CHAPTER 3
SOCIO CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE ORIGIN OF ARABI-MALAYALAM LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

3.0 SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE CONTACTS

An evaluation of the sociolinguistic background of the emergence of AM will be brought about by analyzing the social, cultural and historical factors of the nature of contact between Malayalam and Arabic and how these factors created the process of language mixture, creation and transformation.

There has been a long standing debate on the different factors that play into language contact situations and which factors are most important in determining the outcome. Weinreich (1953) uses the term ‘interference’ to refer to the phenomena that takes place when one language system is fundamentally changed as a result of foreign input. Besides linguistic typological reasons for language change in contact situations, he also mentions that the extra-linguistic factors (i.e., socio-cultural and psychological factors) are not to be dismissed. Thomason and Kaufman (1998) also mention that, ultimately, social factors are highly involved in language change in both genetically transmitted languages and mixed languages.
Like Thomason and Kaufman, Mufwene (2001) suggests that the social environment in which language change takes place is a significant factor in determining the eventual outcome. He uses the term ‘ecology’ to refer to such social environments and states that both internal ecologies (i.e., L1 structure and direction of change before language contact) and external ecologies (i.e., L2 influences on structural change) affect the language contact outcomes. Mufwene argues that both internal and external ecological factors can contribute to this language altering process. He uses pidgins, creoles, and koines as examples of language evolution and shows that the ecology in which these languages formed plays an important part of the nature of the linguistic outcome.

Winford (2003) examines different types of language contact and explains that the different outcomes we see stem from different social situations. In other words, language contact phenomena can be categorized and better understood by considering the situations under which they were formed. He names different contact outcomes such as language maintenance, language shift, and language creation and shows that different circumstances and differing levels of contact intensity produce slightly different linguistic results within these general outcomes.

He also states that there is an obvious socio-environmental context in which all language contact happens and this context is important in shaping
the linguistic outcome. Although each author mentioned above has provided different approaches to explain language contact phenomena, it is evident that social context seems to be a connecting theme. Unlike language contact in general, social factors are the main forces in language change involving AM language contact situations. So the social context of AM is analyzed in this chapter in detail since it is the main factor that determines the outcomes of language contact.

The socio-cultural background of AM is directly related to the factors responsible for the community formation of Mappilas in Malabar region of Kerala as AM is the language exclusively used by Mappila Muslim Community. So a close look into the factors responsible for the formation of Mappila Muslim community is to be made to give an accurate description of AM.

3.1 ANCIENT TRADE CONTACTS OF MALABAR

Kerala had rich trade contact with Arabia even before the advent of Islam. “The Arab trader were attracted to the best quality spices like pepper, cloves, cardamom etc produced in Kerala and numerous evidences are available for the coming of fleets of ships to Kerala ports only for trade purpose even before Christian Era” (Panicker K M 1957:1). Sreedhara Menon (1978:20) attested that it is the Arab traders, introduced cloves to Persian during the reign of the Emperor Solomon. Arabs had termed Kerala
as ‘Bilad-ul-phulphul’ (the land of pepper). “Herodotus, the historian of antiquity attested that the Arabs would carry the goods from Kerala up to Athens in small ships and it was sold to the traders from all over the world including Finnish and Egyptians” (Ilamkulam: 40). Shamsulla Quadiri (1933: 11) stated that “the middle men in the trade relations of Kerala with Greek and Rome were Arabs, the people from Syria and Egypt and the chief trade centre in this deal was the city ‘Lafaar’ in the coast of ‘Halar-ul-Mouth’ in Yemen”.

Abu Zayd, the Arab Traveler of the 9th century AD noted, “The Arabs of Umman (Oman) take the carpenters’ tool-box with them and go to the place where the coconut trees grow in abundance. First, they cut down the tree and leave it to dry. When it is dry, they cut it into planks. They weave ropes of coir. With this, they tie the planks together and make of them a vessel. They make its mast from the same wood. The sails are made of fiber. When the boat is ready, they take a cargo of coconuts and sails for Oman. They make huge profits in this trade” (quoted by Dr. A P Ibrahim Kunhu (1989) from ‘Silsilat-u Tawarikh’). “The Arab Geographers, Ibn Rustah (900 AD) says that before Islam Indian ships used to sail up the Tigris as far as Al-Madain” (ibid). Thus, it is clear that even before the rise of Islam in Arabia in the 7th century AD, Arabs had close commercial relation with Western India Ports, especially with Kerala Ports as the spices and other products of Kerala were in great demand in the markets of Western Asia and Europe.
Many evidences are available from Arabic language and literature for the ancient trade relation between Arabs and Kerala. The ancient Arab poet ‘Imr-ul-Khais’ in one of his famous poem compares the excretions of deer with the pepper that was available only in Kerala. The Arabic words like ‘narajeel’ (coconut) and ‘arus’ (rice) are derived from Malayalam which is found in very ancient Arabic literature. It is the Arabs and Persians named Kerala as ‘Malabar’, which was formed as a combination Malayalam word ‘Mala’ (hills) and Arabic word ‘Baar’ (the region).

The climatic condition and geographical feature were much favorable for the development of ports and maritime trade in Kerala. The large number of rivers were connected the interior part of Kerala with seaport and it made easy to carry the products like spices to the Ports. For centuries, the ports in northern part of Kerala like Kodungallur, Calicut, Kannur and Kollam had enjoyed the monopoly of spice trade with Arabs.

3.3 MUSLIM SETTLEMENTS IN MALABAR COAST

For the purpose of trade, Arab merchants used to live in colonies in the port towns of Kerala. “Ibn battuta the Moroccan traveler of the 14th century and other travelers have mentioned the existence of such colonies on the Kerala coast”(Ibrahim Kunhu: 1989:13). In the absence of the technology for preserving and storing the products, the Arab Traders had to collect it at the time of harvesting season itself. This made them to stay here for three to
four month. “They would reach the Malabar Coast by July to August and return by December to January” (Shamsullah Khadiri 1954:17). The long staying in Kerala cost gave them many opportunities to mix feely with the native people and they began to develop marital relationship with the native women folks with the support of local kings and chieftains.

Several historians attested the earlier settlement of Arabs in Malabar Coast. ‘Malabar was the chief centre of Arabic trading activities right from 4th century AD and by about 7th Century AD, several Arab had taken permanent residence in some port cities of Malabar’ (George F Hourani: 1951:61).

3.4 THE CUSTOM MUT’A MARRIAGE AMONG ARABS

The custom Mut’a marriage facilitated the marital union of Arabs with native women with the support of local kings and chieftains and Arab merchants used to live in colonies in the port towns of Kerala. It was a fixed-term or short-term marriage, where the duration and compensation are both agreed upon in advance. There is no minimum or maximum duration for the marriage contract.

This sort of marital union gave birth to a mixed community known as Mappilas. It is evident that the Mappila community was prevailed in Malabar, the northern part of Kerala long before the propagation of Islam in Kerala. At the initial stage of the community formation Mappilas were a non-religious
group and later when the Arab traders collectively embraced the Islam the Mappila community turned to be a religious group.

