CHAPTER VIII
ARNOS PADIRI’S MISSION OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ACCULTURATION

The colonial impact upon the society of Kerala was manifested in different ways. While some of the colonists focused on expanding trade and commerce with Kerala, others wanted to study language and culture. There was a section of eminent persons who worked as missionaries in various parts of Kerala. Here they confronted the age old traditions, superstitious beliefs and ignorance of the society. Therefore, a good number of the missionaries untiringly worked to liberate the people from all the clutches of traditions and conservatism thorough imparting quality education. Their mission in Kerala was focused along these lines.

Consequently, the missionaries launched a new pattern of educational system as referred to above that made a significant change in the socio-cultural fabric of the society. The missionaries who were committed to education and learning have started separate schools for girls and boys, teacher’s training centers, seminaries, residential schools for girls and vocational training institutions that would give immediate employment. All these had a far-reaching impact upon the culture of the

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2 Ibid, p.128.
3 Dr. Samuel Nellimukal, *op.cit.*, pp. 98-105.
society as well as the ethos of the people of Kerala. This led to a new era of renaissance in Kerala.

Together with the practice of western education, the advent of printing technology further strengthened the waves of change that had started sweeping over the state\(^4\). If Renaissance was seen in art, literature and science in Europe, in Kerala it was in the form of resistance to the prevailing customs of caste, creed, faith and untouchability. During this period, society favoured the upper caste Brahmins everywhere and the lower classes had no freedom of their own\(^5\). Their lives were always one of servility to the upper classes who had higher social status. The Portuguese and the Dutch missionaries have endeavored to spread awareness of individual equality and liberty in such a society.

The missionaries laid the foundation of an educational system in Kerala and elsewhere. They began educational institutions all over Kerala. The educational institutions, which they had started, became the nerve centres of social and cultural changes in the society. They also introduced the printing technology which led to revolutionary changes. Hence, they began the system of imparting equal education for the high and the low class people irrespective of caste or creed.


\(^5\) Robin Jefrey, *op. cit.,* p.22.
The effects and activities of missionaries could usher in the neglected and isolated groups into the mainstreams of the society. The education obtained made the women free from ignorance and negligence. They were also trained to live more independently. This marked a major turning point in the history of women in Kerala. Moreover, the low class people or *Shudras* also became powerful with new learning and began to live independently without caste rigidities. Education provided a new vision, approach, and attitude to life among the downtrodden people in the society. All the new ventures of the missionaries had a far-reaching impact upon the culture of the society as well as the ethos of the people of Kerala. The social set up underwent revolutionary changes. As is known, it was the far-reaching and fruitful activities of missionaries that led to a renaissance or reawakening movement in the social and cultural atmosphere of India. Thus, it was the changes introduced by the missionaries in the sixteenth century that were later popularised by the social reformers of the 19th century India. Brahma Samaj\(^6\), Arya Samaj\(^7\),

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\(^6\) Brahma Samaj was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. During that period there was a revolutionary development in the religious, social and educational advance of India and Brahma Samaj became one of the most influential religious reformist movements in India. This organization started at Calcutta on 20 August 1828 played an important role in the development of Modern India. Samaj does not accept the authority of Veda and it was influenced by the religious ideologies of Christianity and Islam. Samaj stood against caste system, idol worship, untouchability, dowry system, etc. This organization worked for the emancipation of women and improving the educational system.

\(^7\) Swami Dayananda Saraswati established "Vedic Schools" or "Gurukuls" which gave importance on Vedic values, culture and religion. The Vedic Schools represented the first practical application of Swami Dayanand’s vision of religious and social reform. The most noteworthy feature of the Schools
Theosophical Society and Ramakrishna Mission were some of the socio religious movements that were the direct outcomes of the early changes introduced here with the advent of missionaries at the national level. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were the prominent social reformers of the 20th century who spearheaded the social revolution against caste system, untouchability and orthodoxy in the country. All of them have attributed their social commitment and revolutionary fervour to the new learning imparted to them by the western education to which they were exposed. The flaming torch which the great Indian social reformers, gave to the country, was the one which was ignited by the western missionaries of the earlier centuries here.

Thus, the Renaissance of Europe that took place in the 16th century simultaneously took place in Kerala too through the missionaries. They was that only those texts which accepted the authority of the Vedas were to be taught. This was crucial for the spiritual and social regeneration of Vedic culture in India.

