CHAPTER VI
ARNOS PADIRI’S POETICAL WORKS: CONTENTS
AND CONCEPTS

Arnos Padiri has written a number of poetical works in Malayalam. Among his poetical works, six have been brought to light by different authorities. They include *Ummade Dukham* (Lamentation of Virgin Mary), *Genoa Parvam* (Story of Genevieve) *Chanduranthyam* (The Four Ends of Man), *Puthen Pana* (Life of Christ), *Umma Parvam* (Life of Virgin Mary), and *Vyakula Prabandham* (Soliloquy of Virgin Mary). The basic theme of Arnos’ poems is *bhakthi* and their role towards *bhakthi* trend in Malayalam literature was studied as a special feature in the fourth chapter. In this chapter the contents of these works were analysed with interpretations and innovative concepts.

The lyrical works of Arnos Padiri are attractive with the peculiar views and vision. Not the melodious style but the new concepts in the poems made them most eminent. The poems *Ummade Dukham, Genoa Parvam*, and *Chanduranthyam* mentioned above are centered on the

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1 The manuscript of *Puthen Pana*, named as *Koodasa Pana* was discovered from Kurichithanam Pudumana Illam in 1726 A.D. 12th canto of *Puthen Pana* is known as *Ummade Dukham*. *Vyakulaprabandham* is the 14th canto of *Puthen Pana*. The manuscript kept at the Kerala University Library is titled as *Mishiha Charithram Pana*. Original manuscript of *Genoa Parvam* was discovered by Cherian Kuniyandhodath and *Genoa Parvam* was published by Western Star Press in 1892.
concepts like gender equality and feminism. Arnos Padiri’s women characters are powerful and self respected. They are quite different from the ancient, medieval, or post medieval as well as the existing characters of the period. On analysing the general picture of women in early Indian literature it seems that the ancient thought had rarely given adequate regard to womanhood. Manu the ancient law maker sought to establish a stratified, social and occupational structure where the women were not fit for independence. The entire Indian jurisprudence and religion went hand in hand to relegate woman to a secondary position. The law book of Parasara compiled in about eighth century A.D. ordains that a person who kills an artisan, mechanic, Shudra, or a woman shall perform prajapathya twice and will be entitled to get eleven bulls as gift. This corroborates Agnipurana, a work of about eleventh century A.D which states that one who commits the murder of a woman shall be required to perform the same kinds of penance given to the murder of a Shudra.

Post Maurya and Guptha texts also give similar ideas. In the medieval period the attitude of Muslims towards girls was not very different from that of the biblical tradition that Eve was created out of the ribs of Adam. Though centuries have passed and technology has

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2 R.S. Sharma, Perspectives in Social and Economic History of India, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1995 pp. 72-75
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
advanced, the attitude towards woman is not very different from the attitude that prevailed during the ancient and medieval periods. The literature of different periods presented sad, pathetic, shy, and unspeakable women characters. But different from these, Arnos Padiri introduced capable and self respected women characters.

*Ummade Dukham* can be considered as the prominent work of Arnos Padiri for creating potent women characters. The presentation of the heroine Mother Mary in *Ummade Dukham* is attractive with its new style. The poem itself has a new background, an introduction and conclusion. It tells the story of the excruciating pain of Mother Mary in a heart rending tone, on losing her son.

Humanism presented in this poem helped Arnos Padiri to create eternal characters in Malayalam literature. The touching descriptions and the portrayal of Mother Mary as an ordinary woman are the modern views introduced in this poetry. Richness of humanism is actually the cause of the popularity of the poem, *Ummade Dukham*. Mother Mary is portrayed

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5 See Chapter 4.
6 Jancy James, ‘Ummade Dukham Daivamadruthwathinte Manushikabhavangal’, (Mal), Dr. C. Liciniya, C.M.C., and Fr. Sunny Jose, S.J., eds., *Arnos Padiri Oru Padanam*, Thrissur, Arnos Padiri Academy, 1995, pp. 25-30. It is inferred that *Ummade Dukham* was included later in the *Puthen Pana* because the early manuscripts of *Mishiha Charitram Pana*, kept at the Vatican library and Kerala University library have not mentioned about *Ummade Dukham*. The 12th Canto in these manuscripts is *Vyakulaprabandham*. At the same time, in the manuscript of Kurichitanam Pudumana Illam, the 12th Canto is *Ummade Dukham*. Hence it can be concluded that these two poetical creations, *Ummade Dukham* and *Vyakulaprabandham* are separate works, later edited as *Puthen Pana* for the convenience of readers.
by Arnos Padiri as a heroine with emotions of an ordinary mother who undergoes the agony of losing her beloved son. The pathos of Mother Mary, her pain and sorrow, are all revealed by Padiri as if he was seeing it through a mirror. Devoid of the robe of divinity, the true inner feelings of Mother Mary, has been powerfully depicted by Arnos. This poem portrays the pitiable situation of Mother Mary as a common woman. She comments, cries, argues, scolds, and some times bursts into sorrow and anger. Padiri thus allows the woman to protest against the injustice in the society boldly. Arnos’ Mother Mary is powerful even to question the authority. At the same time she is not able to face the pathetic situation of her son. There she becomes helpless and curses her fate. Mother Mary says in this poem thus:

