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## **Language and Power: Mutualities Between Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam and the Making of Mappila Literary**

The paper largely looks at the history of Arabi-Malayalam, a linguistic form popular among the Mappila community of Malabar region of present state of Kerala, India. I intend to examine Arabi-Malayalam in two historical contexts: (i) Arabi-Malayalam as a linguistic form which is almost defunct now in terms of literary productions is studied along within its mutualities, conflicts and correspondences with Malayalam, emphasizing on the peculiar discursive designs that Malayalam as a linguistic edifice exercises on the inferior vernacular. The study particularly concerns about the historiographical strategies and administrative policies that facilitate to perpetuate the hierarchy and to widen their attributed cultural currency. In other words, the study closely looks at the strategical manoeuvres and epistemological formation of the larger context in which Malayalam manages to perpetuate its dominance over other vernaculars including Arabi-Malayalam. In order to perform the discussion, I work closely with four selected historiographical texts in Malayalam that span across a period as wide as more than a century (1870-2008). I hope that will help to look into the concerned topic diachronically keeping the tendencies of formative phases in view. (ii) Arabi-Malayalam, arguably a scriptorial variant of the dominant regional language Malayalam,<sup>1</sup> the advent of the printing technology in the mid-nineteenth century has made positive and negative impacts to its growth. Printing technology helped Malayalam to standardise itself into a homogenous whole with mass-produced textual artefacts, which in effect led to repudiation of Arabi-Malayalam into the cultural periphery. In the larger politico-cultural milieu, this standardisation and linguistic unification led to a considerable shift in the very notion of 'literacy'. With the state of Kerala being formed in 1956 on the basis of the language spoken in the geographical area, a large population of Mappilas, who had been engaging with Arabi-Malayalam, turned illiterate in the State's point of view.

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<sup>1</sup> Arabi-Malayalam is more or less a linguistic form with Malayalam phonemes but with Arabic script.