RISE AND GROWTH OF MUSLIM POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

CHAPTER VIII
RISE AND GROWTH OF MUSLIM POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

Muslims of Kerala were not an organized group socially or politically until 1922. The Rebellion of 1921 and the human and economic loss it brought about agonized the minds of Muslim leaders who had decided to do something to save the community from such hardships and to do something to avoid such situations happening again in future. At that time Kodungallur, where the Muslim reformist leaders had gone into hiding in order to escape from the police atrocities on account of the rebellion, became the centre of Muslim reformation in Kerala. At Kodungallur, the Muslim leaders like KM Moulavi, EK Moulavi and others had formed an association called Nikshpaksha Sanghom with a view to settling disputes between the different Muslim families of Kodungallur. Due to their effort unity and peace were established in the community in and around Kodungallur. When the membership and branches of the Sanghom spread, the leaders decided to convert it into an all-Kerala association of the Muslims. Thus, the first organization of the Muslims of Kerala was born. KM Moulavi, EK Moulavi, Seethi Mohamed, Manappattu Kunhi Mohamed, Seethi Sahib and others were the founding leaders of the movement.

2. Ibid, p470.
Though the Sanghom concentrated mainly on social reformation and educational advancement of the community, it had shown interest in the political affairs of the community too. For instance in the Third Annual Conference of the Sanghom held at Calicut in June 1925 and in the Fourth Annual Conference held at Tellicherry in May 1926, resolutions were adopted against the scheme of the Government to deport the Mappilas to the Andaman Islands. Likewise the Third Annual Conference of the Sanghom in a resolution requested the Government to provide reservation for the Muslims in the Taluk and District Boards as in the Assembly.

Though the Sanghom was not a political organization, several Muslim political leaders of that period like Seethi Sahib, Mohamed Schamnad, TM Moidu, Uppi Sahib and Pokker Sahib were connected with the activities of the movement. From 1922 to 1934, the Sanghom conducted twelve annual meetings. Finally, in 1934 at the Twelfth annual conference held at Cannanore it was decided to merge the Sanghom with the Kerala Muslim Majlis as the aims and objectives of both the organizations were similar and the leadership of the movements was also the same.

4. The Mathrubhumi Daily, 18 May, 1926.
5. Ibid, 6 June 1925.
KERALA MUSLIM MAJLIS

The Kerala Muslim Majlis, the first Muslim political organization of Kerala was born on 22 August 1931 at an ‘All Kerala Muslim Conference’ held at Tellicherry. The conference was convened with the aim of having a common platform for the Muslims of British Malabar and the neighbouring regions like South Canara, Cochin and Travancore to discuss the problems and to get their grievances redressed. Advertisements showing the aims and objectives of the conference were published in newspapers with a request to send representatives from the Muslim organizations and Jama’at mosques to the conference. The Conference was well attended with delegates from all parts of Kerala. Jamal Mohammed, a Muslim leader from Madras and Moulana Zafar Ali Khan from Punjab were the important guests at the meeting. The conference through a resolution decided to form an organization to take steps to redress their grievances and to work for the political, educational, social and economic advancement of the community. Thus, the Kerala Muslim Majlis was formed with M.Jamal Mohammed as the President and K.Uppi Sahib and Abdul Sathar Sait as Secretaries. People from different places and belonging to different political parties got representation in the new organization. For instance, Muhammad Abdurahiman and E.Moidu Moulavi of the Congress, TM Moidu, a Justice Party leader and member of Madras Legislative

Assembly, Mohammed Schamnad, a Muslim leader from South Canara and member of Madras Legislative Assembly, Muhammed Sharool from Kasargod, HB Muhammed Rawther and PS Muhammad, two prominent Muslim leaders from Travancore, Sulaiman Sait, Municipal chairman of Cochin et.al were members of the Committee.⁹ According to Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi, never before in Kerala was such a successful meeting held with the support and representation of Muslims from different places and different groups.¹⁰

In the Kerala Muslim conference about thirty resolutions related to the educational, economic and political needs of Muslims were passed, which included repeal of 'The Moplah Outrages Act', disbanding of Malabar Special Police and release of Mappila prisoners. Abdurahiman Sahib moved a political resolution defining Indian political goal as Swaraj. Seethi Sahib condemned the action of those who obstructed the Congress in its struggle for independence.¹¹

The second anniversary of the Majlis was held at Calicut on 14 and 15 May 1933 under the presidency of Sir Muhammed Habibullah, a member of Viceroy’s Executive Council. Though differences of opinion on political line had been visible in the association from its very inception,¹² they widened during its second anniversary session. All this began with the stand taken by

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¹⁰. Vakkom Maulavi’s Deepika in one volume (Mal), p420.
the organizing committee, not to conduct the Youth Conference along with the Majlis Conference and not to invite Yaqub Hasan to the conference as decided by them earlier. The youngsters got disappointed and they approached Abdurahiman Sahib and he decided in favour of conducting the conference whether the Majlis leaders permitted or not. Not only that they had also decided to conduct the function one day earlier to the Majlis conference and even decided to bring Yaqub Hasan to the conference. Accordingly, the Youth Conference was held at Calicut Town Hall on 12 and 13 May 1933. The conference was well attended. It adopted three political resolutions and also passed a resolution condemning the matrilineal system which was prevalent among the Mappilas of north Malabar and sent it to the Majlis committee for consideration. The resolution came before the subject committee for discussion. Majority of the Majlis leaders were from the north Malabar who were adhering to the matrilineal system vehemently and opposed the presentation of the resolution. At the same time Abdurahiman Sahib described the system as un-Islamic and therefore he advocated strongly for the adoption of the resolution. After heated discussion and exchange of words between the leaders, finally the resolution was passed.13 All these things resulted in the widening of the feud between the leaders in the Majlis.