(English Translation)
If I knew the greed of the sinner
I would beg and give him money
To liberate my son from these enemies-
For he has been betrayed!7

Arnos Padiri also says:

7 Arnos Padiri, Ummade Dukham, in Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., op. cit., p.292.
(English Translation)

Cunningly the cheater betrayed
Kissing and betraying you
Did the sinner cheat you?
You who protected them for long
Even so, they sold you to the enemies

Here a researcher can observe that the missionary poet portrays Mother Mary quite differently from the divine Mother Mary of the New Testament. In the Bible, Mother Mary is depicted as a ‘Divine Mother’, who is calm and composed and she is suffering everything in her life. She had no freedom to protest against the injustices done to her son. The sorrow and grief she feels deep within her are not mentioned much in Biblical literature. But Mother Mary of Arnos Padiri is replete with pain, anger, despair, sorrow as any mother in this world and this is the novelty of his poetic contribution to vernacular literature. Mother Mary was presented as a potent lady and she dares to fight against the injustice of the society. It can be said that nobody has dared to present such a picture of Mother Mary before Arnos Padiri in the literature. The female characters

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8 Arnos Padiri, Ummade Dukham, 21-23, Dr. N. Sam, et. al, eds., op. cit., pp.291-292.

9 Dr. N. Sam, et. al, eds., op. cit., p.34.
in Arnos’ poems are women with great self respect who uphold the maternal, as well as the long suffering enduring character of the woman.

_Ummade Dukham_ which narrates the sorrowful story of Mother Mary in grief can be the first ‘elegy’\(^{10}\) compiled in Malayalam\(^{11}\). It is a mournful poem which echoes the wailings and weeping of a heart-broken mother who mourns the death of her loving son. The unabated agony of this mother is narrated by Arnos Padiri in simple words:

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\text{कृष्णसिद्धि/रामनाथसिद्धि ओम/अविभक्त जीते/}
\text{कृष्णसिद्धि रामनाथसिद्धि ओम नमो भक्ते!}
\]

(English Translation)

Oh my son, your veins are stretching on nails
And how you endured the awful pain\(^{12}\)

These lines depict the picture of Christ after crucifixion with nails driven into his palms and feet that bleed, and his veins are tout with the pain. Mother Mary cannot imagine how her son could bear the agony. In every line of this poem one can feel the heart breaking sorrow of Mother Mary.

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\(^{10}\) Elegy means a mournful poem. In Malayalam literature _Oru Vilapam_ of C.S. Subramaniyan Potti was regarded as the first elegy. It was written in 1902. Some other scholars argue that _Vilapa Vimsathy_ of Naduvathachan (1900) was considered as the first elegy in Malayalam. _Ummada Dukham_ of Arnos Padiri is an independent work and it was written in the beginning of 18th century itself. So _Ummada Dukham_ can be considered as the first elegy written in Malayalam.


\(^{12}\) Arnos Padiri, _Ummade Dukham_, 51. Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., _op. cit._, p.296.
Oh son, I also want to die with you,
If so, I can escape from these sorrows and pain.\(^{13}\)

These lines present the mind of a typical mother who is ready to die for her son. The immeasurable sorrow and grief of a ‘mother’ whose son is dying are effectively expressed by Arnos Padiri in this poem.

Oh my son, if you had done all these after my death
Oh why did you die before me?\(^{14}\)

Here she cries woefully and curses her faith and the people who killed her son, and even wishes to die along with her son. She decries the injustice meted out to her son by the problem, for whom, he had dedicated himself. Mother Mary is anguished at the strange behaviour of the thankless people who forgot all the good deeds done for them and shouted at the judgment of the death-sentence to Christ. Padiri wrote *Ummade Dukham* in a melodious and touching style and readers recite this poem with tears welling up in their eyes. The sorrow of Mother Mary descends into the minds of the readers very strongly. The rich quality of the elegy lies in its power to reduce a reader to tears. The tear-rending descriptions and

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\(^{13}\) Arnos Padiri, *Ummade Dukham*, 51. Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., *op. cit.*, p. 298.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 13.
painful depictions of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and the agony it evoked in Mother Mary, take *Ummade Dukham* to the status of an ‘elegy’ in Malayalam literature. It can be believed that no one had written an elegy of this magnitude in Malayalam literature before.\(^ {15} \) The emotional content of this remarkable poetic work makes it a unique and outstanding elegy in Malayalam language. This work generated immense *bhakthi* among the Keralites and promoted the *Bhakthi* Movement that was gaining momentum in Kerala at that time. To many literary men, the emotional content, heart-rending descriptions, touching and agonizing depictions of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the agony it evoked in Mother Mary gives the poem the status of a classical elegy in Malayalam poetry.

