vatakara. Here Nariman in his speech at the conference emphasized the role of peasants workers and teachers in the national movement. The efforts at unionization among teachers initiated by A.K. Gopalan actually got inspiration from this statement\(^{20}\).

By that time the board school teachers had their own associations in almost all taluks of Malabar. The municipal teachers also had their own unions. Now a desire arose to unite all these under a district association\(^ {21}\). In this contexts V.Ramunni wrote an article in Mathrubhumi drawing the attention of all to the grievances of aided elementary school teachers. He wrote “now it is necessary to remember the condition of teachers under private management who are the ‘harijans’ of the teaching community. Compared to those in other services, the condition of the aided teachers are more deplorable. These teachers who are living in poverty are loosing their spirit of freedom under private managers”\(^ {22}\). More over he called upon the teachers for an All Malabar Teachers Union comprising all board, municipal and aided school teachers\(^ {23}\). But teachers of Malabar working under different agencies such as board municipality and private management had different services conditions and grievances. Therefore it was pointed out that each section should organize themselves to form their taluk and district association. Only then, if necessary an All Malabar Teachers union was to be established\(^ {24}\).

In this backdrop V. Ramunni again wrote, “The condition of aided elementary teachers are more deplorable than the teachers under the local board and municipalities. The management is trying to reduce our salary every year. The local board and municipal teachers have peons and scavengers. But we are our own peons and scavengers. As old age relief they have PF benefits but we have only providence. They can’t be dismissed without sufficient reasons. For us it is not necessary. They have their own association to ventilate their grievances but we have none\(^ {25}\). Therefore he asked the union of the municipal and board

\(^{20}\) Adhyapaka Lokam Visheshalprathi (Kannur, 1982)
\(^{21}\) The Mathrubhumi, October 21,1933 & October 27,1933
\(^{22}\) Ibid, October 27,1933
\(^{23}\) Ibid
\(^{24}\) Ibid, November 9, 1933
\(^{25}\) Ibid, November 2, 1933
teachers to organize agitation to redress the grievances of aided elementary school teachers. Hence he called for an All Malabar Teachers conference to think in this direction. While the board and municipal teachers had their unions, the aided teachers whose life was more deplorable than others began to feel the necessity of their own union. They never wanted the government to say that they were unaware that the managers were exploiting the teachers. Thus the demand for an All Malabar Teachers Union was emphasized.

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

**FORMATION OF UNION**

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26 Ibid, November 9, 1933
27 Ibid, November 28, 1933
28 A mode of punishment given either by parent or teachers for not obeying them or for failure in studies or competition, bowing in a peculiar way with hands holding the ears
29 Adhyapaka Lokam Visheshalprathi, op.cit
The withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the formation of Kerala congress socialist party and the subsequent rise of peasant and trade union movement made the circumstances favourable for unionisation. Many of the teachers who had an agrarian background were harassed by the school managers, most of whom were also landlords. It was this condition that inclined the teachers to take an active part in peasant movements. The failure of Civil Disobedience Movement led many teachers to search for alternatives and this led them towards the ideology of socialism and their efforts at unionization became more active. Chirakkal Taluk was more politically conscious than the other taluks of Malabar. O.V. Govindan Nambiar a teacher from the region wrote several articles in Al-Ameen and Mathrubhumi emphasizing the necessity of a teachers union. He explained the conditions of school education and the deplorable condition of the elementary school teachers of Malabar. He wrote “Teachers should awake from their slumber. Remember freedom is our birth right don’t suppress the spirit of freedom. Let’s bear the sorrow that come from our freedom of opinion, let us live as human beings in our motherland. He continued his propaganda for the unionization of the teachers. He wrote “The managers opened schools for the education of the public. Government assisted them by giving grant. It was to be supplemented by the contributions of the managers so that the teachers would get sufficient salary. This was the basis of the establishment of aided school system. But in course of time the managers deviated from their sacred aim and began to use their institution for their selfish motives. Schools were viewed as their private property and was incorporated in their will or given as gift or “theeru” to others. They appropriated part of the government grant and distributed only the balance amount to the teachers based on their qualification. O.V. Govindan Nambiar made it clear that It was the duty of the District Educational Council to save the teachers from the miseries. The appointment and dismissal of teachers should be made only with the permission of the department. They were to be given the right to submit the receipt of their salary and to inform their grievances directly to the authorities. The representation for the teachers in the Educational Council was also demanded.
The grievances alone would not lead to unionization among different sections of the people. There should be confidence that their grievances could be redressed through organization and union. The anti-caste movement, anti-imperialist movement and anti-landlord movement generated this spirit among the village teachers of Malabar. The propaganda made by O.V. Govindan Nambiar had favorable response from teachers. It prepared the way for the formation of a teachers union in Chirakkal Taluk. A teachers meeting was convened on 23rd August in 1934 at Kalliassery south elementary school. This meeting was attended by 13 elementary school teachers including K.V.Narayanan Nambiar, C.K.Panikar, K.V Krishnan master, P.Kumaran and P.Yesoda. It formed an association called ‘Aided School Teachers Union’ with O.V.Govindan Nambiar as the first president. Shortly another meeting was held at Cherukunnu under P.M.Kunchiraman Nambiar, K.Kunhikannan Nambiar and Sree Govindan Nambiar, a teacher manager of Eripuram Higher elementary school. In the next month teachers meeting were convened at Karivallur and Payyanur under K.P.kunhikannan Nambiar and N.P Kunhikrishan Nair. Soon meetings were convened and unions were formed at several places like Azhikode, Kadachira, Chovva and Kannadiparamb. All these meetings were attended only by 10 or 15 elementary school teachers. But all of them were either the activists of the freedom movement or had loyalty to the national movement.

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

35 P.R. Nambiar, Op.cit, p.81  
36 O.V.Govindan nambiar, ‘Njan Ormikkunnu’, In Kannur Jilla KAPT Union Onnam Varshika Souvenir, (Thalipparambu, 1972)  
37 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.214  
38 Adhyapaka Lokam, op.cit  
39 The Mathrubhumi, November 22, 1934  
40 Ibid
By that time teachers union were formed in almost all teachers association centres of Chirakkal taluk. Attempts were made to unite all these branches under taluk teachers union. The teachers meeting held at Cherukunnu under P. Kunhikannan Nambiar took initiative for the same\textsuperscript{41}. Thus arose a taluk union leadership under O.V. Govindan Nambiar and P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar. It consisted of K. Govindan Nambiar (Karivallur) N.P. Kunhikannan Nair (Payyanur) M.K. Govindan Nambiar (Madayi) T.C. Narayanan Nambiar and Pola Kumaran (Kannadi Paramba) C.K. Panikkar (Thaliparamba) K. Raman (Edakkad) M.V Bhargavan and M.V Anandan (Chovva) and P.Kunhikkannan Nambiar (Cherukunnu)\textsuperscript{42}. The taluk union had certain objectives