3.5 DEMOGRAPHIC EXPANSION OF MUSLIMS IN MALABAR

It is probable that Islam came to Kerala almost immediately after it was founded in 7th Century AD. Several foreign accounts have mentioned about the existence of considerable Muslim population in coastal towns of Malabar between 9th and 16th century AD. “Muslims were so rooted in the soil throughout Malabar and it seems that they are fifth part of its people, spread over all its Kingdom and provinces” (Duarte Barbosa: 1918:74). Sheik Zainudheen in his ‘Tuhfathu-ul-Mujahiddeen’, written in 16th century, placed Mappilas at 10% of the total population.

Between 16th and 19th Century, Mappilas had shifted to the interior part of Malabar. K M Panicker (1989:51) views that “it was due to the increase in conversion and European intervention in Malabar that began in 16th Century, which forced Mappilas to settle in the interior Taluks of Malabar”.

With the coming Europeans, the Mappilas who had been participants and collaborators of Arab traders, were looked up as an enemies and as consequence, a good number of Mappilas employed in port might have been forced to migrate to the interior in search of alternate employment. “By about 20th century AD Mappila population became predominantly rural. Unlike the
coastal Mappilas who engaged in trade, the interior Mappilas were cultivating tenants, landless peasants and petty trader” (Razak: 2007:22).

The British census data tells us about the steady growth of the community in Malabar. “From 170113 in the year 1807 the strength rose to 10,04,321 in the year 1921” (The Census Report, Malabar Presidency, 1921 cited by Razak: 2007: 23). As Gleason (1946:91) stated “looking at the map there is no area so extensive with so concentrated a Muslim population in all of peninsular India as in Malabar”.

The Mappila community was normally settled down in the coastal area of Kerala and around the ports and in course of time massive conversion to Islam from lower caste Hindus demographically expanded the community and they began to migrate to the interior parts of Kerala. In the present study the term ‘Mappila’ denotes all the people of Malabar (Northern Kerala) having Islamic faith.

3.6 THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM ‘MAPPILA’

There are several assumptions about the origin of the term ‘Mappila’. According to Shamsullah Qudiri (1954:45) “Mappila is the compound form of the words ‘Ma’ and ‘Pilla’ and the literal meaning is ‘the son of Mother’ which is intended to signify the offspring born in Matrilineal community like Nairs and Pillas in Kerala.
Ibrahim Kunhu (1989:277) views it as “the contracted form ‘Mahapilla’ which had been formed as compound of ‘Maha’ and ‘Pilla’. The word ‘Maha’ was added as term to express the respect to the newly formed group”. Abdul Aziz (2006:21) also agrees with the opinion, but he adds that the term is formed as an effort to get them identified as one of the numerous caste groups prevailed in those time and to place them in the caste hierarchy like other groups.

Balakrishnan Vallikunnu (1999:27) treated the word in an entirely different angle and he proposed that the word is phonemically modified form of the Arabic word ‘mafalah’, which means peasant. He argues that the word came into existence when the Mappilas were compelled to give up trade and commerce and adopted agriculture for their livelihood in the political context after the arrival of Portuguese.

When the social context of the origin of Mappilas is analyzed with a close look, it is more logical to state that the word ‘Mappila’ is neither a compound form nor derived from any Arabic word. It originated out of the single word ‘Mappila, which is still used in several dialects of Malayalam and in Tamil to signify bridegroom or son-in-law. Since the people from Middle-East would marry the local women, it was logical to term them and their offspring as Mappilas (son-in-laws).
The term was not used in the earlier literatures written by Muslims in Kerala to address themselves and it is evident that at the initial stage the word ‘Mappila’ was used only by Hindu folks to address Muslims and other newly formed groups, having blood ties with Middle-East. As Aziz (2006) opined, when British used the term in official record to denote the Muslims in Malabar, the term became acceptable to the Muslims themselves.

3.7 MAPPILAS – A MIXED COMMUNITY

The Mappilas, the natives of Malabar are either descendant of Arab trader or of Hindu converts of Islam. The tradition current among both Muslims and Hindus connect the origin of Islam in Kerala with the emigration of Cheraman Perumal, the last Perumal ruler of Kerala to Arabia. According to the traditional belief a few Muslim pilgrims to Adam’s peak in Ceylon, visited the Perumal at Kodungallur. Hearing of the teachings of Prophet Muhammed from the pilgrims, the Perumal wanted to meet him and accept the new religion. “He accompanied the pilgrims on their return to Mecca, where he met the prophet and accepted Islam at his hands. After sometime, he planned to return to Kerala, but was taken ill and died at Zufar on the Arabian coast. Before his death, he wrote letters to his principal officers and governors, calling upon them to provide all facilities to his companions, who carried the letters, to spread the new religion. Malik Ibn Dinar and his associates, who accompanied the Perumal on his return trip, landed at
Kodungallur and travelled to the different part of the country spreading the new religion. They established ten mosques where Muslims concentrated” (Shaykh Zainuddin 1942: 38-39).

Mappila community began to be formed even before the advent of Islam. For the purpose of trade, Arab merchants used to live in colonies in the port towns of Kerala. “The Arabs used to remain from October to May in the ports for collecting various products of Kerala. As these traders did not bring their women in these commercial ventures, they used to marry local women, when they were here” (Ibahim kunhu:1990). These women and their children were normally aquatinted with the Arab language and culture and the roots of Mappila community go to this group having mixed blood of Malayalis and Arabs. The Arab traders adopted Islam at the time of the Prophet itself and it is therefore reasonable to conclude that as soon as Islam spread all over Arabia in the life time of prophet, the Arab traders to Kerala must have spread the religion here. The new converts to Islam in their first flush of enthusiasm must have done everything in their power to spread their new religion, wherever they lived. Thus it is possible that Islam spread in Kerala as soon as it spread in Arabia. “The migrated Arab traders established marital union with native women and it gave birth to a mixed race known as Mappilas, which eventually prepared a fertile ground for the easy propagation of Islam to missionaries followed” (Logan (1885):210).
In due course, several Hindu communities in coastal areas, especially from fisherman community were converted into Islam. Several historians attest the massive conversion from other lower caste Hindus. The Economic power and the charismatic leadership of Arab Traders and the freedom that would be experienced when the lower caste break the boundary of caste system were the chief motive force behind this massive conversion. The Kings and Chieftains always promoted this conversion as the friendly relationship with the Arab traders were essential for the economic security of the country. “Zamorin of Calicut even made an order that one or two members from the Fisherman community should adopt Islam with an aim to maintain a cordial relationship with the Arabs and also to strengthen the Navy of the country” (Madhavan Nair 1971:55)

At the initial stage, these conversions confined to the coastal area, for the propagation of Islam was under the leadership of the Arab traders who were mostly related to the people of coastal Kerala. So the older Muslim colonies and mosques were situated in coastal Malabar around Ponnani, Chaliyam, Calicut, Kodungallloor, Thalasseri, Kasaragode etc. The kings and chieftains of these areas extended all the support to establish mosques, religious and commercial centers. Thus Islam flourished in Kerala in a peaceful environment.
3.8 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPREAD OF MAPPILAS IN MALABAR COAST

While analyzing the related literatures on the origin and growth of Mappila Muslim community, it can be noted that three important factors were mainly responsible for the spread of Islam and there by the development of the community. They are:

1. The role of Sufis and Missionaries
2. support of native rulers
3. conversion

3.8.1 The role of Sufis and Missionaries

We have only very little information related to Sufi missionary activity in early period, in contrast to detailed accounts of such activity in North India. All the works related to Islamic religion and theology were in Arabic and the works in Arabic ignored the ideologies and activities of the Sufis and missionaries. However, the traditional accounts of the activities of several Sufis and Missionaries who propagated the teachings of Islam are preserved in ‘Malas’ (a genre of songs written in AM) extolling their miraculous power. These ‘Malas’ were written mainly in the AM. Therefore, they were not widely known. For an account of the activities of the Sufis and missionaries,
we have to depend upon local tradition contained in the Malas and such other works.