Meanwhile election to the Central Legislative Assembly was held on 10 November 1934. From the West Coast Muslim reserved constituency Abdurahiman Sahib and Abdul Sathar Sait contested as independent candidates. When the election results were declared the nationalist Muslim leader Abdurahiman Sahib was defeated by Sathar Sait by a margin of 322 votes. This victory of Sathar Sait, who later became the founder of Muslim League in Malabar, was a clear indicator of how the Muslim politics was going to develop in Malabar.

The Third annual conference of The Majlis was held at Cannanore on 23 and 24 May 1936 under the presidency of Husain Imam, member of the Council of State. At this session, the Majlis leaders had decided to accept the leadership of the All India Muslim League. The last conference of the Majlis was held at Tellicherry on 1 May 1937 presided over by Sultan Abdurahiman Ali Raja of Arakkal who was later elected as the first President of the Malabar District Muslim League.

FORMATION OF MUSLIM LEAGUE IN MALABAR

Due to differences of opinion among the leaders of the Majlis on political grounds, that is, whether to remain in the Congress or to have a separate organization for the Muslims, the activities of Majlis came to a

15. The Mathrubhumi, dated 27 May 1936.
standstill. At the same time Abdul Sathar Sait, who was elected to the Central Legislature, came in touch with the leaders of the All India Muslim League. Advocate B Pokker Sahib who was practising in Madras also came in touch with the leaders of the League there. Seethi Sahib who later became one of the top leaders of the League shifted his legal practice from Cochin to Tellicherry in 1932 and became a member of the “Muslim Club.” Prominent Muslim nobles of Tellicherry like Sathar Sait, AK Kunhi Mayan Haji, CP Mammu Keyi and others were the members of this cultural club. In the evenings they met at the club and held discussions on various topics.

Sathar Sait maintained good relationship with the national leadership of the League and was soon nominated to the Working Council of the Party. Uppi Sahib and Seethi Sahib were nominated to the National Council of the Muslim League. At the same time some prominent leaders from other parties like KM Moulavi and MK Haji from the Congress and TM Moidu from the Justice Party joined the Muslim League. In short the background for the formation of a unit of the League was slowly and steadily developing at that time in Malabar.

As per the Government of India Act of 1935, elections to the state assemblies were conducted in 1937. As far as the Muslim politics of Malabar

17. T.M. Savan Kutty, Seethi Sahib (Mal), p55.
was concerned it was a turning point as it provided the first opportunity for the Muslim League to show its strength in Malabar. There were six Muslim reserved constituencies in Malabar and the All India Muslim League had put up two candidates. Among them AK Khadar Kutty was elected from Kottayam-Wynad constituency defeating KK Pokker while B Pokker Sahib who had contested from Kozhikode-Kurumbranad constituency was defeated by Attakoya Thangal. Though not an official candidate of the Party, Abdu Rahman Ali Raja, who was later elected as the President of the Malabar District Muslim League Committee, was elected from Chirakkal constituency unopposed. During the period of election Moulana Shaukat Ali visited Malabar in connection with the election campaign of Muslim League candidates. His speeches attracted many Muslims to the League.

Against this background a unit of the All India Muslim League was formally established at a meeting held at Cannanore on the initiative of Kattakath Ahamad Kunhi Haji and others on 21 May 1937. At that meeting it was resolved to start more units in Chirakkal Taluk. At the same time, under the initiative of Ismail Sait and KA Muhammad the Cochin State Muslim League began to function from 1937 onwards. At Calicut also a unit of the League was formed in November 1937.

20. T.M. Savan Kutty, op. cit, p56.
22. T.M. Savan Kutty, op. cit, p57.
23. Ibid.
On 20 December, 1937 at a meeting held at Tellicherry, the first committee of the Malabar District Muslim League was formed with Arakkal Abdurahiman Ali Raja (President), KM Hassan Koya and K Uppi Sahib (vice-Presidents), Abdus Sathar Sait (General Secretary), KM Seethi Sahib and MV Hydros (Joint Secretaries) and CP Mammu Keyi (Treasurer). Tellicherry was made the headquarters of the District League Committee. Under the leadership of the Committee, influenced specially by the charismatic personality of Sathar Sait and Seethi Sahib, the activities of the League spread to every nook and corner of Malabar attracting many young people to its fold.

By the close of nineteen thirties and at the beginning of nineteen fourteen, several national leaders of the League like Moulana Shaukathali, Pirpur Raja, Fazlul Haq, Nawab Ismail Khan, Chaudhari Khaliqus Zaman, Qazi Isa and even Nawab Liaqat Ali Khan visited Malabar addressing huge crowds in many Muslim centers of Malabar. Their tour and their oratory had a tremendous impact on the Mappilas of Malabar. The District League Conferences of 1940 (Calicut) and 1941 (Palghat) also turned out to a milestone in the growth of the Party in Malabar.

When the Second World war started in 1939, the British Government one-sidedly without consulting the Indian leaders, declared that India would join the war with the axis powers whereupon the Congress ministries resigned.

in protest. Stating that the condition of Muslims under the Congress rule was miserable, the Muslim League decided to observe 22 December, 1939 as a 'Day of Deliverance'. As in other parts of India, in Malabar also the 'Day' was observed and resolutions were passed expressing gratitude and relief over the resignation of the Congress ministers.25

DEMAND FOR PAKISTAN

When the All India Muslim League started an agitation demanding the creation of Pakistan, the Malabar branch of the League also fully supported it. In support of this demand the A.I.M.L resolved to observe 16 August 1946 as 'Direct Action Day'. In Malabar also the Day was observed with great enthusiasm. Meetings and processions were held throughout Malabar. KK Abu was the convener of the agitation. He was even prepared to wage an armed revolt against the Government if so required. Abu had contacted Sardar Shaukath Hayath Khan who agreed to supply arms through Mysore border to Malabar.26 But no tension or untoward incidents resulted from this in Malabar. Meanwhile the agitation demanding the creation of Pakistan attracted many Mappilas to the fold of Muslim League. PK Moideen Kutty, a former President of the K.P.C.C left the Party and joined the League in 1945 being attracted by this agitation.27 Later Moideen Kutty and Seethi Sahib had even gone to the

27. In an interview with P.K. Moideen Kutty at his residence at Kuttyppuram on 17 August 1997.
extent of demanding in the Madras Assembly the creation of 'Mappilasthan', a separate state for the Mappilas within the territory of India. Though they failed to achieve this demand, the agitation for 'Pakistan' and 'Mappilasthan' had in a greater way helped in augmenting the Party's influence among the Mappilas of Malabar.

