CHAPTER IV
TRENDS IN MALAYALAM LITERATURE – MANIPRAVALAM TO BHAKTHI CULT AND ARNOS PADIRI

Language proffers a window to the socio-cultural milieu of any place, at any specific point of time. It is through language that one finds the soul of a society, its people, traditions, beliefs, heritage, culture, art and literature. European missionaries, who set out to spread the Gospel knew this very well, and so they developed an attitude that inspired and enabled them to learn the vernacular languages of every land wherever they set their foot. Their intellectual process and multi-linguistic skills yielded phenomenal results. The Christian missionaries who landed in Kerala after the intercontinental traders of earlier times also maintained and fostered this policy. They learnt Sanskrit and Malayalam and even immersed themselves in literary pursuits. They wrote poems, prose, grammar works and dictionaries, contributing to the growth of Malayalam language and literature. This led to the origin of a new stream of literature in Kerala.

Fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were the period of Renaissance\(^1\) or reawakening movement in Europe. One of the significant features was its literary revival. However, in contemporary India, especially in the

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\(^1\) Renaissance means rebirth. It was a cultural movement that began roughly in the fourteenth and lasted till the seventeenth century in Italy. This intellectual movement contributed to the growth and development of vernacular literature. This movement was started in Italy in the late middle ages and later spread to the rest of Europe.
southern extreme lands that included Kerala, literature was still in the conservative mould, with limited modernization. Malayalam literature at that time had only the early stage of development. It was understood only by an elite minority. Malayalam literature has no pure prose, nor was it comprehensible to the common man. A new intellectual awareness and cultural transition took place in Kerala during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The religious movement based on the doctrine of bhakthi, during the period often influenced the literature. Therefore, the concept bhakthi had a very important place in the reawakening of Kerala society during that period. It was in such an environment that Arnos Padiri arrived. As Arnos Padiri has contributed significantly to Malayalam literature and left behind his imprints, it is imperative to trace the tradition of this literature.

Ramacharitam, written in the 12th century belonged to the Paattu School, is considered as the first cognizant literary creation in

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2 A. Sreedhara Menon, Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op.cit., p. 191. The earliest literary works in Malayalam are believed to have been the folk songs and ballads. The poets who belonged to the “Pure Malayalam School” in order to be sung in connection with religious rituals or popular entertainments for agricultural operations composed these folk songs. Some of them at least should be a thousand years old. The influence of Tamil was a characteristic feature of the Paattu Sahithyam or literature of songs. The greatest work, which belongs to Paattu School, is the Ramacharitham written by Cheeraman in the twelfth century is a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam. The other folk songs like the Vadakkan Paattukal, Thekkan Paattukal and Mappila Paattukal belong to a later period. One of the most important of the Thekkan Paattukal is the Ramakatha Paattu. It’s author is Ayyappilli Asan who hailed from Avvuaduthurai near Kovalam twenty kilometres to the South of Trivandrum and has been assigned to
Malayalam. However, the language represented in this work was an early form of Malayalam that was so similar to Tamil that it was almost impossible to differentiate it. *Ramcharitam* is regarded as the earliest poetic version of the story of *Ramayana* that appeared in Malayalam.

Though this poem presented in a remarkable style, known for its mellowness and wonderful artisanship, it was far above the standards of ordinary folk poetry.

**Manipravalam**

During the period of *Paattu* School itself, a new form of literature of the elite developed as a mixture of Sanskrit and Malayalam. This new literature composed between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries was known as *Manipravalam* works. The term *mani* means ‘jewel in a necklace’ and *pravalam* means coral. *Mani* is a Malayalam word and

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5 A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op.cit.*, pp. 192-193. *Manipravalam* was a literary style used in medieval liturgical texts in South India, which used a mixture of Tamil (early Malayalam of Kerala) and Sanskrit. In *Manipravalam* it can be said that two languages and their grammar are mixed to form a new language as the result of the synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian languages. Tamil language was the language of the part of the region, known as Tamilakam. The origin of *Manipravalam* and its use caused a significant transition of Malayalam from the Tamil language. This particular school of poetry was patronized by the upper classes; especially the *Namboodiris* and these were written for the pampered tastes of *Namboodiri* community. Also see, Dr. K Ayyappa Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.19.
pravalam is a Sanskrit word. Hence, Manipravalam was a mixture of Tamil or early Malayalam of Kerala and Sanskrit. Thus, in Medieval Period a new literary style developed in Kerala, which was composed of ‘vattezhuthu’ and ‘grantha’ script. This language was a hybrid one, composed of Sanskrit and Malayalam and it reflected a synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian cultures. The elite community especially the Namboodiris patronized this school of poetry. However, Manipravalam literature was not palatable to the ordinary people and only a minority could understand the literature.

The temple arts like Koothu and Koodiyattam were often performed using Sanskrit and Malayalam and these performances caused the growth and development of Manipravalam literature. In Koodiyattam, Malayalam and Sanskrit languages were allowed to use to make it more interesting.

The language of Kramadeepikas and Attaprakarams, follow the rules and regulations for dramatic performances, considerably influenced by the composite literary dialect of Manipravalam. The earliest of these

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7 Prof. Erumely Parameswaran Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
9 Ibid.
works in the *Manipravalam* School is *Vaisikatantram*\(^{10}\) written in the 13th century\(^{11}\). *Manipravalam* works reflected the social conditions of the people of the period and these works aimed at pleasing the tastes of a leisured class. They also throw light on the behavior and morals of the upper class society of its time.\(^{12}\) A special feature is that all these early *Manipravalam* works deal with palace tales about courtesans and royal family and are mostly didactic.

*Manipravalam* works are classified into two branches namely *Chambus* and *Sandesa Kavyas*. The most important *Chambus* were written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The *Manipravalam* works like *Unniyachi Charitam*\(^{13}\), *Unnichiruthevi Charitam*\(^{14}\) and

\(^{10}\) Ibid. Also see, Dr. E. V. N. Namboodiri, *Keralabhasha Charithram*, (Mal) *op. cit.*, p.77.

\(^{11}\) Prof. Erumely Parameswaran Pillai, *op. cit.*, p.69. It contains about 200 quatrains in Sanskrit metres and is in the form of professional advice given to a prostitute or courtesan by her mother. Also see, A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193. A. Sreedhara Menon opines that *Vaisikatanram* was written in twelfth century.

\(^{12}\) Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p.20.

\(^{13}\) A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala*, *op. cit.*, p. 193. *Unniyachi Charitam* is an important *Manipravalam* work. It was written in the last half of 13\(^{\text{th}}\) century. *Unniyachi* is the heroine of *Unniyachi Charitam* and the poem is concerned with a Gandharva’s love for her. Also see, Dr. E.V.N. Namboodiri, *Keralabhasha Charithram*, (Mal), *op. cit.*, p. 78. Dr. K .Ayyappa Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

\(^{14}\) Ibid, p.78. For details see, A. Sreedhara Menon, *Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op.cit.*, p.193. *Unnichiruthevi Charitam* was written in the last half of 13\(^{\text{th}}\) century. The heroine of this work is a Devadasi of the period. In *Unnichiruthevi Charitham*, it is Indra, the King of the Gods, who is smitten by a passion for the heroine and descends on the earth to visit her. Also see, Prof. P.V. Krishnan Nair, *Unnichiruthevi Charitham*, (Mal), in Dr. N.M. Namboodiri & P.K. Sivadas, eds., *Kerala*
Unniyadi Charitam\textsuperscript{15} are examples of the former type, known by the name Chambu, and written in close imitation of the Chambus in Sanskrit\textsuperscript{16}. Early Chambus gave importance to the writing of erotic stories about the Devadasies of the period\textsuperscript{17}.

