Thangal Kunju Musaliar Birth Centenary Celebrations: A Report

As the year 1997 was drawing near people from different walks of life were demanding that the birth centenary of Janab Thangal Kunju Musaliar be celebrated in a befitting manner so as to make the future generation aware of the contribution made by Janab Musaliar to the public life of Kerala. Realising the popular zeal in this regard the T.K.M. College Trust took the initiative and a Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Janab S.H. Musaliar. The Committee decided to observe 1997 as the birth centenary year of Janab Musaliar by organising various programmes.

The celebrations started on January 12, 1997, the Centenary BirthDay of Janab Musaliar. A public meeting was held at the specially erected auditorium on the campus of T.K.M. College of Engineering. The meeting, which started with a prayer, was inaugurated by Mr. P.J. Joseph, Honourable Minister for Education, Kerala. The Education Minister said that if the prevailing system of education in the State continued, the degrees awarded by the Universities would soon become a disqualification.

Mr. Joseph said despite the so-called 100 per cent literacy in the State, Kerala, in many respects, was the most backward State in the country. He said when the system of education the world over was vibrant and changing according to the times, in Kerala it was still the same as what was introduced by the British many years ago.

He called upon educational institutions to take immediate steps to come out of the lecture oriented teaching and move into more practical aspects through which alone the system would change from teacher-oriented to learner centred.

He lamented at the fact that despite wide spread education, the State even today lacks an institute which can give expert technical advice. According to him research in any field in Kerala was zero and all this has hampered industrial growth in Kerala.

He opined that the formal education system prevailing now was in no way a must for an individual to come up in life. What was needed is education with a purpose and he cited the life of Thangal Kunju Musaliar as an example of how a man could succeed in life without any formal education.

On the occasion, Mr. Thomas Varghese, Chief Post Master General, Kerala Circle released a specialcover in honour of Thangal Kunju Musaliar and handed it over to Janab Shahal Hassan Musaliar, President, T.K.M.College Trust.

The meeting was presided over by Janab S.H. Musaliar. Shri N.K. Premachandran, M.P., Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer, and Shri K. Chandrasekharan, both of them are former Ministers for Education, spoke on the occasion.

The meeting was a well attended one. Thousands of people, young and old, ladies and gentlemen, participated in a festive mood. They were welcomed by the late Prof. M.K.A. Hameed, who was one of the founder members of T.K.M. College Trust, and one of the former Principals of T.K.M. College of Engineering. Janab T.K. Abdul Karim Musaliar, member, T.K.M.College Trust proposed the vote of thanks.

As part of the Centenary Celebrations a series of Memorial lectures were planned by the organising committee. Justice M. Fathima Beevi, Her Excellency, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, whose speech is incorporated elsewhere in this part, gave the inaugural lecture on September 25, 1997. Dr. N. Babu, Vice Chancellor, University of Kerala delivered the first Centenary Memorial Lecture. Shri Kodikunnil Suresh, M.P. was in the Chair. Janab S.H. Musaliar welcomed the gathering.

An All India Exhibition-Expo 97-held at the Cantonment Maidan, Kollam, was the other significant event organised in this connection. The range of exhibition covered Science, Technology Education and Culture. It was inaugurated by Shri E.K. Nayanar, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala on December 1, 1997 with Shri Paloli Mohammed Kutty, Hon'ble Minister for Local Administration in the Chair. (Excerpts from the speech of E.K. Nayanar is also incorporated) Janab T.K. Jalaluddin Musaliar, Treasurer, T.K.M. College Trust welcomed the audience.

Since the demise of Janab Musaliar there has been a pressing demand from the public for his biography. The task was undertaken by Janab Kayamkulam Yoonus which he completed during the Centenary year. Thus the biography of Janab Musaliar was released by Prof. M. Salihu, Vice Chancellor, Madurai Kamaraj University by giving a copy to Janab S.H. Musaliar on November 4, 1998. Janab S.H. Musaliar presided over the function. Others who spoke on the occasion were: Shri N.K.Premachandran M.P, Shri Babu Divakaran, M.L.A., Shri M.K. Bhaskaran (President, Kollam Jilla Panchayath),Shri N.G. Moorthy, (Chairman, Kollam Municipality), Shri M.D. Pasupalan (President, Anchalummudu Block Panchayat), Shri A. Yoonus Kunju, Ex. MLA, Shri A. Abdul Rahim (President, Vyapari Vyavasai Ekopana Samithi, Kollam District), Dr. Y. Basheer Kutty, (Principal, T.K.M.College of Engineering), Prof. K. Mohammed Kunju, (Principal, T.K.M. College of Arts and Science), Prof. A.M. Salim, (Director, TKM Institute of Management). Janab T.K. Jalaluddin Musaliar and Janab T.K. Abdul Karim Musaliar welcomed the gathering and proposed vote of thanks respectively.

The addition of one more Institution to the T.K.M.Group by the opening of the T.K.M.Centenary Public School (a profile of which is given under the title T.K.M. Institutions) was perhaps the most enduring contribution of the celebrations.

The valedictory function was held on February 15, 1999 in which Janab P.M. Sayeed, Hon'ble Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, delivered the valedictory address, the full text of which can be read elsewhere in this part. The function began with a welcome address by Janab S.H. Musaliar, President, Thangal Kunju Musaliar College Trust. He pointed out that Janakshema or the welfare of the people was always the goal of Thangal Kunju Musaliar and it remains the goal of the T.K.M. College Trust.

Shri V.P. Ramakrishna Pillai, Hon'ble Minister for Irrigation and Labour was in the Chair. He praised the contribution of Janab Musaliar and observed that the tradition set by the founder was being very much followed by the Musaliar family even today. Shri N.K. Premachandran, M.P. spoke on the occasion. He declared that he was proud to associate himself with the celebrations and observed that he had taken part in every single function in this connection. Shri P.K.K. Bava and Dr. D. Babu Paul also spoke at the meeting. The vote of thanks was proposed by Prof. A.M. Salim, Director, TKM Institute of Management.

The function also witnessed the laying of foundation stones for T.K.M.Centre for Advanced Learning by Janab P.M.Sayeed, T.K.M.Centenary Research Centre by Shri V.P. Ramakrishna Pillai and T.K.M.Centenary Auditorium by Janab P.K.K. Bava, M.L.A.