Chapter 1
Introduction and Research Proposal

1.1 Introduction

The present study titled “Cultural Landscape and Architecture of Medieval Churches of Kerala” has been proposed to study two aspects; firstly, to understand the architecture of medieval Churches and secondly, to understand the regional cultural behavioral pattern and its reflections in Church architecture. However, the study area of the present research has been restricted to five districts of Kerala. These districts are Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta.

The antiquity for the human habitation of Kerala may go back to the Prehistoric period and several Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic tools have been reported from the region (Rajendran 1975; 1987; Gurukal and Varier 1999). Numerous prehistoric Rock Art sites have been identified and studied by various scholars (Matpal 1998; Kumar 2014; Nikhil 2014). Evidence of Proto-historic period in the form of Iron Age Megalithic culture is largely reported from the region and a number of sites have been subjected to the excavations (Thaper 1948; Mehta and George 1978; Satyamurthi 1992; Nair 2007; Gurukkal 2008(as quoted by Darsana 2008); Nambirajan 2009; Joglekar and Nikhil 2013). In addition, early historic material evidences from the sites like Pattanam and Vizhinjam confirm that Kerala was one of the active regions in West Coast of India during the Indian Ocean trade (Shanjan 2005; Selvakumar 2005;, 2009; Cherian 2009;, 2015; Kumar et al. 2013; Abhayan et al. 2014). Thus human occupation continued throughout the period starting from the early prehistoric times to the present using the landscape and resources as required pertaining to their cultural behavior.

The region was well active during the medieval period when the contemporary political establishments along with the trading activity by the foreign traders brought a lot of changes not only in economic front but in cultural atmosphere also. Thus, the present study also intended to make a review of the region along with various kinds of antiquities and artifacts during the excavations and explorations to reveal the cultural
content of the periods in the study region. Besides, the established ancient Indian religion, penetration of the different religious sects like the Judaism and the Christianity might have taken place along with the trade since Early Historic period which is beyond the purview of the present research.

Kerala, had close interactions with the West for a long period of time. Kerala’s Western connection may be traced back to the time of Indo Roman trade or even before. The classical accounts such as *Periplus of Erythraean Sea* and Ptolemy’s Geography give us the reference for the maritime trade. *Periplus of Erythraean Sea* states that two main commercial centers on the west coast of India were Barygaza (PME 44.15.4-7), and the other the twin ports of Muziris (PME 53.17.27-8) and Nelkynda (Casson 1987). Ptolemy’s Geography (Geography 7.1) also notes Muziris (Sidebotham 2011:190). Pliny’s Natural History (NH 6.104), for instance, claims that sailors could use monsoon winds to reach Malabar ports in forty days (Abraham 2009:15). The Sangam Tamil text (Akananuru 149) talks about Muziris (Selvakumar el al. 2009: 29). The 6th century C.E *Topographia Christiana* by Cosmos *Indicospleustes* referred Malabar and its pepper markets (Faller and Albert 2011: 217). Similarly, the Arab Geographers such as Iban Hurradadbih in 9th century C.E, Al Buruni c.973 and Al Idrisi in c.1160 had mentioned about port at Sinkli (old name for Kodungallor) in their travelogues ( Ducene 2016:177). The name of ports on Malabar Coast like Sinkli and Quilon were quoted again by Arab geographers like Al Watwat in 1318, Al Dimasqi in 1327, Abu Al Fida in 1331and Qalqasandi in 1418(Ducene 2016). Malabar is the region corresponds to the entire coastal belt of Kerala. It was Al Buruni, who used the term ‘Malabar’ for the first time (George 1975).

Along with the references in literatures, the numismatics and epigraphic sources also tell about the contact between the West Asia and Malabar Coast. Roman gold coins belonging to various rulers from the period of Nero (54-68 C.E) to Antonius Pius (138-161 C.E) have been discovered in Kerala in different hoards (Satyamurthy 2011:14). The discovery of coin hoards at Iyyal in Thrissur district was made in 1945 and Valluvally in Ernakulam district in 1983 and each consisted of 92 and 252 Roman coins respectively. Copper plate grant issued in the fifth regnal year of Sthanu Ravi in 849 C.E gives clear pictures of donations to the Church at Quilon and provisions to
the West Asian merchant groups (Travancore Archaeological Series 1908:63; Varier 2013: 116; Lambourn 2016: 379).