On the model of Kalidasa’s work Meghadoot and Lakshmidasa’s Sukasandesa, a number of message poems came to be written first in Manipravalam and later in pure Malayalam. One of the best examples for these message poems is Unnuneelisandesam written in the fourteenth century (1350-1365).\textsuperscript{18} Another significant work Kokasandesa was also written in fourteenth century. These Sandesa Kavyas\textsuperscript{19} are important

\textsuperscript{15}A. Sreedhara Menon, Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit., p.193. Unniyadi Charitam a significant Manipravalam work was created in the last half of 14\textsuperscript{th} century. Unniyadi Charitam exists in a fragmented form. It is supposed to be written by Damodara Chakkiar. Against the backdrop of a complicated story involving generations of Gandharvas, there emerges the story of Unniyadi, the heroine. The Moon God happens to hear the wonderful music wafting across the sky and sends his attendant Suvakan to find out its source. The poem contains the description of all that Suvakan sees on the earth, especially in places like Thrissur, Mahodayapuram and Kayamkulam. Also see, Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, op. cit., p.21.

\textsuperscript{16} Prof. Erumely Parameswaran Pillai, op. cit., p.70. Also see, Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, op. cit., p.21.

\textsuperscript{17} Dr. E.V. N. Namboodiri, Keralabhasha Charithram, (Mal), op. cit., p.82. Also see, A. Sreedhar Menon, Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op. cit., p.193. It has been estimated that there were no fewer than fifty women figures in early Manipravalam works. The authors give colourful explanations of their feminine charms.

\textsuperscript{18} Unnuneeli Sandesam is an anonymous work. For details see, Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, op. cit., p.22.

\textsuperscript{19} Sandesakavya means message poems.
source materials for the study of geographical, social, economic, cultural and religious conditions of the people of Kerala in the fourteenth century. They reveal the geographical conditions of the area where the story performs. *Unnuneelisandesam* is one of the best examples for the geographical expressions:

Unnuneeli is the heroine, and she and her lover lived in Kaduthuruthy. One night as they are asleep, a fairy queen (yakshi) carried him away and went south. He woke up, by the time they reached Thiruvananthapuram and freed himself from the hold of the fairy. He visited Sri Padmanabha Temple and met Aditya Varma, a junior prince of Kollam there, engaged him as a messenger to carry his news to his beloved in Kaduthuruthy. In Part one, of the book the poet as usual describes the route to Kaduthuruthy, for the benefit of the messenger as well as the readers.²⁰

*Sandesa Kavyas* or message poems were followed by a new stream of literature in Malayalam.

It was during this period *Nambiar Tamil*,²¹ a new style in Malayalam language, was developed. This peculiar style was derived from *Koothu*

²⁰ Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, *op. cit.* p.22.
²¹ *Nambiar Tamil* is also spelt as *Nambia Tamil*. Fourteenth to seventeenth century was considered as the period of *Nambiar Tamil*. *Nambiar* is a sub caste of Brahmins in Kerala. The telling of Purana stories by *Nambiar* is known as *Nambia* Tamil (*Nambiar Tamil*). The different forms of *Nambia Tamil* are seen in the prose literature from 14th to the 17th century. *Nambia Tamil* is derived from *Chakiar Koothu*. *Nambiar* developed story telling as a special art. It was known as *Patakam*. Gradually a prose literature developed in Kerala for telling Purana stories, this prose literature used by *Nambiar* came to be known as *Nambia Tamil*. It is also known as *Pataka Tamil*. Also see, A. R. Rajaraja Varma, *Kerala Paniniyam*, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1969, p.86. Dr. P.K. Narayana Pillai, *Pracheena Malayala Gadhya*
which was a temple art performed by the Nambiar. This style of writing also borrowed from Sanskrit literature wherein Sanskrit works are profusely used. Naturally, there are many works in this category. Some of the important prose works of Nambiar Tamil include Brahamandapurana, Ambarishopakhyanam, Sahampachaviam, Nalopakhyanam, Devi Mahathmya, Bhavagatham Gadyam, and Uthara Ramayana Gadyam. Nevertheless, this style also failed to develop as a popular prose style in Malayalam. Nambiar Tamil and Sandesa Kavyas followed by another stream of literature were embedded in bhakthi or devotion to the Almighty.

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22 Paul Manavalan, op. cit., p . 235.
23 C.L Antony, ‘Bhashagadhyam’, in K.M. George, ed., Sahithya Charithram Prasthanangaliloode, op.cit., p. 633. Also see, Paul Manavalan, op. cit., p . 238. All these works were compiled between 14th to 17th century.
Bhakthi literature

Bhakthi movement was popular in India from about 12\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. As early as the fifteenth century itself, there developed an independent devotional poetical language in Malayalam, which was developed as a result of Bhakthi Movement. Thus, bhakthi or devotion to the Almighty was the basic element of Malayalam literature during this period.

The works of Prabakara and Sankara\textsuperscript{24}, expressing bhakthi in early periods, had their shortcomings. Their exposition of the teachings of Hinduism was done in Sanskrit and hence it was beyond the comprehension of the common man. They could influence only the highly literate section of society; therefore, the masses were left untouched. Hence, bhakthi culture was propagated and popularized among the common people by a great number of saints in India. The teachings of bhakthi saints like Ramanuja,\textsuperscript{25} Thulasidas\textsuperscript{26} and Kabir\textsuperscript{27} have played a

\textsuperscript{24} Sankaracharya, the famous philosopher of Kerala is said to have lived by the end of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century. He was the exponent of Advaita Philosophy. Sankaracharya was a scholar in Vedas. He is said to have been born at Kalady. He upheld the Vedic tradition. He provided a new interpretation to the existing Vedic knowledge. To spread his philosophy all over India Sankaracharya established four Madams (monasteries) at four centers in India namely, Badarinath in the north, Dwaraka in the west, Puri in the east and Sringeri in the south.

\textsuperscript{25} Ramanuja was the first exponent of Bhakthi Cult in India. He tried much to popularize the cult of devotion to a personal God during the 11\textsuperscript{th} century. He preached the worship of Vishnu and commanded a large following in South India.
very important role in the development of Bhakthi Movement as the main stream of Hinduism at the national level. These poet devotees freely roamed about the countryside singing devotional songs. The simple language of these devotional poems touched the common folk and Siva and Vishnu became popular Gods in Hindu religion.