8 19th century was a period of the process of transition and great social upheaval which led to renaissance in Indian society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first and most important of the great Indian social reformers of the 19th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy worked untiringly to remove different abuses like Sati, caste system, polygamy and concubinage from Indian society. Though there were opponents and threats he carried on a crusade against sati through the press and others. Hence he gave effective support to William Bentik the Governor General of British India, to abolish sati.

9 Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was popularly known as Babasaheb. He was a well known social reformer in India. He started his career as economist, professor and lawyer. He contributed in different ways as jurist, politician, etc. He campaigned against social discrimination and for equal rights for low class people or untouchables in India. He worked as the Law Minister of Independent India and he was the real architect of the Constitution of India.

10 A. Adappur, *Sakshara Keralathuinte Navodhanamoolyangal*, op. cit., p.39
brought it in the form of new learning. Arnos Padiri who arrived in Kerala in the beginning of eighteenth century showed a new path which was a continuation of the one made by his predecessors, Francis Xavier, Thomas Stephens, Robert De Nobili and John Britto in Marathi, Beschi in Tamil et. al., In fact, Francis Xavier had set the beginning of the acculturation process in India with the learning of local languages and attempting to communicate matters of faith in the vernacular\textsuperscript{11}. Thomas Stephens further built on the foundation his predecessors had laid\textsuperscript{12}. He not only learnt vernacular languages but also wrote a Konkani grammar in Portuguese for future missionaries. He wrote the Christian doctrine in Konkani and above all composed the monumental work of the \textit{Kristapurana} in Marathi\textsuperscript{13}. Stephens seems to have begun the model for De Nobili (1577-1656)\textsuperscript{14}.

Robert De Nobili continued the process of the acculturation, mastered vernacular languages, Telugu and Tamil. He was proficient in Sanskrit also. To give further details about the Christian dogma in Tamil he borrowed several words from Tamil. Besides, he adopted local customs and practices and synthesized Christianity with Hinduism. He accepted local terms, customs and practices in his life and lived like a typical Indian


\textsuperscript{12} Nelson Falcao, SDB, \textit{op.cit.}, p.2.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p.3.
sanyasin. He was one of the first Europeans well versed in Indian languages, Sanskrit and Tamil. He prepared catechism books and theological works in Tamil.

John Britto¹⁵ worked in the Madurai Missions of Tamil Nadu. He worked towards making the Christian message intelligible to different peoples of India. He also took the path of acculturation. He himself lived like an Indian and renamed himself, Arul Anandar. He studied vernacular languages and contributed a lot to vernacular literature. Constantine Joseph Beschi was another Jesuit missionary who continued the vision of acculturation in India. He was an Italian Jesuit priest. This missionary worked in South India and he became popular as a renowned poet in the Tamil language. Beschi, followed Britto and he also received local or vernacular terms, names, customs and practices in his life and he became famous under his Tamil name of Vīramāmunivar. Like Thomas Stephens, he also wrote works like grammatical treatise, catechism books and religious books for the instruction of Catholics in Tamil and among his contributions the Thembavani [The Unfading Garland], was considered as the classic of Tamil literature.¹⁶ Moreover, many missionaries of different Congregations working in different parts of India contributed to the acculturation and indegenaisation of the Church.

¹⁶ This poem has 3615 stanzas and it explains history and the life of Saint Joseph.
In Kerala, Arnos Padiri continued the process in an innovative way of linguistic and cultural acculturation. He worked hard towards acculturation to reawaken Kerala in an intelligent manner. His approach to religion was very different and he was against imposing strictly westernized Christianity upon the Christians of Kerala and attempted to heal the wounds inflicted by the conflict of Synod of Diamper. In those days, the dictator of Synod of Diamper had declared a deliberate ostracism of non-Christians. Hindu teachings and rituals having been condemned as ‘superstitious and nonsensical’, there was increasing separation between the Hindus and the Christians.

Therefore, different from Alexis De Menezes and the Portuguese missionaries of the sixteenth century, Padiri’s writings in vernacular served to make the Christian teachings very popular. Very suitably, he made foreign themes, similes, terms, messages and teachings of Christ into vernacular. In *Ummade Dukham*, he describes the crucifixion of Christ and the sorrow of Mother Mary to Keralites. *Puthen Pana* also gives Bible stories in the vernacular.

Christ the leader went to a garden,
Asked His disciples to wait there-
He brought only three of his disciples
To Gathsemen and asked them
To pray for not fall in evil

This stanza in *Puthen Pana* gives a picture of the prayer of Christ at Gathsamen. Peter, Jacob and Yohannan were the three disciples who accompanied Christ to the garden at Gathsamen. Here Arnos Padiri tries to picturaise the Biblical themes in the vernacular to make it familiar to Keralites.