Literary references for the trade link between the Malabar Coast and West Asia is substantiated by archaeological evidences from various sites across Kerala. The archaeological research conducted at Pattanam revealed convincing evidences for early historic urban settlements (Cherian 2015). The architectural, geological and etymological analyses suggest that Pattanam could be the port of Muziris (Shajan et al. 2005). The excavations carried out at Pattanam provide evidence for the Indian Ocean trade network dating back to second half of the first millennium B.C (Cherian et al. 2009:240). Archaeological findings reported from Vizhinjam are very much impressive with regard to Early Historic period. The archaeological excavation carried out for three seasons from 2011 to 2013 at Vizhinjam revealed three cultural periods ranging from Early Historic (c.1st century C.E) to Medieval and modern (Kumar et al. 2013; Abhayan et al. 2014; 253). The discovery of a Medieval boat from Taikal near Cherthala in Alappuzha District of Kerala shows the presence of the Medieval trade on the Malabar Coast (Tomalin et al. 2004). The archaeological investigation conducted at Kottappuram, a medieval fort, provides material evidences of trade activities between 14th and 17th centuries C.E. (Sona 2014; unpublished excavation report of Kottappuram Fort).

Several foreign travelers had mentioned the presence of Christian communities in Malabar Coast. The earliest reference for the presence of Christians on the Malabar Coast was made by Topographia Christiana of the 6th century C.E. It states that the presence of Christians in Sri Lanka and in the spice producing regions of Malabar (Faller and Albert ibid). Marco Polo the Italian traveler who reached in the west Coast in 1293 records that the presence of the Jews and Christians in Kerala (Masefield 1931:377, Gillman and Klimkeit 2016:173). Christians of Malabar Coast were also reported by John of Mote Corvino, an Italian missionary and traveler in 1291 and Nicolo Conte, an Italian merchant and traveler in 1419 (George 1975).

India has had close cultural as well as commercial relationship with West Asia and such relations are evident in the historical and archaeological records. The trade connection of Malabar Coast with the Indian Ocean region made possibilities for the cultural and religious interactions. Religious functionaries often accompanied the
traders all the way through the trade routes, forming close links with trading groups and this network facilitated religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity to spread across the Indian Ocean (Ray 2003:245). Similarly, from the very beginning of the trading activity by the western Christian traders, the Christian missionary activity must have its influence in the trading region to a great extent and in the neighborhood to some extent. However, not much concrete evidence has come out in archaeological records of the early establishments.

Till date, no organized documentation of these Churches has been carried out especially in the intended study region. Hence the cultural, chronological and architectural features of Churches along with its local integration remain unknown. Therefore, a study of the architecture, the circumstances of establishment of Churches and the cultural landscape of the Churches are inevitable. Against this backdrop the present study has been chosen for a systematic study of the cultural landscape which led to various mode of architecture of medieval Churches of Kerala.

1.2 Study Area and the Geographical Parameters

Kerala is wedged between the Arabian Sea on the west and the Western Ghats on the east and lies between north latitudes 8°17'30 and 12°47'40 and east longitudes 74°51' and 72°24'47. This region is known for its spices like the pepper, ginger, clove, cinnamon and cardamom. From very ancient time, spices have played a very important role in the political atmosphere of the region. The political history of Kerala of the early part of Christian era is unclear and all the information of the period heavily depends on the Sangam literature. However, Rock Edict II of Asoka has references for Keralaputras, the border territory of Mauryan Empire (Sircar 1956). The Sangam literature provides the chronology of rulers of Chera dynasty who probably ruled a part of Kerala and their reign might have continued up to c.300 C.E. The last ruler was probably Yanaikatchi (George 1975). The political history of Kerala from the end of Chera reign to 8th century C.E is not much known. The presence of the Ay rulers in south Kerala and Ezhimala rulers in north Kerala were seen during this period (Elamkulam 1970; George 1975; Menon 2008). The period from c.800 C.E to 1100 C.E is marked with the period of second phase of Chera rulers (Elamkulam 1970; Menon 1978). They had their capital at Mahodayapuram near Kodunagalloor (Achan; 1949). At the end of the decline of the second Chera reign the entire Kerala
was divided among the several princely states. However, four prominent ruling dynasties ruled in three divisions, among them were Kolatunad of Cannanore and Zamorins of Calicut in the north, Perumpadapu Swarupam of Cochin in the middle and the Venad rulers of Quilon in the south (Elammalum 1970; Menon 1978). By the fag end of this period the Portuguese under the leadership of Vasco de Gama reached on the Malabar Coast in 1498 C.E.