The tradition of Malik Ibn dinar and his associated who spread the religion of Islam in Kerala indicates the first missionary activity. The tradition current in Kerala is that Cheraman Perumal during his visit to Arabia was accompanied by Malik Ibn dinar and his relatives and on the death of Perumal on the Arabian coast, they arrived in Kerala, on the special request of the Perumal, to spread the new religion. They traveled all along Kerala and established ten mosques in the different parts of Kerala. At all these ten places, he placed his associates to guide the local Muslims and spread the religion of Islam. It is possible that as a result of their missionary activity the new religion spread far and wide. The trading activities of these neo-Muslims in the interior parts of Kerala naturally helped in the spread of the new religion and the establishment of new interior trading centers. As mentioned by Sahikh Zaynuddin “Consequently there came into being new cities (actually trading centres) like kalikut (Calicut), Balinkut (Veliyankode), Tiruvarankad (Tirurangadi), Tanur, Funnan (Ponnani), Barburankad (Parappanangadi), Barunur (Paravann), in the neighborhood of Shaliyat, then Kabkad (Kappad), Tirkuri (Tikkodi) and other towns in the vicinity of Fandarina (Pantalayani), then Kannanur (Kannur), Idakkad, Barrunkad (Pazhayangadi), Hayli (Madayi) and Banba (Chemmalod) round about Darmfatan (Dharmadam) and to the South of these Badfatan (Balaipatanam)
and Nadhavaram (Nadapuram), the towns like Koshi (Cochi), Bab (Vaipin), Ballabaram (Pallipuram) to the south of Kodungallur, besides many other sea port towns. Population increased in these places (Shaykh Zainuddin:39).”

Of several Sufi saints and missionaries of later years, we have only traditional accounts. One Ahammed Jalaluddin of Bukhara came to Balipatam in the year 900 A.H (1494 AD). He and his descendants were renowned for piety and were widely respected. Sayyid Muhammed Moula of Kavaratti Island born in 1724 A.D was the fifth in descent from Jalaluddin Bukhari. He is reported to have extended his missionary activities from Mangalore to Travancore. Another Sufi saint who flourished in North Malabar in the 10th century Hijarah was Purattel Sheik, who claimed to be Abdul Qadir al Thani, the second Abdul Qaudir Jilani, the famous Mujaddid of Islam and the founder of the Qadiriyyah Tarigah.

Ponnani became the centre of Islamic activity with the settling of Makhdums there in the second half of the fifteenth century. The Makhdums were reported to be ab Arab tribe, who came and settled down at Ponnani. The first Makhdum, Zaynuddin Ibn Ali sl Ms’bahi (1467-1521AD) was the author of a well known mystic poem, “Hidayt-ul-Adhkiyaila Tariquatil Aulia” also known as the ‘the manual of Sufism in Malabar’. Ponnani became the centre of Higher Education in theology for the whole country and still imparts religious instruction to new converts.
The first Ba alavi saint, Sayyid Jifri Tangal arrived in Calicut from Hadramaut in 1748 AD and was warmly received by the Zamorin, who assigned his a house property in Tekkutala near Calicut. His later abode at Mamburam became a sacred shrine to large number of devotees in Malabar. ‘The Mamburam Tangals’ as the Ba Alavi saints were known in Malabar were great scholars and issued several Fatwas.

The information about these Sufi missionaries is evidenced by the Malas, the devotional songs in praise of such Sufi saints written in AM. In short, Sufi and Missionary activities had an important role in the community formation of Mappilas of Malabar and such activities indirectly nourished the development of AM literature.

3.8.2 Support of native rulers

The native rulers reciprocated favourably the support given by the Muslim traders settled in the port towns of Kerala in promoting the economic prosperity and political stability of the kingdoms. Speaking of the condition prevailed in Kerala Shaykh Zaynuddin wrote towards the close of the 16th Century. “Muslims throughout Malabar have no Amir (ruler) possessed of power to rule over them, but their rulers are unbelievers. These exercise judicial authority over them by organizing their affairs, by compelling to pay debt or fine, if anyone is subjected to such payment. Notwithstanding these the rulers have respect and regard for Muslims because the increase in the
number of cities was due to them. Hence the rulers enable the Muslims in the observance of their Friday prayers and celebration of Id. They fix allowances for Gazis and Muzadhdhins and entrust them the duty of carrying out the laws of the Shariat”.

“The unbelievers never punish such of their countrymen who embrace Islam, but treat them with the same respect shown to the rest of Muslims, though the converts belong to the lowest of the caste hierarchy. As a result of such kindly retreatment, Muslim merchants of olden days used to come in large numbers” (ibid).

Among the rulers of Kerala it was Zamorian of Calicut who showed special regards to Muslims in his kingdom. On account of this special treatment, large number of Muslim merchants settled in his country and the trade of the country increased enormously. The Mappilas not only made Calicut the greatest port on west coast of India, they even helped to spread the name and fame of the Zamorian. “By the Zamorins’ favour these Arab traders were able to drive the Chinese out of market and in turn not only did they increase his power and wealth by trade, but they directly supported him in his campaigns. In the 14th and 15th century, Malabar apparently had rest from foreign invasion” (Razak : 2004: 35).

Castaneda, the Portuguese historian in 1528 stated “so great was the trade and population of Calicut and the surrounding country and the revenue
of its sovereign. That was able to raise a force of 30,000 men in a single day”.

In consequence of the increased trade, there came into existence a large number of trade centers in the interior of the country, which acted as collection centers for the spices of the country and as distribution centers for the imported goods. The new trade centers were mainly peopled by Muslims, who managed the internal trade of the country.

The Keralolpatti makes mention of the military and financial assistance provided by the Kozhikode Koya in the Zamorin’s conquest of Triunavaya from the Valluvanad chief to secured the proud position of Rakshapurusha at the twelve year Mamanka festival. The struggle against Valluvanad continued. It is related that as a reward for his help the Kozhikode Koya was allowed to stand “on the left side of the Zamorin at the Vakayur platform on the last day of the Mamankam festival’.

The Zamorin supported Muslims against the Portuguese attempt to monopolies the foreign trade of the country. He was willing to accept the Portuguese as any other trading group in Calicut, but they were not willing to accept the proposal. They insisted on the expulsion of all the Arab merchants from Calicut and other ports in his dominion. Naturally, the Zamorin refused to accept the demand and it led to a long drawn-out war with the Portuguese with the support of Muslim. But the atrocities of the Portuguese on land and sea compelled the Muslim merchants to leave the coast. Further the long was
exhausted the resources of the Zamorins and compelled him to ally with Portuguese which antagonized Muslims against the rulers. In short, the support given by the native rulers were crucial in the growth and development Mappila community.