In all his poems, especially in *Ummade Dukham*, Arnos Padiri tries to present the relationship between mother and son and it is quite different from the *Bible*. He says that as a son Jesus could not leave his mother on the earth forever and so in all critical situations the Son wishes to reach the Mother. The reading of this work nurtures spirituality and promotes devoutness and love for motherhood among the people. So, Padiri’s works, especially *Ummade Dukham*, were helpful to create intense love and respect towards Mother Mary. The titles *Ummade Dukham, Umma Parvam, Vyakulaprabandam* and *Genoa Parvam* also denote the respect he

\(^ {15} \) Ibid, pp. 27-29.
gave to mother or women. Thus, Arnos Padiri presented a new ‘pana’ - a song of wisdom in Malayalam literature.

Like humanism the concept gender equality was also presented by Arnos Padiri in Malayalam literature. This concept was appropriately applied by the missionary poet in *Genoa Parvam*. Fr. Paulinus was attracted by the poetic beauty of *Genoa Parvam* and describes the poem in his letters\(^\text{16}\). *Genoa Parvam* the beautiful creation of Arnos Padiri was discovered by Cheriyan Kuniyanthoadath and this work was published by Western Star Press in 1892\(^\text{17}\).

The content of the poem narrates the story of *Genevieve*, a pious German woman who had enormous faith in the Holy Mother Mary. Arnos Padiri tries to relate a German tale in Indian style in this poem. The story goes like this: Sipraso was a ruler under Emperor Charlemagne. He was a warrior and an able administrator. He married Genoa, the beautiful

\(^{16}\) *Genoa Parvam* is a unique poem for its theme, treatment and approach. For a long time *Genoa Parvam* was in oblivion and it was considered as an anonymous poetry. Fr. Paulinus was the first scholar who presented this poem as the creation of Arnos Padiri. He has included *Genoa Parvam* as the fifth work of Arnos Padiri in his list in *India Orientalis Christiana*. For details see, ‘Letter to Rev. Fr .Alexius Maria of St. Joseph, Discalced Carmelite, Concerning the Indic Manuscript Codices of Rev. Fr. John Ernest Hanxleden’, trans’, Dr, M Luke, O.F.M in Dr. J.J. Pallath, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.21-22. Fr. Paulino a San Bartholomaeo, India *Orientis Christiana, op. cit.*, p.191. In the words of Fr. Paulinus, “The literary and poetic qualities of these hymns are so sublime and beautiful and the composition very perfect and free from any defects”.

\(^{17}\) In 1892 AD, Western Star Press published *Genoa Parvam* with a note on the introductory page that 5000 copies printed with the full financial responsibility of Arakkal J. Presisk. The overwhelming number of printed copies shows the increasing demand enjoyed by this work, among the people. For details see, Paul Manavalan, *op. cit.*, pp.314-322.
daughter of the ruler named Prabandha, who was an ardent devotee of Mother Mary. After two years Sipraso had to take part in a battle with Turkey. He left his wife under the care of his trusted friend and minister Golo. Maddened by the unearthly beauty of Genoa, Golo felt a strong desire for her and asked her to live with him. When Genoa refused his proposal Golo became furious and imprisoned her. There she gave birth to a child. Worried about the safety of their life, she wrote a letter to Sipraso and concealed it under her bed. Eight months later Sipraso returned to Germany after defeating Turkey. Golo, his faithful friend, fabricated stories about the fidelity of Genoa and turned him against her. Sipraso ordered the killing of his unfaithful wife and her cook. Golo himself killed the cook and buried him in the Garden. Genoa and her child were taken to the nearby forest by the soldiers for killing.

However, they took sympathy on her and left her alive. They cut the tongue of a wolf to present to the king Sipraso, to make him believe that Genoa was killed. Mother Mary appeared before her devotee, Genoa and blessed her and sent a deer to give milk to her child. She consoled Genoa saying that she would re-unite with her husband and live happily later. In the end of the story Sipraso happened to see the letter written by Genoa and realized the truth and imprisoned Golo. Once he went for hunting to the nearby forest and accidentally met Genoa and her son. They were reunited. Despite Genoa’s pleas Sipraso ordered the killing of the traitor,
Golo. His hands and legs were tied to four bulls that were chased in four
different directions, tearing him apart. A few years later Genoa died.
Sipraso who was an ardent devotee of Mother Mary surrendered to Mother
and a grief stricken Sipraso relinquished all earthly pleasures, left his
palace and went to the forest. The rest of his life he spent in the forest as a
saint.