The political history of 16th century C.E witnessed active spice trade by the Portuguese followed by the Dutch in 17th century C.E. This period marks the period of colonization on Malabar Coast by them (Poonan 1948; Mathew 1983; Anto 2006). The European missionaries also arrived and worked hand in hand with colonial powers to spread Christianity in Malabar Coast (Brown 1956; Tisserant 1957; Mores 1964; Anto 2006; Gillman and Klimkeit 2016). The geographical region of Kerala that generally extends from Thrissur district in the centre to Kollam district in the south was one of the major production centers of pepper and other spices during the time of the Portuguese and the Dutch (Mathew 1983; Malekandathil 1998; Ganesh 1999; John 2003; Singh 2007; Jose 2015). The colonial powers like the Portuguese and the Dutch built several forts across these regions to monitor their internal and external trade activities. Regions where the intense trade activity was carried out and the trade commodities produced were the focal point of missionary activities. Hence the study area of the present thesis includes the Churches located in five districts like Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta, which are collectively, termed as ‘south central Kerala’ (Fig1. 1).

Though there are Churches in other parts of Kerala, the Churches in these five districts have been selected as the study area because the region corresponds to the location of several pre Portuguese Christian settlements and it corresponds to Churches and Christian settlements which were multiplied at the time of the Portuguese and the Dutch. The term ‘Malabar Coast’ generally denoted the entire west coast of India to the south of Mumbai (Menon 1975; Mathew 1983). The geographical term ‘Malabar’ used in this thesis is confined only to the Kerala Coast that extends from Kazargode district in the north to Thiruvananthapuram district in the south.
1.3 Period under study and the Chronological Parameters

It has been approximately estimated that the total Christian settlements of Malabar Coast were not more than one hundred during the arrival of the Portuguese (Gouvea 1606; Geddes 1694; Ward and Conner 1863; 1906; Brown 1956:101; Neil 2002:237). The pre Portuguese Christians community and their customs were transformed after the arrival of the European missionaries (Gouvea 1606; Geddes 1694). No pre Portuguese Church structure survive today. Therefore the chronological extend of this thesis is the period that begins with 1498 C.E and ends with in 1795 C.E. This period has been selected in order to highlight the Portuguese and the Dutch period in the area of study. The year 1498 marks the arrival of the Portuguese in the Malabar Coast under the leadership of Vasco de Gama and the year 1795 marks the closing stages of the Dutch power in Malabar Coast and the beginning of the English/British Power. This period witnessed the monopoly of the Portuguese and the Dutch in the spice trade on the Malabar Coast and the construction and opening up of various forts and ports. The transformation of existing Christian communities with the arrival of the Latin Christian missionaries, further expansion and growth of Christian faith in Malabar Coast and the construction of new Churches and modification of pre Portuguese Churches also took place.

The chronological term ‘Medieval’ is often used to define the period of Indian history that extends from 1300 C.E to 1800 C.E (Singh 2009: 6). Various books published on the history of Kerala use the term ‘Medieval’ to define the period that extends from 8th and 9th century C.E to the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century C.E. (Menon et al. 2008). The term ‘Medieval’ used in the present study is confined to the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 C.E and the end of the Dutch Power in Malabar Coast in 1795 C.E. The term ‘Portuguese Period’ used in the present thesis is to describe the period from 1498 C.E to 1663 C.E and the term ‘Dutch Period’ to the period that begins from 1663 C.E to 1795 C.E.

1.4 Previous Works and Background of Research

Major works on the history of the Church in India, particularly of Malabar Coast, were carried out by Medlycott (1905), Ayyar (1926), Tissarent (1957), Brown (1956),
Pothan (1963), Moraes (1964), Mundadan (1967), Perumaalil (1971), Perumalil and Hambay (1972), Podipara (1979), Neil (1985), and Puliurumbil (2008; 2012). They basically deal with Christianity and little on the activity and nature of Church. Additionally, these works do not have any information on Church architecture. They mainly focused on the history of Christianity in India. Their works highlight various aspects like the arrival of Christian faith in India by St. Thomas, St. Thomas tradition in south India, Churches constructed by St. Thomas, Syrian Christian tradition and the changes made by the European missionaries after the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 C.E. Their works merely focused on the schism that took place after the Synod of Diamper and explained the formation of various denominations among Christians in Kerala. Most of the later publications on history of Christianity in Kerala were based on their works.

