INTRODUCTION

Literacy is an essential threshold for the development of any country. With a minimum level of literacy, the masses can realize modernisation, increase in per capita income, democracy, success of developmental programmes, alleviation of poverty, better health status, women’s emancipation, population control, national integration, international understanding and care for environment.

In this modern world, illiterates are only half-developed human beings. They can contribute little more than their physical power for the betterment of the nation. In short, an indispensable component of human resource development is literacy.

The three menaces that India has been facing since independence are ignorance, illiteracy and poverty. Even after sixty years of independence, literacy is still out of reach of millions of the downtrodden.

A developing country like India is capable of competing with advanced countries in matters of space-research, advanced technology etc., but in the case of literacy, we are far behind other nations. In the 1991 census report, it is pointed out that 50% of our population is illiterate and that there is a rapid population explosion in the country. Universalisation of primary education continues to be a dream even after completing a number of five-year plans, mainly because illiterate parents do not encourage their children to go for schooling.
It is said that Gandhiji felt illiteracy as India’s sin and shame. It is definitely an evil that demands eradication. It is also to be noted that the illiterates are continuously exploited by the rest in the society. At this point, one may wonder as to who is responsible for this unforgivable violence and exploitation of illiterates. It is we the literates, highly educated among us who continue to eat the fruits of democracy by vitiating human rights and dignity. If majority of the people remain uneducated, our precious democracy will wither away. Our dream ‘New India’ will drift away from our midst unless illiteracy is removed.

Adult education is the most significant welfare idea of this generation. It must give a man physical and mental nourishment so that he can keep abreast of the changing society. It enables one to interact and participate meaningfully and actively in social matters as well as burst the social, political, economic and linguistic frontiers and above all human bondages of oppression.

Adult Education can play great role in bringing about economic and social development. It has been clearly stated by Dr. V.K.R.V Rao (1966) that, “without adult education and adult literacy it is not possible to have that range and speed of economic and social development that makes it worthwhile in terms of values and welfare. A programme of adult education and adult literacy should therefore, take a front place in any programme for economic and social development.”

Many literacy programmes have been launched by the authorities to root out illiteracy from our country. However, the importance of eradicating
illiteracy and the necessity of adult education has got special attention in recent years. The Government of India announced the New Education policy in 1986. The New Education policy formulated new direction and comprehensive programmes for this purpose. Thus, a societal mission—National Literacy Mission (NLM)—was formed to realize this aim.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

After launching the National Literacy Mission, many developments in literacy and continuing education programmes took place at a greater pace. Zahir Hussain (as quoted by Sodhi, 1988) pointed out that “the supreme aim of adult education in relation to democracy should be the widening of the horizon of social, cultural, vocational and physical knowledge of the citizen, wise electors, ingenious artisans and artists.”

In 1990, according to the Mission’s objective and guidelines, the Government of Kerala decided to launch a mass programme to attain cent percent literacy within one year. The name of this literacy campaign organized and launched by the Government was ‘Akshara Keralam’. It was implemented and directed by the State Saksharatha Samithi. The aim of the Samithi was to provide administrative as well as academic support to the total literacy campaign.

About 17 lakhs illiterates attended the literacy classes and 12.25 lakhs of people who had successfully completed the evaluation conducted by the Saksharatha Samithi were declared as neo-literates, i.e., the total literacy
(93.58%) is not a political exaggeration. So on 18th April 1991, the Government of Kerala declared that the state attained total literacy.

Literacy provides an entry point to the world of letters and through the world of letters to the world of communication and information. This is the basic step for education. A conducive environment and effective programmes of post literacy and continuing education will yield extremely good results otherwise the effects made in literacy programmes become meaningless. Ansari (1982) opined that we have not only to make people literate but also to keep them literate. Mali (1984) also remarked that maintenance of literacy and its development is an integral part of any literacy programme. If follow-up programmes are not launched effectively and in time, many of the neo-literates relapse into illiteracy.

