

# VARIAN KUNNATH KUNHAHAMMAD HAJI

## MAPPILA FREEDOM FIGHTER OF MALABAR

Dr. HUSSAIN RANDATHANI

In India, Malabar witnessed years long resistance against the British rule, culminating in the establishment of a khilafat raj, at least for six months. Though the British mobilized their maximum strength against the rebels, they had to sweat well to suppress the revolt which were lead by leaders including divines and ulama and their coreligionists. Varian Kunnathn Kunhahammad Haji has been the king pin behind the uprisings during the 1921 struggles. He was known as the Khilafat king who ruled Southern Malabar including Ernad and Valluwanad Taluks of Malabar district. Divines and Ulama like Ali Musliyar, Chembrasserri Thangal, Konnara Thangal and Avokkar Musliyar gave active support to Kunhahammadaji in his anti British struggles and the subsequent khilafat raj which continued for six months.

In India the khilafat Monvement started as a protest against the inimical attitude taken by the British against the the Khalifa of Turkey and this became a freedom Movement when Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress openly supported it. The movement has been a symbol of Hindu Muslim Unity in the anti colonial history of the whole of India. In Malabar, in the southernmost region of the country, the leadership of the struggle was in the hands of the local leaders and Muslim divines in cooperation with the Hindu leaders of the region. The Khilafat Movement created months long resistance against the British resulting the martyrdom of thousands of the fighters and wounding of many any displacing a number of people due to atrocities opened by the British authorities. Meanwhile, the Mappila Muslims , so named because of their identical hybrid culture through the synthesis of local and Arab culture, under Kunhahammad Haji and his friend and neighbor Ali Musliyar started the Khilafat rule providing freedom and security to the people and it lasted for three to six months in various parts of Malabar. Kunhahammad Haji fought bravely against the British and freed the people from the horrors of Zamindari system of the land lords and persecution of the British. He was later captured by the British and murdered along with his comrades.

Kunhahammad haji was born at Nellikkuth of Valluvangad in Vettikkattiri Amsom, South Malabar in 1883 (as per the British records) as the son of Moideen Kutty Haji who was also a fighter for the cause of freedom. Some put his year of birth as 1875. ( Mr.K.K. Muhammad Abdul Karim, the local historian records the birth date as 1866 (1287 AH) but 1287 AH corresponds to 1870). His family, however was as Chakkipparambath and he was also known as

Chakkipparamban Kunhahammad. As per the information given by Mr. Abdul Karim, the Chakkipparamban family belonged to Nediyruppu, near Kondotty in Malappuram and was very close to Zamorins. A branch of this family later settled at Puthanangadi and from here one Kunhalan Kutty married from Valluvangad and settled at the nearby place Nellikkuthu. The land where he settled was known as Variyan Kunnath and later the family also known in the same name. During Mysorean rule the family acted as the tax collectors of Sulthans. Kunhayisha, mother of Mr. Haji belonged to the famous Paravetti family of Tuwwur, near Pandikkad. In the 1894 outbreaks all of his family were convicted and were either deported from Malabar or killed. Kunhahammad Haji had his primary education at Valluvangad Kunnummal Primary School and religious education at the local religious school(Othu Palli) under Karakkad Kammu Molla. He also studied religion in the mosque academy of his place under Erikkunnan Mammad Musliyar, the youngest brother of the Khilafat leader Ali Musliyar whose house was near to that of Haji. Hailing from a rich family Kunhahammad Haji was occupied with timber business when he was young and his family owned a large number of buffalo carts. He had one brother, Moideen Haji who was executed by the British in 21 April 1922 at Kannur for participating in the struggles. Haji married Ummakkiya, daughter of a *Shipai* (Sepoy) of Kondotti Sub Registrar's office at Nediyruppu where he stayed for some time when the local authorities denied him entry to his home town. Later he married two more wives one while he was in exile at Makkah (daughter of one Malabar man) and another from his mother's family.

