

The Legendary Resistance of 1921: (Malabar Rebellion), Historical Narration Untold Stories

Prabhakaran Cheenampatta¹, Vatta Kandathil¹, Dr. Manisha Dixit²

¹Research Scholar, Department of History, Eklavya University Damoh. MP.470661, India

²H.O.D, Department of History, Eklavya University Damoh. MP. 470661, India

Abstract: *The 1921 uprising in the Malabar region grew from long-standing resistance to British rule, landlord control, and the hardships faced by poor farmers. This article focuses on Anakayam and nearby areas, where leaders such as Wariyamkunnath Kunjahammad Haji, Kazhukunnummal Koyamuhaji, Appankulam Moideen, Pantallur Tami, and Ossan Aidru became closely associated with the struggle. It presents the rebellion mainly as a peasant and anti-colonial movement in which people from different communities took part. Particular attention is given to the killing of retired police inspector K. V. Chekutty, who was regarded by the rebels as a supporter of British authority. Historical accounts differ sharply over what happened after his death, especially the claim that his severed head was carried on a spear to Manjeri. By bringing together these conflicting narratives, the article shows how memory, oral testimony, family accounts, and written histories have shaped later interpretations of the event. It also argues that communal violence did occur during the wider unrest, but that such incidents alone do not fully explain the political and agrarian roots of the 1921 resistance.*

Keywords: Malabar Rebellion, Anakayam, Wariyamkunnath Kunjahammad Haji, Peasant Resistance, K. V. Chekutty

1. Introduction

The anti-British leader of 1921, Alimuslyar, and his disciple and brave man who terrified the British, Wariyamkunnath Kunjahammad Haji, were born in the Velluvangad area on the other side of the Kadalundipuzha river, which borders Anakayam panchayat. Therefore, the villages in Anakayam panchayat are the areas that suffered the most from the protests they carried out. The main protest leader of this area was Kazhukunnummal Koyamuhaji from Chittathupara. Another was Appankulam Moideen from Anakayam side. In addition, Pantallur Tami and Ossan Hydrus were also active in the struggle.

Historical back Ground

The people's resistance against the injustices meted out to the poor farmers by the British rulers and the landlords broke out in 1921. It led to an organized uprising. A people who were only armed with iron fists faced the army that marched with guns, bayonets and cannons and rushed forward with the weapons they found. Many fell before the army's guns. Many were arrested by the army and imprisoned. Some were deported to the Andamans and other places. Many died in the cellular jails there. The Mappilas were unable to gather or speak. In between, the army patrolled the villages. Entering farmers' homes and beating up men. Many were afraid and hid in the forests and mountains. Will stayed. The soldiers entered the house without men and women and children were abused. Mothers and sisters were abused, raped.

The 1921 rebellion was not a Mappila rebellion. It was a complete peasant rebellion. Therefore, non-Mappila peasants also participated in it. At that time, when caste discrimination prevailed, their moral attachment to the Muslim community, which gave better consideration to the lower classes, may have been one of the reasons. This may be why warriors like Irulakkandan Tami, a native of

Pantallur, joined the ranks of the main Khilafat activists in 1921.

There were a few soldiers in the country who had joined the British Army during World War I and fought overseas for the Allied powers. After the war, they were dismissed. These former soldiers, who had already been trained in the war tactics of the British army, later volunteered to provide weapons training to the Khilafat activists. People like Irulakkandan Tami and Ossan Hydrus were such former soldiers. They were given high regard in the Khilafat army led by Wariyamkunnath Kunjahammad Haji.

Inspector Chekkutty, a wealthy citizen and a prominent citizen who worked with Anakayam as the centre and Police Deputy Superintendent Amu Sahib were the two men who stood as the right-hand men of the British in suppressing the riot. It is also worth mentioning that both of them were Muslims. Apart from them, some Muslim officials from the neighboring areas also betrayed the rioters. It should also be remembered that there were Mappilas in the British army and the police. How could this be a communal riot when both the parties were Mappilas? It is also worth underlining that it was a Mappila policeman who was hacked to death by the rioters at the Mudikode outpost. However, it is true that some communal clashes and looting took place. But it was not the Khilafat movement that carried it out. It is true that it was some Mappilas who had vested interests who infiltrated in that name. In any case, it can be said that the plot took a turn with the murder of Inspector Chekkutty in Anakayam.