3.8.3 Conversion

“From the time of the origin of Islam in Kerala, it had exerted a great influence on the lower classes of people, who were groaning under the grip of caste restriction. As there was no restriction on conversion, large number of lower class people, who were treated as untouchables, must have been attracted by the egalitarian social structure of Islam. Conversion must have been by groups rather than by individuals. “In order to man his newly organized navy, the Zamorin is said to have ordered one member from every fisherman family should be converted to Islam”(Ibrahim Kunhu: 1995). Further, persons excommunicated from Hindu society had no option but accept Islam or Christianity. Converts to Islam not only improved their social status but also could improve their economic condition by taking up jobs of their choice.

Portuguese writer Gasper Corea (1849: 56) writes, “By becoming Moors (Muslims), they (Lower caste) go wherever they liked and eat as they pleased. When they become Moors and Moors gave them cloths and robs with which to cloth themselves”
3.9 THE CHANGING POLITICAL SCENARIO AFTER THE COMING OF PORTUGUESE

At the time coming of Portuguese to Kerala, Mappilas in Malabar region were politically stable and had a crucial role. “The monopoly of international trade with east and west and the strong political and diplomatic relations with Zamorins of Calicut was the base for their social and economic importance. Portuguese strategies were aimed at disturbing the Mappila’s social and economic importance and there by pick the monopoly of international trade with sea ports of Kerala from the hands of the Mappilas” (Muhammed : 1995 : 129). With the coming of western groups like Portuguese, French, Dutch and English, the higher status enjoyed by Mappilas in all fields of social life began to decline. Unlike from Portuguese Mappilas did not face any hostility from Dutch and French. The Zamorins, the chief patrons of Mappilas were compelled to give in before the strategies adopted by Portuguese with an aim to acquire the Monopoly of the sea port trades.

Myeong, Do Hyeong (2012) points out, “to both the Muslims and the Portuguese, overseas trade was an important element during the 15th and the 16th century. As the main motivation for the Portuguese expedition was to establish a direct trade route with India, the conflict between the Muslim population and the Portuguese was predictable from the beginning. The main reason that the Portuguese established their earliest trade center in the city of
Cochin, not on the port of Calicut where Vasco da Gama first anchored his fleet, was the conflict between the Muslims of Calicut and da Gama’s fleet. Traditionally, the Muslims played a major role in Calicut society as the military leaders, foreign ambassadors, or merchants in the overseas trade”.

Sixteenth-century Portuguese historian Gaspar Correa blaming "Malabar Moors" states that "they all agreed that with all the power of themselves and their property, they should get the Portuguese turned out of the country, which they would also do in all the other parts, in such manner as that they should not be able to trade nor profit, nor establish men at arms, whom the Portuguese would be unable to maintain because they were from a very distant country; and in navigating to India the sea would swallow up so many that a sufficient number of them never could come up to India to make themselves masters of it, and take possession of countries, and deprive them of the great footing and powers which they held in India" (Correa 2005:156-157).

Myeong, Do Hyeong (2012) analyzed that “although Correa's account is certainly biased against the Malabar Muslims, it is indicated in this passage that the Muslims in Malabar Coast and the Portuguese had clashing commercial interests”. In this conflict, the response of Muslim population was as negative as that of the Portuguese; fearing that they would lose the privileges they enjoyed, the Muslim merchants of Calicut acted against the
Portuguese. “Because of the conflicting economic interests, the Portuguese snaked ships of Muslim merchants, massacred many Muslims and demolished mosques” (John: 2010: 124).

The conflict between the Muslims and the Portuguese had another reason other than economic interest; the religion. K M Panicker (1969:159) observes ‘this was not only due to commercial rivalry, but to a hostility which Iberian powers had inherited from their long drawn out fight with the Moors in Spain and Africa’. The Portuguese were ardent Roman Catholics, and the hostility between the Muslims and the Christians in the Iberian Peninsula made the Portuguese consider the Malabar Muslims as their enemy from the beginning.

At the initial stage of Portuguese intervention Zamorins fought against them with the help of Muslim naval forces. “In the fight against Portuguese the Kunjalis of Kottakkal were a constant source of strength of Zamorins” (Abdurahiman: 2004:35). “After a century long sanguinary warfare in which the Muslims spent all their resources in men and money to defend their right to trade, they not only lost the war but also their trade which was the mainstay of their prosperity” (Kunju: 1979: 95). The continuing reverses in the war and the loss of trade affected the prosperity of Zamorin Kingdom too and it closed its vigor in fighting the Portuguese on the side of Muslims. In addition with this “the diplomacy and tactics of Albuquerque was successful
enough to coax the then Zamorin of Calicut and in 14th December 1513 an agreement was signed between the Zamorin and Portuguese, which was known as ‘Ponnani Agreement. The major condition in the agreement was that for the see voyages the Muslims had to get a sanction letter from Portuguese captain’(Kunhi: 1982: 89). Portuguese largely misused these conditions to suppress Muslim Traders and to get hold of the monopoly of maritime trade in Malabar. With the permission of Zamorin, the Portuguese established a fort at Ponnani in 1578. This stained the long-standing cordial relationship between Mappilas and Zamorins and it disappointed the Arabs on sea and the Mappilas on land.

The growing insecurity after the Portuguese interventions made the Mappilas flee from the trade and related business in the coastal area to the agricultural occupations in the interior parts of Malabar.

From the socio historical sketch up to 16th century analyzed above, it can be concluded that the Mappilas become a community by 12th century. But the community sentiments among them were existed with a vague boundary at the initial stage of the community formation. Even when the Mappilas shared a common religious ideology, it alone could not provide them a common identity. The boundary of a community becomes stronger when a group of people share something in common which distinguishes
them from members of other group and the shared elements become the primary referent of identity.

It is to be noted that when the Portuguese interventions alienated them from the mainstream commercial activities, they were forced to rely upon the supernatural forces for relief and confined themselves in their own community sentiments. The community sentiments became further aggravated during the reign of British. They began to form several identity markers and find console in such markers and had to find out a language as a medium for strengthening the identity. Razak (2002) noted, “The earliest known work in ‘AM’ is ‘Mohiyudheen Mala’ which belongs to ‘Mala’ genre. ‘Mala’ consists of hymns in praise of holy men and the aim of the ‘mala’ was to seek help from the holy men. Thus, the community sentiment grown out of the insecure social and political situation made them in search of an identity marker and ‘AM’ is a consciously developed language as one of the identity markers of the Mappila community of Malabar”.

3.10 EVOLUTION OF MAPPILA CULTURAL IDENTITY

Even though Islam had reached at Malabar Coast in its purest form during the time of the prophet itself, “it is a fact that Malabar could evolve its own variant of Islam which was rich, dynamic, and flexible and marked by a capacity to accommodate themselves to indigenous patterns of faith and worship” (Razak :2007: 20). In other word, Islam could take root in Malabar
because of its capacity to build the links with the religion and people of wider society. The main reason for creeping up of the indigenous cultural elements into the Islamic way of life of Mappila Muslims of Malabar was that the majority of the Mappila population was belonged to the converted Hindus who kept up the relics of their traditional customs and folkways while embracing the pure ideology of Islam.