Cultural acculturation was a step taken by Arnos Padiri to complete his vision of cultural synthesis in Kerala. If the Decrees of Synod aimed to develop a westernized Christian culture in Kerala, Arnos Padiri realized that the psyche of Christians in Kerala was steadfastly close to the Indian way of life. Arnos Padiri realized the threat of separatism of the Christian community from the Hindu culture. Padiri visualized the flow of Hindu and the Christian cultures together and not separately. Hence, he

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18 Dr N. Sam. et. al, eds., p.221.
19 Ibid., p. 53.
incorporated vernacular literature as the effective media of his vision and thus there began a cultural reawakening in Kerala.

Arnos Padiri presented his vision in his literary contributions and he adopted the language, Malayalam as his medium to promote his vision. Among his literary works, *Genoa Parvam* and *Chaduranthyam* principally demonstrate that the assignment of Padiri was the synthesis of two cultures of the land. In these works, he presented a tolerant and secular dogma of cultural synthesis and it became his task in Kerala. His hard work and innovations in the land are appropriately applied in this work to highlight Padiri’s vision of cultural synthesis. Thus, cultural integration acquired as the main agenda of his endeavour in the land.

In his literary works, he synthesized the essence of Indian classical literature with Christian ideology. Thus, he blended the new Veda, the teachings of Christ with Hindu culture. He borrowed plentifully the words, ideas, similes, techniques, etc. from the Indian classical literature, such as *Neethi Sara, Bhagavat Gita, Ramayana, Upanishad, Sakunthalam, Adyathma Ramayanam Kilippaattu*, etc. for his works. He followed the style of Malayalam poets and used colloquial terms also in his literary works to make his works easy to the readers. Consequently, cultural synthesis became the foremost intention of all his literary endeavours in the land.

In *Genoa Parvam* Arnos writes.
Whoever sits near ladies always  
Loses valour and turns vigourless  
Wise men have said so long ago.  

These lines closely bear a resemblance to the words of *Manusmrithy*. In the poem, *Genoa Parvam*, Arnos Padiri presents a foreign theme, the story of the German princess Genevieve from an Indian view. He incorporated Indian concepts and ideologies in *Genoa Parvam* to create a new cultural dimension. In *Genoa Parvam*, Arnos Padiri says that the king Sipraso, the hero of the poem, left his kingdom for *vanaprastha* after the death of his queen.

I don’t take in mind a bit  
The happiness of this world  
I want to go to the jungle

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21 *Manusmrithy* cited in, Dr. N. Sam. et. al, eds., *op. cit.* , p.55.
For an ascetic life
Moreover, I wish to die there
And join with your mother.\textsuperscript{22}

This stanza means; “I am leaving all the worldly happiness. My last wish is to lead an ascetic life and die in the forest.” Here the German story synthesized with the Hindu epics of the \textit{Ramayana}, the \textit{Mahabharata} and classics like \textit{Shakundalam}. At the end of the poem, Sipraso relinquishes his kingdom and goes to the forest to lead an ascetic life, that is, reminiscent of \textit{vanaprastha}.\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Brahmacharya, Garhsasthya, Vanaprastha} and \textit{Sanyasa} are the concepts of four \textit{Ashramas} or four stages of life according to the Indian Philosophy. This system was unknown to European culture. It is a pure Indian concept, but Arnos Padiri neatly and systematically and properly applied it in this work.

Arnos Padiri presented the ideas like emancipation, fraternity, liberty, equality, and universal brotherhood in his literary works to promote his mission of cultural synthesis. He offered the teachings of Christ as the media to specify these ideas. In the poem, \textit{Genoa Parvam}:

\begin{quote}
Remember that we are brothers
What you want done to you
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{22} Arnos Padiri, \textit{Genoa Parvam}, Dr N. Sam. et.al., \textit{op.cit.}, p.730.

\textsuperscript{23} According to Indian Philosophy, one has to pass through four stages of life, \textit{Brahmacharya, Garhashtiya, Sanniyasa} and \textit{Vanaprastha}. \textit{Vanaprastha} means a person who is living in the forest as a hermit after partially giving up material desires that means the stage of a forest dweller. These stages were known as \textit{Asramas}, and this system was known as \textit{Varnasrama Dharma}. 
You must do for others
Remove all hatred from your minds
Antagonism is harmful
Our Lord is one
Who showed his other cheek too to be slapped\footnote{24}

Here Padiri asks the people to remember world as a family and do well for others. He requests the readers to get rid of hatred and aggression. He again remembers that there is only one God for humankind. Through such simple words, Padiri presents the message of universal goodwill and cultural amalgamation to spotlight his vision of cultural synthesis.