The second phase of the literacy campaign started on 2nd October 1991, six months after declaring total literacy. The second phase was launched mainly for giving continuing education for the neo-literates. For this purpose Akshara Sanghams and Jana Vidya Kendrams (JVKs) were started in Kerala. The apex bodies of the Akshara Sanghams are JVKs.

As the second phase of the Literacy campaign was completed in 1993, the third phase, the continuing education programmes, is going on through Janavidya Kendrams and certain Jana Sikshan Nilayams.

If the educated adult is unwilling to adopt new techniques, is unable to use this knowledge in life, remains even after his education as what he was in the past, the education given has no impact on him.
So it is very important to study whether there is any impact of the literacy programmes on the adults and thereby to find out how far it was effective.

A single day statewide literacy survey conducted on 8th April 1990 identified 28.5 lakhs of illiterates in Kerala, of which 17.91 lakhs were women. Majority of the illiterate women belonged to Malabar, a socially and educationally backward area. Malabar consists of seven northern districts of Kerala- Trichur, Palghat, Malappuram, Wynad, Calicut, Kannur and Kasargod. These districts are educationally and socially backward when compared to the remaining seven southern districts of Kerala state (Karunakaran, 1991).

The investigator decided to find out the impact of literacy programmes on an extremely backward area. So it is her preliminary work to locate such a most educationally and socially backward district. In Malappuram district majority of the people are living in remote villages. They have no facilities for electricity and other basic necessities of a modern man. A large number of people are belonging to tribal, coastal fisherman, women and other sections of the community. Therefore, a study of impact of the literacy programmes on these people will be more significant. So the investigator selected Malappuram district for the study.

Malappuram being one of the most socially and educationally backward districts in Kerala stood first in the evaluation of the success of first and second phases of the literacy programmes conducted by the Saksharatha Samithi. This is an indication of the effectiveness of the programme.
The Kerala model of literacy campaign is considered to be a model for other states in India. Still the changes in the economic, social, cultural and educational areas of the neo-literates can be found out only after thorough analysis of the impact of the same is done in these areas.

The quality and effectiveness of any programme depends to a large extent on the research and investigation by which it is backed. For the effectiveness and continuation of the literacy programmes it is very essential to study the impact of these programmes.

By studying the impact of the literacy campaign, if needed, the planners can change the curriculum, learning materials for the neo-literates, teaching methods, training for functionaries, the implementation of various developmental programmes and the evaluation and follow up programmes.

So the investigator by considering the importance and the relevance of the above conditions decided to analyse the impact of the total literacy programmes on the neo-literate adults of Malappuram district.

**SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The total literacy programmes has had something of the character of a real people’s movement, the impact on women who constitute two-thirds to three fourths of adult illiterates, has been significant. Positive effects on the issue of gender bias through greater articulation and organisation by women to meet their various ‘life problems’ have been one of the main objectives of the Total Literacy programmes. Intermixing of social state has also had a positive, though, limited impact on caste and communal relations. It is this
practical intermixing leading to behavioural changes that is needed rather than mere achievement of reading, writing and numeracy. Another important effect of the Total Literacy Programmes on learners has been more vociferous demand for the services rendered by Government and other agencies to meet their basic needs in regard to housing, health, employment and also the need for spending their leisure time fruitfully. Salmathullah and Bareth (1984) pointed out the need for in-depth qualitative studies rather than sample surveys. Kundu (2000) remarked that Research should also be undertaken in the areas of evaluation of Total Literacy Campaign. He also emphasized qualitative researches, impact studies through participatory approaches, SC, ST, OBCs and women need to be the focus of further research for improving the quality of life of masses.

So, the investigator felt the need for an in-depth, qualitative, impact study to analyse the impact of Total Literacy Programmes on neo-literates and selected an impact study.