However, two earliest works on the history of Christianity of Malabar are by Gouvea (1606) and Geddes (1694). The book written in Portuguese by Gouvea is very significant in understanding the nature and the customs of Christians during the time of the Portuguese and their religious interventions made by them among the Syrian Christians of Kerala. The Portuguese version was translated by Pius Mekandathil (2003) into English with the title “Joranda of Dom Alexis De Menezes: A Portuguese account of the sixteenth century Malabar”. Another remarkable book was written by Michael Geddes (1694) on “The History of Church of Malabar, from the time of its being first discovered by the Portuguese in the year 1501. Giving an Account of the Persecution and Violent Methods of Roman Prelates, to reduce them the subjection of the Church of Rome, together with the Synod of Diamper, celebrated in the year of our Lord 1599. With some remarks upon the Faith and Doctrine of the Christians of St. Thomas in the Indies, agreeing with the Church of England, in opposition to that of Rome”. Geddes never visited India and drew his information from the Portuguese writings made available to him while he was a Chaplin in Lisbon (Brown 1956: 1). The work by the Geddes was much concerned with the iniquities of Roman Catholic behavior as to describe the Indian Church and was published in English in 1694.

George Menachery’s book on “St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India” (1973; 1982) in two volumes has included several aspects. The first volume has a few articles on different topics like Christian customs, traditions, Church festivals and Church
architecture. But a great part of the work discusses the history of Christianity in India and tries to authenticate the arrival of St. Thomas on Malabar Coast and the concept of seven Churches. The second volume discusses missionary activities of Roman Catholic Church in other parts of India. Susan Viswanathan (1993) wrote a book entitled “Christians of Kerala, history, belief and rituals among the Yakoba”, and it discusses the social and cultural attributes reflected in the festivals, ceremonies related to the marriage, birth and death and other rituals among the Yacobite community of Kottayam region.

A book on Christians of Asia before 1500 by Ian Gillman and Hans Joachim Klimkeit (1999) narrates the Christians of Palestine, Arabia, Georgia, Persia, Central Asia, China, South East Asia and India. The work has emphasized the arrival of the Christianity to India through the north-western frontier and rejects the South Indian tradition of St. Thomas. Anto (2006) in his Ph.D. thesis on “The Latinization, Colonization and Conflict in the Christianity in Kerala” underlines the role of various colonial powers and their persuasion in shaping the Christianity in Kerala. An article by T.K Joseph (1926) on the “Malabar Christian Copper Plates” chronologically places various copper plates of the local rulers of Kerala to the Christian merchants. He has analyzed these copper plates to state that these records authenticate the trade relation between the Syrian Christian merchants and Malabar rulers (Joseph 1927:202).

There are very few works on Church architecture of Kerala. These works are by Menachery (1973), Athappally (1973), Menon (1978), Prabhu (1999), Pereira (2000) and Reitz (2001). In general they have dealt with layout of the Churches as to show the functional activity. An article was published by James Menachery (1973) on “Thomas Christian Architecture”. He explained that the Church architecture of Kerala was influenced by the geographical and climatic features of Kerala and Churches have copied several elements from the temples. Most of the Churches were rebuilt from time to time and the Persian, Antiochean and western forms of architecture crept into the Thomas Christian architecture style in different periods (Menachery 1973:142). It was a good attempt which briefed the information on old Churches across Kerala. However, this work dealt with a few Churches without looking into their
geographical, political, economic, environmental and past socio-cultural landscape, which had tremendous effect in the construction and embellishment of the Churches.

Andrews Athappally (1973) in his article on “Kerala Church Architecture” dealt with different stages of development of Churches from pre-Portuguese to modern period. The earlier Churches were very simple and had rectangular hall constructed with wood and bamboo and covered with a thatched roof. The spacious nave and sanctum were clearly separated during the second phase. The nave had two pillared aisles on the either side. The third phase of development featured with elaborated structure with sanctum, nave and pillared portico (Athappally, 1973:151). Prabhu (1999) in his short article on “Kerala Architecture” mentions casually about the architectural features of Kerala with special focus on temples, domestic architecture, Jewish monuments, Islamic and Church architecture. He opines that Churches of Kerala retained some of the indigenous Hindu style (Prabhu 1999:286).