Though Kunhahammad Haji belonged to a noble family with gentle character, the British documents dubbed him as a fanatic, traitor, cruel and left no stone unturned in using all abuses against him. The authorities added a worse soubriquet whenever his name mentioned in the records, such as robber, fanatics, bigot, anti Hindu etc. He was chased by the government booking him in different cases, most of which were not connected with him. He was forced to leave for Makkah in 1914 and remained there for three years and after his return he remained by assisting his mother who has been involved in civil suits. At home he confronted with his relatives who were loyal to the British and attempts were made in 1915 to involve him in an offence under the Mappila Act. Haji was arrested for trying to kill Mr. Innes, the Collector of Malabr, but later released when there was no proof for his involvement. Later he was forced to leave Valluvangad, his hometown and live in Nediyruppu where he took his residence for few years. Later he got permission to visit his mother at Thuwwur.

Kunhahammad Haji was respected for his scholarship and knowledge in Urdu, Arabic and English. Kattilassery Muhammad Musliyar and MP Narayana Menon, leaders of Khilafat Movement and Indian National Congress, met him at Manjeri Shandy (Market) and introduced to him the Khilafat cause though he thought that it has been a Turkish question. However, he promised to join with them against the atrocities of the British and Landlords. When Haji got the news that his country man and Khilafat leader Ali Musliyar has been arrested at Tirurangadi and the mosque has been looted and some of the police officers have been killed in the ensuing fight, Haji decided to take arms against the British and arranged a band of army with the help of some

sepoys who enthusiastically rallied behind him. As the leader of the Khilafat he was mostly heard all over Calicut and South Malabar.

The Khilafat agitation started in Malabar with the Manjeri Conference of the Indian National Congress in 1920. Since Manjeri is the heartland of Mappilas the Conference was largely attended by the community. The leaders of the conference cautioned the Mappilas on the British attitude towards the Khalifa and their intrigues against him. The British were deliberately creating problems in the territories of the Kahlifa and instigating various peoples to rise against him in the name of nationalism. After the Manjeri conference the Mappilas took vow to fight the British and the oppressive land lords and to relieve the country, at least in Malabar from the British hegemony. In the meeting Kunhahammad Haji was entrusted with the collection of funds for the organizational activities. Haji was an excellent organizer and brought together the rebels fighting at different parts of Malabar. When the news of the police action against Vadakke Veetil Muhammad, the Manager of Pookkottur Kovilakam reached the ears of Haji he proceeded to Pookkottur with his army. Mr. Muhammad was convicted after getting a false complaint from the land lord of the Kovilakam that Muhammad had with him an unauthorized rifle. Soon Mr. Muhammad rose into revolt against the British and Haji's army also joined with him. On the way to Pookkottur, Haji cautioned the people against looting of the granaries of *Jenmi* (Landlord) houses and asked the people to keep away from all kinds of unjust actions. He punished Madari Mukari and his people for looting the granaries of *Jenmis* in Pandalur, Thuvvur and Nenmini in 28 August 1921. He slapped with his sword on the face of Madari Mukri for his wrong actions and for not handing over the guns to the Mappila fighters.

It was at the same month the British Officer Eaton was murdered by Kunhahammad haji and his army. Eaton and his associates Brown and Callbrook were in charge of the famous Kerala Estate of Karuvarakkundu. They were notorious for their atrocities towards the labourers and the peasants. Kunhahammad Haji and his army after looting the Karuvarakkundu Police Station and collecting arms proceeded to the Estate and hearing the approach of the army Mr. Eaton decided to fight with the khilafat army while others escaped to Coimbatore through jungles. Eaton fought alone with the rebels, but fell down and the people attacked him from all sides. The Mappila soldiers cut his throat and threw his body to the river while his head was put on an areca nut bar and placed in Karuvarakkund town.