**Bhakthi literature in South India**

The Bhakthi Movement in South India was led by Alwars and Nayanars in the early periods. Kulasekhara Alwar, the profound scholar in Sanskrit, contributed literary pieces to bhakthi literature. His Mukundamala in Sanskrit and Perumal Thirumozhi in Tamil, constituted a major influence in the development of Vaishnavism in Kerala. Cheraman Perumal Nayanar one of the Nayanars from Kerala has also enriched

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26 Thulasidas (1532-1623) was one of the most important figures of the Bhakthi Movement. He was a philosopher, saint and poet. He is the greatest Hindi poet of all time. Ramacharithmanasasa is the most important literary piece of Thulasidas. The work is a rewriting of the Ramayana in Hindi.

27 Kabir was one of the most influential figures of the Bhakthi Movement. He was a fifteenth century poet singer and saint. From Hinduism, he borrowed the concept of reincarnation and karma and from Islam, the confirmation of a single God. Besides, he stood for rejection of the caste system and idolatry. The name Kabir means ‘the great’. Many of his verses have been included in the Holy Book of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth Sahib.

28 The two important groups among the bhakthi saints in South India were the Vaishnava Alwars and the Saiva Nayanars. The Alwars and Nayanars tried to spread bhakti through singing of bhakthi songs. 63 Nayanars [Saiva saints] preached Saiva Bhakthi in South India during the period between 6th and 9th centuries. Cheraman Perumal Nayanar was considered as one of the important Saiva saints. It is believed that there were 12 Alwars in South India. Among them Kulasekhara Alwar was the most important Vaishnava saint of the period. They have contributed a number of devotional works to bhakthi literature.
bhakthi literature. Ponvannattaandadi of Cheraman Perumal Nayananar was noted for style, literary composition and for its musical quality.

This new development in society changed the Malayalam literature significantly. Thus, after Manipravalam, Malayalam literature witnessed a new stream of literature, which was quite different from the worldliness of early poetry. The readers also differed from upper class to the common people; and the theme changed to bhakthi. One of the reasons for the transition to bhakthi literature was excess forms of eroticism, excessive sensuality, worldliness and sensual revelry in Manipravalam poetry and the society was fed up with such elements. In this way, the new trend was a gradual replacement of the Manipravala cult of worldliness and sensual revelry by a poetics of high seriousness. Bhakthi Movement also enabled the Keralites to withstand and resist the onslaught of foreign cultures in the country.

The first series of bhakthi poems was resumed and replenished by three writers Madhava Panikkar, Sankara Panikkar and Rama Panikkar commonly referred to as Niranam Poets. They belonged to the same

29Prof. Erumely Parameswaran Pillai, op.cit., pp.55, 59. Niranam Poets lived between 1350 and 1450 A.D and made valuable contributions to the Paatta School. Also see, S.K Vasanthan, Nammal Nadanna Vazhikal- Kerala Charithravum Samskaravum, Malayala Padana Gaveshana Kendram, Thrissur, pp 15-17. Niranam in Thiruvalla was the birthplace of Niranam poets and they lived in 14th century. They were also known as Kannassan poets. The Bhakthi Movement of the period influenced them so much. During that period Kerala literature was highly in Manipravalam style. Niranam poets tried to free Malayalam literature from the influence of Manipravalam.
Kannassa family. Madhava Panikkar wrote a Malayalam translation of *Bhagavad Gita*. Sankara Panikkar’s main work is *Bharatamala*, an abbreviation of the *Mahabharatha*. Rama Panikkar was regarded as greatest of the three and his important works are *Ramayanam, Bharatam, Bhagavatam* and *Sivarathri Mahatmyam*. Kannassa *Ramayanam* and *Kannassa Bharata* are the most important ‘Niranam works’. These literary works started a new era in the history of Malayalam literature. The vital native tradition of Malayalam poetry has its most significant turning point in the works of the Niranam Poets. The people accepted the new literature because the ordinary readers who had not much grounding in Sanskrit could also follow these poems. Hence, they gave support to their favourite poems and poets in the so-called *Paattu* School. Because of it, the folk poems as well as *Ramacharitam* and Niranam works became popular in Kerala society\(^{30}\).

The immediate effect of the *Bhakthi* Movement was the prominence of temples in the cultural life of Kerala. Gradually temples became the nerve centers of all cultural activities and different forms of theatrical arts were evolved in the Kerala temples prominently.\(^{31}\) The *Ramayana, the Mahabharatha* and all other Indian religious works were also translated into

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\(^{30}\) The *Chambus* and *Manipravalam* works failed to attract the common people because they represented the aesthetic tastes of the scholarly and refined readership. Niranam works were supported by the society and it continued with Cherussery in his *Krishna Gaadha*.

other vernacular languages during this period. The works of *Alwars* and *Nayanars* led to the establishment of a number of Siva and *Vaishnava* shrines all over Kerala.

Following Niranam poets, a number of profound literary talents in Malayalam have contributed a lot to *bhakthi* literature. Among them Cherussery\textsuperscript{32} has a significant role in Malayalam. The well-known poetical work *Krishna Gaadha’* \textsuperscript{33} [story of Krishna] of Cherussery in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century opened a fresh *bhakthi* literature in Malayalam. *Krishna Gaadha* is considered as the first epic work in the language written in a popular Dravidian metre, which has evolved from a folk metre. As is known, Malayalam literature passed through a tremendous process of development in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Cherussery’s *Krishna Gaadha* bears witness to the evolution of modern Malayalam language as a proper medium for serious poetic communication. The language of *Krishna Gaadha* was quite different from *Ramacharitam* and the works of the Niranam poets. It popularised the use of colloquial Malayalam for

\textsuperscript{32} Cherussery Namboodiri is believed to have lived between 1375-1475. He was born in Kanthaloor village in Kannur district. His greatest work *Krishna Gaadha* was written in simple and chaste language.

\textsuperscript{33} *Krishna Gaadha* is one of the great devotional poems in Malayalam, written by the well-known Malayalam poet Cherussery. He was the court poet of the king Udayavarman and it is said that he wrote the poem according to the instruction of the king. Udayavarman was highly impressed with the epic *Krishna Gaadha* and he bestowed the honour ‘Veerasarimkala’ on Cherussery. This poem describes the story of Lord Krishna based on *Bhagavatham*; this devotional poem is considered as the landmark in the development of Malayalam Literature. In Kerala, the poem is used for daily recitation. *Krishna Gaadha* gives a detailed description of the boyhood pranks of Lord Krishna based on 10\textsuperscript{th} canto of *Srimad Bhagavatham*. Also see, Dr. E.V.N. Namboodiri, *op. cit.*, pp.102-106.
literary purposes and this was the culmination in the evolution of the Malayalam literary tradition. Cherussery is known for the simplicity and clarity of expression and images: melodious, clarity, fervor and high seriousness. *Bhakthi* (devotion), *karuna* (pity), *vatsalyam* (affection), etc. are the main themes and strong points in Cherussery’s poetry. The uniqueness of his style, enchanting innovation about his description, genuineness and ease of his flowing lines also accounts for Cherussery’s popularity. Later poets followed his use of figures of speech, his amusing enunciation and his mastery over the metrical arrangement. Therefore, through *Krishna Gaadha*, Kerala society was elevated to a higher wave of *bhakthi*34.