In \textit{Chaduranthyam} also one researcher can find out the indications of linguistic and cultural acculturation. In \textit{Mararnaparvam} of \textit{Chathuranthyam} Arnos Padiri writes:

\begin{quote}
	ஒருமைக் எல்லாவோரும் கூறின்று
	ஒருமைக் எல்லாவோரும்

(English Translation)

We alone had to face the troubles
Of our awful attempts\footnote{25}

These lines closely resemble Ezhuthachan’s \textit{Adhyathma Ramayanam Kilippaattu}, which says:

\footnote{24 Arnos Padiri, \textit{Genoa Parvam}, A. Adappur, \textit{Sakshara Keralathinte Navodhana Moolyangal}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 54.}

We alone face the problems
Of our activities in this world.\(^{26}\)

Both these stanzas mean that every person would have to bear the fruits of his/her own *karma*. The process of cultural synthesis is clearly identified in *Naraka Parvam* of *Chaduranthyam* where Arnos Padiri says:

(English Translation)

Know you, that the son
Has the soul right to perform
His father’s last rights,
For, he is entitled to half his father’s life.\(^{27}\)

Here one experiences the application of pure Indian concept.

In *Maranaparvam* of *Chaduranthyam* Padiri seems to be very much influenced by the style of Ezhuthachan who uses plentiful synonyms in respect of God. In the same manner, Padiri uses synonyms on many occasions in his poem *Chaduranthyam*. For example, Padiri writes:

\(^{26}\) Ezhuthachan, *Adhyathma Ramayanam Kilippaattu* in Dr. N. Sam, et. al., eds., op. cit., p. 56
The merciful God, of perfect Goodness
Sans the faintest shade of cruelty
The Almighty and compassionate spirit,
Spirit in the body [Jesus]
Spirit with the most beautiful charisma
Who is the very foundation of my Being?
You only my faith and my savior28

Arnos Padiri often praises Jesus with so many synonyms of God, like Merciful God, Perfect Goodness, the Faintest Shade of Cruelty, the Almighty, the Compassionate Spirit, Spirit in the Body [Jesus], Spirit with the most Beautiful Charisma and Savior.

Approximating this, in Mararnaparvam of Chathuranthyam Arnos Padiri writes:

(English Translation)

Just as the body needs clothes for cover,
So does my soul need the body –
For its brief sojourn upon the Earth29

28 Dr. N. Sam, et. al, op. cit., p.346.
(These lines mean that man receives the frame work of body as a cloth to live sometime in the earth.) The influence of Bhagavat Gita is very clear in the words of the dying person in Marana Parvam:

Vasami Geernai yatha Vihaya  
Navani grihnadi naroaparani  
Thoa Sareerani vihaya geerana  
Naniani Samyadi Navami dehi

(This stanza in Bhagavat Gita means ‘As man leaves the old clothes and receives another one so the soul leaves the old body and accepts new one’.) This metaphor developed from Padiri’s deep respect and love for Indian culture and literature. This also proves his deep-rooted knowledge in Sanskrit and his earnest attempt at acculturation.

There are many such instances of combinations and similarities in Arnos Padiri’s poems. In Narakaparvam of Chathuranthyam, there is an instruction given by Thathwaboadhan to cross Swar Ganga (Ganges) to attain Moksha (salvation). Arnos Padiri described the importance of the holy river Ganges and the path to heaven like this:

$\text{अन्नमेव गंगायास्तरिति अद्वितीयतापयिनिः}$

$\text{मात्रा तंत्रसंस्कारसंपन्न गरीलोत्तरकालं}$

$\text{नवमीते खलस्वेतहस्ताक्षरं गंगायास्तरिति}$

$\text{भवमहादानमेव गंगायास्तरिति}$

$\text{तत्रयोगाश्रयं गंगायास्तरिति}$

$\text{भवमहादानमेव}$

$\text{नवमीते खलस्वेतहस्ताक्षरं}$

$\text{गंगायास्तरिति}$

29 Arnos Padiri, Chathuranthyam, 4; 5, Dr. N. Sam, et.al, op. cit., p. 319.

30 Bhagavat Gita, cited in Dr. N. Sam, et. al, op. cit., p.54.
You have to walk through the right way to get heaven
There you have to cross a river
The water in the river gives knowledge
It is sacred and pure
It has power to wash out the sin
And it is the elixer
Those who are longing to get heaven-
Have to take bath in that elixir
The baptism gives light and disappears
The darkness of ignorance