1. Redress the grievances of the aided schoolteachers

2. Improve their financial condition of those who were suffering from poverty than the peasantry

3. Attain the deserving position for teachers

4. Revive the lost feeling of self respect, self reliance and love of freedom among the teachers

5. Make education beneficial for the progress of the society

6. Create an atmosphere for the authorities to redress the grievances of teachers amicably

7. Mobilize public support and corporation for their efforts

8. Unite all teachers of Kerala by organizing an all Kerala independent teachers union\textsuperscript{43}.

Kannur was chosen as the headquarters of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union. The meeting also decided to convene a taluk teachers conference at Kannur on 16\textsuperscript{th} December 1934. Decision was also taken to prepare a constitution to be presented in the conference for approval. A fund was raised in the meeting for the activities of union and also for the proposed conference. The additional amount would be raised by making an appeal to the people. Above all it was decided to consult other taluk unions to organize a joint conference of teachers\textsuperscript{44}.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, December 2, 1934
\textsuperscript{42} Adhyapaka Lokam, op.cit
\textsuperscript{43} The Mathrubhumi, December 2, 1934
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, December 2, 1934
These efforts of unionization of teachers got all necessary help and pieces of advice from the congress socialist party. At the same time the leaders never attended the public meetings and conferences of the teachers\textsuperscript{45}.

The first conference of the Chirakkal taluk was held on 16\textsuperscript{th} December 1934 at Ananda Mandiram Hall, Kannur\textsuperscript{46}. More than 500 teachers participated in the meeting, which was presided over by K.Chathu Achan, Dept of History, Govt Brennan College, Tellicherry. Pointing to Jesus Christ and Gandhi he asked the teachers to live for others. At the same time he emphasized the relevance of union in the present day world. O.V.Govindan Nambiar welcomed the audience. He pointed out that the condition of the aided teachers, the depressed class of the teaching community, was worse than the life of the peasants. He narrated all the grievances of the teachers faced from the managers. Considering the social status and salary scale he argued that they were getting less salary than kolkaran and peon. Quoting Surendranath Banarji he reminded that an ideal teacher should have a higher respectable position than the rulers in society. He said “Until we unite and work to regain our right we will continue to suffer. He urged them to join the union without fearing managers and Deputy inspectors. He wanted this union to become an ideal All Kerala Association. P.K. Koru gave a speech on “Teachers and their Duties”\textsuperscript{47}. It was in this conference that the Chirakkal Taluk Teachers union formally came in to existence\textsuperscript{48}. The conference passed the following resolutions.

1. To appeal to the teachers of Malabar to make this union the association of all teachers of Malabar.

2. To request the authorities to give grants quarterly instead of an annual grant.

3. To request the education department, educational council and the Legislative assembly to redress the grievances of teacher.

\textsuperscript{45} Adhyapaka Lokam, op.cit
\textsuperscript{46} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.214
\textsuperscript{47} The Mathrubhumi, December 21, 1934
\textsuperscript{48} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.214 . Adv. T. Naryayanan Nambiar was elected president of the union, O.V.Govindan nambiar (Vice Presient), P.M. Kunhiraman Nambiar (Secretary) and T.C. Naryananan Nambiar ( Joint Secretary) were the other office bearers of the Union. A 15 member taluk committee was also constituted.
4. To request the managers to give the actual pay allowed by the council till there is an increase in salary.

5. To express their protest on the suspension of teachers by the management with out sufficient reason and prior notice and to invite the attention of the authorities in this matter.

6. To request the authorities to give aided teachers due representation in the educational council.

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

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

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49 The Mathrubhumi, December 21, 1939
50 Ibid, January 14, 1935
51 Ibid, February 1, 1930 & June 28, 1931
52 Ibid, June 28, 1931
53 Ibid, November 9, 1933
54 Ibid, September 28, 1934
A teachers meeting held at Chokli discussed the grievances of the teachers and emphasized the necessity of the union. Here an aided school teachers union was formed\textsuperscript{55}. An aided school teachers conference was held at Thiruvangad on 3\textsuperscript{rd} November 1934. This meeting attended by teachers from different ranges of Kottayam taluk adopted the following resolutions. This conference expressed its regret on the continuous grievances experienced by the teachers of Malabar. This conference opined that a strong organization was necessary to redress the grievances of the aided elementary teachers of Malabar. This conference requested the teachers to form taluk unions in all the taluks of Malabar and also decided to form Kottayam Taluk Aided Teachers Union in this conference itself. The conference called upon the members of the unions already formed in the taluk to be a part of the taluk union and to form new branches union wherever necessary. It was also decided to make all aided elementary teachers of Kottayam taluk as members of the teachers union. The members were to remit two annas as membership fee. An executive committee of 27 members with T.N. Chathu of Punnol Higher Elementary School as convener was formed. And it was authorized to prepare the bylaw of the union and to present the same in the next conference\textsuperscript{56}. Thus the Kottayam taluk aided Elementary School Teachers Union was formed with Kottiyath Krishnan as the president and T.N.Chathu and P. Ummer Kutty as Joint secretaries. Kottiyath Krishnan was a strong critic of caste system and untouchability. T.N. Chathu on behalf of the union tried his best to draw the attention of the government and the public leader to the miserable condition of the teachers of Malabar. He wrote in Mathrubhumi ‘Teachers belong to the working class. They should be united as of the flowers on the string’\textsuperscript{57}.

An elementary school teachers meeting held at Koothuparamba was attended by about 100 teachers. Here a branch of the union with nine members was constituted. Another meeting was held at Nettur were T.N.Chathu gave a speech on Teachers organization. Here also a branch of the union with 14 members was formed\textsuperscript{58}. Thus union of teachers spread rapidly through out the

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, October 20, 1934  
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, November 6, 1934  
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, November 24, 1934  
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, December 13, 1934
There were efforts of unionization in Kurumbranad taluk also. During 1933, Fredrik, a teacher of BEM High School Vatakara, pointed out the grievances of the elementary school teachers and emphasized the need for a union for them\textsuperscript{61}. T.Chathumaster an ardent disciple of Sree Narayana Guru and an activist in the anti-untouchability and tenancy movement gave leadership to the early union activities in Kurumbranad taluk\textsuperscript{62}. He had no connection with congress and the national movement. He was an efficient teacher and organizer and so he had much influence among the teachers. Initially he was a high school teacher. But he was expelled from that post since he criticised the management. Later he took up the post of a primary teacher and hence he was looked with respect and admiration by one and all\textsuperscript{63}. It was under his leadership that the union of the teachers was formed at Vatakara. It was in November 1934 that the Kurumbranad Taluk Teachers Union was formed\textsuperscript{64}. T.Chathu Master was elected president of the union. Here an annual subscription of one rupee was collected from the members. Thus 41 teachers paid one rupee as annual subscription and became members of the union\textsuperscript{65}. Unlike other unions this union was named as Malabar Aided Elementary School Teachers Union\textsuperscript{66}. P.R Nambiar, K.P. Padmanabhan, C.C Nair, K. Unnikidave and K.G. Kidav were some of the early leaders of the Kurumbranad taluk teachers union. It is to be noted that K.Kelappan the eminent congress leader of Malabar was the founder president of one of the branch union of Kurumbranad taluk\textsuperscript{67}. P.R. Nambiar the secretary of Vatakara centre Aided School Teachers Union took initiative to convene the first conference of the Kurumbranad taluk teacher union\textsuperscript{68}. It was held at Vatakara North Higher Elementary School on 3\textsuperscript{rd} February 1935. The Govt training school teacher Ramanatha Ayyar presided over the meeting. The meeting discussed the petition
to be submitted to the deputy director and formulated certain rules for the union. The executive members for the year were elected and thus the Kurumbranad taluk Aided Teachers Union formally came into being\(^69\).