Cherussery is also the exponent of the *Gaadha* style of poetry in Malayalam. Together with *Gaadha* style, the poet wrote in a native tongue with a deep aesthetic sense. His works were considered as the products of the synthesis of the three major streams of literary output in early Malayalam, viz. the folk songs, *paattu*, and *Manipuravalam*35. Moreover, his poem *Krishna Gaadha* gives a clear picture of Kolathunadu, the kingdom of Udayavarman. Thus, his work became a historical record of King Udalavarman’s reign and period. Except *Krishna Gaadha*, *Bharatha Gaadha* is also regarded to the composition of Cherussery.

34 Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
Thunchathu Ezhuthachan:

Kerala’s greatest poet Thunchathu Ezhuthachan is the author of two great epics - *Adhyatma Ramayanam* and *Sri Mahabharatham*, was a notable poet in the tradition of bhakthi literature. Ezhuthachan wrote these works in the form of *Kilippaattu* (parrot songs). His works *Irupathinaluvrutham* and *Harinamakeerthanam* represent a landmark in the evolution of Malayalam language and literature. Both the works are considered as classics in Malayalam. By writing these works, Ezhuthachan has revolutionized Malayalam language and also literature in the sixteenth century.

The objective of Ezhuthachan was to warn the nobles against their immoral life and persuade them towards devotion. He used quiet and elegant words to present his ideas in his poems. In all his poems, God is depicted as the hero. Bhakthi and faith in God were the focus of his writings because he believed that only bhakthi could save society from the worldliness and eroticism. Therefore, Ezhuthachan can be considered the

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36 Ibid, pp 194-195. Ezhuthachan was known as Thunchathu Raman Ezhuthachan. He was born at Trikaniyur in Tirur, in Malappuram District. He lived in 16th century. The term Thunchatha was considered as his family name and Ezhuthachan denotes his caste. His birth place is now known as Thunchan Parambu. He had unusual elegance in Malayalam and Sanskrit language.

37 The style of poetry, which Ezhuthachan popularised, is known as *Kilippaattu*. In this style, the poet writes as telling the story and message by a parrot. *Adhyatma Ramayanam* and *Sri Mahabharatham* were written in *Kilippaattu* style. It is believed to have an influence from Tamil literature. It has been identified that *Ramacharitham* composed by Cheeraman in the 12th century used the same style.
greatest representative of Bhakthi Movement in Malayalam. Also, Ezhuthachan presented bhakthi as a medium to get rid of social inequalities in society. This poet studied Vedas and Upanishads, became proficient in them, stood against caste system and worked for the integration and unity amongst the people who were divided by caste and sub-castes. Ezhuthachan worked as a social reformer and his poems became a political weapon to motivate people and to protest against the injustice in the society.

Very soon, Adhyatma Ramayana Kilippaattu enjoyed publicity and popularity among the Keralites. Today also, Adhyatma Ramayana is read in Hindu houses, especially in the month of Karkidaka (August-September) as a ritual. Ezhuthachan’s writings became more popular because of their targeted readers: the common man. Ezhuthachan taught the people to venerate and worship the language and the script, which is a level of culture, difficult to find even in the modern era. He distinguished the Malayalam language style and wrote his works for the ordinary people, incorporating whatever is good with a strong sense of uprightness and worship.

The contributions of Ezhuthachan to the Malayalam language through the Adhyatma Ramayanam (a translation of the epic Ramayana)
and *Mahabharatham* (a translation of the epic *Mahabharatha*) are incomparable, and his role in the growth of cultural entity is immense. His other creative works include *Devi Mahathmyam, Bhagavatham Kilippaattu, Uthara Ramayanam, Siva Puranam* and *Sathamukha Ramayanam*. Advaitha philosophy of Sankaracharya influenced Ezhuthachan so much that it was reflected in his work *Hari Nama Keerthanam*. In this way, Ezhuthachan enriched this stream of literature with his beautiful and simple language. Until the time of Ezhuthachan the language Sanskrit had highly influenced on Malayalam. Ezhuthachan systematically combined the Sanskrit and Dravidian streams in Malayalam language. Besides, Ezhuthachan’s poetical works in Malayalam literature paved the way for a proper synthesis of languages and culture.

The evolution of modern Malayalam becomes complete with his sensible blending of the different elements. The *Kilippaattu* form he adopted in *Ramayanam* and *Bharatam* may be an indicator to his acknowledgment of the importance of sound effect in poetry. It enabled

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40 Advaitha is the philosophy of oneness and of the essential divine nature of man. Advaitha means no dualism or monism, the doctrine that declares that there is but one reality that the individual self and Brahman are one. Sree Sankaracharya defines that Brahman is reality, the Universe is an illusion and the living being is Brahman alone.

41 P.K Parameswaran Nair, *Malayala Sahithya Charithram*, (Mal), op.cit., p.70.
him to combine fluency with elegance, spontaneity with complexity, naturalness with depth of meaning and simplicity with high seriousness.

Ezhuthachan not only contributed to Malayalam poetry but modified Malayalam alphabet also. It is said that he wrote *Hari Nama Keerthanam* to popularize 51 letter alphabets. Modification of Malayalam alphabets became a turning point in the history of the development of Malayalam literature because language is the key to know the culture and people. Today the study of Malayalam should properly begin with the acquisition of the skill to read Ezhuthachan’s *Ramayanam* with fluency.

As the maker of modern Malayalam and the ‘Father of Malayalam Poetry’, Ezhuthachan’s greatness consists in the appropriateness of the style and method he chose and the language he used for what he wanted to present to the people of his time as well as of later times. That is why the scholars see the light of conscience and moderation in Ezhuthachan. Language represents the culture or the life of the people of a society and Ezhuthachan by his literary endeavour became a cult figure. As ‘the path

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42 It was in the Thunchan Parambu that Ezhuthachan modified the Malayalam alphabet and wrote the *Hari Nama Keerthanam*. Even today, people from different parts of the state come to take sand from Thunchan Parambu for initiating the tiny tots into the world of letters. Every year, hundreds of people bring their children into Thunchan Parambu to write their first letters during the *Vijayadasami* festival, which falls in October–November. Masters, teachers or parents initiate children to the world of letters by holding their fingers and writing the letters in a plate filled with rice. The letters will also be written on their tongues with a gold ring.


44 Ibid., p. 32.
finder\textsuperscript{45} of new metre Ezhuthachan took the language to a new cultural and literary dimension.

The transition from Cherussery to Ezhuthachan marks the accomplishment of modernism over medievalism\textsuperscript{46}. Rama Panikkar's \textit{Ramayanam}, Cheeraman's \textit{Ramacharitam}, Ayyappilli Asan's \textit{Ramakathapaattu}, Cherussery's \textit{Krishna Gaadha} and Ezhuthachan's \textit{Adhyatma Ramayanam} all created a horizon of \textit{bhakthi} in Kerala literature.

