

K. KELAPPAN.

K. Kelappan, the well known, widely respected and deeply loved freedom fighter of Kerala was born on the 24th of August, 1889, at Turayur, a small village in Kurumbanad Taluk of the erstwhile Malabar District in the Madras Presidency. His father Kanaran Nayar was a Vakil clerk of affluent circumstances. With a scholarship Kelappan passed the Matriculation examination from B.G.M. Parsee High School, Tellicherry. In 1912 he passed the B.A. Degree examination from Madras Christian College with Physics as his optional subject. Next year he joined the Law College at Trivandrum, but before completing the course took a teacher's job at Chaganacherry, where with Mannath Padmanabhan and others he founded and became the first President of the Nayar Service Society, and worked as the Headmaster of the first High School started by the Society. Soon he realised that a communal organisation like the Society could not claim his loyalty. He left for Bombay where he joined the Law College but in 1920, without appearing for the LLB Examination, he returned to Malabar, joined the Congress and began to work as the Secretary of Ponnani Taluk Congress Committee. Soon afterwards he was arrested and jailed for three weeks. During the Mopla rebellion of 1921 he was kept in jail for more than ten months. From 1924 to 1930 and from 1945 to 1950 he was the President of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee. His bold and imaginative leadership during the Salt Satyagraha in April 1930 electrified the whole of Malabar. Since then he had been at the forefront of every popular movement in Kerala and had to undergo prolonged terms of imprisonment.

Since early in his life he was interested in the uplift of Harijans. His fast upto death in connection with the Temple Entry Satyagraha at Guruvayur in 1932, though terminated at the request of Mahatma Gandhi after 12 days,

gave a great fillip to social change in Kerala. Till the end of his life he kept up his interest in the betterment of the lot of Harijans and as the President of the Malabar District Board (1938-1940) he could do much to spread education among them.

Kelappan was a powerful prose-writer. For years he had been the Editor, Mathrubhumi, the most circulated Daily newspaper of Kerala.

Kelappan was a faithful follower of Mahatma Gandhi. After the martyrdom of Gandhiji, Kelappan felt that the Congress was drifting away from the ideals of Gandhiji. He therefore left the Congress in 1951 and joined the Kisan Masdur Praja Party and was elected to the Parliament from Ponnani on K.M.P.P. ticket. Finally in 1957 he joined the Sarvodaya Movement. He was instrumental in the opening of a Rural Institute at Tavanur on the Banks of Bharata river, where he worked during his last years to create a village exemplifying the Gandhian ideals.

Kelappan was a protagonist of the Kerala Unification movement, but gradually he changed his view and stood for a multilingual West Coast State.

A man of undaunted courage and forthright expression, he was deeply venerated even by his political antagonists for his sincerity, selflessness and courage. Wedded to Gandhian ideals he identified himself with the poor whose cause he always championed. He kept the windows of his mind wide open and was ever receptive to new ideas.

At the age of 83 he died on the 7th of October, 1971. He married Smt. T.P. Annalu Arma in 1915, who passed away in 1923 leaving him a son.

Kelappan

Turayur

Kurumbanad

Kanaran Nair

Mannath Padmanabhan

Changanacherry.

Mopla

Guruvayur

Mathrubhumi

Ponnani

Tavanur

Bharatha