The murder of Inspector Chekkutty

The sensational Chekkutty murder and the procession with the severed head on a spear are described in the book 'Anglo-Mappila War' by historian A.K. Kotur as follows:

On August 25, Kunjahammad Haji met the revolutionary leaders of the Perinthalmanna area of Angadipuram and inaugurated a military training center. He met a wealthy man

named Parambur Unnin and Unnin, who was stingy, donated to the expenses required for this training camp. There was a fight with Unneen. Hitchcock was informed that Haji had come to the house. And he has been recorded. On August 29 th, Kunhahammed Haji Pantallur Military Training Lana visited the camp. H. C. of the Panthalur Police Outpost and near and Kakkadan Aidraskutty, a native of Cheruputhur Othukkungal. The British authorities had appointed him to monitor the movement of Kunhahammed Haji. Sri. Lakappara Kunjalan aged 102 years old Said that Inspector Kaukkunnummal Koyamu as well as large group of 24 persons entered Chekkutty's house on August 25 the British Administrator T. Ostry ordered to produce all fire arms (licenced or un licenced) to Sub divisional Magistrate. At that time Chekkutty told them it was not here. It was in Malappuram, suddenly the former Army chief Ossan Hydru stood up and shooted. Sri Sardarchandroth said that Kaukkunnummal Koyamu was distant relative of deceased inspector Chekkutty who fired. On this account Special Judge Walsh convicts Kaukkunnummal Koyamu Kunheethu and Ossan Hydru was sentenced to death.

After the Mappila army soldiers cut off the head of Chekkutty, who had fallen on the upper verandah, and placed it on a spear, a charge sheet was read out by Naik Thami, a native of Pantallur, detailing the countless atrocities he had committed against the common people of Eranad, especially the Mappilas, while serving the imperial government throughout his life. The charge sheet, which took 40 minutes to read, contained about 300 charges (Thami's notes).

Those who heard about this unusual or at that time impossible murder rushed to Chekkutty's house. A large crowd gathered in the yard and in the compound. They then proceeded in a procession towards the capital of Eranad (Manjeri). Inspector Chekkutty's head was placed on a spear and held high in the procession. (Article written by Sardar Chandroth in Deshabhimani on August 25, 1946)

Sardar Chandroth describes the murder of Chekkutty and the subsequent procession as follows.

"From time to time, fireworks were fired into the sky from the procession. There were more than six thousand people in it. There were more than five hundred Hindus in the procession. At the front of the procession, which moved in a disciplined manner in rows of four, was a dark, thin man, with many teeth missing, a little hair growing on his chin, wearing a thick white dress, a white shirt, a white coat, a red fur cap, and around it a white urmal k Sardar, walking in front with a weeping shoe and a cane in his hand, the hearts of the people gathered there were said to have pounded. Although he was a little ugly to look at, his eyes had a magnetic power. That was Variyankunnath Kunjahammad Haji.

The cry of 'Allahu Akbar' rises to the sky again. Right behind Hajiyar, Naik Haider, who had just come out of the army, was holding a long spear. On top of it was a head. Blood was dripping from it. Kunjahammad Haji turned around and raised his hands. Manjeri was a place with four gates. About 75,000 people had arrived from all directions.

Haji, standing on a bare ox cart lying by the roadside, greeted him and said:

"We are suffering. We have to follow the dictates of others. The British rule is the reason for this. It must change," Haji explained the circumstances that led to the need to take up arms and fight. Haji said, pointing to the head of the police inspector in Anakayam. "He was threatening us by saying, 'Don't play with the British, don't play with the landlords.' This is a man who has sworn to work against the freedom of the people. I want to know what you are saying. If I have done wrong, you should kill me here. (The people shouted 'Allahu Akbar' and said, 'What you have done is right, right;') I came to know something yesterday. It is being spread abroad that this is a war between Hindus and Muslims. It is being spread by people like Chekkutty and the Jains who have divided the creation of God into four castes and made the majority of people slaves by lying and making them believe that God made them. We have no Hindus or Muslims here. We have human beings. They and their families should get the fruits of their sweat and toil." (From the historic Manjeri Declaration. (Relevant part of Sardar Chandroth's article published in Deshabhimani on August 25, 1946)

However, Mappila historian K.K. Muhammad Abdulkarim says in his book 'Variyankunnath Kunjahammad Haji' that the king was captured and thrown into the forest and was not taken to Manjeri. He was beheaded and placed on a spear and executed. It is stated in the history of the Anakayam Panchayat Development Record that he was shown. Kalakappa Kuttyappukkakka says that he heard that he was taken to Manjeri with a spear in his head. Hitchcock (Malabar Rebellion, page 116) records that when Ahamed, who worked as a guerrilla in Kollaparamban Abduhaji's gang, was arrested, he said that when the incident took place, Thirukkad, who was cutting stones in Chekkutty's field, caught him and told him to walk holding the spear that had pierced his head.

