ABSTRACT OF THE STUDY

Among the agencies of Non-Formal Education libraries are perhaps the most flexible in providing educational service to adults.

Kerala is blessed with an abundance of public libraries, which contribute to adult education and eradication of illiteracy. The library movement of Kerala is a massive and extensive organization led by the people, the like of which is not seen anywhere else in the country. This has helped Kerala to become the most literate state in India. It has played a vital role in the total literacy campaign and nearly 5000 public libraries were actively associated with various programmes for the awakening of the people, creating awareness and preparing them for a leap towards a cultural renaissance.

The present study attempts to analyse the performance of various public libraries of the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham - the association of public libraries - in the field of Non-Formal Education, with special reference to continuing education.

The study covers different aspects of the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham such as organisation, administration, resource mobilisation, information dissemination and extension activities.

To study at the micro level, a survey was conducted in libraries of 5 districts.

The survey revealed the field reality of the functions and programmes of public libraries.

Suggestions for the improvement and effectiveness of the programmes and activities were collected from library workers, library council authorities, experts in education and instructors and beneficiaries of the Non Formal Education programmes of the libraries.

The major findings include that the public libraries along with the service of information dissemination undertake rural extension activities, social awareness
programmes, cultural development programmes and community interactive programmes. The libraries organise women’s forums, children’s clubs, youth clubs, nursery schools, arts and sports clubs etc.

The KGS established Academic Study Center, Thaluk Reference Libraries, Career Guidance Centers, Literacy and Continuing Education Centers, Rural Information and Guidance Centers. Model Village Libraries, Book Distribution Schemes for Women etc. in various affiliated libraries.

The KGS conducted social awareness programmes on different problems by organising seminars, workshops, study classes, processions, film shows etc.

The KGS promoted cultural development of the community with various community interactive activities.

It was found that professional expertise has a little place in the management, administration and organisation of the present public library system. The available resources and infrastructure of the public libraries were under-utilised by the educational systems such as Literacy Mission, Open Schools and Open Universities, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Distance Education and Research and Development.

The main suggestions are, proper disbursement of Government grants to the KGS, participation of professional experts, co-ordinated activities with other developmental agencies of Government and NGOs, and application of information technology and networking in public libraries.

It was found that, in this era of the information explosion, the qualitative development of the public libraries of Kerala is far behind the quantitative development.