ALL INDIA MUSLIM MAJLIS

When the efforts of Gandhiji and others to restore Hindu-Muslim harmony failed to achieve the goal, the nationalist Muslims of Bengal got annoyed and hence decided to form an organization called the Muslim Majlis. Later its leaders decided to widen its scope by converting it into an all India organization. With this end in view a meeting was convened on 6th, 7th and 8th May 1944 at Delhi. At the meeting an all India Committee of the Majlis was constituted with Barrister Khwaja Abdul Majeed as President and Dr. Shaukatullah Ansari as Secretary. The Majlis opposed the League demand for Pakistan and stood for Hindu-Muslim amity. It was a pro-Congress organization and so they had decided to work among the Muslims with the aim of bringing them into the national stream through the congress.

In July 1944 Malabar unit of the Majlis was formed with KV Noorudheen as President and CN Imbichamu as Secretary. Its members were mainly Con-

29. E. Moidu Maulavi, Memories (Mal), pp72-73.  
gress Muslims and its flag was similar to the Congress flag with a slight difference that instead of Asoka's wheel, crescent was depicted at the center. On 19th and 20th May 1945 a mammoth meeting of the Majlis was held at Calicut. Its national leaders like Khwaja Abdul Majeed, Dr. Shaukatulla Ansari and Moulana Abdulla Mistry participated in the meeting. On finding that the meeting was a success more village committees were formed and the Majlis workers intensified their campaign against the League and its demand for Pakistan.

**ELECTIONS OF 1945**

At the peak of the fight between the Muslim League and Muslim Majlis elections were held to the Madras Legislative Assembly (March, 1945) and to the Central Assembly (December, 1945), which provided an opportunity for these parties to test their strength and popularity among the Muslims of Malabar. All the candidates put up by the League were elected by a large majority while all the majlis candidates not only were defeated but with the exception of one candidate all the others lost even their deposits. Two Muslim League candidates, K Uppi Sahib and SK Shaikh Rawthar, were also elected to the Madras Legislative Council. In the election to the Central

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Assembly the League candidate Abdus Sathar Sait was elected securing about seven thousand votes. The Majlis candidate who contested with the full support of the Congress got only six hundred votes and he lost his deposit. In short, by winning these elections the League had clearly proved that the majority of the community supported their line of thinking.

EARLY LEADERS

From the very inception of the League in Malabar, the party was blessed with the presence of a good number of leaders having charisma and popular appeal. In the Tellichery-Cannanore area, Sathar Sait, Pokker Sahib, Uppi Sahib and others provided leadership for the community. In Kasargod Taluk, Mahin Schamnad, Mahmood Schamnad, Hameed Hasan Schamnad, Hussain Puthoor, Ahamad Husain and others strove hard for the spread of Muslim League. In South Malabar NV Abdul Salam Moulavi, Perur Ahamad, Machingal Ahamed Kutty, PT Veerankutty Moulavi, KK Muhammad Shafi and KK Abu worked among the Muslims of Ernad Taluk spreading the ideals of the League. Seethi Sahib played a great role for the growth of Muslim League in the whole of Malabar.

35. M.C. Ibrahim, op. cit, p94.
36. Seethi Sahib, loc. cit, p11.
ANCILLARY ORGANISATIONS

In order to attract the students, the youth and the labourers to the Party, feeder organizations were set up. At Calicut a committee of the Muslim Youth League was formed in 1938, MV Alikoya, Ponmanichintakath Ahamad Koya and Punathil Mammu were the leaders of the Youth League. About the same period, a ‘Bala League’ also began to function from Calicut with Kunhithan Maliyakkal Abdu as President and K.P. Hassan as General Secretary. At a function held at Calicut on 23 and 24 January 1943 the Malabar District Muslim Students’ Federation was set up with Hasantisa as President and P. Moidu as General Secretary. CH Mohammed Koya, CM Kutty, SM Thangal et al. were the prominent workers of the Muslim Students’ Federation. During the same period a trade union of the League called the ‘Muslim Labour Union’, which is said to be the first of its kind in the history of the All India Muslim League, was set up under the leadership of KK Abu, PK Moideen Kutty, SKS Jaleel Thangal, SM Haneefa and others. Later some of the leaders like KK Abu, SKS Jaleel and others crossed over to the Socialist Party and PK Moideen Kutty and others moved to the Congress Party. With the result the Muslim Labour Union ceased to exist. The vacuum of a trade union for the Muslim League was filled with the creation of Swathanthra Thozhilali Union, a apolitical labour

39. Ibid.
40. T.M. Savan Kutty, op. cit, p59.
organization established at the instigation of Seethi Sahib. Though they considered themselves as an independent organization, its members as well as the leaders belonged to the Muslim League.42

THE 'CHANDRIKA'

The Chandrika began its publication from Tellicherry in 1932 as an independent Muslim weekly. Sathar Sait, Seethi Sahib, AK Kunhi Mayan Haji and others were the main spirit behind the publication of the weekly. It was started to oppose the views and comments published in Al-Ameen, the mouthpiece of the pro-Congress Muslims. For a short period in 1935 the Chandrika stopped its publication. But from 1938 onwards it reappeared as a daily and as a mouthpiece of the Muslim League. In 1946 its publication was shifted to Calicut.

The Chandrika stood for the cause of Muslims by publishing news and views pertaining to the community. It also paid attention to nurture and encourage budding Muslim writers and poets.

'MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE POST INDEPENDENT ERA

After the partition of India, the Muslim League was facing the question whether to disband it or not. Important leaders of the League had

shifted to Pakistan. Many members resigned from the League. Some of them left active politics while others joined other political parties.\textsuperscript{43} In many states the League units had either ceased functioning or changed its name. For instance in Bombay they adopted the name the ‘Fourth Party’.\textsuperscript{44} In Travancore-Cochin the League decided to disband itself in 1949 and did not resume political activity until 1959.\textsuperscript{45} Some people thought that there was no need for having a separate organization to protect the rights of Muslims as there was no obstacle to worship or to manage religious institutions. Some others argued that since the League had achieved its goal of creating a Muslim majority state of Pakistan, there is no need to continue that organization in India.

**INDIAN MUSLIMS’ CONFERENCE**

A meeting was however convened by the former Chief Minister of Bengal H.S. Suhrawardi at Calcutta on 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} November, 1947 to assess the plight of Muslims after partition. From South India, Muhammad Ismail Sahib and Seethi Sahib participated in the meeting. Suhrawardi, who convened the meeting moved a resolution that since the demand for the creation of Pakistan was achieved, there was no need to continue with the League. But Ismail Sahib and Seethi Sahib opposed his views and argued strongly in favour

\textsuperscript{43} M. Alikunhi, ‘History and Activities of the Muslim League’ in *Ernakulam District Muslim League Souvenir*, 1969, p23.

\textsuperscript{44} Muhammad Raza Khan, *What Price Freedom*, p366.

\textsuperscript{45} Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, p168.
of the continuation of the League as the political party of Muslim in India. Most of the members who were present at the meeting also held the same view. So Suhrawardi’s plan did not succeed. After the meeting Suhrawardi remarked that “two Dravidians from the South have come and foiled our scheme”.46

KARACHI CONVENTION

A Consultative meeting of the All India Muslim League was convened at Karachi on 14th and 15th December, 1947 to discuss the future of the organization. At the meeting it was decided to form an Indian Union Muslim League for India and a Pakistan Muslim League for that country. Ismail Sahib was elected to be the convener of the former and Liaqat Ali Khan was elected as the convener for the latter.47

FORMATION OF INDIAN UNION MUSLIM LEAGUE

As per the decision of the Karachi convention, a meeting of the Muslim League leaders was held at the Rajaji Hall, Madras on 10th March, 1948 to chalk out the future programme. Seethi sahib, Pocker Sahib, Uppi Sahib and others attended the conference from Malabar.

At the Muslim League council held at Madras, members differed on the question of the continuance of the League. Some members argued that the

46. M. Alikunhi, loc. cit, p21.
47. K.M. Seethi Sahib, loc cit, p18.
League should be converted into an educational and cultural organization. Some others argued that the League should either wind up its activities or at least change its name. But Ismail Sahib and Seethi Sahib strongly opposed their arguments and a resolution favouring the continuance of the League as a political Party was adopted by the meeting.

At the end of the meeting the Indian Union Muslim League Committee was formed with Ismail Sahib (President) and Mahaboob Ali Baig (Secretary). At the meeting a committee was constituted to draft a new constitution for the League. Sathar Sait, Seethi Sahib, Pocker Sahib and PK Moideen Kutty represented Malabar in the committee. The new constitution was adopted on 1 September, 1951.

The period just after the partition was a gloomy one for the Muslims especially the followers of the Muslim League through out India. Some people questioned the patriotism of Muslims. Some others described them as fifth columnists. Not only Congressmen but even some Muslim Leaguers questioned the necessity for the existence of the League. Muslims felt that they were discriminated against by the administrators. In Malabar, PP Hassan Koya, MLA, and the office-bearers of the Calicut Town Muslim League resigned from the Party. It was at that time that the ‘Hyderabad Police Action’ had taken place.

49. M.C. Ibrahim, op. cit, p128.
The Nizam of Hyderabad who was not ready to merge with India had been dealt with by the Indian forces and Hyderabad had been annexed to India in September, 1949. Some Mappilas had been enrolled in the forces of Nizam. On the ground of suspicion some of the Muslim League leaders like Panakkad Pookoya Thangal, NV Abdul Salam Moulavi, Assan Kutty Kurikkal and others had been entered.50 The Madras Government even passed an order that Mappilas should not be recruited to police force.51 President of the Indian Union Muslim League, Ismail Sahib had been requested by the Madras Government to issue a statement supporting the military action by the Indian Government and he did so.52 Seethi Sahib and other members of the League raised questions about the arrest of the Muslim League leaders in the Madras Assembly and submitted a memorandum requesting their release, but their attempt did not succeed.

ELECTIONS

The period that followed partition witnessed a lull in the activity of the Muslim League. Making speeches at the milad meetings or madrasa anniversaries were the only activity of the Muslim League leaders during this period.

50. T.M. Savan Kutty, op. cit, p78.
51. Muhammed Raza Khan, op. cit, p388.
52. Ibid, p389.
It was during this period of inaction that election to the Malabar District Board was announced in 1949. Muslim League decided to contest the election. No other Party except the Socialist Party led by Dr. K.B. Menon came forward to have alliance with the League in the election. That was the beginning of friendship between the Socialist Party and the Muslim League in Kerala politics.

When the League member Koyappathodi Ahamed Kutty Haji died, a bye-election was held in the Ernad-Valluvanad constituency on 28 October, 1950. MPM Assan Kutty Kurikkal contested as the Muslim League candidate. Against him the official faction of the K.P.C.C led by CK Govindan Nair put forward KA Ibrahim, brother of Abdurahiman Sahib, as their candidate. At the same time the rival Congress group led by K.Kelappan put forth Palat Kunhikoya as their candidate. To campaign for the League candidate their leaders like Ismail Sahib, Bafaqi Thangal, Seethi Sahib, Raza Khan and others came to Malappuram, which created a new enthusiasm among the Party workers.