The aided elementary school teachers of Valluvanad also began their efforts at unionization. On September 15 1934, after the meeting of the teachers association, the teachers of Kulukallur assembled under S. Naraya Ayyar. They were convinced that only through the union could their grievances like the circulars against them, low salary etc be solved. Thus a union of the Aided Elementary School Teachers was formed with Attur Devesha Pisharati as president and K.P Sankunni Menon as Secretary. Here 31 teachers joined the union\(^70\). Before long the teachers of Vallpuzha centre assembled under C. Krishnan Ezhuthachan to discuss their grievances. A committee of five members under P. Sekhara Warier was formed and it was advised to consult the unions already constituted in the taluk\(^71\). Thus a meeting of the Valluvanad teachers was held at Ottapalam mission School. K. Krishnan Nair who spoke on the occasion pointed out the importance of union. Here the Valluvanad taluk aided teachers union was formed and resolutions for the redressal of teachers grievances were passed\(^72\). Soon efforts were made to organize unions in all teachers association of Valluvanad\(^73\).

**FORMATION OF AN ALL MALABAR TEACHERS UNION**

By that time the activities of the aided teachers union spread all over Malabar. In this backdrop the activists of the teachers union of Kottayam taluk who were already awakened by the national movement and movement against untouchability took initiative to form an All Malabar Teachers union\(^74\). Under their leadership a meeting of the teachers was convened at Tellicherry Chaliya School

\(^69\) *Ibid.*, February 12, 1935  
\(^70\) *Ibid.*, September 20, 1934  
\(^71\) *Ibid.*, November 20, 1934  
\(^72\) *Ibid.*, January 16, 1935  
\(^73\) *Ibid.*, January 22, 1935  
\(^74\) P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.85
on January 13th 1935. This meeting was presided over by O.V.Govindan Nambiar. His idea was to hold an All Malabar teachers conference75.

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

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

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

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75 *The Mathrubhumi*, January 18, 1935
76 Ibid, February 5, 1935
77 Ibid, February 9, 1935
78 Ibid, February 7,15, 1935
79 Ibid, February 12,1935
80 Ibid, February 14, 1935
movements against untouchability and land lordism. There were also British loyalsists\textsuperscript{81}.

Kottiath Krishnan received K.P. Raman Menon, the president of the conference, at the railway station and took him to the town hall. The meeting began with the national song. Kottiath Krishnan made the welcome speech. He pointed out the misuse of public fund in the field of education because of the increase of schools under different agencies and also because of separate schools for Muslims and girls. He emphasized co education and argued that all children of a village must be taught in common schools. He narrated the miserable conditions of the aided school teachers. He said ‘the present day teachers are not respected and honoured; he is considered neither a human being nor an animal. Even the scavenger of the finance minister is getting more than the elementary school teacher. Government should spend some more to make their home happy\textsuperscript{82}. He asked the government to take necessary steps to ensure proper payment of salary, security of tenure and their representation in the district education council.

K.P. Raman Menon in his presidential address highlighted the miserable conditions and how they were exploited by their managers. He pointed out how Madras government was neglecting Malabar by spending very little in this area\textsuperscript{83}. At the same time he promised to do all he can to get the grievances of the teachers redressed. The conference passed resolutions demanding department consent to the appointment and dismissal of teachers, quarterly grant, parity with local board teachers, 25% representation for teachers in the District Educational Council, free compulsory education etc\textsuperscript{84}.

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

\textsuperscript{81} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.86
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{The Mathrubhumi}, February 20,1935
\textsuperscript{83} P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.86
\textsuperscript{84} \textit{The Mathrubhumi}, February 20, 1935 See Appendix I
demands. It clearly showed that the teachers of Malabar were aware that they would also be forced to do the same in future. Another resolution passed in the conference also reflected the general awareness of the teachers. As per the education Act of 1920, education council with a majority of peoples representatives were constituted in all districts. It had the right to recognize private schools, withdraw the recognition of inefficient schools and ultimately to decide the school grant. It could restrict the bureaucratic hegemony to a certain extent. But the government turned against it. Actually it was an attempt to suspend the council altogether. The new papers highlighted this issue and the teachers were aware of its consequences. Hence another resolution passed in the conference protested against the attempt to repeal the right of the district education council to elect their president and to nominate him directly by the government and also demanded to make the council more democratic. This resolution clearly revealed the democratic aspiration of the teachers and their vision of a democratic India.

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

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

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

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85 P.R. Nambiar, op.cit, p.87
86 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.18
87 The Mathrubhumi, October 26, 1935
88 Ibid, November 12, 1935
89 Ibid, February 22 1935
Meetings were convened to protest against the reduction of teaching grant. The early unionization activities were actually facilitated by Gurujana Samajam meetings. These meetings were convened compulsorily by the department once in any one of the Saturdays of every month to update the knowledge of the teachers and also to inform the decision of the department and the government. The aided elementary school teachers used to meet separately after these meetings and units of the aided elementary school teachers union were formed at several places. Capable teachers were selected from the teachers association centres and they were given charge of 10 or 15 schools to do the propaganda work. Thus the teachers union activities spread widely and rapidly through out Malabar.

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

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90 Ibid, April 13,1935
92 The Mathrubhumi, May 21, 1935
93 Ibid, April 12,13, 1935
94 Ibid, April 17, 1935
95 Mathrubhumi Weekly, Book 13, Vol W.7, April 29, 1935
96 The Mathrubhumi, April 25, 1935
97 Ibid, April 23, 1935
The Manappuram aided school teachers union was active only in the south of Chettuvai. But they tried to extend their activities with a view to form an all Malabar aided school teachers Union.\footnote{Ibid, May 9, 1935} Attempts were also made to organize union in the south of the taluk under Vanneri Teachers Association.\footnote{Ibid, September 5, 1935}

The elementary teachers of all taluks of Malabar had responded to the steps taken by the union leadership. But the union activities in Eranad taluk were very slow. P.R. Nambiar called upon the teachers of the area to wakeup. He required the address of teachers who were ready to work so that he could send the pamphlets of the proposed conference\footnote{Ibid, March 5, 1936}. It had the desired result. K.P. Narayanan Nair near Manjeri promised to extend union work in Eranad Taluk. Teachers were told to collect pamphlets and admission tickets of the conference from him\footnote{Ibid, March 17, 1936}. Now many teachers began to take interest in union activities. P. Gopalan Nair of Kodangad aided Mappila School, Kondotti wrote “Teachers of Eranad are sleeping. They don’t know what is happening around the world. A teacher should be a Karmayogi interested in public service and should emphasize truth and stand for justice. Managers torture the teachers mercilessly. We have no sense of unity. Our grievances could be redressed through union\footnote{Ibid, April 4, 1936}. So he asked the teachers to form unions in all teacher association centres with a view to organize a taluk teachers union\footnote{Ibid, March 20, 1936}. Thus the teachers of Eranad also began their own efforts at unionization.