Padiri presents here the struggle between good and evil in the human
mind. He depicts two ‘faces’ of Golo. The psychological aspects of human
mind were beautifully presented through the character, Golo in *Genoa
Parvam*. Meaningful similes and simple language were used by Arnos
Padiri to present the picture of human mind.

The story of Genoa asserts the importance of one’s faith in God and
the devotion that amounts to total surrender. The value of faith and
devotion is expressed in an emphatic manner in *Genoa Parvam*. It also
declares Arnos Padiri’s devotion to Mother Mary and urges the reader to
believe in the omnipotent Almighty and the Holy Mother. In *Genoa
Parvam* God is portrayed as an ultimate protector who guards the faithful
and wipes out their difficulties in life. Genoa is protected by God, in prison
and in the forest. Angels are assigned to her service and by re-uniting with
her husband her faith triumphs. So Padiri gives a hope to the readers in
divine kingdom and protection of God to all faithful and pious ones.
A religious theme with very high moral tone, emphasizing the equality of men and women, narrated in a romantic style, is what makes Genoa Parvam different from other works of Arnos Padiri.

(English Translation)

If from leg, women will have the feeling of a slave.

If from up, the head

She will be superior to man

So God created man equal to Him

And took a bone from his ribs with love,

And created Eve, the half of man

If created separately,

There is chance for separation.

Hence, God commanded Adam

to protect his half.18

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18 Arnos Padiri, Genoa Parvam, Stanza: 466:470, Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., op. cit., p.648.
Arnos Padiri explains in this poem why God created woman from the rib of a man. Had she been created from his legs she would have been treated like a slave, inferior to man and if created from head she would have been superior to him. God emphasized the equality of man and woman and paired them so, by creating her from his rib, as an equal life partner.

Arnos Padiri presented the modern concept of feminism in his poetical works. Though women studies were developed only in 20th and 21st centuries Arnos Padiri gives heroines self respect in the beginning of 18th century itself. In each and every poem especially in Genoa Parvam Padiri presents this modern view. Hence each poetical work is a matter of research study and they can produce unique ideas and thoughts to the world. Like this, Padiri’s poems speak about wide-ranging concepts.

Arnos Padiri presented the modern ideas like liberty, fraternity, freedom, equality, and universal brotherhood in his literary works to promote his mission. He offered teachings of Christ as the media in order to specify these ideas.

Universal principles and philosophical notions were also stated by Arnos Padiri mainly in the poem Chaduranthyam. It examines philosophical doctrines, such as the realities of life like death, hell, heaven, soul, salvation, destiny and the ultimate end of human being. This poem is
a significant work, a hymn on the universal judgment. Such themes were rare in Malayalam literature of the period.

*Chaduranthyam* of Arnos Padiri is noted for its articulacy and fluency. Fr. Paulinus has recorded the flowing eloquence and purity of language of this poetry and he says, ‘Unimaginable is the majesty and dignity of this poem, coupled with flowing eloquence and purity of language’. Such great expertise of an alien European in language, coupled with solid piety, cannot but arouse the admiration of the Indian people. *Chaduranthyam* is dignified with Christian ideology and enriched with poetical qualities. The scholars have valued the language, expression and vocabulary in this poem, composed by a European in Malayalam. It suited the regret of heart and came to be sung popularly.

*Chaduranthyam* literally means ‘Four Ends of Man’. Fr. Paulinus, an authority on Arnos Padiri’s writings, calls this classical work as *Nale Parvam*, because it deals with the last four experiences of man in life as

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19 *Mathew 25:31-46*. Paul Manavalan, *op. cit.*, p.292. Also see, Dr. Samual Nellimukal, ‘Darsanikatha-Marana Vidhi Parvangalil,’ Dr. C. Liciniya, C.M.C. Fr. Sunny Jose, S.J., eds., *op. cit.*, p.81. According to the Christian ideology, Last judgment, the Day of Lord is the final and eternal judgment by God of every action. The concept is found in all the canonical Gospels, particularly in the Gospel of Mathew. It will purportedly take place after the resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Christ. The belief has inspired numerous artistic depictions also in the world.


death, judgment, salvation and hell\textsuperscript{22}. This poem popularly sung by the devoted Christians, deals with the miseries of life and the ultimate experience of death. \textit{Chaduranthyam} is divided into four sections. They are: \textit{Marana Parvam} (deals with death), \textit{Vidhi Parvam} (explains judgment) \textit{Moksha Parvam} (defines salvation) \textit{Naraka Parvam} (describes hell). Among the four sections, \textit{Marana Parvam} is the most widely accepted one by the people.\textsuperscript{23}

