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INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

Education is unquestionably necessary for the progress of civilization and the advancement of society. Literacy is the essential tool for learning, communication and acquiring and sharing of information. Literacy is one of the main planks on which cultural, social and economic development of the country depends. The progress of a country depends largely on the education provided to the citizen either through formal or non-formal education.

A democratic society needs citizens who are aware of their environment and well acquainted with the cultural, social, political and economic heritage of the country. In the history of human civilization it is seen that cultural attainments, intellectual activities and literary achievements have produced institutions for perpetuating these achievements. The public Library is one of such institutions and plays an important role in the education of a developing country.

Though the importance of formal education, colleges, universities etc. in this context needs no special emphasis, this alone is not sufficient for the overall development of one’s personality. ‘Informal education’ or ‘self education’ occupies a very significant place in one’s life simply because the process of education does not end with one’s formal education. In fact, real education begins at the point where formal education ends. The process of self education is a life long process and requires no class room attendance. A public library undoubtedly is the most suitable institution for this purpose simply because it is an essential part of one’s life. Public libraries are key access points for community based education for life long learners. Community based and locally supported libraries link independent learners materials,
programmes and other community agencies and provide a common touchstone for all segments of the population.

2 Adult education and Public Libraries

Libraries play an important role in education. In 1952 the Government of India initiated the community development programme in which social education was assigned an important role. Libraries became an integral part of this programme. As it is well known libraries are institutions of “education by self” or “education without a teacher”. Libraries are one of the agencies of social education and as such stand in close relationship to other similar agencies. In 1961 the public libraries in North America were carrying out crash programmes of adult education.1

Adult education has found a rightful place in the report of the Education Commission (1964-66). The Commission accepted the concept of “life long education” and remarked “Education does not end with schooling but is a life long process”. The adult today has need of an understanding of the rapidly changing world and the growing complexities of the society. Even those who have had the most sophisticated education must continue to learn; the alternative is obsolescence.2

Lee is of the opinion that “among the agencies of non-formal education, libraries are perhaps the most flexible in providing educational services to adults.”3 According to him, the provision of these services is based on the following assumptions:

1. to lead a full and meaningful life, adults need to continue to learn;
2. books are the principal means of continuing self-education; and,
3. adults are capable of continuing self-education.

So far as the public library is concerned, by its very nature and scope, it is a library for every citizen. Its clientele includes people from all walks of life who are literate, neo-literate or illiterate. This feature of public library makes its educational functions more diverse and elaborate.
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According to Melvil Dewey\(^4\) (1888), the Father of Library Science, a public library is a people’s university. He maintains that, next to school, the greatest single educational influence is that of public library. The relevance of the public library in non-formal education is well noted in Fortnight California Law.\(^5\) The legislature hereby declares that it is in the interest of the people and of the state that there be a general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence through the establishment and operation of public libraries. Such diffusion is a matter of general concern in as much as it is the duty of the state to provide encouragement to the voluntary life long learning of the people of the state. The legislation further states that the public library is a supplement of the formal system of free public education, and a resource of information and inspiration to all persons of all ages, and a resource of continuing education and as such deserves adequate financial support from government at all levels.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 emphasized the basic rights and individual freedom that every individual must be assured of. Among the rights and freedom set forth in this declaration, the “Right to Education” is one of the most basic and important rights. The word ‘education’ we must understand in terms of learning.\(^6\)

The National Policy on Library and Information Science (1986) has given prime consideration to the establishment and maintenance of public libraries in the country and enabling them to work as a system. The main thrust in this area is given to the rural public library. It is noted that a village or a village cluster with an adequate population should have a community library, which will also serve as an information centre. Resources of different agencies engaged in the work of public health, adult education, and local self government and such others may be pooled to build up this composite centre. The policy emphasises that the community library should also importantly cater to adult education and make adequate audio visual aids available to attract the illiterate villagers.\(^7\)
3. Concept of Public Library

3.1 Definition

*The International Encyclopedia of Information Technology and Library Science* defines the public library as one which is operated wholly or partly from public funds and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community, but is freely available to all. It is a major agency of enlightenment of adults, providing also for children the recorded experiences of others which could help them to grow into the adulthood.

The modern definition of the public library as approved by the UNESCO and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) is: “Public Library is an organisation established, supported and funded by the Community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organisation. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age/gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment.