Before the commencement of the election, the congress candidates withdrew their candidatures and the League candidate was the election with a thumping majority.\textsuperscript{53} It is to be noted that it was the first election victory of the

\textsuperscript{53} M.C. Ibrahim, \textit{op. cit}, pp138-139.
MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE TRAVANCORE-COCHIN STATES

In the Princely States of Travancore and Cochin too the Muslim community had shown interest in the political activities. In the Cochin state, a unit of the Muslim League had been formed in the very year of the formation of the League in Malabar in 1937. Ismail Haji Isa Sait, KM Seethi Sahib, Advocate KA Muhammad and others were the leaders of the *Cochin State Muslim League*. The unit of the League possessed a press and published a journal called to *Cochin Mail*.

In Travancore, though there had been a number of social and cultural organizations working among the Muslims, politically they were not united and they had suffered greatly on account of it. A move for the organization of a strong association was made in a conference which met at Varkala in December, 1945. It was decided to form *The Travancore State Muslim League*, with PS Muhammad as President and PK Kunju as Secretary. Within one year they were able to enroll 36,000 people as its members. Later, due to differences of opinion, some persons under the leadership of Thangal Kunju

Musaliar left the organization and formed another organization called the *Akhila Travancore Muslim Majlis*.\(^{57}\)

In February 1948 election was held to the constituent Assembly in which nine seats were reserved for Muslims. As per the electoral agreement between the State Congress and the Travancore State Muslim League one Muslim reserved seat was given to the former and eight to the latter. In the election, the Travancore Muslim League secured seven seats.\(^ {58}\) After the election also the State League supported the State Congress Ministry. But in the Ministry led by Pattom Thanupillai they were not given a seat in the ministry. The Pattom Ministry did not last long due to factional squabbles within the state congress. Later, after the integration of Travancore and Cochin on 1\(^{st}\) July, 1949, T.K. Narayana Pillai became the Chief Minister. In the same year, the State League had taken a decision to abstain from politics\(^ {59}\) and instead TA Abdulla, a leader of the State League was made a minister in the Narayana Pillai ministry.\(^ {60}\) He is said to be the first Muslim to become a minister in Kerala.\(^ {61}\) Later he was removed from the ministry along with two others as per a decision to reduce the size of the Cabinet.

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60. C. Narayana Pillai, *From Pattom to Panambili* (Mal), p138.
On the integration of the two states, Travancore and Cochin, the Muslim League committees also decided to merge and formed the Travancore-Cochin Muslim League. PK Kunju was elected the President of the new organization.\textsuperscript{62}

In 1952, in the first election held after India became a Republic, the Travancore-Cochin Muslim League tried to have an electoral understanding with the State Congress but the latter was not ready for it. This isolation in politics provoked many of the leaders of the League. This phenomenon was prevalent among a section of the members of the Muslim League throughout India immediately after the partition. As a result in 1953, PK Kunju Sahib, one of the prominent leaders of the Travancore State Muslim League left the Party and joined the Praja Socialist Party.\textsuperscript{63} In another development in the same year a section of the leaders of the Cochin Muslim League under the leadership of AB Kochunni met at Trichur and decided to convert the League into a social organization.\textsuperscript{64} In the same year in a convention of the League held at Changanacherry also a resolution was passed demanding the discarding of politics by the League.\textsuperscript{65}

At an annual conference of the Travancore-Cochin Muslim League held at Perumbavur in 1957 under the Presidentship of A. Majeed Marikkar it was

\textsuperscript{62} Jamal, \textit{op. cit}, p164.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid, p173.
\textsuperscript{64} P.A. Syed Muhammed (ed.), \textit{op. cit}, p384.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
resolved to change the name of the organization into Kerala Muslim Jama’t Federation and to concentrate its activities on social, economic, educational and religious affairs of the community.  

With the formation of the Kerala state, units of the Indian Union Muslim League were established in Travancore-cochin area also. When KM Seethi Sahib and B.Pokker Sahib shifted their residence to Ernakulam, it became the headquarters of Muslim League in the South Kerala.

GENERAL ELECTION OF 1952

India became a Republic on 26th January, 1950. On the basis of the new Constitution, general elections were held throughout India in January 1952. The election of 1952 was significant because for the first time in the history of India elections were held on the basis of universal adult franchise. Like wise, as far as Muslims were concerned it was an important election because they were facing the first election after the partition of the country and after the abolition of the system of separate electorates for Muslims and other communities.

In the election, Muslim League contested in twelve seats to the Madras Assembly and won five seats. Compared to the Congress, which had contested in thirty-two seats and won only four seats, it was a great revival for the League.

66. Ibid.
The victorious candidates were K Uppi Sahib (Tirur), Chakkeri Ahamad Kutty (Kottakkal), KK Muhammad Shafi (Perinthalmanna), Seethi Sahib (Malappuram-General) and M Chadayan (Malappuram-Reservation). In the election to the Parliament B Pokker Sahib contested from the Malappuram constituency and won it by defeating the nearest Congress rival candidate by a margin of about seventeen thousand votes.68

In the Assembly election, no party got the required seats to form a ministry. Hence, the Communist Party and Kissan Mazdoor Praja Party approached the leaders of the League to support them to form a non-Congress ministry. But the League leaders categorically declared that they would not support a ministry led by the Communists. Not only that, after long discussions with other leaders of the party, Ismail Sahib, the President of the I.U.M.L. declared the party’s stand to support the Congress for the formation of the ministry. This friendship between the two parties developed further into an election understanding in the Municipal elections, which resulted in the victory of the Congress in many Municipalities of Malabar. The alliance between the two parties continued also during the Chief Ministership of Kamraj Nadar who succeeded Rajaji as Chief Minister of Madras State.69

The understanding between the two parties did not last long due to criticism and opposition from some quarters especially from the nationalist

Muslims. So, in the District Board elections, there was no alliance between the Congress and the League and as a result, the election victory went in favour of the Communist Party.70

FIRST ELECTION TO THE KERALA ASSEMBLY

Political parties of Kerala were engaged in hectic discussions to chalk out political strategies, when the election dates were announced in 1956. Everybody knew that, if there were no alliance, the Communist Party would sweep the polls. The State Committee of the Muslim League proposed that if the Congress, Praja Socialist Party and the League formed an alliance then the "Communist menace" could be averted.