On 21 August 1921 rumours from Tirurangadi about the destruction of the mosque reached Manjeri and it was passed to Pandikkad. The rebels decided to murder important Police officers including Amu Sahib, the DYSP. Now Karunakan Nair, the sub Inspector of Pandikkad, got orders to bring the arms from Pandikkad to Manjeri. The arms were well packed and sent in a cart to Manjeri. A Police Head Constable and six others escorted the cart. On the way a group of fighters under Kunhahammad Haji, his brother Moideen Haji and Payyanadan Moin and fifty others looted the arms by killing the Head Constable and beating others. Now the rebels rushed to attack the Pandikkad Police station. When the rebels reached the station the police ran away and took shelter in the house of Kodalayil Mussa Haji, Pandikkad Adhikari. More people

gathered and looted the station and put fire to all the records. The mob then proceeded to Valluvangad and broke the bridge to prevent the British army entering Pandikkad. Rebellion spread to surrounding area. They put to fire police stations and supporters of the British were killed and the granaries of the land lords were looted. The main leaders were Onampurath Mamu Kurikkal, his brother Koyassan, Pattanam Moideen Kutty, his sons Kunhayamu, Marakkal and Moidu, Ossan Mouhammad, Chingara Koyakkutty, Palathil Mootha, Pandikkad Attakkoya Thangal, Ayyarali Poller and Ayyarali Cheriya Musliyar. Kunhahammad Haji and his army were engaged in collecting arms by terrorizing the authorities. On 24 August fighters under Kunhahammad Haji came to Manjeri and opened the Nambuthiri Bank returning all the pledged jewels to the owners. This was a warning for the Nambuthiri (Brahman owner of the Bank) for imposing exorbitant interest up on the people. The Hindu debtors also got back their pledged valuables.

A Khilafat meeting was held at the house of Chembrassery Thangal, another leader of the rebellion, to discuss and assess the situation. The Thangal was introduced to the Khilafat cause by Kunhahammad Haji. About four thousand Mappilas attended the meeting. Kunhahammad Haji emphasized that, being a freedom struggle Hindu-Muslim Unity should be maintained strictly and the innocent Hindus should be protected. He also warned the Mappila people not to convert the people to the faith forcibly. He warned of harsh punishment to those who commit robbery. Haji declared that all property obtained by loot of the British and the loyalist land lords belongs to Khilafat property and directed that it should be deposited with the khilafat authorities. 'In fact, without the supply of food, arms and money commandeered from the inhabitants of the area of insurrection, it is cleared that the khilafat troops would have lacked the means of continuing resistance to the British rule.' (Conrad Wood, *The Moplah Rebellion and its Genesis*, Peoples Publishing House, 1987, 178). Haji also opposed conversion of the Hindus without their will and asked his people to maintain peace in the khilafat territory by protecting the people from the British atrocities and asked the land lords to stop giving taxes to the government. He declared capital punishment to all those who supported the government. Kunhahammad Haji toured Mampad, Wandur, Nilambur and Mannarkkad to enlist the support of the Mappilas and collect arms and amenities for the cause of khilafat and freedom. Kunhahammad Haji started a weapon fund with the money derived from the sale of passports in effect safe conduct passes. The trespassers were severely punished. In 28 August 1921 a Sub Inspector of Police and two constables were killed by rebels at Edakkara as they were attempting to cross a Khilafat Raj frontier. The frontiers were marked by khilafat flags. Land lords were given security on giving a security tax to Khilafat Raj. The common fee for the security pass was one rupee. It was also decided to start regular courts to deal with popular grievances. Court marshaling of innocent people was strictly forbidden.

After the looting of Pandikkad station there were similar acts at the police stations of Karuvarakkundu and Wandur. In the meeting held at a mosque, Chembrassery Thangal was appointed as the Amir of Chembrassery, Karuvarakkundu, Melattur, and Kalikavu.

Kunhahammad Haji was to govern Nellikkuthu and Valluvangad area and Kodalayil Musakkutty Haji, the adhikari was appointed as the Amir of Pandikkad area. The fighters approached Vettikkat Bhattathirippad who contributed with money and rice for the expenses of khilafat army. Chembrassery thangal moved to Melattur, Mannarkkad and other places to spread the message of Khilafat. At Kumaramputhur, his relative Seethikkoya Thangal was appointed as the Amir of Mannarkkad area.