“The census superintendent in 1881 observed that among a few of them there may be a stain of Arab blood from some early generation, but the mother throughout have been Dravidian and the class has been maintained in number by wholesale adult conversion”(Thurston: 1909:456).

Valiya Umer Quazi, the reformer and traditional intellectual of 19th Century of Malabar referring to the vanity of elite Mappilas with regard to family Pedigree, wrote:

‘Aya Faqiran binnasabi

Kifta Faquru

Wa alsuk min quablu

Thiyyan was Nayaru

Wa mannan pananu

Wa koyappanu chettiyaru
Wa nayadi parayaru’ (quoted from Mahathaya Mappila Paramparyam (Mal))

The translation given by Razak (2007: 22):

‘You who boast about pedigree

What is your base?

Are you not converted from?

Thiyya, Nairs,

Mannars, Panars,

Koyappans, Chettiyars,

Nayadis and Parayans?

The poem clearly shows that a major portion of Mappila population were converts from various caste of Kerala. Dale (1991:43) attested that “the size and distribution of Mappila population by the end of 18th century makes it obvious that conversion to Islam had persisted in Kerala for centuries”. Razak (2007:23) analyzed the annual reports of ‘Maunathul Islam Sangam’, Ponnani, which established for new converts and found that the process of massive voluntary conversion was taking place up to 20th century.

Hence, it can be concluded that the majority of the Mappila communities were the converts form Hindu society and they could not easily
give up the traditions and practice that had been followed for centuries. Hence, several instances of the mixing of local traditions and cultural elements can be found in the Islamism of Mappilas in Malabar along with the core values of Islam.

The hybridization of pure Islam and the ‘folk’ elements formed a distinct identity to the Mappilas. As Razak (2007) found out “the growth of collective consciousness among Mappilla has two definite stage, the first as a religio-cultural community and then as a political community. Primary socialization took place within the family, tended to foster religious identity in the minds of Mappila children. Elaborate rituals with many characteristics of folk elements like Moulood, Ratib etc. and pure Islamic rituals like Namaz created cultural milieu in which the Mappila child was initiated into a religious ‘identity’”.

The hereditary customs and folkways, which derived from folk tradition, had powerful hold on the Muslims of rural Malabar. It is argued that these converts had no knowledge of even the basic tenets of Islam. “Folk belief and practices which had evolved for centuries as part of indigenous life habits remained intact despite the formal act of conversion. Certain customs practiced by Mappilas were derived from counties like Oman and Yemen from where Islam came to Malabar. Many of these customs of Malaber could be seen prevalent in Oman” (Moulavi K M 1996:17).
It can also be concluded that the indigenous folk Islam in Malabar was thus supplemented by various foreign streams also.

3.11 FOLK ELEMENTS IN MAPPILA CULTURE

3.11.1 Tomb Worship

Though tomb worship is contradictory to the pure Islamic ideology, it was endemic in Mappila religious life. As C A Innes observed “the religion of Qur’an is pure monotheism, but Mappila worship many saints (Aulya) and martyres (Shahids) and his religion betrays not a few traces of primitive animism and ancestral worship”

3.11.2 Nercha

Nerchas, the largest public festivals of Mappilas were closely linked with this saint worship. “These were expensive and elaborative ceremonials which combine nominally Islamic elements with certain features of Indigenous folk festivals”(Dale & Menon 1995:174). Anniversaries of each of the Aulya were celebrated in all major centers of Malabar with great pomp and splendor.
3.11.3 Malappattu

Hymns were composed in the honour of holy men and a major portion of the AM literature belongs to this genre (Mala). Among these most popular were Malappuram Mala, Mampuram Mala, Manjakulam Mala etc. “These songs and hymns were composed in praise of indigenous Aulyas and Martyrs, but in tune with the Malappattu of Muhiyuddeen, Rifai and Badr Shahid. Recitation of these Malas was specific to particular need. At times, the Malas were chanted to ward off diseases. For E.g. Manjakula was recited to ward off small fox, to cure insanity and for protection from thieves” (Razak: 2007: 25). Recitation of these Malas is still controversial among different sects of Mappilas, as a few sects argue that it is against the pure monotheistic ideology of Islam.

3.12 Language Situation in the Newly Formed Cultural Identity

From the above description on the native elements that crept into the Islamic ways of Mappilas clearly proves that the large chunk of Mappilas was the converts from different Hindu castes and had kept affinity with local culture and tradition. The available demographic profile analyzed above also shows that the Mappilas with pure Arab blood and culture were very fewer in strength. It was impractical to make the majority of the Mappilas who were converted lower caste peoples as bilinguals, fluent in Arabic in addition with their mother tongue. In the examination of historical records, it can also be
found out that the linguistic environment prevailed at the initial stages community formation never demanded a stable bilingualism. As an alternative, the Arab merchants who were fewer in number when compared with the newly formed Mappilas, learned the local language and used scribes for recording their transaction. Barabosa says, “the king gave each one (Moorish merchant) a Nair to guard and serve him, a Chetty scribe for his accountant and to take care of his property and a broker for his trade” (cited by Padmanabha Menon: 538).

However, it was natural that several words related to trade and commerce were mutually exchanged, which is still prevailing in the Mappila dialect of Malayalam. However, there is no evidence to prove that such exchanges were neither led to form a pidginized language nor developed into a Creole. Borrowed vocabulary and few phonemic variations found in the Mappila dialect alone can not be treated as a proof for treating it as a Pidgin or Creole.

As far as common Mappila folks were concerned, learning of Arabic was demanded by the newly formed cultural identity, not for the day-to-day communication need. The internalization of newly introduced Islamic ideology demanded the learning of how to read and write classic Arabic of Qur’an, not spoken Arabic, mainly for just reciting Qur’an and to utter the compulsory daily prayers. While considering the diglossic feature of Arabic
language, the situation here was the written, not spoken, Arabic language and its script in contact with the dialect of Malabar. As Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 7), stated learning to write a language does not necessarily lead to an ability to speak it. Of course, there may be a situation where spoken Arabic in contact within the small circle of trade and commerce, but the outcomes of which is unclear yet.

3.13 AM—the Language under Study

Fusion of Arabic with local language, at least in terms of the development of script is found in most of the parts of the world where Islam is propagated. Russell Bernard (2000) in his article ‘Language and scripts in contact: Historical Perspective’ proves that ‘Arabic is among most widely used alphabetic scripts, having spread with Islam’.

There are several assumptions regarding the origin of AM language. Scholars like O. Abu (1970:22) and C K Kareem (1960:665) have the opinion that the AM language is formulated by the bilingual Arabs. They evaluate that after the advent of Islam, Arab traders paid special attention to the propagation of Islamic ideologies along with their business during their voyages to different part of the world. With the limited vocabulary and knowledge in native language – which was enough for the business communication – they were not able to propagate and convey the Islamic ideology to the local folks. So a powerful medium for communication had to
be developed to get the Islamic ideology and rituals filtered down to the converted natives. It was essential for the Mappila community to learn the Arabic script to perform the basic worships and to recite Qur’an and the learning of Arabic script was the first step to get rid of the communication problem. In course of time the Arabs began to learn the native language and to write it in Arabic Script with which they were able to communicate the religious ideologies. The language was not limited to the religious domain. In due course it was developed to a medium for all the creative expression of the community which is evident in the rich literature, both prose and poetry, available in AM language.