By the end of December 1956 All India Congress Committee leaders like SK Patil, Panambilli Govinda Menon and others came to Kerala to discuss and work out the details regarding an election understanding with the leaders of the Muslim League. They had reached an agreement also. But at the Indore A.I.C.C Session when the matter came up for discussion, majority of the delegates vehemently opposed to have any truck with the League. At the same time leaders of the P.S.P tried to have an alliance with the Communist Party. When they failed in their effort, they approached the Muslim League. Consequently an agreement was signed between them on 15 January, 1957.71

70. Ibid, p23.
71. M.C. Ibrahim, op. cit, p240.
In the election, Muslim League contested in fourteen Assembly seats and three parliament seats. The following persons were the successful candidates in the Assembly election: CH Muhammad Koya (Thanur), Chakkeri Ahamad Kutty (Kuttippuram), MPM Ahamad Kurikkal (Kondotty), Avukkadar Kutty Naha (Tirurangadi), KV Muhammad (Mankada), K Hasan Gani (Malappuram), Bava Haji (Tirur) and M. Chadayan (Manjeri). In the parliament election, only B Pocker Sahib could win the election. He was elected from the Manjeri constituency. Seethi Sahib had contested the election from the Calicut constituency to the parliament but was defeated in a three-cornered contest with a congress candidate by a margin of 27870 votes.\(^72\)

This election had created far-reaching consequences. After the election, the Central Election Commission had recognized the League as a State Party and the election symbol of ladder had been allotted to them.\(^73\) Due to the alliance between the Muslim League and the Praja Socialist Party, the Communist Party failed to secure absolute majority in the state election. Even in the Uttar Pradesh election the alliance had created repercussions as the Muslims there had cast their vote in favour of the P.S.P.

'THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE'

The first Ministry of Kerala headed by EMS Namboodiripad came to power on 8\(^{th}\) April, 1957. Within a short period of his rule trouble started through

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\(^72\) Ibid, p244.

\(^73\) T.M. Savan Kutty, op. cit, p103.
out Kerala. Private school managers came forward with agitational programmes against the Education Bill introduced by the Government. Politically motivated skirmishes and conflicts were a usual affair. Mannath padmanabhan, the leader of the Nair Service Society and K. Kelappan, well-known freedom fighter and leader of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party launched an agitation against the Communist regime in the state. Under the auspices of the Indian National Congress and the Praja Socialist Party, a 'Liberation Struggle' was declared on 12th June, 1959. The State Council of the Muslim League which met on 22nd June, 1959 decided to join the struggle.74

Twenty six out of twenty nine Municipalities, seven hundred out of Eight hundred and ninety five village panchayats and thirty Bar Associations passed resolutions demanding the resignation of the Communist Ministry.75 Besides that almost all student organizations, youth organizations and trade unions came out in the agitation raising the same demand. The Government used all sorts of repressive measures to suppress the agitation. In the police firing twenty four people were killed and 1605 people were seriously injured.76 Almost all the Malayalam dailies wrote editorials criticizing the Government action and supporting the demand of the agitators.

74. M.C. Ibrahim, op. cit, p257.
76. Perunna K. Nair, Congress Movement in Kerala (Mal), p384.
On 15th July, a massive procession led by Mannath Padmanabhan, PK Kunju, PT Chacko, K Hasan Ghani and others marched to the Raj Bhavan demanding the dismissal of the Ministry and taking over of the State administration by the President of India. At last on the recommendation of the Governor, the President of India dismissed the Ministry on 31st July 1959.

PROGRESSIVE MUSLIM LEAGUE

In 1959, a rival organization to the Muslim League made its appearance in Malabar by the name the Progressive Muslim League. Idassery Muhammed Moulavi, KP Thangal, Moideen Kunhi, KP Muhammed Koya, Koya Kunhi Naha, MV Alikoya, Advocate K Alikoya and others were the leaders of the new Muslim political Party. Most of its leaders as well as followers belonged to the communist Party. They criticized the Muslim League against its participation in the 'Liberation Struggle'. In the election to the Kerala Assembly held in 1960 the Progressive League fielded its own candidates, allegedly to create confusion in the minds of the Muslim League supporters. In the election all of its candidates were not only defeated but they lost their deposits as well. After the election the new Party slowly disappeared from the scene.

77. In an interview with K.P. Mohamed Koya at his residence at Feroke on 5 November 1995.
INTERIM ELECTION OF 1960

After the dismissal of the Communist Ministry, Congress leaders like Lal Bahadur Sastri, UN Dhebar and others came to Kerala to bring about an election understanding with the Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League. Prime Minister Nehru and the Congress President Sanjiva Reddy came to Kerala for election campaign. At the election rallies they urged the people to cast their votes for the candidates of the Democratic Front comprised of the Congress, the P.S.P and the Muslim League.

The Democratic Front came out with a thumping majority. The Congress Party itself secured seats required for an absolute majority. So, they decided to form the Government without the Muslim League. At the same time the National Executive of the P.S.P decided not to join the Kerala Ministry, if the Muslim League had no part on it. Mannath Padmanabhan, the leader of the liberation struggle also strongly supported the demand of the League for their inclusion in the Ministry. But the Congress High Command did not agree to it.