The teachers union activities got stimulated in Kozhikode taluk also. The teachers meeting held at Kunnamangalam thought about the formation of a Taluk union\footnote{Ibid, November 29, 1935}. Another teachers meeting was held at Panniyankara Sankara Vilasam Hindu aided school. Here A.K.Gopalan made a speech and highlighted the necessity of the Teachers union. A committee of nine members was constituted to form a union\footnote{Ibid, December 21, 1935}. By that time only two branches were formed in Kozhikode. K.Gopalan Nair of Bepyore made sincere efforts to form a taluk union. He called up on the teachers to form more unions in the taluk.\footnote{Ibid, December 21, 1935} P.Appu of Bepyore asked
the teachers to form their union through Teachers association centres and also to convene a taluk conference at the earliest\textsuperscript{107}. The Teachers meeting held at Panniyankara decided to strengthen their union to redress their grievances. It passed resolutions demanding the scale of board School Teachers, direct payment of teaching grant and P.F benefit for teachers. The meeting selected 6 members including the secretary for the proposed district conference at Vatakara\textsuperscript{108}.

The union activities continued to be active in Kottayam taluk. K.M Karunakaran Nair was the Secretary of the union\textsuperscript{109}. It was decided to hold the taluk conference on 9th June 1935 at Thiruvangad municipal Girls Higher elementary school\textsuperscript{110}. Representatives from all branches attended the conference which was presided by V.P.Narayanan Nambiar. On this occasion K.Kelappan gave a speech on ‘grant-in-aid school’ in which he narrated the deplorable condition of Teachers and criticized the managers. He asked the Government to give the grant directly to the teachers and congratulated the teachers for the formation of the union\textsuperscript{111}. Another Teachers meeting was held at Kathirur where P.V. Madhavan Nair gave a talk on ‘The importance of union’. Here A.K.Gopalan said ‘Majority of the aided school Teachers of Kerala had no national pride. They are not active and energetic. If they don’t get the deserving remuneration, even after working for a whole year, then they themselves should be blamed for it. It is because of their inability. But all these grievances can be redressed through a powerful union and a strong agitation\textsuperscript{112}. Here one of the teachers invited the attention of the audience to an incident and requested the union to interfere. It was reported that an elementary school manager at Ponniam compelled the teachers to sign the acquittance without giving their remuneration. Those who refused were not given school register and were sacked. It led to a heated discussion. But finally it was decided to launch strong agitation against such managements. A resolution was also passed asking teachers not to sign the acquittance for an amount not actually received\textsuperscript{113}. A.K.Gopalan made an enquiry.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, February 6, 1936
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, March 8, 1936
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, May 1, 1935
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, June, 1935
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, June 12, 1935
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, September 5, 1935
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid
on the Teachers-Manager dispute in Kottayam taluk. He wrote an article in Mathrubhumi and pointed out that the condition of the teachers and managers were equally deplorable. He wrote “There are managers who run schools as business concerns. But some of them run schools properly but face difficulties due to the government stand….. If the managers and teachers join hands their grievances can be redressed. Both of them should work together for obtaining more government grant”\(^{114}\). At the same time he criticized the managers policy of trade as dangerous and emphasized the importance of the unity among teachers. He further wrote ‘As long as there are teachers who are ready to work for a low amount, teachers can’t solve their grievances. Strengthen their union by enlisting the cooperation of the managers. When teachers unite nobody would oppose it\(^{115}\).

M.S. Sreshta and some other members decided to present a resolution in the Madras Legislative council to increase financial assistance to aided schools so as to raise them to the level of Local Board Schools. With a view to bring the matter to the attention of the government and the public, teachers were asked to convene meetings all over Malabar and to pass resolutions highlighting the same\(^ {116}\). The Teachers union meetings held at Koothuparamba demanded an increase in the salary of aided teachers to that of municipal and local board teachers. It congratulated M.S.Sreshta on his proposed resolution. It also appealed the members of the legislative council to pass the resolution and the government to enforce the same\(^ {117}\). The meeting of the Kottayam taluk aided Teachers union held on 1\(^{st}\) February at Thiruvangad Girls School decided to observe a ‘Grant Week’ from 15 to 21\(^{st}\) February. In this effect the following resolution was passed “For requesting the Madras Government to increase the salary scale of Aided elementary teachers to that of teachers under local boards, a week from February 15 to 21 1936 should be observed as a ‘Grant Week’ in all places of Malabar by convening meetings and passing resolutions\(^ {118}\). In a teachers meeting held at Tellicherry, on 4\(^{th}\) February 1936, Chandroth Kunhiraman Nambiar viewed the aided schools as mere business concerns and pointed out the corruption and malpractices in the field of elementary education. He further said,

\(^{114}\) Ibid, September 6, 1935
\(^{115}\) Ibid
\(^{116}\) Ibid, October 5, 1935
\(^{117}\) Ibid, October 23, 1935
\(^{118}\) Ibid, February 4, 1936
“The educated section who work and starve and bear the scolding of the creditors are the elementary school teachers. Teachers should bring their grievances to the attention of the public. The agitations of the teachers and managers should be echoed in the ears of the authorities. It should open their closed eyes. As an initial step the elementary school teachers of Malabar were to observe a week as ‘Grant Week’

119. As a part of the ‘grant varam’ a public meeting was held at Tellicherry town hall on 15th February 1936. P.M.Thangal (MLA) who presided over the meeting promised to bring the grievances of the teachers to the notice of the government. Dr. T.V.Narayanan Nair presented the following resolution: This meeting of the Tellicherry citizens requests the Madras government to raise the salary scale of the aided teachers of Malabar to the scale of teachers under local boards

120. The resolution was passed and the copy of the same was sent to the education minister, Director of Education and also to K.P Raman Menon, the first president of the Malabar Aided Teachers Union

121. T.C. Narayanan Nambiar wrote an article in Mathrubhumi entitled ‘The grievances of the aided school teachers’. It made the union activities more active in Chirakkal taluk. He wrote ‘The progress of a country depended on its schools which moulds the little kids to proper citizens. It is true that in Malabar it is done by the Grant Schools. Thus the poor elementary school teachers are those who dedicate their life for the country. For the upliftment of Malabar, the grievances of the teachers are to be redressed. For any national reconstruction elementary schools can be used as a powerful tool

122. He clearly explained the grievances faced by the teachers of Malabar and wrote ‘What we hear from the schools of Malabar is the cry of poverty and helplessness. Hunger in schools means the nation is not fit and healthy.... The managers who are the capitalist refuse to give even a small part of the grant to the teachers who are their workers. They are behaving like the proprietors of the soda shops

123. Hence he asked the teachers all over Malabar to be more active in their effort at unionization. Above all he tried to bring the attention of the union leaders to the tug of war going on between managers and teachers in different parts of Chirakkal taluk.