Here Arnos Padiri tries to attach Indian concepts suitably with the western beliefs and concepts and he says that a bath in the Ganges is sacred and pure. It has the power to destroy sin. Ganges water has the power to eliminate sorrow. It gives knowledge. Ganga water is medicine and can cure all diseases. Hence, a person who takes bath in the Ganges receives goodness. Baptism also has the same result and qualities. Baptism is a bath in knowledge. When one takes bath in knowledge, darkness of ignorance disappears from him. Here he describes that the bath in the Ganges is equal

31 Arnos Padiri, Chathuranthyam, Dr. N. Sam. et. al, op. cit., pp.463-464.
to baptism. The comparison between *bath in the Ganges* and *baptism* should be read together as it reveals the union of a pure Indian concept with the western ideology and the Christian theology and through the powerful language he incorporates the cultural acculturation. Arnos Padiri presented the Indian thoughts on life and salvation suitably and rightfully in all his poems.

In addition, the abundant usage of Sanskrit words in his poems helped Arnos Padiri to bring his vision to the zenith.


In this way, he richly used Sanskrit words and synonyms of God in most of his works as in the vernacular literature.

Like these, the concept of indigenization\(^{35}\) of the faith is a significant step chosen by Arnos Padiri with the aim of establishing religious harmony in Kerala. Therefore, the vision - cultural synthesis - developed through indigenization of Christianity and it applied in all the poetical works of Padiri, aimed at the integration of cultures. For indigenization of Christianity he borrowed many terms, phrases and words from Indian classical literature. Moreover, Arnos Padiri acknowledged the colloquial words profusely from Malayalam literature for the sake of familiarity.

Instead of following German or other foreign authors, Arnos Padiri followed the poetical model of Malayalam poets. He followed the style, metre, treatment, technique, tone and others from the Malayalam poems especially which the poets like Ezhuthachan and Poonthanam, introduced. If he had written poems and other works in his own mother tongue, they would have become known to the world in his own time. Instead of that, he

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\(^{35}\) Indigenization means adapting Christianity to the cultural background or Christianity merged into the cultural ethos of a place. [External changes in the expression of faith without affecting the faith itself]
took Indian vernacular languages for his endeavor in India and produced Prayer Books, Christian devotional poems, Bible stories etc., in vernacular, etc for the Christians in Kerala. This emphasizes his love for the language, which he treated like his mother tongue.\(^36\) Therefore, he could contribute a novel venture of literature to Malayalam language. As a result, Arnos Padiri significantly enriched cultural heritage of Kerala through his literary achievements.

Arnos Padiri has used a vocabulary that suits the common person. Common words and similes, familiar to every Keralite, were abundantly used in his works. The simple presentations of the poetical works of this missionary, especially \textit{Chaduranthyam} and \textit{Genoa Parvam} soon became familiar among the Keralites. These works gave equal importance to cultural synthesis, creation of devotion and spirituality among the people and this luminary enriched the readers with a new philosophy of cultural synthesis.

To enrich the vision of cultural synthesis, Arnos incorporated the element of \textit{bhakthi} in his poems. He believed that \textit{bhakhi} or devotion has immense power to patch up the differences and he applied it as a bridge to unite the two cultures together. Thus, Padiri’s poems opened a prospect of

\(^{36}\) 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.
bhakthi literature in Malayalam. Arnos Padiri’s bhakthi literature influenced not only the Christian community but the others also. The melodious tone, simple and the meaningful words, transparency of the theme, truthful presentation, reverence to Indian culture and literature all influenced the people and so his poems became popular among the Keralites.

In addition, the basic element in the poems helped Arnos Padiri to rise above the limits of the narrow margins of caste and religion. This foreign missionary continued bhakthi trend in Malayalam literature. Bhakthi in his poems helped to highlight and boost the idea of cultural synthesis. Thus, in his literary works Arnos Padiri placed the teachings of Christ or the Biblical literature and culture face to face with Indian culture. The new perspective he presented to the society was very relevant and widely accepted.