After long discussions, a solution to the crisis was provided by the Muslim League by retreating from their earlier stand. They declared that the need of the hour was to save the state from the "Communist danger," and hence they did not wish to stand in the way of ministry-making. However, they decided to accept the speaker's post. Accordingly, on 22nd February, 1960 a coalition Ministry led by pattom Thanupillai of the P.S.P came to power. KM
Seethi Sahib, leader of the Muslim League was elected unopposed as the Speaker of the Assembly. It was the first time after Independence that a Muslim League member got elected to this esteemed post.79

On 17th April, 1961 Seethi Sahib died. Again, problems started in the Democratic Front. The Congress High Command was not in favour of giving the speakership to another League candidate. Meanwhile leadership of the League proposed the name of C.H. Muhammad Koya for the speaker’s post. Then the Congress put up another demand that before contesting for the speaker’s post Muhammad Koya should resign from the Party. The decision of the Congress was only the reflection of the Durgapur A.I.C.C resolution which demanded that the Congress should keep away from making alliance with communal forces. After prolonged discussion the League leaders conceded the demand put forth by the Congress and CH Muhammad Koya was elected as the third Speaker of Kerala Assembly defeating the Communist Party candidate Aysha Bai.80

The concord in the front did not last long. With the bye-election of Kuttippuram, which was necessitated due to the death of Seethi Sahib, trouble started again in the front. Though a partner of the Democratic Front, the Congress had decided not to support the League candidate Muhsin Bin Ahamad, on the basis of the Durgapur Resolution. Not only that, a Congress rebel

79. M.C. Ibrahim, op. cit, p273.
candidate, K Kunhi Muhammad had contested from there. The Communists also supported him. But when the election result was announced, the League candidate came out successful with a majority of 9204 votes.81

The rift in the front widened further with the Lok Sabha election of 1962. In the discussions for seat adjustments, the Muslim League was not consulted and all the 18 seats were adjusted between the congress and the Praja Socialist Party. Disappointed with the developments, the Muslim League was not consulted and all the 18 seats were adjusted between the Congress and the Praja Socialist Party. Disappointed with the developments, the Muslim League state Committee which met on 9th November, 1962 decided to end its alliance with the Congress and asked CH Muhammad Koya to submit his resignation from the speakership.

In the Parliament election of 1962, Muslim League contested from Kozhikode, Manjeri and Ponnani constituencies. CH Muhammad Koya from Kozhikode and Ismail Sahib from Manjeri were declared elected whereas KM Alikunju who contested from the Ponnani constituency was defeated. The election victory of CH Muhammad Koya to the Parliament caused a bye-election in Thanur Assembly constituency. Muslim League contested the election alone and its candidate Dr.CM Kutty won the election with a majority of 12,936 votes.82

82. The Chandrika Daily dated 29 April 1962.
Meanwhile some important political developments took place in the State. Pattom Thanupillai was appointed as the Governor of Punjab. Hence he resigned as Chief Minister of Kerala on 25th September, 1962 and R Sankar was sworn in as Chief Minister on the next day. But these steps created more problems in the state politics. For, the P.S.P became disappointed over the loss of Chief Ministership; whereas the Christian lobby in the Congress favoured PT Chacko for the Chief Ministership. It was in this situation that from the opposition side PK Kunju moved a no-confidence motion against the Government. A section of Congress MLAs led by KM George also voted in its favour. Thus the Sankar Ministry fell on 8th September, 1964.83

MID-TERM POLL OF 1965

In the interim poll to the Kerala Assembly which was held on 4th March, 1965 Marxist Party made alliance with the Kerala Congress. Though Samyukta Socialist Party was in the front of the Marxist Party, it had made some election adjustments with the League. The Congress and the Communist Party contested the election alone. When the election results were announced no Party could secure majority. So the Assembly was again dissolved on 24th March, 1965.

83. G. Gopa Kumar, Regional Political Parties and State Politics, p87.
1967 ELECTION

The Fourth general election to the parliament and election to the Kerala Assembly were held in February 1967 simultaneously. The importance of this election was that the Muslim League which hitherto was adopting an anti-Communist line changed its policy and came forward to have an alliance with the Marxist Party. In that election, the Muslim League had fielded 15 candidates and won 14 seats. The successful candidates were E Ahamed (Cannanore), PM Aboobacker (Kozhikode II), M. Moideen Kutty Haji (Thanur), Avukkadar Kutty Naha (Tirurangadi), Bava Haji (Tirur), CM Kutty (Kuttippuram), Ummar Bafaqi Thangal (Kondotty), MPM Ahammad Kurikkal (Malappuram), VPC Thangal (Ponnani), CH Muhammad Koya (Mankada), Seethi Thangal (Guruvayur), MPM Jafar Khan (Mattanchery), M. Hakeemji (Kazhakkoottam) and M. Chadayan (Manjeri). Hamid Ali Shamnad who contested from Kasargode constituency was the sole defeated League Candidate. He had been defeated by a small margin of 95 votes by a rival independent candidate. In the Parliament election both Ismail Sahib who contested from Manjeri and Sulaiman Sait who contested from Kozhikode constituency were declared elected.

84. Department of Public Relations (Government of Kerala), Assembly Elections Since 1951, pp122-145.
SAMASTHA KERALA MUSLIM LEAGUE

Another development in this election was that a small section of the members left the League in protest against its alliance with the Marxist Party. K. Hasan Gani, a former Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Assembly Party, Sayyid Alavi Koya Thangal, K Muhammad Naha and others were the leaders of the new Party. The Samastha Kerala Muslim League which was formed on 16th November, 1966 fielded six candidates in the 1967 election. All of them were not only defeated but even their deposits were forfeited in the election. Altogether, they got only 3680 votes.85 It was revealed that they had no backing in the community. At last, it was dissolved on 19th June 1968 and many of its leaders as well as workers re-joined the Muslim League.86

MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE GOVERNMENT

The year 1967 is a significant year as far as the Muslim politics in India was concerned. The Muslim League, which has been described as a 'dead horse' by Nehru, emerged as a vital and decisive force in Kerala. For the first time since Independence, the Muslim League became a ruling partner of a State. Actually, they had got this opportunity in 1960 when they became victorious with their allies namely, the Congress and the P.S.P. But after the election, the Congress High Command had denied them a place in the cabinet.

