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A.V. Kuttimalu Amma

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A.V. Kuttimalu Amma

Jail rules said no infants. She quoted the law back at the guards. She kept her daughter, only two months old, with her in prison.

The idea in brief

- She broke a British ban order carrying her own newborn.
- In jail, she insisted on keeping her baby with her.
- She married a fellow Congress leader, Kozhipurath Madhava Menon. After her release she later led the party's Kerala unit.
- Her public life ran from local government to party work and social welfare.
- Her years of resistance fit patterns common among freedom fighters.

How did Kuttimalu Amma defy a banned procession with an infant in arms?

She broke a British ban order carrying her own newborn, choosing open defiance over quiet compliance.

A.V. Kuttimalu Amma was born on 23 April 1905. Her family, the Anakkara Vadakkathu, lived in Palakkad district, South Malabar.

She began public work in 1931 as a Khadi and Swadeshi worker. She picketed foreign cloth shops with fellow activist Margaret Pavamani. On 2 April 1931, the two led a women's picket at Thrissur.

That June, women at Calicut formed the **Desa Sevika Sangh**. Pavamani was its president, and Kuttimalu Amma was its treasurer.

In 1932, during the Civil Disobedience Movement, she led a women's procession through Calicut. She carried her own daughter, only two months old, in her arms.

The procession broke a British ban order on public assembly. She chose open defiance over quiet compliance.

Think about what this took. A ban order meant the police could stop any gathering. A mother with a two-month-old baby had every reason to stay home. She walked anyway. That is why examiners remember this act. It shows courage that was personal, not only political.

She was arrested for this act. A court sentenced her to two years of rigorous imprisonment.

Sources: thehindu.com; mgutheses.in



A.V. Kuttimalu Amma. CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Quick check 1. Check 1: true or false? A.V. She carried her own daughter, only two months old, while leading a banned procession through Calicut in 1932. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 2. Check 2: true or false? She successfully quoted prison rules back at guards to keep her infant daughter with her throughout her jail term. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

How did she fight prison rules and still contest an election?

She fought prison rules to keep her infant with her. She was arrested three more times across a decade of resistance.

Prison rules barred infants from staying with convicts. She quoted the actual rule back at prison guards.

Officers relented, and she kept her infant daughter with her throughout her term.

This shows a useful point. Protest did not end at the jail gate. She used the prison rules themselves to win a small victory. Remember it as the story of one mother who knew the rule better than the guards.

In 1936, she was nominated to the Madras Assembly. Nomination, not election, secured this first seat.

A decade later, in 1946, she won a seat in the same Assembly by real public election.

Mind the difference. In 1936 she was **nominated**. In 1946 she was **elected**. Nomination means being chosen by those in power. Election means winning votes from the public. Exams love this pair.

She was arrested again in 1940, during the Individual Satyagraha movement, and jailed for a year.

In 1942, during the Quit India Movement, she was detained for two years at the Presidency Jail for women. She was released in 1944.

Sources: mgutheses.in; scholar.uoc.ac.in

> **Quick check 3.** Check 3: true or false? Her 1936 seat in the Madras Assembly came through a real public election. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What did she do after marriage and release?

Kuttimalu Amma married a fellow Congress leader, and after her release she rose to lead the party's Kerala unit herself.

She had married Kozhipurath Madhava Menon, in 1925 according to the cited research. He served as a minister representing Malabar in the Madras government.

Madhava Menon had himself been president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC).

After her 1944 release, she took up organising Congress work across Malabar. She later served a term as KPCC president herself, in 1944.

She also served as a director of the Mathrubhumi newspaper, a major Malayalam daily founded during the freedom movement.

Notice how her work moved from streets to institutions. First she picketed shops. Then she sat in an Assembly. Later she led a party unit and sat on a newspaper board. Each step used a different tool for the same cause.

Sources: thehindu.com; scholar.uoc.ac.in

Quick check 4. Check 4: true or false? Her husband, Kozhipurath Madhava Menon, was himself a former KPCC president. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 5. Check 5: true or false? Her post-independence career included leading the Malabar Hindi Prachar Sabha, an organisation promoting Hindi learning outside Hindi-speaking regions. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What public roles did she hold?

Her public life spanned local government, national party structures, and hands-on social welfare work.

She served as a member of the Calicut Municipal Council. She was also a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), the Congress party's national body.

She served as president of the Poor Home Society in Calicut, which supported the destitute.

She opened a Juvenile Home for the rehabilitation of young delinquents in the same region. She served for years as president of an orphanage in Kozhikode, caring for children left without parents.

Look at the pattern in these roles. The Poor Home Society helped the destitute. The Juvenile Home helped young delinquents. The orphanage helped children without parents. All three served people who had no one else to turn to.

Sources: mappilaheritagelibrary.com; thehindu.com

> **Quick check 6.** Check 6: true or false? She combined local Calicut Municipal Council membership with national AICC membership, alongside her civic welfare work. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What patterns in her career do examiners test?

Her decade of resistance, and her post-independence institution building, fit patterns common among Indian freedom fighters.

Her insistence on keeping her infant in jail is a documented act. It shows activism and motherhood combined, not kept as separate phases.

Her three arrests span a decade, from 1932 to 1942, across three separate campaigns. These were Civil Disobedience, Individual Satyagraha, and Quit India.

Between arrests, she remained free enough for public life. She was nominated to the Assembly in 1936, mid-way through this decade.

So jail did not end her public work. It sat inside it. A simple way to remember the order is this: three campaigns, one Assembly nomination, then a long career in institutions.

Examiners like such patterns because they turn many dates into one story. If you know the story, you can place any single date quickly and avoid mixing the campaigns up.