Pereira wrote a book on “Baroque India, the Neo Roman Religious Architecture of South Asia: A Global Stylistic Survey”. This book discusses the history and evolution of Neo Roman architecture and explains five styles of Neo Roman like the Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, Rocco and Neo Classicism. It explains the Neo-Roman Architecture style which survives in six regions in the Subcontinent and Kerala is one among them (Pereira 2001:133). Though the work is mainly focused on the Churches in Goa and other parts of India, it also refers to various Churches across Kerala in brief. However, this work is quite valuable as far as in understanding the architectural term and their functions. An article entitled “Is the Origin of Granite Crosses of Kerala Indigenous or Foreign? “by Falk Reitz (2001) analyses the open-air crosses found in front of the Churches. He pointed out that the open-air crosses are the result of acculturation of both regional and foreign influence (Reitz 2001: 808).

There are several studies on the Church mural art of Kerala. Important works among them were carried out by Chritra and Srinivasan(1940), Padmanabhan Thampi (1952), Anujan Achan(1953), Devassy (1978), Sashibhooshan (1998), Menachery (2005), Varghese(2009) and Jene Peter and P.K Gopi (2009). The main Churches mentioned are St. Marys Orthodox Syrian Church, Kottayam, St. George Yacobite Church, Paliekara, Mar Sabore Afroth Yacobite Syrian Church, Akapparambu, St. Mary’s Yacobite Church, Angamaly, St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Kanjur, St.
Augustine Church, Ramapuram, St. George Yacobite Church, Cheppad and Marthoman Church Mulamthuruthy. The mural paintings in these Churches show a blend of Hindu and Christian symbols. Padmanabhan Thampi (1952) and Anuchan Achan (1953) attempted a comparative study of Church murals in the erstwhile Cochin state and suggested a tentative chronology. Kerala has a rich mural painting tradition and it mostly appeared in the temples, palaces and Churches (Sasibhoshan 2000: 7). Menachery (2005) has commented that wood carvings and mural art of the Churches are copied from the temples. The use of both the sculptures and paintings seems to have become prevalent only after the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century and the classical period of the mural art of Kerala is from 15th century to 18th century (Varghese 2009:28). A monograph on “Church Mural Art of Kerala” gives the list of 71 Churches with mural paintings and briefly discusses the nature of Church murals of Kerala (Peter and Gopi 2009). However, there is enough scope to integrate the murals, the sculptural depictions and the architecture to bring out the underlying regional ethos which has made the Churches of Kerala distinctive.

Apart from all these publications, which merely emphasized on various nuances of Church history, not many systematic studies on Church architecture had been conducted. The growth of Church construction activity, development of architecture and changes in architecture over time has also been neglected. Additionally, no archaeological investigation had been carried out so far to understand the relation between the cultural landscape and the gradual development and establishment of Churches, their location and the circumstances which made them there. Furthermore, no systematic work has been carried out so far to comprehend and analyze the antiquity of Christianity and also of the Churches in India in general and even Kerala in particular.

The tendency of demolishing old Churches for the new ones has been taking place for the last two decades in Kerala. Increase in Christian population and lack of adequate space both for congregation and difficulty in retaining the old structure along with the newly constructed Church are probably the main reasons behind the demolition. This further increases the demand for a comprehensive study of the Churches of Kerala.
1.5 Research Objectives and Scope

The aim of the research is to understand the architecture of medieval Churches of Kerala and its evolutionary development through ages in relation with Church activity and the specific denomination of Christianity associated. It looks into the Church in relation with contemporary religion of Kerala and different architectural models available and tries to understand why amalgamation of regional and foreign architecture elements took place. It also aims to investigate the historical and archaeological evidences of Christianity and its monuments in the Malabar Coast, especially in the study area, both intensively and extensively. Focus will be on the nature, spread and the distribution of Churches within the landscape of the Malabar Coast along with the influence coming out of trade, establishment of trading community, contemporary religious atmosphere and economic environment of the region.

With the above research objectives in mind, the scope of the present research is as follows:

* Churches and its Architecture should not be a neglected topic, yet, it has not been systematically studied in the context of Kerala. This research will provide, for the first time, a detailed documentation of the architectural features of Churches.