Another view on AM is that it was originated as part of the efforts of native Mappilas who had learned the Arabic script, to incorporate Arabic and religious knowledge into their native dialect. The scholars think in this direction dismiss the view that it is originated as a result of the conscious efforts of Arabs. The divinity assigned to the Arabic language might be the reason for them to prefer Arabic script to write the religious literatures. Their acquaintance with the Arabic as a second language made them mix the native dialect and the Arabic language for the written communication. Later when other literature like prose and poetry developed in this medium, the process of mixing or hybridizing was intensified as the authors in these genres borrowed the vocabulary from other south Indian languages and also from Urdu, Hindi and Persian languages. As Traders, the Mappilas’ exposure with the polyglot
environment in the trade and commerce situation might have been the reason for this multi linguistic borrowing.

Moulavi & Kareem (1978: 35) put forward a different view on the development of AM script. They argue that the Kerala Muslims imitated Persian scripts, as it was more flexible to represent most of the native phonemes in addition with Arabic phonemes. They attest that Kerala had very ancient contacts with Persian too as it is evident in the Persian vocabulary enrooted in the Malabar dialect of Malayalam like ‘Siirni’, ‘Baanku’, Mulla, ‘Meesaan Kallu’ etc. They also point out that the text like ‘Meesan’ and ‘Sanchaan’, teach in the traditional Muslim seminaries are written by Persian authors.

Another factor to be noted that at the time of the origin of the AM script and language, no uniform Malayalam script was developed and the Malayalam was not standardized in its present form. The old literatures in the form of both oral and written provide much evidence that the then dialect of Malabar conceived the linguistics elements of old Tamil, Kannada. In short, the oral language for communication in Malabar region also was a language mixture.

It is logical to state that the Arab trades learned this oral language of common folks, as they were directly in touch with lay men for the purpose of trade and this oral language became the base when they formed AM for the
purpose of propagation of Islamic ideology among the native folks newly embraced Islam.

Since the ideologies and philosophies are largely the part of written tradition, it was natural for them to search for a script as medium to record and propagate their ideals. The fact that the uniform Malayalam script in its present form was not developed at the initial stage of propagation of Islam and they find it difficult to record the Arabic phonemes in its purest form in the ‘Vattezhuthu’ or ‘Kolezhutthu’ script then prevailed. This situation made them to record the things in Arabic script even though they adopted the native dialect as the under current of the language. In due course the Arabic scripts were modified to represent all the native phonemes alien to Arabic language and scripts. The effort to record the local words in Arabic, even if in a limited way, might have started even before the propagation of Islam as an effort to record the native name of local products for the purpose of trade. As V M Kutty (2006:26) attested, the language eventually developed into a full-fledged literary language in which enormous text including prose and poetry have been come out.

All the scholars worked to trace the origin of AM agree that the exponents of this language and its scripts were bilinguals fluent or partly fluent in Arabic and Malabar dialect of Malayalam. A few among them are even polyglot which is evident in the amalgamation of linguistic items from
other Indian languages found in several AM literature. Scholars like Kutty (2006), Moulavi & Kareem (1978), Abu (1970), Shamsudheen (1978), Aboobacker (2006), Muhyidheen (1992) etc. worked on this language unanimously agrees that the language was developed as conscious effort to develop a medium to propagate Islamic ideology and there by form a religious and ethnic identity. Hence, it is concluded that AM can be treated as a ‘Bilingual Mixed Language’, the theoretical and terminological background of the term has been elaborately discussed in theoretical review (Ref. Chapter 2).

3.14 BILINGUALISM AMONG MAPPILAS

“The northern part of Kerala is one of the areas outside the Non-Arab countries where Arabic language is widely popular” (Kareem & Moulavi 1978:25). “Majority of the Muslims of the area know how to read and write Arabic” (Hameed : 2006). Every village of the area has at least one or two institution to provide opportunities to learn Arabic. Majority of the schools in the Malabar region still provide the opportunity to learn Arabic as an optional second language. This situation maintains the long tradition of propagation of Arabic and Islamic ideologies and an instance to preserve bilingualism among Mappilas of Malabar.

Jaleel (1995:152) states, “A large chunk of scholars had deep knowledge in Arabic language and literature at the beginning of the
propagation Islam in Kerala. The people with Arabic as mother tongue and the native people who acquired Arabic fluently for the purpose of business and trade were included among them”.

Unlike in other part of India the Mappilas could attain a peculiar personality and identity with their close ties with Arabic language and this helped them to acquire them the Islamic ideologies in its purest and most humanistic form. “The earlier leaders of the propagation of Arabic were the Arabs from Halar-ul-Mouth and Yemen who had settles in small colonies of coastal areas even before the advent of Islam. The maintained a very close ties with the native folks of the respective areas which in the long run developed into strong cultural transmissions” (Jaleel: 1995: 151). These cultural transmissions before the introduction of Islam formed a fertile field for the wide propagation of Arabic in Malabar and a natural development for the Islamic faith. The major institutional devices formed by Mappilas to propagate Arabic are discussed below.

3.14.1 Othupalli

When compared with the other religions prevailed in the area, Islamic faith demanded the compulsory learning of basic principles of the religion and prayers for compulsory worship. In Hinduism, such things were largely confined to Brahmins in those days. As V T Bhattathirippatu memories in his autobiography ‘Kanneerum Kinavum’, the Sanskrit learning among Brahmin
children were confined just to by heart how to recite Vedic hymns without knowing the ideals and meaning of it. Such a system was called ‘oothu’ and the teacher, who led ‘oothu’ was called as ‘othikkans’. “At the initial stage Muslims adopted the same system of making the children by heat the part of Qur’an and basic prayer through the institutions attached to mosques called as ‘Othupalli’” (Hameed:2006). These ‘Othupallis’ universalized the Arabic education and led an influential role in developing Mappilas into a full or partial bilinguals. The ‘Othupallis’ were later revived developed into Madrasas, where religious and Arabic educations were imparted more formally. Presently Madrasas act as basic institutions of Mappilas to learn Arabic and Islamic principles.

3.14.2 Dars

The earlier Muslims formed very simple but effective devices to propagate higher order Arabic learning among native people. ‘Dars’, another institutional device attached to Mosques provided free residential education in higher order Arabic. The food and clothes were provided to students of ‘Dars’ at free of coast by the economically well of families of the villages at rotation basis. They treated it as a virtuous deed. Still such ‘Dars’ are found in many parts of Malabar.
3.14.3 Vayalu

Another medium to propagate Islamic ideologies and Arabic were the speech series called as ‘VayaLu’ conducted in nights for general public including women. In these series, scholars from different parts of Malabar were invited to the villages for these series of speech. They also had developed a peculiar form of collecting funds to run Mosques and Dars in a typical form auction that was carried out as part of the ‘VayaLu’. In this people would contribute simple things like eggs, hen, banana etc. and these things were auctioned at a huge price as the people believed that possessing such things by paying higher prices in such context where sacred knowledge was propagated is a virtuous deed.