Some of the spin-offs of TLCs have been improved enrolment at primary level; social empowerment of women; improvement in immunization and acceptance of the small family norm and organized correction of superstition and social evils. The major thrust areas of the Total Literacy Programme of NLM in Kerala are on promotion of Literacy among women, people in coastal area including Muslims, members belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, particularly in the rural areas. Hence the investigator decided to select sample for the study from these thrust areas.
The present study also has given special emphasis to the participatory and qualitative approach

How the study is different from earlier studies in the field.

The present study is an in-depth, qualitative impact study based on the objectives of the National Literacy Mission. It is intended to include all the possible aspects of the literacy programmes.

1. The impact of learning should reflect not only on the learner but also on the entire family. So a household survey approach was adopted.

2. The present study has given importance to self-reliance in 3 Rs of neo-literates.

3. The earlier studies in this area suggested that participatory approach was necessary for understanding the real impact of literacy programmes. So participant observation was also an important tool for the present study.

4. Another important focus of the study was to understand the impact of Total Literacy Programmes of neo-literates with respect to imbibing values of national integration, conservation of environment, women’s equality and empowerment, perseverance of family norms promotion of maternity and childcare, peace and communal harmony. These aspects are included in the present study.

5. A follow-up study was conducted to know the real impact of the literacy programmes on neo-literate adults.
Possible Outcomes of the Study

The findings of the study are intended to yield the following outcomes.

1. The Study is useful for Directorate of Adult Education, NLM, State Saksharatha Samithi, etc., for implementing new strategies and media for the effective implementation of the literacy programmes.

2. The researchers can study on the areas which show negative, no or negligible impacts on neo-literates and thereby find out solutions for the same.

TITLE OF THE STUDY

The problem for the present study is entitled as “THE IMPACT OF TOTAL LITERACY PROGRAMMES ON NEO-LITERATE ADULTS OF MALAPPURAM DISTRICT IN KERALA”.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Impact

Dictionary of Education (Good, 1973) defines impact as the total effect of sensory impressions, level of interaction, and focus of interest associated with a given instructional activity.

In the present study impact is used to mean the multiple effect of the Total Literacy Programmes as indicated by the changes showing improvement in the select aspects of life of the neo-literates.
Total Literacy Programmes

The term refers to the Literacy Programmes organized and implemented in Kerala by the Government of Kerala as per the objectives and guidelines of the National Literacy Mission (NLM). In the state it is known as Akshara Keralam I & II phases and the continuing education programmes as the third phase.

Neo-literate

The neo-literate is the one who completed the functional literacy/ post-literacy courses under Total Literacy Campaign or Post-Literacy Campaign or any other programmes (National Literacy Mission 2000).

Adults

The Total Literacy Programmes in Kerala were implemented for the age group of 6-60. The term ‘Adults’ was referred to this age category in the programme. But for the present study only people of age 15 and above are taken, as certain aspects of behaviour to be analysed in the study are relevant to this age group only.

Malappuram District

One of the fourteen revenue districts in Kerala, which is labeled as an educationally and socially backward district by the Government of Kerala

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The following is the objective set for the study.
Introduction

To analyse the impact of the Total Literacy Programmes on neo-literate adults in their;

I. Personal background
   a. Education
   b. Health and Hygiene
   c. Vocation
   d. Economic condition
   e. Religion

II. Family background

III. Social background and

IV. Cultural background

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study is given below in brief.

a) Design of the study

The present study is a qualitative one. Instead of attempting any cause and effect relationship with the help of experimental and control groups, impact has been assessed by comparing the pre and post participation attitudes and behaviour of the neo-literates. The field sources of study consisted of 100 neo-literates and 50 persons from the immediate society of the neo-literates in Malappuram District. The purposive sampling method was used for selecting the sample to ascertain the representation of all sections of
the community. Hence for making the study qualitative and in depth, the investigator decided to collect adequate data through the triangular approach.

b) Sample for the study

The study was based on a sample of 100 neo-literates and 50 persons from the community representing the three literary projects of Malappuram district, viz., General, Coastal and Tribal literacy projects.

c) Tools and techniques used for the study

The following tools and techniques were used for the study.