In her later years, she served as president of the Malabar Hindi Prachar Sabha. This body promoted Hindi-language learning outside Hindi-speaking regions.

Her post-independence roles fit a common pattern among freedom fighters. Many moved into long institution building careers, rather than retiring from public life.

Sources: mappilaheritagelibrary.com; mgutheses.in

Quick check 7. Check 7: true or false? Her three arrests, between 1932 and 1942, spanned three separate campaigns: Civil Disobedience, Individual Satyagraha, and Quit India. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 8. Check 8: true or false? Her Civil Disobedience-era arrest connects to the wider Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement timeline of 1930 to 1934. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Who was her contemporary in Travancore, and how did her life end?

Her story parallels a contemporary leader from nearby Travancore. Both are now remembered in one Kerala.

She and Accamma Cherian were contemporary Kerala women leaders. Both led banned marches against colonial authority within a few years of each other.

She worked in Malabar, while Accamma Cherian worked in nearby Travancore. Both regions later merged into modern Kerala.

Why pair these two women in your notes? Exams like comparisons. Malabar and Travancore were separate then. Two women, two regions, one kind of courage. If a question names one, think of the other.

A.V. She died on 14 April 1985, at the age of 79.

She is remembered today as one of Malabar's most active women freedom fighters and social organisers.

A quick memory ladder helps here. Born in 1905. Began public work in 1931. Led the procession in 1932. Nominated in 1936. Jailed again in 1940 and 1942. Won an election in 1946. Died in 1985.

Sources: thehindu.com; scholar.uoc.ac.in

Quick check 9. Check 9: true or false? She and Accamma Cherian both worked and led their banned marches in the exact same Kerala region. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 10. Check 10: true or false? Her Quit India detention lasted only a few months, the shortest of her three prison terms. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What can exams ask about Kuttimalu Amma?

Treat her as a name worth knowing. Questions on Kerala's freedom movement often ask about women leaders from the Malabar region. Learn her role in the Civil Disobedience Movement first.

Exams often test whether the 1936 Assembly seat was won or nominated. Remember: 1936 was nomination, 1946 was election.

Do not confuse her with Accamma Cherian of Travancore. Both led banned marches, but in different Kerala regions and years.

Her Civil Disobedience arrest connects directly to the wider Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement timeline of 1930 to 1934.

No Previous Year Question in this site's index has directly tested this yet.

Sources: scholar.uoc.ac.in; mappilaheritagelibrary.com

Sources: thehindu.com; mgutheses.in; scholar.uoc.ac.in

Practice MCQs

1. How old was Kuttimalu Amma's daughter when Kuttimalu Amma was arrested after the 1932 Calicut procession?

A. Six months

B. Four years

C. Two months

D. Two years

See answer ↓

2. Along with which fellow activist did Kuttimalu Amma lead the April 1931 women's picketing at Thrissur?

A. Margaret Pavamani

B. Kunhikavu Amma

C. Accamma Cherian

D. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay

See answer ↓

3. In the Madras Legislative Assembly, Kuttimalu Amma sat from a seat reserved for whom?

A. Landholders

B. Labour

C. Scheduled Castes

D. Women

See answer ↓

4. What sentence did the court give the Calicut women arrested in February 1932?

A. Transportation for life

B. Two years of rigorous imprisonment

C. A fine only

D. Six months of simple imprisonment

See answer ↓

5. Kuttimalu Amma's husband, Madhava Menon, served as a minister in which government?

A. The Cochin government

B. The Travancore government

C. The Madras government

D. The Bombay government

See answer ↓

6. In which year was the Desa Sevika Sangh formed in Calicut, with Kuttimalu Amma as treasurer?

A. 1937

B. 1931

C. 1942

D. 1921

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **C.**
   Her daughter was only two months old when she was arrested.
   Sources: The Hindu · Mahatma Gandhi University thesis.
   ↑ Q1
2. **A.**
   She led the picketing with Margaret Pavamani of Kozhikode on 2 April 1931.
   Sources: Women in Colonial Malabar · Mahatma Gandhi University thesis.
   ↑ Q2
3. **D.**
   She was elected from the seat reserved for women and took an active part in the debates.
   Sources: Calicut University thesis · The Hindu.
   ↑ Q3
4. **B.**
   The women were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for two years.
   Sources: Mahatma Gandhi University thesis · The Hindu.
   ↑ Q4
5. **C.**
   Her husband Madhava Menon was a minister in the Madras Legislative Assembly and later in the Rajya Sabha.
   Sources: The Hindu · Calicut University thesis.
   ↑ Q5
6. **B.**
   The Desa Sevika Sangh was formed on 13 June 1931 with Margaret Pavamani as president.
   Sources: Mahatma Gandhi University thesis · Women in Colonial Malabar.
   ↑ Q6

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** She was arrested for breaking the British ban order. ↑ 1
2. **True.** Prison rules technically barred infants from staying with convicts. ↑ 2
3. **False.** The 1936 seat came through nomination, not election. ↑ 3

4. **True.** She herself also later served a term as KPCC president. ↑ 4
5. **True.** This fits a common pattern among freedom fighters, many of whom moved into long institution building careers rather than retiring from public life. ↑ 5
6. **True.** Her welfare work included leading the Poor Home Society in Calicut and an orphanage in Kozhikode. ↑ 6
7. **True.** Between arrests, she remained free enough for public life, including her 1936 nomination to the Madras Assembly. ↑ 7
8. **True.** Exams often specifically test whether her 1936 Assembly seat was won by election or secured by nomination. ↑ 8
9. **False.** The two women worked in different regions, Malabar and nearby Travancore. ↑ 9
10. **False.** Her Quit India detention lasted two years at the Presidency Jail for women, from 1942 until her 1944 release. ↑ 10

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