With bhakthi as the basic feature of his poems, Arnos Padiri also incorporated humanism. The richness of human depth or human sense in Arnos’ poems helped him to present his theory more easily. In his poems, Mother Mary is depicted as an ordinary mother. Different from traditional depictions, Arnos Padiri presented a powerful image of Mother Mary in his works especially in Ummade Dukham and it was a new experience to
Keralites. The human picture of Mother Mary influenced the society too much. Hence, along with depth of humanism, he aimed at familiarizing Christian concepts in Kerala society and people accepted Mother Mary as their own mother and protector. Thus the elements bhakthi, humanism, universal brotherhood, freedom, liberty, love, etc. were presented by Arnos Padiri in his poems, and he channelized them towards acculturation. He synthesized two cultures successfully to produce a meaningful presentation of the gospel of God in the language of people.

Moreover, Arnos Padiri wrote poems and circulated them it among the people to spread his vision among the people in Velur, Pazhuvil and Puthenchira in Trichur. Fr. Hanxleden’s secretaries have prepared copies of his works and distributed to people free of cost or for a very low price. His well-known work *Puthen Pana* was written on palm leaves, copied and circulated among the non-Christians. This is evident when one such palm leaf was discovered by historical encounters from the *Pudu mana illam* near Kurichithanam, Palai. During this period, marginalized sections of people also became literate through missionary institutions and manuscripts available to the lower class people. This was the beginning of a new awakening in the social milieu of Kerala and it is evident that Padiri

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could influence the society through his innovations. In addition, the village Velur became one of the centers of Kerala Renaissance in literary revival.

His approach to religion was very different from the prevalent beliefs of the European colonialism. Evangelism of Arnos Padiri came to be termed a very delicate and unconventional one. His words, behaviour, attitude and his writings served to bring about a genuine love for Christianity and this resulted in delicate conversions. It is obvious that people were influenced by Arnos Padiri’s teachings, writings and way of life. There are many traditions about the disciples of Arnos Padiri in Thrissur area. All these unique efforts were initiated by him towards indegenaisation and cultural integration.

The multifarious and efficacious works of Padiri declares his acumen as a versatile poet with lofty ideology, elevated thinking and unique insight. He introduced new ideology, concept, innovations and themes in Indian literature through his literary works. In Malayalam poetry also, Arnos Padiri introduced modern techniques and treatments. Padiri’s literary works are unique for the systematic and accurate presentation, growth and development of his poetical style, etc. In addition, the boundless imagination is an outstanding characteristic of his works.

39 A. Adappur, op. cit., p.48. A Namboodiri boy became a Christian, joined Seminary in the name of Francis Xavier and he became a parish priest in a church at Arakuzha near Muvattupusha.
Thus, Arnos Padiri took the interpretation of the Bible as an inter-cultural encounter in Indian literature. The indigenization of Christianity, bhakthi, humanism, application of the language of ordinary people all commenced in cultural integration through the literature of Arnos Padiri. Hence, a new culture centered on “the word” was strongly built on the powerful vision of acculturation.

All these efforts of Arnos Padiri caused a cultural reawakening in the land. In all fields, Arnos presented wide-ranging and fascinating views. Padiri’s poetical works, like, Puthen pana, Chandurandyam, Umma Parvam, Vyakulaprabandham, Ummade Dukham and Genoa Parvam are excellent and extensive contributions in Malayalam literature. In every work, he gave a powerful message with the aim of purification of human mind and synthesis of cultures. Hence, the poetical works became familiar to Keralites. Arnos Padiri is the first poet who familiarized Christian teachings, beliefs, hymns and prayers in Malayalam to the local population. He is the second grammarian and first dictionary writer in Malayalam. He is also the first European to have studied and mastered enough to write in Sanskrit, he is the first European Sanskrit grammarian, and he is the first Indologist. Similarly in all fields in literature, social

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milieu, and in the culture of Kerala, Arnos Padiri left his imprint and started a cultural reawakening in the land.

Thus, from the east and west the winds of Renaissance swept over the country and it was enhanced by Arnos Padiri in Kerala in the eighteenth century. After the age of Arnos Padiri the new spirit of universal brotherhood and fraternity was taken up by eminent socio-religious leaders, such as Ayyankali\(^41\), Sree Narayana Guru\(^42\), Chattambi Sawamikal\(^43\) and Vagbhadanandha\(^44\). In fact, they are known as the

\(^41\) Ayyankali was a contemporary of Sree Narayana Guru. He devoted his life to the development of the most oppressed and suppressed section of the society, the Pulayas in Kerala. Ayyankali emerged as a savior for the Pulayas and other untouchables in the society.