1. A structured interview schedule for neo-literates.
2. An interview schedule for the community.
3. Participant observation.
4. Performance test in reading.
5. Performance test in writing.
6. Performance test in numeracy.

d) Procedure in brief

Face-to-face interviews lasting for around five hours, using a structured interview schedule, were conducted with 100 learners and 50 important persons from the community, in their homes. The questions were designed to ascertain information about the reason for joining the literacy centre, their interest in learning, cleanliness, habits etc., and the effect of participation in literacy classes on their personal, familial, job, utilisation of leisure time, etc. The interview schedule contains a mixture of closed and
open-ended questions. The data collected were analysed qualitatively for 100 sample. The sample was selected using purposive sampling technique to ensure that the sample included those who have attended all the sections involved in literacy programmes. Participant observations were also done to apply the method of triangulation. After a long interval, a sample of 8 learners from a single literacy centre was re-interviewed to ensure the retention of the impact of the literacy programme. As the focus of this interview was on changes since the first interview the same questions were asked.

e) Statistical techniques used for the study

The statistical technique used for analysing the data was percentage analysis.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The description of the study given above is adequate to convey the scope and limitations of the study. Since they have been presented in combination with other routine descriptions, and attempt has been made here to examine separately the scope and limitations of the study and is presented as follows.

The present study has been designed as an impact one and the objective of the study was to analyse the impact of literacy programmes on neo-literate adults.

The sample selected for the study was 100 neo-literate from Tribal, Coastal and General Literacy Projects by giving due representation to SC, ST
and Women. Hence, the results of the study could represent the thrust areas of NLM.

Awareness is the most important aspect of Literacy programmes. A detail analysis has been done in the present study about the awareness about learners’ own problems, the need for change, etc.

The main tool used for the collections of data was an interview schedule for neo-literates. This is developed as per the objectives of the Aksharakeralam project implemented in Kerala and the NLM, and hence is valid.

A follow-up study was conducted to a selected group to ensure whether the result of the study is retainable.

The data is analysed quantitatively using percentage analysis and qualitatively interpreted for finding out the impact precisely.

Thus every attempt was made to make the study more generalisable. But the following limitations have also been crept into the study.

The present study was confined to 100 neo-literates of three literacy projects. More subjects of the sample were female as male neo-literates were not available for interviewing.

The relationship of the performance of learners in reading, writing and numeracy skills with their gender, age, caste, income, etc., were not analysed.
It is expected that the limitations mentioned above would not affect the generalisability of the study and also the result of the study will be helpful for the beneficiaries.

This study could be of immense help to the planners and policy makers, administrators and all other bodies related to adult education programmes to support and guide future programme formulation and implementation.

**ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT**

The contents of the report have been presented in six chapters:

Chapter I is the **Introduction** which presents the rationale for selection of the problem for the study, its special significance including expected original outcome of the study, statement of the problem, definition of key terms used, statement of the objective and a brief description of the methodology and scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter II is the **Theoretical Overview**. This part of the report presents a brief history of Adult Education in different countries of the world, India and Kerala.

Chapter III Presents the **Review of Related Literature**. The studies have been classified under two sections with a summary of the studies reviewed and a conclusion.
Chapter IV of the report is the **Methodology**, which describes the methodology, adopted for the study, sample selected, tools used, procedure in detail and statistical techniques used.

Chapter V of the report deals with the **Analysis and Interpretations**. This chapter gives the details of the analysis of data followed by discussions and important findings of the study and conclusions.

Chapter VI contains **Summary of Findings**, **Conclusions** on the impact of Total Literacy Programmes and **Suggestions** for future implementations and further research.