Kunhahammad haji decided to proceed to Pookkottur via Karuvarakkundu. He stopped there a night endeavoring to collect more arms and then proceeded to Angadippuram through Melattur. Here at Mudikkod he confronted with a Muslim constable Hydross and in the encounter Hydross was killed. He was further joined by Kazhukunnimmal Koyamu Haji and his army and they proceeded to Anakkayam. They proceeded along the main road till they reached the road to the house of the retired Police inspector Khan Bahadur Kurimannil Valiya Mannil Chekkutty Sahib. The house is situated on the riverbank. Chekkutty Sahib was a loyal servant of the British who exchanged information regarding the revolutionaries and their movements to the authorities. Besides, Kunhahammad Haji had a previous grudge towards the Khan Bahadur who had been responsible for punishing his father in the Mannarkkad riot. When Haji entered the house of the Inspector it was full of Police officers and loyalists including his brother Mr. Chek and Inspector Narayana Menon. The incident took place on 30 August 1921. Khan Bahdur Chekkutty Sahib was in the upstairs of his house. One of the followers of Haji entered into the courtyard and called him out and he came to the porch by answering the call. This time Haji's men shot at Chekkutty hiding behind the trees. The second shot hit on his head and he fell down. His wife was near him. The rebels hastened to the upstairs and at the order of Haji they cutoff the head of Chekkutty Sahib and came out. They tried to find out Narayana Menon who had just escaped. His house was looted. The fighters took out a procession by hoisting the head of Chekkutty Sahib on a spear. They moved to Manjeri and burnt and looted the Munsif Court. By abandoning Pookkottur trip the party proceeded to Pandikkad and on the way they burnt the local court (Amsom Cutchery) of Payyanad.

Meanwhile, a Dorset Column under Herbert made a search in the places - Valluvangad, Vadapuram, Mampad, Wandoor, Edavanna and other riot-ridden areas. A Complete search was made in which the army arrested Musliyarakath Abdulla Kutty Haji, the brother in law of Kunhahammad Haji and a search was made in the wife house of Haji also. Army made all arrangements to capture Kunhahammad Haji and his party, but the attempt became futile and satisfied with the murder of two men of Haji's camp. The Dorset with sixty men arduously searched for twenty days without getting any significant result. At the same time the fighters showed their strength by killing few soldiers and loyalists in the midst of the search. A Chetti of Nilambur was found helping the troops and giving them information of the fighters. Kunhahammad Haji knew him and killed Chetti at Nilambur on 7 Sep. 1921. After three days he captured a Mappila Sub Inspector Shaikh Mohideen and two Nayar constables of the Nilgiris who were sent by the authorities to gather information about the rebels. All the three were killed

by Haji. Though the whole area beyond Manjeri was under keen surveillance of Haji, the British troops, due to thick forest on the way, couldn't find him. The Mappila army took their camp in the dense forest and the local support prevented the British army in gathering information on the movement of the Mappila forces.

Kunhahammad Haji made Nilambur his head quarters and established his khilafat rule in a very systemic way. A troop under Colonel Herbert moved to Nilambur from Malappapuram, but Haji moved to another place before the arrival of troops. Then the troops went to Kalikavu and Karuvarakundu to deal with army of Chembrassery Thangal. Haji now appeared at Angadippuram to seize some arms, but had to disappear to a secret place when he got information that the British troops had arrived at the vicinity of Angadippuram. The fighters from Karuvarakundu under Chembrassery Thangal moved to Angadippuram to assist Haji and many of them were killed by the army. However, they burnt the Musnif Court at Angadippuram. By this time to avert the crisis in the khilafat army, a meeting was held at Kanjiramukku near Vellinezhi on 20 Sep 1921. Both Chembrassery Thangal and Kunhahammad Haji participated. The meeting decided not to enlist the children below sixteen years to the army and strict vigilance to be made to follow the movement of the enemy forces. The troops in fact, failed to capture Chembrassery Thangal and Kunhahammad Haji at Angadippuram and they couldn't destroy their strongholds. The army couldn't move forward because the roads have been disrupted and bridges damaged. Huge trunks of trees were placed on the roads. The Mappilas attacked the troops by hiding behind the trees. At some places the Mappila youths rushed directly against the troops and after killing one or two soldiers they themselves they fell to the shots of the enemy. At some places the rebels hid on the trees with heavy stones and threw at the troops while they moved through roads. Their firm faith in the religion never dissuaded them from the fight. Their urge to become martyrs and entering paradise left no stone unturned in utilizing every chance to become a *shahid*. Kunhahammad Haji and Chembrassery thangal moved to Mannarkkad where Seethikkoya Thangal was the Amir. The Khilafat army from Melattur and Karuvarakundu also moved to Mannarkkad in order to strengthen the rebellion. The troops became completely helpless when the rebels could move easily because of their acquaintance with the area. Kunhahammad Haji gave a hope to his army that whole of India will become free at any time and the trial of Ali brothers had roused the anti British feeling all over the country. More people came to the fore-front of the rebellion that the British army was completely helpless to resist the guerilla tactics of the Mappila fighters.