* A special focus will be on the nature, spread and the distribution of Churches within the spice producing hinterland landscape of the Malabar Coast. It also aims at the regional cultural pattern reflected in the Churches.

* To assess the amalgamation of the local architecture and the foreign architecture in the Churches of Malabar Coast.

* Studies in Christianity of Kerala have mainly focused on the history and development of Christian faith, arrival of Christianity in India by St. Thomas Apostle and his arrival on Malabar Coast. Studies so far have ignored the possibility of tracing the archaeological sources. No attempt has been made to collect the archaeological sources of Christianity in India particularly in the Malabar Coast.
1.6 Methodology

1. Extensive survey and documentation of Churches in the proposed study area using maps, GPS and local guidance.

2. Preparation of sketches of the ground plan of the selected Churches

3. Preparation of sketches and digital photography of façade of the selected Churches and other architectural features.

4. Photo documentation and XRD analysis of mural paintings at selected Churches.

5. Conduct interviews with the parish priests and interact with local people to collect relevant information.

6. Comparison of similar kind of architectural features and decorative motifs that have been found in Kerala in relation with the monuments of Goa.

7. Visit libraries and archives to review all the available literature and documents relevant to the proposed research.

8. Collect data from the available ancient literatures and published modern works.

1.7 Summary of Chapters

This thesis has been organized into chapters. The chapter wise plan of the thesis is as follows;

Chapter 1 Introduction and Research Proposal

This introductory chapter gives the background of the research and the research problem. It gives an overview of the previous researches carried out on Churches and the history of Christianity in India, particularly of Kerala. The geographical parameters regarding the study area and chronological parameters regarding the time period of the present study are briefed. It also provides the foremost aims, and objectives of the study and methodology adopted to achieve them.
Chapter 2 Geography, Environment and Political History of the Study Area

This chapter gives an outline of the geography, geology, rivers and environmental settings of the study area. It provides the demographic profile of the Christian community in Kerala. The political condition of medieval Kerala, local rulers in the study area and their territories has also been discussed. The role of colonial powers like the Portuguese and the Dutch and their interventions in the regional politics has also been incorporated. Major trading centers, ports, important spice producing centers and internal trade routes during the medieval period are briefed.

Chapter 3 History and Antiquity of Christianity

This chapter discusses different phases of the development of the Christianity in India, particularly of the study area. It explains how Christian faith arrived in India by various traditions at different time periods since the Indo-Roman trade. Evaluation of the various trading groups who reached India along with Christianity, locations of their established settlements and the status of Christianity in their respective home countries are done. Along with that it also examines the antiquity of Christianity in India with special focus on the study area. The archaeological evidences for Christianity in the form of inscriptions, paintings and stone crosses have also been incorporated. An index of inscriptions in the Churches of the study area have been prepared and included in this chapter.

Chapter 4 Cultural Landscape of Churches in South Central Kerala

This chapter discusses the nature, spread and the distribution of Churches within the landscape of the study area. Geo coordinates have been prepared with the help of G.P.S to decipher the location of Churches and it has been used to understand the religious landscape of the Churches in the study area. The location of Churches within the landscape of the study area along with the influence coming out of trade and economy and environment of the region are discussed. Maps prepared by the Portuguese
and the Dutch on their stronghold areas and medieval ports of the study area are included.

Chapter 5 Architecture of Medieval Churches in South Central Kerala

This chapter discusses the details of the architectural features of the medieval Churches in the study area. Various components of the Church like the altar, nave and front and side porches are discussed. Ground plan of thirteen Churches has been prepared and included in it. Details of layout and general arrangement of altar, nave, porch, wall, roof, features of facade, mural paintings, open-air crosses and other architecture elements have been discussed.

Chapter 6 Discussions and Conclusion

This concluding chapter summarizes the overall result of the study. There are comparative differences among the architecture of Churches of different denominations and such difference can also be seen in their sculptural and decorative elements. Unlike Churches in other parts of the world, Churches in Kerala use more wooden works for their superstructure as well as for their roof. Church murals show native impact in all their depictions. As population has increased through ages, old Churches have been expanded or new Churches are being built in the same premises. Certain Christian ritual practices in Kerala like offerings, prayers and ceremonies connected with birth, death etc. are influenced by the regional cultural patterns while certain Church architectural elements like lamp posts, open-air crosses validate the influence of regional architectural styles. The detailed study of the layout of the Churches shows the influence of the environmental conditions of Kerala.