According to Christian ideology, in the last span of life, there are different stages in human life. The first is death. After death the soul reaches the Universal Soul. Then according to his life in earth those who lived in the love of Christ get heaven and others are condemned to hell. The man who lived on the basis of this belief listens to the sound of death. So in the last moments of life it is natural that human beings think about death, life after death, last Judgment and punishments for the sins in his life. The death and departure is a painful thought to all. Some feel happiness when they think about life after death and last Judgment. At the


\textsuperscript{23} Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., \textit{Arnos Padiriyude Kavyangal, op. cit.}, p.60. K.R. Narayana Panikkar, \textit{Kerala Bhasha Sahithya Charithram}, 1929, p.174. Death is the theme of the poem \textit{Chaduranthyam}. In Malayalam literature death was taken as a subject of poem only in 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The first work which took death as the subject was \textit{Assanna Marana Chinthashathakam} of K.C. Kesava Pillai. It was published only in 1895.
same time some others feel fear. Mankind is helpless and so there is chance for temptation to sin.

*Marana Parvam* of Chaduranthyam narrates the experience of a dying man who confronts the severity of the oncoming judgment. *Marana Parvam* has 450 stanzas. The desire of man for worldliness and anxiety about the life after death are the basic themes of *Marana Parvam*. When death comes close to man he thinks about the good and bad activities of his last life and wants to live a better life. But in the next second he knows that death is very near, he is helpless and he prepares to say bye to his friends, relatives, birth place and everything in this world. The thought of departure brings fear and sorrow in his mind. He doesn’t know where he will go after death; whether he will go to heaven or hell. In his youth and good health he didn’t think about all these things: he lived a comfortable and luxurious life, not paying attention to doing well. Jealousy, selfishness, laziness and treachery ruled his life and he never thought about God. But now at the end of the life as he stands before God he is full of fear. It is at such a moment of fear and confusion that the devil appears before him and tries to win him over from the court of God.

*Moksha Parvam* consists of 519 couplets. It begins with an invocation to God, the ruler of the world and the giver of salvation. Human life is full of sorrows. The flow of tears begins right from the birth. And life ends up in death. Sorrows spring from desires. Not all
desires can be satisfied. When one desire is satisfied another crops up. The result is an unending chain of sorrows. Is there anyone who becomes contented with his portion of life on the earth, or with his portion of the earth? Here Arnos Padiri visualizes a heaven oriented life. In order to explore the joys of heaven the poet sets out on a heaven bound trip in imagination. His mind ascends the solar system. He is wonder struck as he passes by each planet. Beyond the planets and stars emerges heaven brighter than the brightest of stars. Just as the stars are dimmed by the midday sun, so are the planets and stars by heaven. Here the poet’s attempt is to depict the heavenly bliss that a soul enjoys after death. The city of heaven is a beautifully designed metropolis. The poet begins the description of heaven from its outer ramparts. As he moves forward, he feels totally incapable of describing the beauty of heaven. Advancing through the ineffable beauty of heaven, he reaches the holy presence of God and stands dazed. His still unquiet mind seeks a reasonable answer to the mystery of God’s unity and trinity.

The poet’s next preoccupation is Christ’s incarnation. He stands in deep meditation over Christ’s Self-sacrifice, Resurrection and Ascension. He meditates over the blessed mother, the angels and the saints. He stands listening in attention to the God-experience shared by the Biblical fathers like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, Moses and Daniel and the Apostles like Peter and Paul. The poet again feels that the heavenly joy is
impossible to describe. In heaven the gratification of the senses is complete. A comparison between the noblest of human beings on the earth and saints in heaven is like the one between dry leaves and beautiful flowers. St. Paul had the rare blessing of experiencing a vision of heaven and then coming back to the earth. But he was absolutely incapable of describing heaven. All he could do was to exclaim that no eye had ever seen it; no ear had even heard of it, and no mind had ever conceived it. The poet is apprehensive about whether he will have the good fortune to reach that blessed place. He prays fervently for that blessing. He believes that the reading of this poem will be a means to salvation. He concludes the poem with an exhortation for the same.

All religions in the world teach that there is punishment for sin. In *Naraka Parvam* the poet tries to reflect on the experience in hell. He uses many similes and imagination in this part to explain the pathetic and alarming conditions in hell. The poet brings Jude Skariyatha as the narrator of hell who betrayed Jesus and later committed suicide. The poet starts *Naraka Parvam* by narrating the book Genesis of Bible. A group of angels turned against God. He punished them and they became devils and for them the hell, the centre of all sorrows, was created. Jude explains the bitter painful experiences of hell to the readers. Here the poet presents the horrible and shocking picture of Juda and applies sub stories and similes to make the presentation more powerful. It is difficult to say what is more
severe in hell? Is it hunger or thirst? Is it pain of the body or mind? The inhabitants of hell want to die. But they can’t. The poet wants to point out the list of people who deserve heaven and those who deserve hell. After explaining the situation in hell the poet gives thought to the people through a discussion between two saints named Gunanukan and Thathwabodan (two characters presented by Arnos Padiri in the last part of the work Chaduranthyam). Gunanukan claims that it is difficult to believe that God gives heavy punishments for simple mistakes. But Thathwabodan argues that God is great and piteous towards sinners who confess. At last Gunanukan joined with Thathwabodan and he requests him to advise the way to escape from the punishment of hell and to achieve God. Then the poet explains elaborately the way to achieve salvation.