The trend of Bhakthi or devotion created in Kerala by Ezhuthachan was continued by Melpthur Narayana Bhattathiri (1559-1620) and Poonthanam Narayanan Namboodiri (1547-1640). Melpthur was a devotee of Lord Krishna (Guruvayoorappan) and he was associated with Guruvayoor. With his background as a mathematical linguist, Melpthur had studied \textit{Memamsa}, \textit{Vedanda}, \textit{Logic}, and \textit{Vyakarana} and had become a scholar in Sanskrit. Melpthur studied from his father in the childhood, his father himself was a \textit{pundit}\textsuperscript{47}. He learned \textit{Rig Veda} from Madhava, \textit{Tharka Sasthra} from Damodara and \textit{Vyakarana} from Achutha Pisharadi and he became a pundit at the age of 16\textsuperscript{48}. \textit{Prakriya Sarvaswom} was considered as his significant literary work. Nevertheless, Bhattathiri was famous for

\textsuperscript{45} The phrase ‘Father of Language’ is a symbolic reference to Ezhuthachan.

\textsuperscript{46} Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, \textit{op.cit.}, p.32.

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Pundit} means scholar.

\textsuperscript{48} A. Sreedhara Menon, \textit{Cultural Heritage of Kerala, op.cit.}, p.217.
his devotional literary piece *Narayaneeyam*. *Narayaneeyam* enjoys an important place in the devotional literature of Malayalam even today because of its grace of language and the pure bhakthi in it. Thus, Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri enriched Malayalam literature with his literary works.

This period also witnessed a wave towards bhakthi among the Manipravala poets. They contributed a series of chambus and kavyas. In addition, single quatrains were also produced in the period, the greatest monument of which is perhaps the *Naishadham Chambu*. The later chambus however were different from the earlier chambus as they too gave priority to bhakthi in their arena. Thus, the most significant development towards bhakthi of the time took place in the Sanskrit works also.

Poonthanan Nambudiri, a contemporary of Melpathur Bhattathiri is known among the Keralites as the most recognized devotional poet of the

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49 Melptrur Narayana Bhattathiri was a scholar in Sanskrit. He suffered from rheumatism and it was not cured by medicine. Therefore, he went to the temple at Guruvayoor and there he began to write the poem *Narayanaeeyam* with prayer. *Narayanaeeyam* is the most important work of Bhattathiri. This literary piece is a Sanskrit devotional work written in the form of a poetical hymn. The essence of Bhagavatha is the base of this poem where the poet gives a deep vision to the readers, that bhakthi towards Vishnu was the only way to attain moksha or heaven. *Narayaneeyam* enjoys extra ordinary literary merit both as a poem and as a devotional hymn. The devotional composition *Narayaneeyam* is still sung at Guruvayoor temple in praise of Guruvayoorappan and *Narayaneeyam* the great literary work was considered as the masterpiece of Bhattathiri’s literary works. Also see, K.V Krishna Ayyar, *op.cit.*, p.179.

50 Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.29 *Ramayanam Chambu, Bharatham Chambu, Naishadham Chambu, Rajaratnavaleeyam Chambu, Kodyam Viraham Chambu, Ramadahanam Chambu, Chellur Nadhodayam Chambu, Narayaneeyam Chambu and Thenkaila Nadhodayam Chambu* are the main medieval Chambu poems.
seventeenth century. He was popular among the Keralites as a devotee of Lord Krishna. His chief poems in Malayalam are *Bhasha Karnamritam*, *Kumaraharanam* or *Santanagopalam Pana* and *Njnanappana*. The first of these is a devotional work, which is intended to create *Krishnabhakti* (devotion to God Krishna). The second is a touching narrative in very simple and straightforward language and fast moving verse. It tells the story of a *Brahmin* father who lost all his children and sought the help of the *Pandava* prince Arjuna:

> Arjuna proudly offered to help him preserve his next child alive, but he was unable to keep his word. The Brahmin abuses Arjuna to his great anguish and in his wounded pride he decides to commit suicide by leaping into flames. Krishna out of love for Arjuna intervenes at the last moment and takes him to *Vaikunta* [Heaven] from where they recover all the lost children of the Brahmin.

Krishna’s infinite love for his devotees is thus the central theme, but the poem also makes its appeal because of its down-to-earth realism and unmistakable touch of authenticity.

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51 Poonthanam (1547-1640) lived in Keezhattoor in Malappuram district. Poonthanam was the family name. Poonthanam was born in a Namboodiri family. He was the contemporary of Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri and both of them were associated with Guruvayoor. It is believed that Lord Guruvayoorappan has appreciated Poonthanam’s devotion directly and God Himself came down and took Poonthanam to heaven.

52 K. Parameswaran Nair, *op.cit.*, p.80.

53 Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikkar, *op.cit.*, pp.35-36.
Among the works of Poonthanam, *Njnanappana* is considered as the masterpiece. *Njnanappana* or the Song of ‘Divine Wisdom’ is an actual store of unlimited knowledge that is heroically embedded in the experiences of this world\(^{54}\). Besides, this work is famous for its poetical merit and intensity of devotion. *Njnanappana* was considered as the *Bhagavath Gita* of Malayalam. In a language that is entirely free from colloquialism and dialects, use of abundant symbols and real pictures taken from contemporary life, the poet is able to drive home his insight of the short-lived nature of life. In addition, this poem was notable for its ordinary language palatable to the common man. His religious meditations flow smoothly and imaginatively. His observation of life and the use of pure Malayalam aiming at certain directness enriched his poems. This philosophical poem encloses 360 lines of verses and it was written in *Pana* metre of Malayalam poetry. This poem enjoys so many adjectives like the light to enlightenment, encyclopedia of life, *Bhagavath Gita* of Malayalam etc. Thus, *Njanappana*, Poonthanam’s testimony to the wisdom became the indispensible part of Malayalam *Bhakthi* literature.

**Arnos Padiri and Bhakthi literature**

\(^{54}\) K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *op.cit.*, p.179. Poonthanam Narayanan Namboodiri the author of *Njnanappana* was an ardent devotee of Sree Guruvayuoorappan [God Vishnu]. *Njnanappana* is a philosophical poem written in simple Malayalam. Simple phrases and terms, philosophical ideas and deep devotion to Guruvayoorappan [God Vishnu] are the important characteristics of *Njnanappana*. 
As mentioned earlier a new intellectual awareness and cultural revival had taken place in Kerala in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Bhakthi literature had a very important place in the reawakening of Kerala society during that period. It was to such an environment of socio-cultural and intellectual tradition that Arnos Padiri had arrived. He was attracted by the element of bhakthi in Malayalam literature, especially in the poems of Poonthanam. The popularity of Poonthanam’s poems fascinated Padiri. He was so much influenced by Malayalam poets like Poonthanam Narayanan Namboodiri and Ezhuthachan that he followed the style and treatment of Poonthanam’s well-known work Njnanapana.

To Arnos Padiri, the devotional poems of Poonthanam Narayanan Namboodiri and Ezhuthachan had a high moral tone and he could comprehend that these songs were the basis of spirituality of Hindus in Kerala.

Arnos Padiri realized that bhakthi was the only way to turn the people away from their immoral life, and lead them towards devotion. Therefore, he decided to create devotional poems for Christians in the same manner to promote spirituality and morality among them. Thus, in


56 Ibid.
the selection of the title, tone, metre, treatment and in technique, Padiri followed *Njnanapana* and he gave the title *Puthen Pana* to his own work\(^{57}\).