Major Welldon and his party got information that Kunhahammad Haji has camped at the grain house (*kalam*) of Koyilot Vairier at Nenmini, at the north west end of Pandallur hill. As the news reached Haji, he and his party escaped to the Jungle. Regarding the situation in Eranad and Valluvanad Taluks, the following message was sent by the army to the authorities on 24 September 1921: "So far as what may be called roughly, the interior Ernad and Valluvanad is concerned, the position is this: 'There are an unknown number of armed gangs openly waging active war against the British government, the largest numbers, in two or more gang is not

certain, but under the general leadership of Variankunnath Kunhahammad haji and Chembrassery Thangal are in the country of which Kalikavu, Tuwwur, Melattur and Alanallur may be put roughly as the north east and south boundaries; another gang under Kumaramputtur Sithi Koya Thangal operates round Mannarghat, another gang possible under the general leadership of Abdu Haji are in the triangle, Malappuram, Manjeri, Mongam; another gang presumably under Variam Kunnath Kunhahammad Haji's lieutenant holds Nilambur; all these gangs are known to be actively hostile, and there are probably others in the Pandalur country and else where. I consider that destruction of these gangs is essential preliminary not only any attempt at the restoration of law and order in the tracts which the gang are now holding under a reign of terror, but also to the restoration of any real confidence in the rest of the martial area." (Tottenham, *Mappila Rebellion 1921, Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, 243). The army made futile attempts to capture Varinakunnath at Nilambur many a time but returned with disappointment. The authorities assessed that the situation in Wandur-Pandikkad- Melattur region was abominable and the rebellion couldn't be suppressed unless more army forces reached the area. Mr. Tottenham advised the government to increase the strength of Malabar Special Police for the purpose.

The Khilafat army again concentrated at Agadippuram adding many new groups from Pathakkara, Amminikkad, Kakkuth and surrounding places. Kunhahammad Haji and Chembrassery thangal appeared again at Angadippuram. They divided the fighters to different bands- Nadakalathil Ahmad Kutty at Arakku Paramba, Palan Viran and Mammu Haji at Nenmini, Ayilikkara Mammad at Vengur, and Ambalavan Muhammad at Melattur. The land lords and loyal Mappilas took shelter at Kavalappara. The houses of the land lords and British loyalists were looted and many of them were killed in cold blood. The rebels under Poothani Kunhippu at Kakkuth, killed a blacksmith for refusing to make swords. At Melattur the tenants including Hindus and Muslims gave active supports to rebels. Among the supporters there were Nair Jenmis and also a brave Nair woman who helped the rebels with food and water. When the British troops entered Melattur the Mappila woman left the place for Kappu fearing the molestation of the soldiers. They were given protection as per the orders of Kunhahammad Haji at Kappu. Here there were a number of blacksmiths engaged in making swords to the Khilafat army.

At Arekode near Manjeri the affairs were becoming serious due to the rebellion led by the combined forces of Karat Moideen Kutty Haji of Pookkottur, Konnara Thangal, Kollapparamban Abdu Haji and Kunhahammad Haji. Kunhahammad Haji reached Arecode and collected a large band of Mappilas. A number of people from Calicut Taluk - Kodyathur, Manassery, Mukkam, Kannipparamb, Thalakka Chulur- also joined him. On 28 October 1921 Haji and his troops made a raid at the house of Kondotty Thangal Nasruddin Shah, who had been a strong supporter of the British. After burning the records of the Sub Registrar's office and police station, they proceeded to the house of Nasruddin Shah alias Mushtaq Shah II, and demanded weapons and rice for the khilafat raj. Thangal decided to retaliate and he stationed security men around his house and the