119 Ibid, February 5, 1936
120 Ibid, February 18, 1936
121 Ibid
122 Ibid, June 27, 1935
123 Ibid
In this backdrop a taluk committee meeting was held at Kannur under the presidency of O.V. Govindan Nambiar. It evaluated the union activities in the taluk and realised that the branches were not organized properly and teachers are not made aware of the necessity of the union. Hence a committee was formed and T.C Narayanan Nambiar was appointed the propaganda officer. The union office was shifted to Gouthama Lodge Kannur and it was decided to meet monthly once on every 4th Sunday. Accordingly efforts were made to form branches all over the taluk and also to raise a union fund. Above all decision was made to organize propaganda for a taluk conference. Appeals to make the union more active continued to be raised. One of the teachers wrote ‘To attain an ideal atmosphere for elementary education the capitalist fort of the private management should be destroyed; the poverty of the teachers should be eradicated by raising their salary’. A.K. Gopalan visited several schools in Chirakkal Taluk and wrote an article in Mathrubhumi, “School trade in Chirakkal Taluk”. He clearly brought out the corruption and malpractices that existed in elementary schools and pointed out the grievances of the teachers. At the same time he said “The majority of the elementary schools teachers are slaves and that is an obstacle to the progress of the country. They have no national pride, patriotism or the desire to acquire more knowledge. They have no courage or sense of unity. The presence of such teachers leads to the success of managers who are traders. All such things will end if the teachers unite.

As required by the MATU the Chirakkal taluk union selected five members – O.V. Govindan Nambiar, P.M. Kunchiraman Nambiar, T.C. Narayanan Nambiar, M. Bhargavan and M. Kunhambu – to the district committee. It was also decided to collect an amount not less than five rupees from each branch of the taluk. Moreover it was decided to organize the conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union on 8th December 1935. Thus the second conference of the Chirakkal taluk teachers union was held on December 8 in the Edward memorial town hall, Kannur. R.M. Palatt, the District Board president presided over the meeting. More than 600 teachers attended the conference. The meeting began

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124 Ibid, July 3, 1935
125 Ibid, August 2, 1935
126 Ibid, August 4, 1935
127 Ibid, August 21, 1935
128 Ibid, November 23, 1935
129 Ibid, November 30, 1935
with Vande Mataram and passed resolutions demanding salary scale of local board teachers, monthly payment, salary contract between teachers and managers, union interference in salary dispute and representation in the district education council. T. Narayanan Nambiar, T.C Narayanan Nambiar and K.Raman were elected as the new office bearers of the union.\textsuperscript{130}

Aided elementary teachers were asked to pass resolutions demanding regular and proper payment of salary in their branch meetings and to intimate the same to the district education officer and the president of the District Education Council. A model of the resolution was also published. “We the poor elementary School teachers who had dedicated our life on the scaffold of the nation for the spread of education are now leading a life of poverty and misery. We are given a very low salary. Due to the deduction we are not even getting this meagre amount in time. This cruelty of the authorities towards these ‘Daridranarayanas’ is deplorable. Therefore this year grant may be distributed to the managers without any deduction by the end of March itself so as to reduce our grievances.\textsuperscript{131}

In the meeting of the Chirakkal taluk Teachers union held at Goutama Lodge on 23\textsuperscript{rd} February 1936, it was decided to observe a ‘Grant week’ form 8\textsuperscript{th} to 14\textsuperscript{th} of March 1936.\textsuperscript{132} The meeting also decided to organize a Teachers Jatha in the month of May.

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

1. To sanction the same pay scale of Government school Teachers to the aided elementary school teachers

2. Invite the attention of the government to the proceedings of the director of Education Cochin and request them to take steps to redress the grievances of the elementary teachers of Malabar.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, December 12, 1935
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, February 5, 1936
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, February 27, 1936. It was also decided to organize propagandas in areas like Cherukunnu, Pazhayangadi, Payyannur, Karivellur, Taliparamba and Cherula.
3. Accept the demands of Jogendra Chandra Chatterji who is observing fast
unto death for the last 100 days in the Lucknow Jail and save his life\textsuperscript{133}.

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

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF MATU

The second conference of the Malabar Aided Teachers Union was held on
4\textsuperscript{th} April 1936 in a decorated panthal near Government Training School Vatakara.
More than 2000 people including Teachers from 9 taluks and prominent
personalities of the area attended the conference. V.P. Narayanan Nambiar in his
inaugural address said “A major part of the Grant given to the Teachers for their
work is actually swallowed by the managers and only the balance amount is
distributed among the teachers. The poor teachers work and the cruel managers
receive the remuneration. What an injustice! Why should you meekly request to
the manager for salary? It is to be opposed through your organization. Even
illiterate workers who had no education could defend against the injustice of their
managers through their organization. So the only solution for your grievance is
union\textsuperscript{134}. He also supported the teachers demand for an increase in salary and
representation to District Education Council. M.S. Sreshta in his presidential
address pointed out the grievances of the teachers, the policy of indifference
adopted by the government and the necessity of an organized agitation. The
teachers from Chirakkal taluk staged a skit ‘Grant Varatte’ (Let the grant come)
depicting the deplorable condition of the elementary school teachers of Malabar\textsuperscript{135}.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, April 7, 1936
\textsuperscript{135} O.V.Govindan Nambiar, Grant Varatte (Kannur, 1936) O.V.Govindan Nambiar wrote this skit at
the request of MATU. After much rehearsal the Chirakkal taluk teachers union activists staged it at
the Badagara conference. The motive of the skit was made clear by the author “The teachers
were not paid enough, the payment was irregular, no security of employment nor were they
respected or given a position in the society. One can not imagine the height of torment and insult
they received and so the youth considered this divine job a curse. No organisation came forward to
help them. The public and the authorities turned a deaf ear. Hence I am trying to picturise their
grief”. The vivid description of Kittu Kurup a manager who make a lively hood through school
On the second day of the conference the meeting which continued under M.S. Sreshta passed the rules formulated for the new District Committee and prepared the constitution of the union. A 15 member District executive committee representing 9 taluks of Malabar was also constituted. There after about 44 resolutions were presented. The most important among them demanded salary parity with local board teachers, monthly grant remittance of an amount for one year school expense by the managers, compulsory PF, representation in the district education council and a common syllabus for higher elementary schools.