Arnos Padiri discovered that there were many *bhakthi* poems for the Hindus to lead a devout and spiritual life, but among the Christians, there were only few literary pieces like *Margamkali paattu*\(^{58}\), *Ramban paattu*\(^{59}\), *and Marthoma paattu*\(^{60}\) and so on. One of the reasons for the lack of Christian lore in Malayalam was that the Decrees of the Synod of Diamper (1599) prevented the Christians of Kerala from reading the literature of Hinduism, Hindu arts, *Puranas*, and *Kavyas*, etc. Therefore, Arnos Padiri took the challenge and started to write poems in Malayalam and thus he familiarized Christ to Keralites. Arnos Padiri realized that Christian folk songs of that period were not enough to create Christian devotional poems in Malayalam\(^{61}\).

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\(^{57}\)Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., *op.cit.*, p.45. Dr. Kurias Kumbalakuzhy says that Padiri gave the title *Mishika Charitham Pana* to *Puthen Pana* and later he changed it and gave the title *Koodasa Pana* to this poem. Also see, M. Leelavathi, *Malayala Kavitha Sahitya Charithram*, (Mal), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1996, pp.106, 108.

\(^{58}\) *Margamkali* was the form of ritual and entertainment among the Syrian Christians corresponding to the *Sanghamkali* of the Brahmins. *Margamkalipaattu* is the song for this performance depicting the story of St. Thomas, the Apostle.

\(^{59}\) Dr. N. Sam et.al., eds., *op. cit.*, p.50. *Rambban Paattu* was a long folk song prevailed among the Christians in early period. There is a tradition that it was written by Maliyekkal Thoma Rabban and later it was codified in 1610. There were many other songs like marriage songs and songs on the saint and church.

\(^{60}\) *Marthoma paattu* includes folk songs, which say about the arrival of St. Thomas, the disciple of Christ in Kerala.

\(^{61}\) Dr N. Sam. et.al., *op. cit.*, p.51.
Arnos Padiri also wanted to initiate devotion towards Mother Mary. He had deep love towards motherhood and it is clear from his poems. As Arnos Padiri had to leave his mother at an early age, he was always haunted by the nostalgic memories of his mother and childhood. The love he had for his mother passed to Mother Mary spontaneously, and the result was the devotional poems. In all poems, he explained the sorrows and pains of all mothers. The great devotional works of Arnos Padiri in Malayalam literature includes *Puthen Pana* (Life of Christ) *Chanduranthyam* (The Four Ends of Man) *Umma Parvam* (Life of Virgin Mary) *Vyakulaprabandham* (Soliloquy of Virgin Mary) *Ummade Dukham* (Lamentations of Virgin Mary) and *Genoa Parvam* (Story of Genevieve).

**Puthen Pana**

Among his devotional poems *Puthen Pana* is the most famous melodious poem of Arnos Padiri. Some scholars consider *Puthen Pana* as the most significant work of Padiri. *Puthen* means ‘new’ and *pana* means ‘hymns’. *Puthen Pana* was quite new and different from the old ballads about the life of Christ. *Puthen Pana* came to be known in Kerala by different titles. There are 14 cantos in *Puthen Pana*. Among them, the

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64 Dr. Kurias Kumbalakuzhi, ‘Kurishil Vidarna Kavitha’, in Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., *opcit.*, pp.39-43.

Fr. Paulinus was a missionary and Sanskrit scholar who reached Kerala in the 18th century wrote about
12th canto has been considered by most of the poets as an independent work and it was titled, *Ummade Dukham*.65 Life history of Christ is the content of *Puthen Pana*. It also deals with the origin of the earth, concept of heaven, Holy Trinity, birth of Jesus Christ, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and such other matters.

*Puthen Pana* can be considered as the first work, which familiarized the *Bible* to Malayalam66 to people of Kerala. It was in 1811 that Claudius Buccanan published the first Malayalam *Bible*. Later Benjamin Baily translated the complete *Bible* in Malayalam that was published only in 1842. However, Padiri wrote on the life history of Christ in Malayalam in the beginning of the eighteenth century itself. Hence, Padiri made the life and works of Christ more familiar to Keralites. Presentation of the *Bible* stories in an interesting and motivating way and the development of devotion in Christ and Mother Mary were the prime objectives of this

The manuscript kept at the Vatican Museum is also named as *Mishiha Charithram Pana*. The manuscript kept at the Vatican Museum is also named as *Mishiha Charithram Pana*. Kerala University Publication of *Puthen Pana* was in 1960 with the title *Koodasapana*. Fr. Thermadam published *Puthen Pana* in 1982, titled as *Rakshakara Veda Keerthanam*. However, the manuscript of 1726 AD obtained from the Kurichithanam Pudumana Illam is considered most authentic because it was written and corrected during the time of Arnos Padiri and at times, by Arnos Padiri himself.

65 Dr. Kurias Kumbalakuzhi, ‘Kurishil Vidarna Kavitha’ in Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., op.cit., pp.24-25.
devotional poem. *Bhakthi* towards Mother Mary is the centre of this poem.

Arnos begins the poem *Puthen Pana* with a prayer to Mother Mary:

(English Translation)

Devout heart, yearning to do well
Bows before you in benediction
The God of all that is good
Let holy thoughts sprout from my mind-
Savior who banished the curse
Of the original sin from mankind
Be merciful unto me.
Mother Virgin, purity and light
Remove the darkness from my mind

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Here Arnos Padiri is appealing to Mother Mary to bless him with due abilities and power to write this poem. He prays to God to give good thoughts. He prays to Christ who protected humanity from a curse, to be merciful to him and prays to Mother Mary to remove darkness from his mind and help him to compile the poem. Arnos Padiri took up the challenge of writing poems in Malayalam which would acquaint the people with the history of Christ. Hence, he followed a simple and impressive method to write poems. Padiri used a language which was comprehensible to the ordinary people so that the people could understand the message and significance of the poem easily.

(English Translation)

On the sixth day

God created the first man

Out of the dust of the earth;

Into him he gave

His life breath

And thus man was born on earth.68

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Here, Padiri presents the Biblical themes in a simple and straightforward way so that any ordinary person could understand and comprehend the theme.\(^{69}\)

\begin{multicols}{2}
\begin{quote}
அதுது எழுதியிருந்து வாய்ப்படாதே
அபிளைமண்டிவீன ஒருவி வையே
என்றுமையர்க்கு ஏற்றுவெனேமை
அந்ததர் கன கதவத்காயது
பொப்பாயத் தொகை விரைவிக்கு
அந்தாயதொரு பாத்திராக்கிரே

to 

(English Translation)

O Lord of unending compassion

Who became the receptacle served thee as

Of the worst sinners (our first parents)

The God of all goodness

Whose mercy, knows no bounds

Yet we sinners suffer from our sins

Oh Almighty God

Banish the guilt and sadness which

Sin has brought into our minds.\(^{70}\)
\end{quote}
\end{multicols}

These lines are a part of a long prayer compiled by Arnos Padiri in the poem *Puthen Pana*. Here he says that Adam and Eve served God confessing and praying to God to forgive their sin. They were suffering a

\(^{69}\) *Bible*, ‘Book of Ulppathi,’ 2:7.