mausoleum( *Jaram*) of Muhammad Shah. Haji divided his army into two, one part proceeded towards his house and the other towards the *jaram*. When the army reached near the mausoleum the drummer began to beat the *nagara* (drum used to inform the time of the prayer ) continuously. Haji's men stabbed the drummer to death. The security men who were hiding behind the pillars shot at the rebels. Since it was night the Mappilas couldn't identify the security men and they left without retaliating. The other group of Mappilas tried to enter the house of Thangal, but the security men forced them to retreat, with one dead- Ennakkaran Kammu. His body was buried after two days in a land outside the mosque. A man from Thangal's side also was killed in the encounter. People who supported the thangal chased the khilafat army out of the area. Kunhahammad Haji abandoned the attempt through the intervention of some eminent Mappilas who were closely related to the Haji, through his wife at Nediyruppu. Haji also went to Feroke to rouse the people with the help of some elders of the area who were close to him through business. Tottenham complained that the army couldn't chase the rebels who were familiar with the unknown roots.

Pandikkad had been a stronghold of rebellion from beginning. Many of the khilafat soldiers were recruited from here and the surrounding areas. Besides, Chembrasserri Thangal and Kunhahammad Haji were closely related with this place. Thangal and Haji selected Pandikkad as the centre of rebellion. They were also joined by the troops of Mukri Ayammad and those of . Ernad. The huge Khilafat army started rebellion at 5 am on 14 November on the day of the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad. The British camp was on the site of old Shandy on the south of the road. The camp was surrounded by a mud wall which was broken by the Mappila troops. They killed many Gurkhas including Captain Averell. According to Government report at least 234 Mappilas became martyrs. Those who killed from the British side are not known, though the British reports makes it to a few. The Mappilas who remained the place raised *Koota Vangu* or joined call for prayer and the wounded fighters were taken out of the place. Others escaped to various places and the army was not powerful enough to chase the rebels.

Kunhahammad Haji and Chenbrasserri Thangal moved to Wandur Kalikavu area to strengthen their troops and to collect arms and food materials. A large number of fighters have gathered there. At the same time the British troops organized a raid in the same area and a number of khilafat fighters were killed. A series of encounters took place at Kallamula where a khilafat army of 6000 people have been gathered at the instance of Chembrassery Thangal and Kunhahammad Haji. Other leaders like Karatt Moideen Haji, Konnara Thangal, Mukri Ayamad were also present at Kallamula. The rebels decided to collect arms from different police stations and band of 250 persons were selected for the purpose. They went to Nilgiri area through forest and surprised the police at Pandalur. After killing three police men they collected a large number of arms. At Kallamula the forces of Kunhahammad haji fought against a powerful British army. About thirty fighters including Ossan Ayamutty, Perengal Kunhalavi, Kadampodan Ahamad, Parakkal Enu, Puyithodika Ayamu, Asarithodika Moideen laid their life for the khilafat cause. The house of Pulikkal Kunnummal Unni Mammad Musliyar was put to fire. Musliyar was burnt



to death in the fire. Kunhahamamd Haji and the leaders now fixed their camp at Parambayil, north of Kalikavu.

After the episode at Pandikkad the British army enhanced its strength and took stern actions by making a thorough search for the rebels at different parts of Malabar. Strong search was made at Wandur, Nilambur, Puduppadi, Calicut town, Tirurangadi, Chaliyam, Nannambra, Kodinji, Tanalur, Velimukku, Tirur, Kalpakancheri, Thozhuvanur, Kottakkal, Malappauram, Manjeri and other riot-ridden areas and a number of fighters were either killed or arrested. Lastly the troops moved to Mannarkkad where many of the rebels surrendered. The struggle found declining and many of the leaders were arrested. The troops searched for rebels at Karimba, Kanjirappuzha, Thenkara, Edaykkal, Thiruvazham kundu, and Pallikkundu in Mannarkkad area. Meanwhile Chembrasserri Thangal (18 December) and Kumaramputhur Setthi Koya Thangal surrendered to the army. They were later shot at Malappuram on 9 January 1922. The rebel centres at Amminikkad, Mannarmala, Valambur, Vengur, Thazhekode, and Ponniakurussi were destroyed and the rebels killed.