But many do not accept this story written by Sardar Chandroth. Although it is true that he was shot and his head was cut off, some of the grandchildren of the current Chekkutty Inspector's family line argue with evidence that it is factually wrong to pierce him with a spear and take out a procession. Koorimannil Poovvathikkal Kunhalikutty kakka, who is over 100 years old and lives in the Chepur area, not far from his house, also argues that this is a lie. Sardar Chandroth is strongly opposed to this in this regard by Mappila historian K.K. Mohammed Abdul Karim. He records it in his book 'Variyam Kunnath Kunjahammadaji' as follows.

"Haji Sahib and his friends killed Inspector Chekkutty. Many have recorded that he cut off his head and brought it to Manjeri on a spear. That is not true. Chekkutty's head was thrown into a forest in his garden. The originator of the above story is Sardar Chandroth Kunhiraaman Nair. The article narrates this false story in an article he wrote about Wariyam Kunnath Kunjahammadaji in 1946. He was a soldier during the Malabar Khilafat Revolution and wrote this story based on hearsay. Therefore, it turned out to be a mixture of truth and falsehood."

K. Madhavan Nair described the murder of K.V. Chekkutty as an eyewitness. He writes in his controversial history book:

"Kunja Hammadaji already has a grudge against Chekkutty, who was one of those who had tried to deport him and his father in his youth. There must have been other grudges as well. For those reasons, Kunja Hammadaji attacked Chekkutty's house. He had killed another Mappila head constable on the way.

Since Chekkutty was respected by all the rioters, he was not at all afraid of their arrival. When the rioters arrived, he was on the roof of the mansion. 'What do you want, my children?' he asked the rioters at the gate. The government had published a notice in the meantime that all those who had guns should produce their guns. Referring to this, the rioters said this: 'We have a number of guns. We came here thinking that we should produce them before you. There is no harm in buying them.' Hearing this, Chekkutty said, 'I do not have the authority to buy guns. They should be produced before the Thukkd in Malappuram. If you want, I can also give you a letter.' "We are all here to attend to this," he said, and shot Chekkutty at the same time. While his wife was screaming, holding the head of Chekkutty, who had been shot, in her lap, the rioters rushed to the top. They snatched away his wife. They took a separate body from the body that had been shot. They then made the pilgrimage to Manjeri with that head on a spear."

2. Conclusion

In any case, I am not of the opinion that it was a communal riot as some have claimed recently. In fact, it was a liberation struggle. Even if the protesters killed my paternal uncle, it would be unjust to forget this truth.

When the incident took place, many wealthy Loyal Mappilas of Madhya Eranadu, the Anakayam Amsham Adhikari, Chekkutty's paternal uncle Khansahib Cheku Adhikari and the notorious C. I. Narayana Menon were inside Chekkutty's house. All the money and valuables from the Loyal Mappilas' houses were kept in Chekkutty's house. The Adhikari and the C. I. came out through the kitchen and O. T. Narayana Menon ran to M.P. Narayana Menon who was in Manjeri and sought shelter. Dr. M.P. S. Menon (Malabar Smarat) says that M.P. Narayana Menon dressed C. I. Narayana Menon in a woman's dress and made him stay in a house in Melakam. Adhikari Chekkutty and C. I. Kunjahammad Haji announced that he would kill Narayana Menon as well and went to their homes in search of them. He did not find them.

Chekkutty, who followed all the rules of the British police while serving, was an admirer of imperialism and sincerely believed that the country could not be ruled by anyone other than the British. Therefore, he hated independence and even the word "self-government". Because of all this, Chekkutty had great influence in the imperial government. There was a saying among the people at that time that if they could get a single letter from Chekkutty, they would kill four people. This must be because of all this. Tirurangadi Pookottur. The

Chekkutty murder, like many other incidents, shook the villages of Eranad.

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