\(^{68}\) Arnos Padiri, *Puthen Pana*, Dr. N.Sam, et.al., eds., *op.cit.*, P.113.
lot for their offense and so he prays to God to banish pain and sorrow from humanity with mercy:

(English Translation)

May the all knowing – Eternal Omnipresent God be loved The Father, Son and Holy Spirit The Three- in- One, Trinity To be accepted totally in faith Then to be baptized in the name of the Trinity And thus obtained salvation, To believe in the sacraments And receive the same in purity The mystery of the Trinity And our beliefs in its tenets
Is what will bring salvation

No other form of piety will obtain you this.\(^{71}\)

Through these lines, the missionary poet tries to make known the Christian ideology, in a simple manner to the people of Kerala. He explains the significance of faith in Trinity and obligation of belief in sacraments. Here, he especially presents the realm of devotion and asks Christians to live according to the words of Christ and sacraments because then only they attain salvation.

**Chaduranthyam**

*Chaduranthyam* was based on the ideology of life after death. In this poetry, the missionary poet focuses on the guilt of a dying person who has followed a luxurious life and never thought about God in his youth. Nevertheless, when he is on the deathbed, he begins to think about his sins and he becomes afraid of it. He realizes that the devil is near and about to invite him to hell. He thinks of his helplessness to escape from the evil spirit. The descriptions in this poem are vivid and effective in portraying hell as dreadful. Moreover, it is sought enough to prevent the people from committing sins. Judas represents the inhabitants of hell, with an ugly and dreadful figure. If one reads *Chaduranthyam*, one will not commit any sin consciously\(^{72}\), so effective does Arnos Padiri put down the content thus:

\(^{71}\) Arnos Padiri, *Pathen Pana*, Dr. N.Sam, et.al., eds., *op.cit.*, p. 174.

\(^{72}\) Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., *op.cit.*, p.60, 66.
Different types of snakes of hair on head
Scorpion is in the ugly eyes
Tears are flowing always
And it is similar to the boiled water
Vermin are living on the face
Nose is carved by wild creatures
Lips are like burnt pieces of flesh
Hands and legs are bound
And his clothes are also with fire
This horrible figure of sin creates fear in mind.73.

Here Judas is portrayed as one with poisonous snakes for hair on his head, his nose is devoured by wild creatures, his face is dirty and covered by

Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., op.cit., p. 402-403.
vermin, his eyes are always filled with tears that burn like hot water, his lips are like burnt pieces of flesh, both his legs and arms are bound with fire, his body is covered in fire. The picturesque presentation of Judas gives a horrible picture of hell and the plights of its inhabitants are printed with a powerful imagination. This ghastly picture evokes acute fear and anxiety in the minds of the readers, forcing them away from earthly sins. The missionary poet very intelligently selected Judas; the disliked and hated one and the most deserving one to hell, as the representative of hell.

These lines are too powerful to create awareness among the people about their sins and their after-effects. At the same time, Padiri gives hope to the readers that if a sinner confesses his sins with a plain heart, Mother Mary will forgive him and he can attain salvation. From the first to the last, this poem is a typical devotional poem and it fills the heart of the people with anxiety of life after death and awareness about not committing sins in life.

This poetry gives a powerful message to the people, by presenting the worthy and meaningful ideas of Christian ideology of confession for sins. Arnos Padiri asks the people to believe in God, resurrection of the dead, the last judgment and salvation and motivates people to confess their

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74 Paul Manavalan, op.cit., p. 304.
own sins and seek redemption. One is urged to analyze his behaviour in this world as good or bad and commit only good deeds. Reading of *Chaduranthyam* evokes a kind of guilty conscience in the mind of the reader about sins and an apprehension of hell.

**Umma Parvam**

In *Umma Parvam*, also there are similar examples of *bhakthi*. The aim of this poem was to convey to the people the biblical stories narrated in an attractive way and provide them a spiritual experience. Like in all other poems, Arnos Padiri’s intention was to develop more *bhakthi* among the Christians. It also aimed at creating a devotional attitude among the Keralites towards Holy Mother. So devotion towards Mother Mary is the centre of this poem also. Arnos Padiri has attempted to create a Christian lore with a devotional touch, in *Umma Parvam* also. The style of this poem is also simple and remarkable. This work is aesthetic because of its clarity in language, rich vocabulary, powerful images and eloquent narration.

75Dr. N. Sam, et al., eds., *op.cit.*, p.69.
Oh, Mother of the Universe, beautiful-
Star of the Ocean, Mother of God
When I try to express in words
All that you are, I fail miserably,
Unless, you put the words into my mouth
Be the guiding light to each soul,
Journeying through the sea of life,
As well as the world\textsuperscript{76}

Arnos Padiri starts this poetry with a prayer to get knowledge to write. Padiri here also gives good examples for devotion to Mother Mary. He calls Mother Mary the ‘Star of the Ocean’ and requests her to give words to write in praise of her.

\textit{Vyakulaprabandham}

\textit{Vyakulaprabandham} is another devotional poem of Arnos Padiri, which also reflects the \textit{bhakthi} as the basic element. \textit{Bhakthi} towards Mother Mary is the theme of this poem too. The severe pain of Mother Mary in losing her son is the favorite theme of Arnos Padiri and so the grief of Mother Mary pervades this poem too. The poem begins with a picturesque presentation of Mother Mary at the foot of the cross. Padiri

\textsuperscript{76} Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., \textit{op.cit.}, stanza 1-4, p.543.
invites the readers to share the pain of Mother Mary in losing her son. Along with encouraging *bhakthi*, Arnos Padiri gives an earnest request to the people to abandon immorality or *adarma* from life. In all his poems, he concentrates on developing consistent faith in Christ and on morality or values of life and ends with some messages. In this poem, all the moments in the life of Mother Mary are depicted with powerful symbols to help the readers to reach a high state of intense *bhakthi*. *Vyakulaprabandham* begins thus:

(Author's translation)

Eternal God, perfect in all goodness
Out of compassion for humankind
You took birth on this Earth,
In the most humble manner-
Lived and preached good words,
And alleviated the eternal
Suffering of the human race

Arnos Padiri continues:

(English Translation)

Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., *op. cit.*, p.303.
Your word, Oh Lord is the air
That we breathe
You are the elixir of our life.\(^{78}\)

Thus in each line Padiri presents the spirit of devotion and invites readers to the realm of devotion. The poet perceives God everywhere and considers God as the elixir of life. He believes that the words of Christ are indispensable for man’s existence on this earth.

**Ummade Dukham**

*Ummade Dukham* another devotional poem written by Arnos Padiri presents the agonies of Mother Mary on the sufferings of her son expressed in an agonizing and heartrending way. The description of the meaning of Christian ideology was also the indispensable part of this poem. The poet asks the people to accept Mother Mary as our own mother and he creates a personal relationship with Mother Mary in all his poems. In each line of the poem *Ummade Dukham* one can visualize the beautiful depiction of *bhakthi*:

\[
\text{Ummade Dukham}
\]

78 Ibid, p. 315.
Virgin Mary, the germ of human race  
Who accepted the divinely 
Ordained sorrow whole-heartedly  

Listen, you people, with an open mind!  
This, which I attempt to render in verse  
Falls short of the Mother’s real experience  
But if Virgin mother, herself fills me with her grace  
I shall succeed where my own abilities fail. 