This time Kunhahamamd Haji and his troops were moving along the Nenmini hills. Though the British army tried to trace him under EV Amu Sahib, the Police Inspector, the effort bore no fruits. Meanwhile Haji had reached at Pandallur hills. The troops stationed at Pandikkad got the information that Kunhahamamd Haji and his troops are at Chembrasserri. Here Haji's troops looted the house of Mambadan Cheriya Moiden Kutty (2 January 1922) who has been a supporter of the government. The loot was intended to gather food for his army. The rebellion was still powerful in Karuvarakundu and Melattur areas under Kazhukunnimal Koyamu Haji. The British now determined to capture Kunhahammad Haji by forming a large confederacy of different army wings and police forces. Subedhar Gopala Menon and Krishna Panikkar were in charge of the operation. Sub Inspector Ramnatha Ayyar was attached as Intelligence Officer. Kunhahammad Haji now narrowly escaped to Kallamula. This time Mr. Ayyar came to Melattur to gather information on the movement of Haji. Few loyal Mappilas were entrusted the duty of finding Haji and his group. One Pottayil Unniyali Musliyar handed over the information to the police that he had seen Mr. Haji at Kallamula. The troops now moved towards Veetikkundu three miles away at Chokkat hills as per the information given by Unniyali Musliyar who has been the mediator between Haji and the British. After reaching the place Unniyali Musliyar went to negotiate with the Haji who agreed to surrender before Mr. Ayyar on the condition that he will be sent to Makkah. The Musliyar and four men met with Haji. Ayyar and three police men including Subedar Krishna Panikkar and Constable Gopala Menon proceeded to meet Kunhahammad Haji. The three men took hide behind the trees and Ayyar alone went to meet him. About ten army men dressed as peasants also followed Mr. Ayyar. Unniyali Musliyar, Ayyar and Haji discussed the conditions for surrender and Haji brought all his arms except his revolver and submitted them before Ayyar. Now for performing prayer Haji went to take ablution after placing his revolver on a rock. This time Krishna Panicker came out of his hiding and caught Haji from the back. Gopala Menon also appeared along with army men.

It was a clear treachery of Mr. Ayyar whom Haji believed to be his close friend. Now the time was 5.45 PM, 6 January 1922. The khilafat men arrested consisted of 22 men eight from Karuvarakkundu, three from Kalikavu, four besides Varian Kunnath from Vettikkattiri, two from Vellayur and one each from Edappatta, Tuwur, Pandikkad and Nemmini. Kunhahammad Haji hit back the army men along with his men. The combat continued for half an hour. Two Plolice men and four fighters lost their life in the attempt. Haji valiantly submitted fighting. He and his men were taken to the road where a platoon of gurkhas from Kalikavu was waiting. The party stayed at Kalikavu at night and the next day morning proceeded to Manjeri through Wandur and Valluvangad. They inflicted all kinds of harassment up on Haji on the road and the army danced with joy for capturing their chief enemy. From Manjeri Haji was brought to Malappuram where the Special police and army men heavily tortured him. They plucked his beard and mustache. On 18 January, Haji and his supporters were tried by Martial law court. Haji wore a coat and a turban and bravely faced the trial. The trial was held in the presence of R.Gelli, the collector, Hitchcock DSP, Army Officer Hamphri, Amu DYSP, Narayana Menon, the Circle Inspector and others. The court sentenced Haji and his close allies Varian Kunnath Enikkutti and Chekkutty to death . He and others were taken to the side of the Kottakkunnu hills. When the police officer began to cover his eyes with a toweltied his eyes with a towel he objected saying that he want to see the shooting. While Haji was chanting the holy words of Kalimah he was shot dead. The execution took place at Malappuram Kunnummal (the northern side of the hill near *Onnam* (first)Mile) on 21 January 1922. His comrades were also shot at the same place. The bodies were cremated fearing that the grave may become further inspiration for the rebels. Kerosene and wood logs for cremation was supplied by the Village Officer Kalappadan Ali Adhikari. All the records connected with the Khilafat raj was burnt in order to make the people forget the Mappila khilafat rule of six months.

drhussaink@gmail.com