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

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

Mean while the MATU directed the district executive members to give leadership to form unions all over Malabar. The taluk unions were advised to
organize propaganda committees and to send 5 representatives to the district committee. It was also decided that the union office would be located at Vatakara. It decided to take up the issues of dismissal of teachers by the managers. It authorized M.S Sreshta to submit the resolutions of the Vatakara conference to the Governor of Madras, the education minister and the Director of Education. The union protested against the council for reducing the grant of 1935-36 and decided to send a delegation to the DEO and the president of the district education council.

In this backdrop MATU thought about submitting a memorandum to R.M Stathan, the Director of Education during his visit to Malabar\textsuperscript{141}. The MATU meeting held at Thiruvangad requested the Director to receive a union delegation at Tellicherry. A committee was constituted for the same. The meeting also requested the District Educational Council to distribute the grant without delay and to stop the practice of withholding salary in times of management disputes\textsuperscript{142}. The Director agreed to meet the teachers delegation. Accordingly, the union delegation consisting of T. Narayanan Nambar, P.M. Kunhiraman Nambar, P.R. Nambar, T.C Narayanan Nambar and K.M Karunakaran Nair met the Director and submitted their memorandum at Tellicherry\textsuperscript{143}. R.M. Stathan was a strong activist of national union of teachers in Britain. Hence it was with much sympathy that he welcomed the delegation of teachers\textsuperscript{144}. Consequently he gave a favourable reply to the union leaders. He promised to consider their demands of proper payment of salary, implementation of PF benefits, representation in the district Education Council and the making of 8th standard examination a government examination. He also reminded them that order has already been issued for the introduction of TC system and promised to give necessary direction to the inspectors to inform them before hand the annual examinations in all schools\textsuperscript{145}. Here it is to be noted that it was for the first time that the teachers of Malabar got an opportunity to present their grievance before a director on equal terms. It created a slight change in the attitude of the department officers. They began to discuss the grievances of the teachers with the union leaders\textsuperscript{146}. It gave a shot in the arm for

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\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, August 12, 1936
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid, August 20, 1936
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, September 24, 1936
\textsuperscript{144} P.R. Nambar, op.cit, p.89
\textsuperscript{145} The Mathrubhumi, September 24, 1936
\textsuperscript{146} P.R. Nambar, op.cit, p.89
\end{flushright}
union activities in Malabar. The union leadership repeatedly reminded the teachers to be united and to join the union to get their grievances redressed\textsuperscript{147}.

After the Vatakara conference the teachers union became more active all over Malabar. The teachers of Ponnani taluk continued their efforts at unionization. Appeals were made to form unions in all teachers association centres. A conference was held on November 7\textsuperscript{th} at Engadiyur Sree Narayana Vilasam Higher Elementary School. The meeting was presided over by K. Raman Menon. The conference passed resolutions demanding salary parity with local board teachers, appointment and dismissal of teachers with department consent, representation of teachers in education council, copy of annual examination report to the schools, compulsory education and common curriculum for elementary schools\textsuperscript{148}.

The cut in the teaching grant for the year 1935-36 had awakened the elementary teachers of Kurumbranad taluk. The union activities spread rapidly all over the taluk. It was decided to hold their taluk conference at Quilandi\textsuperscript{149}. Thus the second anniversary of the Kurumbranad teachers union was held at Madathil Higher Elementary school on May 9, 1936. Manomohana Menon presided over the meeting. T. Narayanan Nambiar gave a talk on ‘Grievances of Teachers’. The conference passed resolutions demanding the redressal of teachers grievances like non payment of salary and arbitrary dismissal, prior information regarding annual examination and assurance of grand in aid with out cut before school recognition\textsuperscript{150}.

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

\textsuperscript{147} The Mathrubhumi, September 25, 1936
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, November 12, 1936
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid, April 30, 1936
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, May 14, 1936
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, December 3, 1936
The conference passed resolutions highlighting all the major demands of the teachers and congratulated Maharaja of Travancore for the Temple Entry proclamation\textsuperscript{152}.

Efforts were made to revitalize the union activities in Kozhikode taluk. Here, V.T Achutan Nair asked the efficient teachers of two teacher association centres in the city to take initiative to form a taluk committee. He wrote “The scavengers and toddy tapers had their own organization. Among the teachers the Board School and Municipal School Teachers had formed their associations. Aided School Teachers of other taluks have their own unions. But the aided teachers of our taluk have no union\textsuperscript{153}. Now M.N Pisharoti informed that as per the direction of the MATU, the Kozhikode taluk aided teachers union conference will be held in the last week of December at Calicut. Thus the conference was held at Training School Calicut. M.K. VeeraRaghava Ayyar, Principal of the training school in his presidential address asked the teachers to join together and to organise public meetings in different areas to acquire popular support. K.K. Poduval who welcomed the audience explained the helplessness of the aided school teachers. The conference elected a 25 member executive committee and seven resolutions were passed\textsuperscript{154}.

The teachers of Valluvanad actively continued their efforts at unionization. The first anniversary of the Valluvanad Taluk Teachers union was held at BEM Higher Elementary school, Ottapalam on November 28, 1936. Dr. A.R. Menon in his presidential address compared the condition of teachers of Cochin and Malabar. He said “The teachers of cochin get a minimum salary of Rs 15. They can’t be dismissed without the consent of the Department. But here teachers are facing several grievances. Join together, build unions and organize agitations”\textsuperscript{155}. He also asked the teachers to publish a journal for the same. M.P. Govinda Menon in his inaugural address reminded the teachers that their grievances could be redressed only through unions. The conference passed the following resolutions\textsuperscript{156}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid
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\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, December 10, 1936
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\textsuperscript{154} Ibid, December 24, 1936
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\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, December 4, 1936
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\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, December 4, 1936
\end{flushleft}
1. The dismissal of teachers only with the consent of the department and also with the provision of subsistence allowance

2. 25% of representation for teachers in the district Education council

3. Make 8th Standard examination a Government examination

4. Abolish all communal schools at the earliest.

5. Send reports and reviews of the examination to the superiors only with remarks of the head masters

6. Protest against the attempt to prevent teachers from participating in debates other than educational topics

7. Raise the salary of teachers to the level of local board teachers and give it directly to the teachers every month.

8. Revise the amount of stipend given to teacher students.

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

A conference of Chirakkal taluk aided teachers union was held at Town Hall on 22-09-1936. More than 900 teachers, both male and female, attended the meeting. R.M. Statham, in his presidential speech, promised to improve elementary education and advised the teachers to mobilize public opinion in favour of compulsory education. He promised to consider all the demands of the teachers including the proper payment of teaching grant. At the same time he reminded the teachers to give proper attention to students and education 158. Thus the teaching grant to higher trained teachers and secondary trained teachers was enhanced from Rs 144 to 156 and Rs 200 to 212 respectively 159. The government also promised to increase the pay and to improve the service conditions of aided school teachers to those of local board teachers 160.