The belief in ‘life after death’ is shared by many religious communities in this world. Sharing such a faith, the ultimate realities of life and death are presented with exceptional lyrical quality by Arnos Padiri in this work. According to Christian belief those who live abiding by the wishes of God get heaven and those who do not will be doomed to hell, after death. In all religions, this ideology of heaven for the good and hell for the evil exists. The knowledge of the ultimate destiny of man is elusive even today. It remains an unpredictable reality to man. These anxieties of a dying man are impressively narrated by Arnos Padiri in this work and they form the basic theme of the poem. Such kind of themes in
poetical works is rare in Malayalam literature and hence the work deserves a special place in literature.

The simplicity of thought and the clarity of presentation adopted in presenting a universal concept in this poem make it a classical work. The smooth and marvellous flow of the verses was another quality of this poem. Fr. Paulinus comments:

*Chaduranthyam* describes in a sublime vehement and passionate style, the anger of the judgment to come, the examination of the wicked and the sentence passed on them which are of a different metre and tone.²⁴

The Malayalam scholar Valia Koyi Thampuran has stated that “Padiri’s *Parvams* have been surpassed only by Ezhuthachan’s *Bharatham*”.²⁵

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These lines suggest that in order to save dharma, one has to relinquish adharma [evil practices].

Chaduranthyam can be considered as the first poem of Malayalam literature that depicts one’s personal experience in death and dying\(^{27}\). In this work the missionary poet says that death is very close to the dying man’s bed and he is facing it with a guilty mind. This poem emphasizes the inevitability of death and the existence of life after death. This kind of picturisation was absolutely a new approach in Malayalam literature. In Malayalam literature death was taken as a subject of poem only in 19\(^{th}\) century. The first work which took death as the subject was considered as Assanna Marana Chinthashathakam of K.C. Kesava Pillai\(^{28}\). It was published only in 1895 in the last half of nineteenth century. Arnos Padiri has most effectively used the imageries of heaven, hell and the abstract ideas like soul in communicating his message to the common man, clearly and intensely. Thus Ummade Dukham, Chaduranthyam and Genoa Parvam clearly points out novel concepts in Malayalam literature.

Puthen Pana another prominent work of Arnos Padiri is a brief narration of the redemptive history of man according to Christian faith.

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\(^{26}\) Arnos Padiri, Chaduranthyam, Stanza: 552-555, Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., op. cit., p.465

\(^{27}\) Dr. N. Sam, Dr. Kurias Kumbalakuzhi, eds., op. cit., p.60

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
The elaborate theme of the poem spreads from the creation of the Universe to the early activities of Christ’s disciples, and highlights the crucifixion of Jesus, his resurrection and his ascension. In this respect it can be said that this poem presents a life history of Christ. First canto of *Puthen Pana* deals with creation of the Earth, fall of angels, and the conspiracy of evil to cheat man. Second canto explains the expulsion of Adam and Eve from heaven and their prayer to God. So the first two cantos briefly touch on the Old Testament. The focus is on certain episodes from the Book of Genesis, the creation, the fall of the first Parents, the consequent human suffering, and the promise of the coming Savior. The Old Testament portion is concluded with a mention of Yah repeating his promise to forebears like Abraham and David. The rest of the poem narrates the history of Jesus as given in the four Gospels of the New Testament and it describes from the birth of Holy Mary and her engagement with Ouseph. *Puthen Pana* was the most famous work of Arnos Padiri. Its simple style and modern innovations made it popular among the people of Kerala.

*Umma Parvam* is a short devotional poetry of Arnos Padiri, written in *Dravida Yamaka* style.\(^{29}\) This poetry is also titled as *Mathru Samkshepa Charithram*. Like *Ummade Dukham* the poem *Umma Parvam* has also

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\(^{29}\) Ibid., p. 69.
created different opinions among the scholars of literature.30 *Umma Parvam* was considered as the first biographical sketch in Malayalam literature.31 The death and resurrection of Holy Mary are the themes described in *Umma Parvam*.