These are the beginning stanzas in *Ummade Dukham*. Through these lines, he invites readers to the purity and holiness of *bhakthi*. Arnos Padiri states that he cannot write about the divine sorrow of Mother Mary without the help of Virgin Mary herself, and so he prays to her to fill him with her grace in order to write the real experience of the Mother. After singing the sorrow of Mother, he concludes his poem with a thankful heart. He says in the concluding part of the poem:

> வெட்டாக்கி விளக்கிறு எழுப்பு, வீரி வாழ்க்கையக்காலம்
> குறுக்கண்டவலை குருக்கண்டவலை எழுவா!  
> விளக்கிறு இயல்பையை யாதையறையை வாதை
> கோவில்வலை கோவில்வலையால் வாதை  
> விளக்கிறு விளக்கிறு வாதையை மீள்வை  
> விளக்கிறு விளக்கிறு வாதையை மீள்வை

79 Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., *op.cit.*, p. 289.
Virgin Mother with this rendering of your sorrow,
Remove the darkness in me and bring me to the light.
Let the holy blood of your son, wash my sins
And make me pure and white, O Mother
By your son’s death let,
The death of my own soul be prevented
Thus leading me to salvation
You are my mother, Jesus my father.
Let this be so in my life.  

Each line of this poem is filled with *bhakthi* and the readers feel the pain of Mother Mary as their own. On reading the poem, the readers identify themselves with the poet’s emotions and sentiments too.

**Genoa Parvam**

*Genoa Parvam* also declares Arnos Padiri’s devotion to Mother Mary and urges the reader to believe in God and the Holy Mother, trusting God’s omnipotence. The theme of this poem asserts the importance of one’s faith in God and the devotion that amounts to total surrender. The value of faith and devotion were expressed in an emphatic manner in *Genoa Parvam*. In this poem, God is portrayed as an ultimate protector who guards the faithful and wipes out their difficulties in life. Genoa is

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80Dr. N. Sam, et.al., eds., *op. cit.*, p.289.
protected by God, in prison and in the forest. Angels are assigned to her service and in the end; she is reunited with her husband. Thus, through the story of Genoa, Padiri gives a hope to the readers about the abiding protection of God, for those who follow a truthful and devout life\textsuperscript{81}. In *Genoa Parvam* also the poet tries to promote spirituality, devoutness and love for motherhood among the people.

All the works of Padiri are purely devotional. His greatness as a poet consists in the appropriateness of the form he chose and the language he used for what he wanted to present to the people of his time as well as of later times. Thus, by providing these melodious devotional poems Arnos Padiri added teachings of Christ familiar to the readers of Malayalam *Bhakthi* Literature. It actually led to the development of new stream of literature especially a Christian lore in Malayalam. Consequently, the horizon of *bhakthi* was continued in the minds of readers until the eighteenth century even after Poonthanam Namboodiri.

The intimacy one feels in reading Arnos Padiri is accounted for in the efficient handling of the linguistic resources. With his absolute sincerity, his expert skill in the use of language, his total dedication to poetry and religion, Arnos Padiri was aiming to develop and establish a new literature and a new culture. In later times, whenever there was a

divergence in the cultural trend, the return to the central native tradition was facilitated by a true recognition and fresh realization of what Padiri had done and had stood for. He, thus, became a cultural figure and an exponent of intense bhakthi, i.e., writing on various themes.

To conclude it is from the Tamil and Sanskrit languages that the Malayalam language and literature derived. To begin with, many classical Tamil works and Sangam literature had a very deep and reflective influence on the origin of Malayalam literature. Tamil traditions of Paattu and Sanskrit style, Manipravalam were used for the formation of Malayalam language. However, even in Medieval Period the Malayalam language had only at the early stage of its development and was understood only by the elite minority. The Malayalam language has developed to the present form through different stages. Many new attempts and approaches were introduced in the language. From Paattu School, Malayalam literature conceded through different stages such as Manipravalam, Koothu, Koodiyattam, Chambus, Sandesa Kavyas or Message Poems, Bhakthi Literature, etc. Many poets and scholars have contributed a lot to the upgrading of the language. Amongst them Niranam poets, Cherussery, Ezhuthachan, Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri and Poonthanam Narayana Namboodiri are the prominent ones.

The innovations of Cherussery such as Gaadha style and the presentation of Dravidian metre in Malayalam poems became a turning
point in Malayalam literature. The contributions of Ezhuthachan, towards *kilippaattu* and *bhakthi* literature and his ability to combine Sanskrit and Dravidian streams in Malayalam brought an evolution in Malayalam literature. The result was a synthesis of language and culture. Through *bhakthi* in his literature, Poonthanam appropriately used to dispose of social inequalities and to advise the higher-class people to throw away their immoral traits in life. Therefore, Ezhuthachan worked as an instrument of cultural renaissance in the society and he worked hard to modernize the language and culture of Kerala, the tempo was continued under Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, Poonthanam Narayanan Namboodiri and Arnos Padiri.

Devotional poems of Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri and Poonthanam Narayanan Namboodiri created a new intellectual awareness in seventeenth century Kerala. The observation of life in the poems of these poets influenced the society so much. Poonthanam presented real pictures from the life in simple and pure Malayalam. *Narayaneeyam* and *Njnanappana* became popular among the Keralites and many followed the poetical style of Poonthanam during that period. The literary pieces of Melpathur and Poonthanam have high status in the devotional literature of Malayalam even today. They could create an atmosphere of devotion in the land and the indigenous and foreign poets continued it later.
Arnos Padiri who reached Kerala in the new literary environment of devotion was so overwhelmed by the component of bhakthi in Poonthanam’s poems. The devotional literature gave birth by Padiri enriched our culture and literature. After Poonthanam Narayanan Namboodiri, the bhakthi poet, Arnos Padiri continued the tradition of Bhakthi literature in Malayalam. His devotional poems were attracted by Kerala society and they became popular among the people. There are even parodies to the lines of his poem Ummade Dukham in Thrissur area where he worked and wrote his bhakthi poems. This shows the popularity of his poems not only among the Christians but among the non-Christians also.

Arnos Padiri presented a clear vision in his literary works. He had realized the element of bhakthi to unite the people together and to turn the people away from immorality. Moreover, he wanted to fill the vacuum of Christian lore in Malayalam. Along with it, he tried to spread devotion towards Mother Mary. Devotion in his works also introduced a new philosophy of love between different cultures and Arnos Padiri; the missionary poet became a cultural synthesizer. Principally, Arnos Padiri’s vision in Kerala was the synthesis of two cultures of Hindus and Christians and for that he founded bhakthi as an instrument to bring about intercultural harmony in Kerala. The result of his attempt was the creation of charming and melodious devotional poems in Malayalam literature. Padiri’s devotional poems Puthen Pana, Chaduranthyam, Ummade
Dukham, Vyakulaprabandam, Umma Parvam, and Genoa Parvam played a decisive role in reawakening Kerala society. Like the bhakthi poets in Malayalam literature, prior to Arnos Padiri, he too wanted to inculcate utmost devotion to Almighty; all his devotional poems had a high moral tone and high spirituality. As well the dictionary and grammar works written by Arnos Padiri brought vital developments in Malayalam prose literature.