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

157 Ibid
158 Ibid, September 25, 1936
159 G.O.(Education) Madras, No 2683,15th December 1936
160 G.O.(Education) Madras, No 2611,8th December 1936
several places. Teachers demands began to get greater support. Now the managers turned openly against the teachers. Thus some of the teachers of Kuthiravattam Higher elementary school were dismissed. The MATU demanded urgent official interference\textsuperscript{161}. With a view to bring the attention of the Government and the District Educational Council on the teachers grievances Mathrubhumi wrote an editorial on 14\textsuperscript{th} March 1937. It pointed out that the proposed resolution in the District Educational Council to stop the grant of managers who refuse salary to their teachers will not be a proper solution to their problem. It asked for the abolition of the system of allotting grant to the managers but to give the same directly to the teachers\textsuperscript{162}. It was during the month of April that the teachers usually get their annual teaching grant. It was at the same period that the teachers came out of their training institutions. The managers made use of this opportunity to dismiss teachers in service and to appoint new teachers for a lower salary\textsuperscript{163}.

Meanwhile a meeting of the District Education council under R.M Pallatt passed a resolution for withholding the grant of Managers who refuse full amount of Salary to their teachers\textsuperscript{164}. O.V.Govindan Nambiar congratulated V. Sankara Narayana Menon who presented the resolution in the council. It was hailed as the result of the efforts made by the teachers for the last three years. But he argued that withholding teaching grant will affect the managers. But the teachers will have to suffer more. Therefore he demanded the payment of grant directly to the teachers. He said “The management system is not for the progress of the country. But only to create dangers. Until all schools are made under a common institution through legislation, education will continue to decline\textsuperscript{165}.

\textbf{UNIONISATION: THE SECOND PHASE}

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

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{161} The Mathrubhumi, November 27, 1936
\item \textsuperscript{162} Ibid, March 14, 1937
\item \textsuperscript{163} Ibid, March 25, 1937
\item \textsuperscript{164} Ibid, March 24, 1937
\item \textsuperscript{165} Ibid, March 27, 1937
\end{itemize}
to be dismissed in different parts of Malabar. R. Manikkam of Palayad Girls school, Tellicherry was dismissed for refusing to sign an agreement for a low salary\textsuperscript{166}. The remaining teachers of the school were asked to organize strong propaganda and the new teachers were advised not to accept the post of the dismissed teachers\textsuperscript{167}. At the same time the union leaders could understand the difficulties faced by the managers in running their schools. The union did not adopt a confrontational policy\textsuperscript{168}.

However many managers continued to refuse salary to the teachers. Some of them were reluctant to give the full amount but the teachers were forced to sign the acquittance for an amount not received. The union leaders called up on the teachers not to do so. They were advised to give complaints to the deputy inspector, DEO, 6\textsuperscript{th} Circle Inspection and also the president of the district education council\textsuperscript{169}. This policy of the managers reached its climax when K.P. Padmanabhan, Madathil Higher Elementary School, Quilandi was dismissed by the manager\textsuperscript{170}.

This policy adopted by the managers made the union more active in various taluks of Malabar. The union could interfere in some of these issues and compelled the managers to give actual salary to the teachers\textsuperscript{171}. By July 1937 the union could settle disputes in 19 schools. As the most important aspect of regular payment of the salary of teachers revolved around the grant, a ‘grant varam’ (week) was to be observed. Thus the MATU executive meeting held at Badagara on 2\textsuperscript{nd} January 1937 decided to observe Grant varam during January and February all over Malabar\textsuperscript{172}. In this context, P.R. Nambiar wrote an article in Mathrubhumi with the title ‘Grant Varam’\textsuperscript{173} Here he pointed out the miserable condition of the teachers and the irresponsible policy of the department. So he

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, March 20, 1937
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, April 9, 1937
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid, May 14, 1937  See Articles by O.V.Govindan Nambiar which has a conciliatory tone
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid, May 22, 1937
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid, July 16,18, 1937.  The unemployment among the trained teachers was increasing. Besides, as teaching experience was made compulsory for training selection, untrained teachers were ready to work even without salary or for a very small amount given by the managers. Moreover they had to sign for an amount they did not get which lead to irregular payment of salary misappropriation of teaching grant and the dismissal of teachers.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid, May 28, 1937
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid, January 6, 1937
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid, January 29, 1937
wanted the teachers to bring the following three points to the attention of the government.

1. Distribute the annual teaching grant (1936-37) without any prorata cut to all schools by the end of March

2. Give up the practice of distributing annual or half yearly grant and make provisions to give the same monthly without any cut.

3. Make provision to ensure actual grant to the teachers and also to take action against the managers who refuse to give salary to the teachers

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

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

174 Ibid, February 20, 1937
175 Ibid, February 25, 1937
176 Ibid, March 7, 1937
177 Ibid, February 20, March 2,9, 1937
178 Ibid, January 23, 1937
179 Ibid, February 19, 1937
to highlight their grievances\textsuperscript{180}. Such meetings were held at several places in the taluk and its resolutions were sent to the Minister and Director of Education\textsuperscript{181}. In a public meeting held at Thiruvangad, Advocate T. Narayanan Nambar in his presidential address said “The problem of aided teachers can be solved only when the management system is abolished and free and compulsory education is introduced under Government supervision.” He advised the teachers to strengthen their union and to make use of the opportunity when the leaders who are aware of their grievances got elected to the Madras Legislative Council. Then the resolution proposed by the district union demanding monthly salary without cut, action against managers who refuse salary to the teachers and the current year grant before 31\textsuperscript{st} March was unanimously adopted\textsuperscript{182}. Efforts were made to observe grant Week in Kozhikode taluk also\textsuperscript{183}. It was decided to begin the same on 6\textsuperscript{th} March 1937.

Though unionisation was vigorous in North Malabar, the same could not be said about South Malabar. The efforts of unionisation in Eranad Taluk were comparatively weak. P.R. Nambar repeatedly asked the teacher to awake and form their own unions. A teachers meeting was held on 16\textsuperscript{th} January 1937 at Mannur Higher Elementary School\textsuperscript{184}. This meeting presided over by M.N. Pisharoti was attended by a large number of teachers. Here the Eranad taluk aided teachers union was formed. A.K.Gopalan Nair was the president and P.Krishnan Nair was elected secretary of the Union\textsuperscript{185}.

The teachers union activities gained strength in Ponnani taluk. The union activists were asked to visit several places in the taluk to organise branch unions. M.S Nair called up on the teachers to become members by taking 2 annas membership and 2 annas admission fee and to strengthen the union. They were also asked to contribute liberally to enable the taluk union to give its share to district union registration fund and for the 3\textsuperscript{rd} district conference\textsuperscript{186}.

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid, March 6, 1937
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, March 9, 1937
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid, March 14, 1937
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid, March 5, 1937
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid, January 10, 1937
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid, January 20, 1937
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid, April 29, 1937
The Valluvanad teachers union work was conducted well. P.S.Varier asked teachers to demand full salary and to be the members of the Teachers union\textsuperscript{187}.

The efforts at unionization in Palakkad were very slow. Several times the union leaders asked the teachers to elect their representatives to the district union\textsuperscript{188}. By February 1937 all taluks except Palakkad formed their own union and elected their representatives to the district union. Hence the teachers of Palakkad were once again asked to move in this direction\textsuperscript{189}.