Arnos Padiri explains the story of Virgin Mary and mentions the story of Joseph also in this poem. The birth of Jesus Christ, his childhood, and adolescent years are described elaborately. It narrates the whole life story of Christ and gives importance to crucifixion and resurrection. As in *Puthen Pana* in this poetry also Padiri says that Christ visited Mother Mary

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30 For details see, Fr. V.A. Thomas S.J., ‘Vyakulapranatham oru Padanam,’ (Mal), Dr. C. Liciniya C.M.C. and Fr. Sunny Jose SJ, ed., *op. cit.*, 1995, pp.31-46. Fr. Paulino a San Bartholomaeo, *India Orientalis Christiana*, *op. cit.*, p.194. Fr. Paulinus, an authority of Fr. Hanxleden had not mentioned *Umma Parvam* in the list of his works in *India Orientalis Christiana*. Except Fr. Paulinus, other prominent scholars like Ulloor S. Parameswara Ayyer, P.J. Thomas, and Dr. K. Raghavan Pillai and T.M. Chummar consider *Umma Parvam* as an important work of Arnos Padiri. However Fr. Paulinus has written that there are a number of Fr. Hanxleden’s books but all of them are not mentioned in his works. The theme of *Umma Parvam* resembles other works of Arnos Padiri like *Puthen Pana* and *Ummade Dukham*. It also speaks about the life of Mother Mary.

31 This poetry also is filled with his devotion for Maria (Mother Mary) and mentions the story of Joseph also. The birth of Jesus Christ, his childhood, adolescent years etc., are described in this poem. It narrates the whole life story of Christ. Hence some scholars consider *Umma Parvam* as the first biographical sketch in Malayalam literature. Like in other poems Arnos Padiri exposes the agony of Mother Mary and uses many examples to present her sorrow and pain before the people. He writes about the crucifixion of Christ and the life of Mother Mary after the death of her beloved son, in this poem. According to Arnos Padiri, Mother Mary lived for about 14 years after the crucifixion of Christ. She prayed for seeing him once again during the last moments of her life. So an Angel descended from the heaven and gave her a message. She died serenely after receiving it. She was buried in the presence of all disciples of Jesus Christ except St. Thomas. It was believed that St. Thomas who reached three days after the burial of Mother Mary opened the tomb, but could not see her body. The tomb was found empty. Hence Mother Mary is believed to have ascended to heaven.
before the crucifixion. Christ visited his Mother twice, once after the resurrection and second visit just before her ascend to heaven. Padiri believed that a son could not forget his mother; so in his poems he gave importance to the meeting of Christ and His mother. These were also quite different from the *Bible*. The poem explains that Mother Mary lived for 14 years after the crucifixion of Christ. In the last days Mother Mary wanted to see her son and she prayed to God. Then God sent a messenger to her. The disciples of Christ reached her from different parts of the world. Holy Mary died in the presence of all disciples, except St. Thomas. After three days St. Thomas arrived and opened the grave, but the dead body was not there. Then Holy Mary appeared and blessed them. Here Arnos Padiri tries to present the history and the traditional stories of Mother Mary as a biographical sketch.

This stanza proves Arnos Padiri’s literary mastery in using apt words in right places in a perfect manner. Here also one can see the forlorn Mother, who grieves for her dead son. Arnos Padiri’s ability to narrate the painful moments in Mother Mary’s life is powerfully reflected in this stanza.

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Vyakula Prabandam is a soliloquy⁵³ that contains the lamentation of Virgin Mary. It is considered as a notable work of Arnos Padiri by many scholars⁵⁴. On comparing the content and format of this poem with the other works this poem is different from other works of Arnos Padiri because it is written in Sanskrit style. The style used in Vyakulaprabhandam usually used in elegies in Indian literature.⁵⁵ The grief of Mother Mary is the theme of this poem also. The poem begins with a picturesque presentation of Mother Mary at the foot of the cross. This work abounds in similes, metaphors and personifications⁵⁶.

Padiri’s poems are valuable for beautiful similes and picturisation. Vyakulaprabandham also presents many examples for attractive similes and comparisons. The confused and chaotic mind of Mother Mary is revealed in a remarkable style in this poem. He writes:

33 Soliloquy is a dramatic or literary form of discourse in which a character talks to him or herself or reveals his or her thoughts without addressing a listener.
34 Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., op. cit., pp.24-27. Also see, Fr. V.A. Thomas S.J., ‘Vyakulaprantham oru Padanam’, in Dr. C. Liciniya CMC and Fr. Sunny Jose S. J., ed., op. cit., 1995, pp.31-46. Scholars consider Vyakulaprabhandam as a part of Puthen Pana because it is included as a part in Puthen Pana. Fr. V.A. Thomas and Dr. Kurias Kumbhalakuzhi both opine after studying Puthen Pana that Vyakulaprabhandam is a separate and independent work of Arnos Padiri.
35 ‘Upajathi’ is the Vritham (style or metre) of Vyakulaprabhandam. This style is usually used in elegies in Indian literature. Scholars consider Vyakulaprabhandam also as ‘the first elegy in Malayalam literature’. Also see, Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., Arnos Padiriyude Kavyangal, Current Books, 2002. Cherian Kuniyanthodathu, ‘Parichayathinte Pavizhathuruthukal’, (Mal), Kudumba Deepam Magazine, March, 1995.
36 Arnos Padiri, Vyakulaprabandham, in Dr. N. Sam, et. al, eds., op. cit., p.303.
Like a ship being tossed in the sea—
Like a ball
Plunging her to the depths
And throwing her up in a moment
Like the stormy winds that uproot trees
It uprooted her Being, almost destroying her. \(^{37}\)

