Sri Narayana Guru is the shining star of the firmament of philosophical literature of Kerala in particular and of entire world in general. He was one of the well-known social reformers of India. He was a poet, a philosopher, a mystic and a social revolutionary. He was born on 20\textsuperscript{th} August 1854; (Malayali people treat this day as auspicious day), in Chempazhandhi village near Trivandrum City. His father was Madan Assan and Mother Kittiyamma.\textsuperscript{1}

Sri Madan Assan, father of Sri Narayana Guru was economically poor but was highly respected by all the villagers due to his skill in Astronomy and Ayurvedic medicine. Hence he was addressed as Assan which
means Acharya. Amidst the Hindu fenetics it was good fortune of Madan Assan to be respected like this because during those days caste was the major factor to be respected. "Everybody wanted to know, caste and every one revealed his castes also as a matter of course".  

Narayana (lateron addressed as Narayana Guru) was the only male child to Madan Assan and the parents used to call him as Nanu lovingly. Nanu had two sisters. Nanu sent a Nayar’s school for his elementary education at the age of five. A local teacher taught him Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil languages. There is no more information available about education of Sri Narayana Guru in any works written by scholars. However, Narayana Guru has written 35 works in Malayalam and 9 Books in Sanskrit, and one in Tamil.
He used to communicate in Tamil, Malayalm and Sanskrit languages.

Narayana or Nanu was surrounded by many relatives. Unfortunately he lost his mother at the age of 15 and later his father at the age of thirty. During those days in Kerala there was practice of the arranged marriage without consulting bride or bridegroom. In case of Nanu also after the death of his parents, his sisters and relatives have done such marriage. Nanu was the bridegroom and Kaliymma (who was his relative) was the bride. They have never been consulted; they have not met each other in connection with their marriage, but, the relatives of Nanu, especially his sisters, have exchanged cloth and gold neck-trinket and announced that Nanu has married Kaliyamma.

Ofter some time Nanu himself went to Kaliyamma's house and says to her as follows:
“Everybody in the world has appeared to serve some purpose. I have my own purpose to serve the human kind and you have your own aim in life. Kindly allow me to follow my way and you are free to proceed on your way”.

Sri Narayana then proceeded to Shivagiri nearer Varkala. He stayed there several years studying several scripture especially works on Advaita. Then he thought of exploring himself as he used to get glimpses of reality, sparks shining within, light exploding from within, a sort of sound resembling like Shank\"ranada and citsagara flowing in his heart. These experiences made him to sit for dhyana and after several months he got samadhi. Then, he became enlightened like siddharta becoming Buddha. He becomes Guru, Narayana Guru. He has started seeing the presence of Divine everywhere.
He wanted to spread the message of the mystic experience and the presence of divine to one and all in the society. When the divine has embraced him all kinds of ignorance and inequalities have been destroyed. Then his motive was to destroy inequalities injustice on the earth. So, his motive was dual, one is to spread divine message and second is to destroy inequalities, injustice etc.

Many scholars and leaders of the country have showered praises on him. Mahatma Gandhi says: "I feel it as the greatest privilege in my life to have a darshan of venerable sage, Sri Narayana Guru". 6

Rabindranath Tagore when he has visited Kerala met Sri Narayana Guru and exclaimed as "I am sure, I shall never forget that radiant face illumined by the self effulgent light of divine glory and those yogi eyes fixing their gaze on a far remote point in distant horizon. I
have never come across one who is spiritually greater than swamy Sri Narayana Guru of Kerala". 

Ramanuja Maharshi who was himself a very great mystic and philosopher of this century has praised Narayana Guru as: “Sri Narayana Guru was the ‘Mahatma’ of high intellectual supremacy”.

Sri Rajagopalachari who was deeply impressed by the work and personality of Sri Narayana Guru when he personally met Guru in his ashrama at Shivagiri mutt in Verkala, says: “Narayana Guru has to be remembered by the people of this country for his contribution to universal concept of religion, education and social uplift of the handicapped communities”.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who was himself a great philosopher of this century has praised Narayana Guru as: "A great social Reformer, a staunch promoting
Hindu Religion, and true Philosopher. Sri Narayana
Guru was a revolutionary yogi of Kerala".  

Guru has written the following works in Malayalam.

1. Advaita - Pradipika
2. Arivu
3. Ardha-Narishvara-Stotram
4. Atmopadesa satakam
5. Anukampa - Dasakam
6. Bhadra - Kali Ashtakam
7. Bahuleya - Ashtakam
8. Chidambara - Ashtakam
9. Chittada Chintham
10. Daiva-Dasakam
11. Daiva Chinthanam
12. Homa Mantram
13. Isha-Vasya-Upanishad (commentary in Malayalam)

14. Indriya-vairagym

15. Janani-Nava-Ratna-Manjari

16. Jati Mimamsa

17. Jiva-Karunya-Panchakam

18. Kundalini-Pattu

19. Kali Natakam

20. One hundred verses of self instruction

21. Oita Padyamgul

22. One hundred verses of self instruction

23. Shiva prasada-Panchakam

24. Shanmukha-Stavam

25. Sravana-Bhava-Stuti

26. Subramanya-Stotram

27. Sadasiva-Parasanam
The following Works in Sanskrit have been authored by Guru (actually some of them have been translated in Sanskrit, which were in Malayalam, listed above by Guru himself)

1. Brahma Vidya Panchakam
2. Bhadra-Kali Ashtakam
3. Darsana Mala
4. Devi Stavam

5. Jati Mimamsa

6. Muincarya-nancakam

7. Nivriti-Panchakam

8. Shri Narayana Smriti

9. Shri Vasudeva Ashtakam

All the above works are available at Shivagiri Ashram. Sri Narayana Guru is said to have authored one work in Tamil which is not available.
Foot Notes:


4. Parmeswaran : *Narayana Guru: The Prophet of Renaissance* (New Delhi; Suruchi Sahitya, 1979), P.38


10. Ibid, P.103.