\(^42\) Sree Narayana Guru was a social reformer of Kerala. As a social reformer, he wanted to create a society completely free from evils of caste system. Caste system during the period had become so rigid that people belonging to the low caste communities denied freedom of walking through roads and streets. They had to run several feet away from higher caste Hindus. They denied the right of entry to the temples for worship. It is against these evils Sree Narayana Guru raised his voice.

\(^43\) Chattambi Swamikal was a well known socio-religious reformer of Kerala who initiated the social reform movements among the Nairs. He tried to put an end to the Brahmin dominance in the religious rites and ceremonies. He was well versed in logic, grammar and Upanishads. Sree Narayana Guru had deep respect for Chattambi Swamikal. He had written several books including Vedandikara Nirupanam, Sarvamatha Samarasyam and Advaita Chinthha Padhadi. Chattambi Sawamikal believed that the growth of social consciousness among Nairs will help for the emergence of social consciousness among the other non-Brahmin groups. He initiated a movement among the Nairs against the caste system.

\(^44\) Original name of Vagbhadananda is Kunjikannan. He was born in 1885. After getting educated in Sanskrit and Vedic Philosophy, he helped his father in teaching the students and so he came to be called as Kunjikannan Gurukkal. After a short while, he shifted his place from Kannur to Calicut and spent the rest of his life in active social work and writing. In later period he became the disciple of Alathur Brahmananada Sivayogi and accepted the name Vagbhadananda. He started the Sanskrit educational centre called Tatwa Prakasika Ashram in 1898. Then he started a magazine called Sivayogavilasam. He founded the Atma Vidya Sangam in 1917 and its journal AtmaVidyakahalalam in 1929. Abhinava Keralam was another journal edited and published by Vagbhadananda. He died at Tatwa Prakasika Ashram in Calicut in 1939 October.
exponents of the nineteenth century Renaissance in Kerala. They advocated abolition of untouchability, especially in temples, rituals and worship. The vision and message of these great social reformers awakened the people against rigid orthodoxy.45.

The poetical works of Kumaranasan, one of the chief followers of Sree Narayana Guru, also helped to carry forward the teachings of Guru and the ideas of liberation. In his poem: *Oru Theeyakuttiyude Vicharam*, Kumaranasan writes.

Bharatham why are you crying,
Your destiny is servitude
Your children blinded by
Caste system and communal fanaticism
Do not need a swaraj

Such sentiments of goodwill and love for all irrespective of caste, religion or community had a tremendous influence upon the ethos of the people at that time. In another poem:- *Duravastha* he writes:

The hands that created the *Brahmin*
Are they the same that?
Created the untouchable!47

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Here the poet tried to bring about a socio-cultural liberation with the power of his writings. Among the Pulaya community, it was Ayyankali who assumed the role of the leader to liberate his people in the same way as Sree Narayana Guru and Kumaranasan had done for the Ezhava community. In 1906, he established ‘Sadujana Paripalana Sangam’ (Association for welfare of the common people) and worked for the education and social enlightenment of the Pulayas. Vagbhadananda has also played an important role in the uplift of Kerala society.

They were instrumental in bringing out great changes in the socio-cultural conditions of Kerala society during this period. Kerala witnessed a lot of organizations and movements from the eighteenth century. As a result of it, a new awakening was seen in the nineteenth century. There was an urge for higher values and the society was facing a revolutionary change in the structure. The values, such as equality, fraternity, liberty, freedom, etc. taught by the missionaries were applied successfully by the reformers in Kerala.

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48 Ayyankali founded Sadujana Paripalana Sangam in 1906 in order to organize the lower caste people and then fight for the eradication of social inequalities such as untouchability. Mahatma Gandhi called Ayyankali as Pulayaraja (the king of Pulaya).
49 Vagbhadananda raised his voice against polytheism, caste system, religious fanaticism and intolerance among the people belonging different religions. He propagated the teachings such as universal non-duality in Kerala. He had established schools for teaching Sanskrit in Calicut. His Athmavidya Sangham followed a secular approach and he criticized the economic exploitation of foreign governments and he stood for the social uplift of North Malabar.
Anyway, the missionaries in Kerala from the sixteenth century especially Arnos Padiri, followed a broad minded secularism in the land without any discrimination of caste, creed and religion. It resulted in the mutual enrichment of cultures. A new approach of adaptation and transformation was followed by Arnos Padiri in Kerala and he adopted new methods of communicating the faith, which would be in keeping with the customs, traditions, cultures, and religions of the peoples. The contributions of Arnos Padiri to Kerala culture are relevant and meaningful. He dared to integrate important elements of Hindu tradition and culture into the Christian tradition. Therefore, there happened a Christian-Hindu symbiosis in which a mutual enrichment-process has taken place. Really, Arnos Padiri delved deep into the Hindu culture and he had incorporated the elements of the Hindu culture into the Christian culture, paving the way for a cultural symbiosis.