3.14.4 Centers of Higher Learning

Apart from the non-formal institutions discussed above, there were many ancient centers for Higher learning in Arabic. Most of such learning centers were established in the port cities of Malabar like Ponnani, Kodungalloor, Kozhikkode etc.. The students schooled in ‘Othupallis’ and ‘Dars’ were enrolled here for higher education. Up to the coming of Portuguese such a centre at Ponnani was famous in Arab world. Jaleel (1995:152) writes that “the Maqdoom family, who were migrated from ‘Ma’bar’ in Yemen, were the chief patron of the learning centre at Ponnani and hundreds of students from the countries like Yemen, Indonesia, Malaysia and
Silone would enroll here for Arabic and religious learning”. The chief founder of the centre Sheik Zainudheen Maqdoom I was a famous Arabic poet and wrote a long poem ‘Tahreesu Ahli Iimaani Ala Jihaadi Abadatti Sulbaani’ calling the Muslims to fight against Portuguese invasion and to protect the country. ‘Tuhfat-ul-Mujahidheen’ written by Zainudheen Maqdoom II is regarded as the first history of antiquity of Kerala. It was translated to many languages all over the world. Several Arabic texts written by ‘Ponnani School of scholars’ still use as basic texts for learning Arabic (Moulavi & Kareem 1978: 141). Jaleel (1995: 154) attests that the ancient learning centre at Ponnani can be equalized with the status attain by the then Oxford, Bellona and Paris Universities in terms of the diversity of syllabus and the enrollment of international students are concerned.

The entire medium discussed above were the examples for formal, non formal and life long learning adopted by Mappilas as a conscious effort to propagate classic Arabic language and Islamic ideologies which in due course led to develop earlier Mappilas into fluent or partly fluent bilinguals. This situation eventually contributed to the origin and development of AM.

3.15 PRINT MEDIA AND AM

“The first printing press for AM was established in 1867 AD at Telicheri.” (Moulavi & Kareem : 1976). “The Mappilas leapt at the opportunities provided by the lithographic press and everything was published
at large scale from Malappattu to Mouluds, from works on Taswuf (Mysticism) to commentaries on Hadiz. Thus the knowledge of AM manuscripts was now available to anybody at nominal price and the printing made tremendous impact in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge in Malabar” (Razak:2007). A survey of the entire gamut of printed work- AM Poetry, Missionary tracts, journals, books and pamphlets- of mappilas is necessary to understand Mappilas as a community.

Though the Mappila literary tradition could be traced back to early 17th century when Muhiyuddeen Malay was composed, much of these earlier works were printed and published only in 19th century. “During pre printing phase, there were many professional scribes who used to copy these works” (Moulavi & Kareem: 225). In the absence of print media, the only means of preserving knowledge was by memorizing it. May be because of this oral transmission of texts the date and author of earlier Mappila poems were inserted inside the poem itself.

E.g. Mohiyudeen Mala

“Around 6000 works have been composed in AM, out of this a 1000 might have put to print” (Kareem: 1998: 79). The concern of authors expressed in this literature spanned a wide range of issues but majority of which was religious in nature. The most popular theme, whether in poetry of prose was Islamic faith and Islamic History (ibid).
3.16 DIFFERENT GENRES OF AM LITERATURE

An evaluation of different genre of AM literature and the social and cultural background responsible for the emergence of this genre has to done to get a vivid picture on the social forces that accelerated the development of AM language.

3.16.1 Malappattu

The earliest known works in AM belongs to the genre called ‘Malappattu’. They are also known as Nerchappattu as it was sung during Nerchas, the ritualistic festivals related to the birth anniversaries of Sufi saints and the death anniversaries of Martyrs. Later it also got the name Sabeenappattu, as it was sung largely at nights. The Persian word Sabeena means night.

“All Malappattus were eulogies of Islamic divinities and it was appended with intersessionary prayers called ‘Iravu’ and certain Malas like nafeesath Mala got two ‘Iravu’. It was believed collective recital of such work would bring about miracles in life. These malas were recited in times of troubles as these poems address no the problems of other world, but of this world itself. An ‘easy delivery’ is a common prayer found in the Iravus attached with most of the Malas, which also shows that a major chunk of readership belongs to women. Take the popular Malas-Badr Mala, Nafeesath Mala and Majakulam mala—in all these, we come across reference to the
miraculous power of the respective divinities for an ‘easy delivery’.
(Majakulam: 94, Badr Mala:55, Nafeesath Mala: 84, Moulid Malayalam

Razak (2007) analyzed that “when European forces denied natural
justice to Mappilas, they were alienated from the main stream social life and
were forced to build up an alternate identity by glorifying the divinity of the
spiritual leader and by framing some ritual related to these glorification which
evidently demarcate them from other social group. Moreover in the anarchic
situation of 16th to 20th century when they face acute alienation, they had no
other way, but to rely blindly upon supernatural forces for relief and this was
provided by Malas”.

This may be the reason that the Malappattu out numbered all other
genre of Arbi-Malayalam literature in terms of popularity. Also it was these
Malappattu that brought Mappilas into the world of literature. “Umpteen such
songs were published in Malabr during the period 1875-1950, many of these
were composed very earlier and several editions of these were published.
Though some these poems were produced much before the introduction of
print, they continued to enjoy uninterrupted popularity till the middle of 20th
century, when they had much increased readership. For instance, Muhiyddin
Mala was composed in 1607AD and began to have printed version only in
1870, hundreds of editions of it were brought out with in period of 80 years” (ibid).

“Prominent among these Malas, in terms of popularity, were Mohiyuddeen Mala, Rifai Mala, Nafeesath Mala and Majakulum Mala” (Musliar Muhammed K V: 1986: 1). It deals with the life and miracles of a Sufi Sheik of Bagdad, Mohiyuddeen Abdul Khader Jilani who lived in 11th C AD (ibid). It was composed in 1607 by Quazi Mohammed of Calicut and was considered the earliest Arbi-Malayalam work. “Every Muslim house in Malabar kept a copy of it as an object of veneration. It was even mandatory on the part of Muslim bride to study it by heart. Thorough out the work we come across reference to the miracles performed by the Sheik” (ibid). All the later Malappattus were modeled after Mohiyuddeen Mala and hence it remained as the core text from where the later poets made their derivative discourses.

“Rifai Mala, the second in popularity deals with another Sufi Sheik for whom a number of disciples were there in Malabar. The poem contains similar descriptions about the miracles of Rifai Sheik. Nafeesath Mala deals with the miracles of Sufi saint, Nafeesathul Misiriya, the grand daughter of the orthodox Caliph Ali who lived in 8th century AD in Egypt” (Hidayathul Muhmineen Book 2, Issue 2 December 1951: 2). “This Mala was specifically recited by Mappila women of Malabar, especially pregnant women, for a
smooth delivery. Mmapuram Mala deals with the life and miracle of Sayyid Alavi Thangal, a Quadiriya Sufi Pir, who lived in Tirurangadi during the first half of 19th century AD. Several such Malas were composed in Malabar by various poets” (Abu: 1978). Most of these Malas were of anonymous authorship, but published in several editions. “It was through this ‘Malappatttu’ genre, the problem of how to translate the highly sophisticated tradition of Islamic mysticism, in meaningful terms to the Mappilas were solved” (Razak: 2007).