The condition of aided elementary teachers of Wayanad was more miserable. How ever they failed to develop an awareness of the same. While the efforts of unionisation were actively going on in other taluks, there were no such activities in Wayanad. But P. Narayanan Nambeesan, the Head master of Vellamunda Higher Elementary School convened a meeting of aided teachers on 16-01-37 at Manandavadi CMS School. This meeting under J.J. Joseph (Supervisor of CMS School) was expected to form the Wayanad taluk Teachers union. P.R. Nambiar called upon the teachers to make their efforts successful\textsuperscript{190}.

**THIRD CONFERENCE OF MATU**

The third conference was held in Zamorin’s Guruvayurappan Hall, Calicut on 29\textsuperscript{th} May 1937. More then 300 teachers including several lady teachers from different parts of Malabar attended the meeting. Many important personalities like Kattilasserri Muhammed Musaliar (Dt. Board vice president) E. Kannan (MLA), A.V Kuttimalu Amma (MLA), K.E. Sarada and Thomas also participated. V. Ramunni in his welcome speech explained the existing condition of elementary school and the grievances of the teachers of Malabar and demanded proper and regular payment of salary, scrutiny of tenure and representation for teacher in the District Educational Council. C.J Varkey made a presidential address\textsuperscript{191}. He touched on all aspects of elementary education and made certain suggestion including a five year plan for compulsory education, increased grant and proper payment of salary to the teachers, ensured security of tenure and 8\textsuperscript{th} standard public examination, vocational training to students, recognition of schools as

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\textsuperscript{187} Ibid, April 9, 1937
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid, January 29, 1937
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid, February 21, 1937
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid, January 13, 1937
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, May 30, 1937
centres of rural upliftment and the reorganization of the District Educational Council. He asked the managers not to use the money given to 'purchase chalks for purchasing chocolates'.

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

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

At that time the manager used to appoint a large number of untrained teachers in elementary schools because it gave them an opportunity to appropriate their salary. Besides the appointment of at least one secondary trained teacher was made compulsory for getting recognition to higher elementary schools. As there was scarcity of trained teachers, some of the managers used to give an increased amount to them taking the same from the untrained teachers. The union fought against this injustice also. Moreover the annual examination gave an opportunity for the inspecting officers to obtain bribery. Therefore the
union demanded that the ESLC examination be made a government examination\textsuperscript{197}.

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

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

After the 3\textsuperscript{rd} conference of the teachers union, R.M Statham the Director of Education, visited Malabar and reminded the teachers of the measures already taken by the government to improve their condition. He pointed out the increase of salary to the higher elementary and secondary trained teachers and the exemption of efficient schools from the prorata cut. He promised to improve the service conditions of the teachers by introducing a teachers license. Above all it was declared that the recognition of schools of managers who refuse or reduce the salary of teachers will be repealed\textsuperscript{199}.

The Government decided to convene conferences to know the public opinion on education reforms\textsuperscript{200}. C.J. varkey, Parliamentary secretary, education department came to Malabar and held discussion with public leaders like K.Kelappan, Muhammad Abdurahiman, Kozhipurath Madhava Menon, V.R.

\textsuperscript{197} Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.23  
\textsuperscript{198} The Mathrubhumi, June 6, 1937  
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid, June 8, 1937  
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid, August 20, 1937
Nayanar and K.S. Rama Swami Ayyar\textsuperscript{201}. He also accepted the memorandum given by the teachers union and discussed the points with T.C. Narayanan Nambiar\textsuperscript{202}. The teachers union gave their own suggestion to the government\textsuperscript{203}. Above all the union submitted a memorandum to the prime Minister at Calicut requesting to implement the measures related to the salary and security of tenure of teachers stated in the communiqué of December 8\textsuperscript{th} 1936\textsuperscript{204}.

Thus the union could bring the grievances of the teachers to the attention of the authorities and the public. The union appreciated the favourable policy adopted by the authority particularly the statement made by the Director. Inspired by the union, teachers began to move against the corruption and malpractice of the managers in elementary schools. Now the managers were very much antagonized and a large number of union activists were dismissed. The union requested the authorities to take steps to prevent the same and to give a warning to the managers\textsuperscript{205}. But the managers continued to dismiss teachers union activists who questioned their malpractices in the payment of salary and attendance registers. Some of the teachers felt that their grievances could be redressed only by abolishing the aided system. Therefore some among them formed a radical teachers union in Kottayam taluk. Teachers like K. Krishnanan and Chathoth Kanari made propaganda for its conference\textsuperscript{206}. Thus the Kottayam taluk radical teachers conference was held at R.C Amala Higher elementary school Pinarayi on October 24\textsuperscript{th} 1937\textsuperscript{207}. Representatives from different parts of the taluk participated in it. T.C. Govindan Nair in his welcome speech said that the managers were not giving the increased grant to the teachers. He viewed the official attempt to distribute salary through Head masters as a futile attempt because most of them are actually managers. A.K.Gopalan in his inaugural address said “many requests have been sent and several representation have been submitted. But the grievances of the teachers are yet to be readdressed…. Aided school teachers are suffering from many difficulties. The highhandedness is supported by the government. When there is conflict between the capitalist and

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid, August 25, 1937
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid, August 27, 1937
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid, September 7, 1937
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid, October 23, 1937. (Chief Ministers were known Prime Ministers in those days)
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid, July 11, 1937
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid, October 17, 1937
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid, October 29, 1937
the workers, the government will be on the side of capitalist. Therefore to get your grievances redressed, you will have to fight against an imperialist power….. Your strike resolution presented in the Vatakara conference had really frightened the department. It is also the reason for the present awakening. Public support is inevitable for the success of our agitation. Don’t forget that this is the first and important duty of this organization208.

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

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

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

208 Ibid, October 29, 1937
209 Ibid, July 23, 1938
between these two groups. The new leadership decided to formulate programes and to enforce the same purely on trade union lines.

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

TEACHERS AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT

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

210 Adhyapakan, October, 1939
211 Kannur Jilla APT Union, Dwithiya Varshika Sammelana Souvenir (Mattannur, 1961)
212 Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.21
213 The Mathrubhumi, February 16, 1937
land. He stated that “those who experienced poverty develop compassion towards poor people. Only those could redress the grievances of the people. To make the future of aided teachers happy, it was necessary to redress the grievances of the students and parents. Hence only a programme which was capable of eradicating starvation, poverty and unemployment in India for ever could help…… Therefore it is the duty of the teachers to support the congress which is trying to achieve the same214.

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

214 Ibid
215 K. Gopalan Kutty, op. cit, p.199
216 Ibid
217 P. R. Nambiar, op. cit, p.91
the teachers of Malabar. The statement made by the Education Minister, Dr. Subbarayan at Quilandi on November 28, 1937, that the teachers should not participate in political affairs was a clear indication of this move\textsuperscript{218}.

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

\textsuperscript{218} Vallathol Kumara Menon, op.cit, p.24