86. M. Abdul Aziz, Rise of Muslims in Kerala Politics, p75.
As per the previous understanding between the parties of the coalition, Muslim League was given two seats in the Cabinet besides the Deputy Speaker's post. Education and Panchayat portfolios were allotted to the League in which CH Muhammad Koya and MPM Ahamad Kurikkal respectively were declared to be nominees of the Party. MPM Jaffar Khan was announced as the Candidate of the Party for Deputy Speaker's post. Besides the two League members there were two other Muslim ministers in the Cabinet, namely, EK Imbichi Bava of the CPM who was in charge of the Ministry of Transport and PK Kunju of the Samyukta Socialist Party who held the Finance portfolio.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEAGUE MINISTERS

One of the important achievements of CH Muhammad Koya as Education Minister of Kerala was the establishment of a University in Malabar area called the Calicut University which was formed through an Ordinance issued by the Governor on 22nd July, 1968. Till the formation of this University, there existed only one University in the state, namely, the University of Kerala. The over-all development of the Malabar region which was very backward in all respects compared with Travancore, was the main motive behind the establishment of this new University.

CH Muhammed Koya introduced the Kerala University Bill 1967 in the Kerala Assembly and initiated the preliminary steps to frame a similar bill for the Calicut University. The bill was aimed at providing service security for
the private college teachers in the State and for preventing mismanagement of private colleges and giving representation to the students in the Senate and Academic Council of the University.\textsuperscript{87}

Hitherto, the language teachers in schools were treated only on a par with craft teachers in the matter of salary in spite of the number of hours of teaching work they had. All discriminatory rules against the language teachers (Arabic, Urdu and Sanskrit) were removed. On account of the liberal policy followed by the Government, about 12,000 Arabic teachers got appointment.\textsuperscript{88}

It was during this time that an order was issued providing direct payment to the private college teachers of Kerala. Thus, hundreds of private college teachers were saved from the harassment of private college managements. Government had also taken steps for making Secondary Education free by abolishing tuition and examination fees in High School classes. This measure provided immense relief to thousands of students and parents in the State.

The League members were constantly demanding adequate representation of Muslims in the Government services and the judiciary. Accordingly due to their effort EK Moidu was appointed Judge of the Kerala High Court.\textsuperscript{89} Besides that it was only due to their pressure that the EMS

\textsuperscript{88} M.C. Ibrahim, \textit{op. cit}, p336.
\textsuperscript{89} The Kerala Kaumudi Daily dated 25 March 1969.
Ministry was forced to grant ten percent reservation for Muslims in the Government services considering their under-representation in the Government services.90

MPM Ahammed Kurikkal, who held the portfolios of Panchayats, Fisheries and Community Development, could remain in power hardly for one year since he died on 24 October, 1968. Later K Avukkader Kutty Naha was chosen to fill the vacancy of Kurikkal. Within a short span of time, Kurikkal had proved his merit as an able administrator. He had piloted a bill in the Assembly aiming at the decentralization of power. Unfortunately, it was not passed during his lifetime. He had been able to prepare a masterplan for the benefit of the fisherman. However, his greatest achievement was the creation of Malappuram District which had been the long-cherished dream of the Muslim League.

Actually, Muslim League had raised the demand for the creation of Malappuram District in 1960 itself. Alankode Abdul Majeed, a League member, while taking part in the discussion in the Assembly session demanded that a new district must be formed by joining northern Taluks of Palghat District and southern Taluks of Kozhikode District which were very backward in all respects.91 But nobody came forward to support his demand and the

Government also did not take any action on it. In 1968 at a State Muslim League conference held at Calicut, MPM Ahammed Kurikkal moved a resolution demanding the formation of Malappuram District. He was able to convince the delegates with the help of statistics that formation of a new District was the only solution for the eradication of backwardness in that area.92

The demand of the Muslim League for the creation of Malappuram District created great concern and immediate reactions from several quarters. Newspaper dailies like the Mathrubhumi and the Indian Express wrote editorials ridiculing the demand of the League saying that Mappilas were still holding the kind of attitudes that had resulted in the partition of India.93

In spite of the protests, the Government appointed N Kaliswaran as Special officer in connection with the formation of the new District who submitted his report in May, 1969. A Cabinet sub-committee consisting of EMS Namboodiripad, K.R. Gouri and CH Muhammed Koya held discussions about the report and approved it. The final decision for the creation of the new District was taken by the Cabinet meeting held on 5th May, 1969 and the new District officially came into being on 16th June, 1969.94

Under the leadership of K. Kelappan and the leaders of the Janasangh agitations started against the formation of Malappuram District. An “Anti-District Bifurcation Committee” was organized in this regard. At Delhi also attempts were made to force the Central Government to interfere in the matter. This was resisted by the then Home Minister on the ground that it was a State concern.

Though the C.P.M. had defended the demand for the formation of Malappuram District on the floor of the Assembly and outside, after the fall of the ministry they had changed their opinion. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, who was the Chief Minister of Kerala at the time of the formation of Malappuram District, after analyzing the situation later came to the conclusion that the formation of Malappuram District had helped the Muslim league in a bigger way to increase their political and organizational base. Not only that the whole authority of the new District went into the hands of the Muslim League and thereby helped the growth of ‘Islamic communalism’ in the State.

Within a short period schism developed in the United Front. Corruption charges were levelled against all the Ministers except the Chief Minister and the two League Ministers. Samyuktha Socialist Party and Karshaka Tozhilali Party, the two partners of the alliance, faced split in their parties. Due

95. Roland E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, p183.
96. The Indian Express dated 26 March 1968.
to problems in the coalition, many of the Ministers resigned. At last the Marxist led coalition Ministry crumbled after it was defeated on a voting over a resolution presented by TA Majeed of the Communist Party of India in the Assembly. The EMS Ministry resigned on 24th October, 1969.⁹⁸

Though the coalition government collapsed within a short period, as far as the Muslim League was concerned it was a fruitful period in two ways. Firstly after partition it was for the first time that they got an opportunity to participate in the Government of the country and secondly, it emerged as a strong and decisive political force in Kerala.

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⁹⁸ Perunna K. Nair, Congress Movement in Kerala (Mal), p400.