In these lines, Arnos Padiri compares the agitated mind of Mother Mary to a boat in the rough sea that is being tossed up and down by the destructive waves. \(^{38}\) Here Arnos Padiri applies systematic, meaningful and beautiful similes to present the confused mind of Mother Mary. And so from the literary point of view also *Vyakulaprabhandam* enjoys a special status in Malayalam.

These multifarious and efficacious works of Padiri declares his acumen as a versatile poet with lofty ideology, elevated thinking and unique insight. He preferred to write his poems in a foreign language—Malayalam, which he learned in an alien land and culture. This emphasizes his love for the language which he treated like his mother

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\(^{37}\) Arnos Padiri, *Vyakulaprabandham*, Stanza: 4 Dr. N. Sam, Dr. Kurias Kumbalakuzhi & Dr. D. Benjamin eds., *op. cit.*, p.303

\(^{38}\) Arnos Padiri, *Vyakulaprabandham*, stanza 4. For details see, Fr. V.A. Thomas S.J., ‘*Vyakulaprabantham oru Padnam*’, Dr. C. Liciniya and Fr. Sunny Jose S.J., *op. cit.*, pp.31-46.
tongue. Arnos enriched cultural heritage of Kerala through his literary achievements. He introduced new ideology, concept, innovations and themes in Malayalam language and literature as well as Indian literature. Modern techniques and treatments were also introduced by Arnos Padiri in Malayalam Poetry. Padiri’s literary works are unique for the systematic and accurate, growth and development of his poetical style. The affluent imagination is an outstanding characteristic of his works. Arnos Padiri has used a vocabulary that suits the common man. Common words and similes, familiar to every Keralite, are abundantly used in his literature. The poetical works of this missionary, especially Chadurathyam and Genoa Parvam furnish equal importance to cultural synthesis, creation of devotion and spirituality among the people and this luminary enriched the Malayalam literature in an unprecedented manner.

The integration of cultures and sharing of knowledge of the east and the west were the important visions of Arnos Padiri which are reflected in all his works. Arnos Padiri has introduced innovations, and concepts to Kerala culture. Each work of Arnos Padiri has given a picture of Kerala society during his period. His works present the social, religious, cultural and psychological aspects of Kerala society. In these aspects his works

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39 It is widely accepted that if Arnos Padiri had written his works in his own Mother Tongue, he would have attained world fame and popularity like other renowned poets of his motherland.
also are considered as relevant source materials for the studying the cultural history of 18th century, Kerala.

To conclude, it is to be stated that each work of Arnos Padiri if unique in all respects. Fascinated by Poonthanam’s well known bhakthi work, Njnanapana and also by the style of other poets of the period under reference, Ezhuthachan and Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, Arnos Padiri too followed the style and format of bhakthi literature.

Arnos Padiri followed the language of common people in all of his poems and so it was palatable to ordinary people. Actually it was the cause for the success of Arnos’ poems. Clarity of presentation and simplicity of thought are the basic characteristics of the literary pieces of Arnos Padiri. The missionary poet adopted universal principles and Indian philosophical ideas abundantly in his works. Hence the poetical works became familiar to Keralites.

Arnos Padiri introduced new innovations like humanism, gender equality, feminism, elegy writing, personification, picturisation, biographical sketch, and devotional Christian lore in Malayalam. It was Arnos Padiri who acquainted the life history of Christ to Kerala. The element bhakthi and the message universal brotherhood all worked as building blocks or foundation of his vision and mission- cultural synthesis.

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Love for motherhood is also applied in suitable manner in his poems. The inspiring devotional poems made an impact on the people of Kerala. Apart from his aim to spread the ‘gospel’, his literary endeavors contributed much to promote Indian literature and cultural history of Kerala.

Thus, Arnos Padiri enriched the cultural heritage of Kerala through the presentation of modern ideas in Malayalam literature. In short, he incorporated in his works concepts like gender equality, concept of feminism, advocacy of virtues and above all his message of integration of cultures caused for a cultural synthesis and a reawakening in Kerala society. The messages and innovations in his literary pieces caused a cultural reawakening in Kerala society.