

**A STUDY ON THE WORDS EXTINCT (DEAD WORDS) IN MALAYALAM:
A LEXICON FOR WORDS EXTINCT IN MALAYALAM SINCE 16TH CENTURY**

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO

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BY

MARTIN JOSEPH

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF MALAYALAM
NIRMALAGIRI COLLEGE
NIRMALAGIRI P.O
KANNUR, KERALA-670701

SUMMARY

Malayalam is the language spoken by around 35 million people, mainly the inhabitants of the state of Kerala and the union territory of Lakshadweep in India. Malayalam is a Dravidian Language and thus has close association with the other Dravidian languages, especially Tamil. While going through the world history, 16th century is marked remarkably with all its movement towards revolutions and renaissance. Likewise when we try to understand the history of the Malayalam Language and Literature the same century turns out to be very remarkable. The history of Malayalam Language can be divided into period before 16th century and period after 16th century .It is after 16th century that the language of Malayalam began to move in to its new form.

In the pre-16th century the Malayalam literature remained in preliminary stage. During this time, Malayalam literature consisted mainly of various genres of folk songs, then later *Ramacharitham* (a poem which is a combination of Malayalam and Tamil language) and some *Manipravala Sahithyam* (Poems which is a combination of Sanskrit and Malayalam) like *Vaisika thanthram*, *Leelathilakam*, *Chambukkal* (poem prose combination)*Chandrostsavm* etc. In the pre 16th century apart from the folk song the number of the literary work can be counted approximately twenty.

It is certain for sure that language is one among the determining factors of culture and civilization. Culture is translated and transmitted widely through the medium of language. Preserving language is preserving culture. Taking into consideration of this aspect, when we study the history of Malayalam Language and literature we find the fact that the pre-16th literature became out dated in modern-post modern discussions due to the difficulty in understanding the meaning of most of the words and usages. The hypothesis that leads to this research is the truth that if we fail to understand the pre-16th literature, we are actually missing the cultural and historical heritage of that time which can direct us to the later developments in language and culture. Many of those words used in pre 16th century literature are now extinct due to the unawareness of its meaning. We need lexicon of that time.

The language of Malayalam has its roots in Sanskrit and Tamil. Malayalam has received lot of words from Sanskrit, Tamil and even from Arabian, Persian to its Lexicon. Some of the Alphabets of Malayalam are from Sanskrit or from Tamil. It was Missionaries from Europe who formulated the language to its present form since then Malayalam is a growing language and a lot of studies are on the air especially, based on the grammar, literary theories and literature. But no studies were taken place in the area of primitive words which are extinct. We don't find a lexicon for such words which existed between 11th and 16th century. There is some piecemeal treatment of the subject but not in a concise form.

The project which consists of two parts is a collected lexicon of the pre-16th century words in which most of them are unused at present. Since this is not a subject study but a formulation of a lexicon the project follows a special treatment of giving the pre-16th century words and its meaning. Nearly thousands words are collected and given the corresponding meaning of the word. In the introduction I try to explain the relevance of the project and its significance, i.e. It will help to read the pre-16th literature which laid foundation for the later development in Malayalam language and literature, with a special emphasis on the objectives such as: formulate a Lexicon to undermine the primitive structure of this language and thus to place this Language in to its classical status.

Part I is a small introduction to the books that are used for the formulation of the lexicon. Since the pre 16th century literature is discussed only in a limited academic circle, the texts that are used are un familiar to the present time. The text used is mainly poems its story and a short briefing is given in this part. Nine such primitive Literatures are used for this study namely: *Ramacharitham*, *Vaisika thanthram*, *Chandrostsavm*, *Thirunizhalmala*, *Ananthapuravarnanam*, *Unniachee charitham*, *Unnuyadeecharitham*, *Unnichirudeveecharitham*, *Unnineeli sandesam*.

Part II is the lexicon part in which the word are given with its present day meaning. Apart from the lexicon part II of this project explains the History of the lexicon in Malayalam Language and literature and a short but detailed evaluation of the word in the lexicon also is given in this part.

Since Malayalam is a growing language, lot of studies are on the air especially, based on the grammar, literary theories and literature. But no studies were taken place in the area of primitive words which are extinct. We don't find a lexicon for such words which existed between 11th and 16th century. So, as far as my knowledge and enquiries, this project is an original endeavour's. I believe for certain that this research will push further detailed studies in this area and will be a marking point in the development of this Language and its literature.

MARTIN JOSEPH
Principal Investigator