3.16.2 Mystical Poems

Another genre of Arbi-Malayalam literature was the highly philosophical work, which normally could not rouse the thoughts of common folk. Kappappattu of Kunhiyin Musliar of 18th century is leading among them. As the title itself denoted, the song equates human life with a ship. C Brunel writes “it is an allegory of the fate of the human body, which is compared to a ship, the ribs ot the framework, and the spine to the keel. It describes the voyage of life and dangers the body meet from rocks and shoals of temptation by Satan, its wreck or safe conclusion of the voyage” (A C Burnell, specimens of South India Dialect as quoted in KKM Kareeem ‘Kappappattum Nulmadhum oru Padanam (Mal), Tirur, 1983:28). The poem tries to inspire in the minds of the believers a kind of unassailable belief in God and inspires them to lead a moral life.
‘Saphalamala’ of Kulanagara Veeettil Modu Mulsiar popularly known as Shujai, deals with Islamic mysticism from the genesis to the death of prophet Muhammed. It is a moralistic Mahakavya in AM, which calls man who is enticed by worldly pleasure to the path of spirituality. Another work of this genre is Naseebath Mala composed by Kunhikoya of Tirur. This work reminds the people of the vacuum of material life and the eternalness of life after death.

3.16.3 Padappattu (WAR SONG)

War songs constitute a major category of Mappila Ballards. About a hundred Padappattu were composed in Malabar and most of these were composed during the latter half of 19th century. Almost all battles fought by prophet and orthodox Caliphs during the formation phase of Islam have been dealt with these songs. “Similar war songs were popular in Arabi-Tamil called Padappattu Charitam” (Razak: 207 cited from Moore p. 32).

The most popular songs in this genre were Badr Padappattu, Uhd Padappattu, Makkam fath, Futh sham, Hunain Padappattu, Khandak Padappattu and Khaibar Padappattu. These were the histories of Islamic ballets in verses embedded with the imaginations that were recited in social gatherings. It reminded Mappilas of the sacrifice made by Shaheeds (Martyrs) for the cause of Islam and inspired them to fight against the western colonial forces in Malabar. Among them, the Badr was a constant source of
inspiration to the Mappila poets and around 18 poems were written about Badr. “This has got a special sanctity in the minds of Mappilas in general. In time of trial and tribulations, it provided relief and mental courage to them. The holy warriors of Badr were believed to possess eternal life. This must be the reason that by 1896 itself, Badr Padappattu of Moyeen kutty Vydiar had already gone three editions of 1000 copies each” (F. Fawcetl, letter No. 1567 Judical, 30th spetember, 1896 P 99, TNA. The first edition was come out only in 1888). The AM poets like Vydiar, through these war poems were trying to amalgamate the Islamic social psyche with the contemporary historical situation of Malabar. Through these war poems, Vydiar and other poets provide a new life to the dead consciousness of Mappila community and inculcated a spirit of pride and valour among Mappilas.

“Chettuva Pareekutty has written a famous war song called ‘Futuh Sham’ in 1887, which deals with Syrian victory of pious Caliphs Omar and Aboobacker” (C K Abdul Khader, Chettuvai Pareekutty (biography), Calicut 1960 : 85). “Vyasana Mala of Kunhutty Musliyar (1951) deals with the battle of Caliph Ali. ‘Muhtat Pada’ by Vallanchira Moideen Haji, ‘Khandak Pada’ and ‘Futuh Tayif’ by Kadampiyath Kunhiseethi Koya in 1889, Makkam Fath by Tanur Muhiyudheen Mullah etc, are other notable work in this genre” (MMS 395-398).
Within the war songs there are a sub category, which glorifies the Martyrs of Malabar who dead in the battle of indigenous and European enemies. These were composed in 19th C when the continuous hostility between Mappilas and English had been in its extreme. Later, the British authorities identified these war songs as the stimulating force behind many of the rural revolt of Malabar in 19th Century. AS F Fawcett, the British Police Superintended in Malabar opined, “these poem must be read if the Mappilas are to be understood” (F Fawcett’s Letter Number 1567 Note No. 45 P 100). He states, “How much stronger force on the life and the government and use of life, there is in songs, which stir the heart of a people to the core. No people of Madras Presidency sings song of this kind as do the Mappilas. You cannot read the songs I am sending you without feeling the terrible strength of the spirit which animates them” (ibid. p. 97). “Hence all these above mentioned war songs war songs were prohibited and the copies were seized and burnt” (Maoulavi & Kareem: 1978: 71).

3.16.4 Hagiographic works

Mappila hagiographic works were called ‘Maduhupatt’u or ‘Kisapattu’ which was composed to praise Prophet Muhammed and other personalities of Islamic history. “While Maduhi (eulogies) were exclusively eulogies prophets, the Mala eulogized both for shahids and Sufi Shaikhs. While Mala were recited for satiatory worldly desires, the maduhius represented the selfless
urge for union with prophet” (Razak : 2007). The most prominent figures eulogized through Maduhupattu or Kisapattu were Prophet Muhammad, Adam, Yusuf, Ibrahim, Prophet’s wives, the pious Caliphs and Caliph Ali’s son-Hassan and Hussain.

The most prominent Maduhu is Nool Maduhu written by Kuhayeen Musliar in 1773 AD. It extols the virtue of prophet Muhammad in 666 verses and comes second in popularity to Mohiyudhee Mala.

3.16.5 Non-Religious Literature

3.16.5.1 Novels

The early novels printed in Malabar were translations from Persian. “Char Daresh, the Persian work of Amir Khusru was translated by Muhiyudheen of Thalassery and published in 1886 in 4 volumes by K Hassan” (Moulavi & Kareem). Though the work was not connected with Islam or Islamic history, the author claims that the ‘reading of this book would cure disease by the grace of God’.

Another work in this genre is the translation of Alif Laila, the celebrated ‘Arabian Nights’. This was translated jointly by Kunhi Moosa and kunhayan T C and published in 8 volumes in 1900 AD. Other famous Persian works like Amir Hamza, Kharamar Zaman and Noor Jahan were translated into AM by Nalakath Kunhi Moideen Kutty (1920) of Ponnani.
3.16.5.2 Moralistic Novels in AM

Novels were also published in AM with the intention to reform the religious life of the community. “The earliest Novels in this genre were ‘Khilr Nabiye Kanda Nfeesa’ (Nafeesa who saw the prophet Khilr) and ‘Hiyalilakath Zaiaba’ written by K K Jamaludheen Maulavi (1909-1965) of Nadapuram in early 1920s. Criticism of social evils figured in both the novels. Both were puritanic in nature and echoed reformist ideology and the message projected was quite straightforward” (Razak: 2007).

3.16.5.3 Secular Work

Mappilas through the AM works contributed much to Medicine and Astronomy. The translation of Ashtangahridaya and Amarakosapadartham were available in AM. Professional physicians among Mappilas composed all such works.

3.16.5.4 Prose Work

One of the far-reaching effects of print was the simultaneous invention of modern prose. “Translation from Arabic, Persian or Urdu constituted the main portion of prose writing in AM. Hence in AM, the very word Tharjuma (translation) carried an altogether meaning as a byword for prose” (Karasserey: 1995).
The earliest prose works belong to the genre of moralistic works like Vellatti Masa’la, Nuurul Ameen and Nuurul Islam. Following the models of this work, many proses prescribing the religious code of daily life were composed and published in Malabar. All the textbooks of Madrssas were printed in AM scripts.