Arnos Padiri presented a meaningful way of living together of different people of varied cultures in Kerala and he propagated relevant values like equality, toleration, mutual respect, fraternity and liberty. Arnos Padiri contributed his own share in the socio-cultural renaissance of Kerala. To an extent the social reformers of the nineteenth century had popularised what Arnos Padiri did in Kerala, in the eighteenth century.

Colonialism has influenced the society of Kerala in different ways even though there are vehement criticisms and reaction to the phases of
colonialism in the erstwhile Travancore Cochin and Malabar areas. Galaxies of eminent social activists and missionaries have reached Kerala along with the propagators of colonialism. They have highly influenced the culture, language and literature of the society. They brought revolutionary changes in the socio-cultural fabric of the society. It was the comprehensive and prolific activities of missionaries that led to a renaissance or reawakening movement in the social and cultural atmosphere of India. The changes envisaged were introduced by the missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and they were later popularised by the social reformers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Kerala and at the national level. Thus, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, et. al. led the social revolution against caste system, untouchability etc in the country.

In addition, the missionaries like Francis Xavier, Thomas Stephens, Robert De Nobili, John Britto, Beschi and others have initiated the acculturation process in India with a broad-minded view of secularism by learning new local languages and attempting to communicate matters of faith in the vernacular. In Kerala Arnos Padiri continued the process with an innovative way of linguistic and cultural acculturation. Arnos Padiri after a thorough study on the political, social, religious and cultural history of Kerala also envisaged a new style of missionary work in the land, which aimed at establishing religious harmony rather than religious confrontation.
He decided to use literature as the media to present his new mission of cultural synthesis in Kerala. Thus, vernacular literature became the effective media of his vision. To him linguistic acculturation was the first step towards cultural synthesis. The concept of indigenization of faith was another step commenced by Arnos Padiri with the aim to establish religious harmony in Kerala. Thus, the vision - cultural synthesis complimented the concept of indigenization of Christianity and it applied through his poetical works like *Genoa Parvam* and *Chaduranthyam*. In addition, the basic elements *bhakthi* and humanism which he applied in the poems helped him to rise above the limits of the tapered boundaries of caste and religion. The messages of universal brotherhood, freedom, liberty and equality, etc. were presented by Arnos Padiri to achieve his aim of cultural integration in Kerala.

Arnos Padiri presents a tolerant and secular view of evangelism in Kerala in a very subtle and exceptional way. His words, behaviour, attitude and his writings served to bring about a genuine love for Christianity. The new perspective he presented to the society was very relevant and widely accepted. The popularity of Arnos’ poems proves that the mission of Padiri was acceptable to the ordinary people in the land.

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
Above all the messages and innovations in his literary pieces paved the way for a cultural and linguistic reawakening in Kerala. Thus the element of bhakthi, the concepts like gender equality, fraternity, universal brotherhood, humanism and the profuse use of the language of common people all worked as building blocks of his vision and mission – cultural synthesis and his teachings and writings ushered in a new era in the history of Kerala.

To conclude, Arnos Padiri was an ardent advocate of cultural synthesis and his mission, acculturation was successful in Kerala. Arnos Padiri’s innovations, such as elegy writing, personification, picturisation, biographical sketch, and devotional Christian lore in Malayalam all enriched the cultural heritage of Kerala. Ultimate success of Padiri’s activities was a reawakening in the social, religious and cultural environment of Kerala society. His literary pieces facilitate to know the history and culture of Kerala society of that period. They reflect the social, religious and emotional aspects of people in Kerala in 18th century. After Arnos Padiri, the new spirit was continued by socio-religious leaders like Ayyankali, Sree Narayana Guru, Chattambi Sawamikal, and Vagbhadanandha etc. Thus there began a new awakening in the social milieu of Kerala and Padiri became one of the initiators in this effort and thus the village Velur became the center of Kerala renaissance.