A public library is one that serves the entire population of a community. Everyone in the community, regardless of nationality, race, colour, creed, age, sex, status, educational attainments, language or any such considerations has a claim to its services as a matter of right. It is generally established and maintained out of public funds under the mandate of legislation.

**UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994**

The UNESCO considered the public library service so important that it brought out a Public Library Manifesto in 1949. This was revised in 1972 by IFLA.

In 1994 the third version of the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto was published.
It rapidly become recognised as an important statement of the fundamental principles of public libraries.

The manifesto is a concise and yet comprehensive statement of the modern concept, objectives and functions of the public library and of the general principles governing its service. It is reproduced in full in Appendix-4.

The American Library Association (ALA) standards for public libraries highlight the educational functions of public libraries. According to these standards public libraries “attempt to assist people to contribute to the growth of knowledge, make use of leisure as it will promote personal and social well-being, develop their creative and spiritual capacities, be more capable in their daily occupations, discharge their political and social obligations, become better members of home and community, keep pace with progress in all fields of knowledge, educate themselves continuously”. Obviously, public library accepts the educational functions as its primary function.

3.2 Functions of Public Library

The primary purpose of the public library is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development, including recreation and leisure. They have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving the individual access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions.

3.2.1 As an Educational Centre

The need for an agency available to all, which provides access to knowledge in printed and other formats to support formal and informal education, has been the reason for the foundation and maintenance of most public libraries and remains a core purpose for the public library. Throughout their lives people require education
either at formal institutions, for example, schools, colleges and universities, or in a less formal context related to their employment and daily life. Learning does not end with the completion of formal education but is, for most people, a lifelong activity. In an increasingly complex society people will need to acquire new skills at various stages of their life. The public library has an important role in assisting their process.

**Formal Education**

The public library has an important educational function in formal education. It must serve the teachers and students of the educational institutions in its area by acquiring books of academic importance suited to their needs. No educational institution is able to make available in its own library all the books required by its users. The Public Library should therefore supplement the resources and services of these libraries.

**Life long Self-Education**

Formal education, in the present context of the phenomenal expansion of knowledge, can be regarded only as a preparation for the future self-education of those who have undergone it. They have to keep themselves abreast of the continuous developments in their respective fields. Otherwise they will soon be overtaken by these developments and become out of date. It is in this sense that education is described as a life-long process. This is possible only if they have access to public libraries, well equipped with up-to-date books in the various branches of knowledge and modern information technology. Without these facilities there is a real danger of those who are educated relapsing into the uneducated state.

**Education of working groups**

The public library is an educational centre also in another sense. It should stock books relevant to the needs of people engaged in different vocations in its area by reading which they will become better informed and educated in their areas of work and will be
able to increase their work efficiency. This will lead to greater productivity.

**Adult Education**

According to the 2001 Census of India the percentage of literacy in the country was only 65.38. This implies that 3500 out of every 10,000 people are not able to read and write and consequently are without the basic means of self-education. Society has a responsibility to increase the number of literate and educated people through appropriate programmes. The adult education drive is geared to this end.

The aim of adult education “is to create an educated mind among the adult illiterate”. The public library, with its infrastructure in terms of men and materials, can play an important role in this programme. Some of the activities it can organize for this purpose besides conducting literacy classes are arranging talks on topics of interest to the different sections of illiterate people, organizing reading clubs at which books will be read out to them, holding exhibitions and presenting educative themes through films, radio, television, etc.

**Distance Education**

Distance education comprises all those efforts aiming at enabling people to acquire an educational qualification without being enrolled in a formal educational institution. The new National Education Policy lays great stress on it. Distance education basically involves self-study for which library support is absolutely essential. Indeed, a strong public library system is the most important element in the infrastructure to be provided for the successful implementation of distance education programmes. In its absence, those who join this stream will not have the opportunity to read the type of books that they should, to become really educated. They will have to be content with confining themselves to sub-standard books euphemistically called guides, which might, at best, enable them to pass the examinations in the existing system. The major objectives of education; namely, enabling the learner to acquire a
thorough grasp of their subjects, developing their thinking abilities and critical faculties and their overall personality development will all become casualties. The inevitable consequence will be a fall in the standard of education in all respects. A degree acquired through this means will be a totally misleading sign-board of the real educational attainment of the persons. To prevent this situation it is essential to provide facilities for learning through reading authoritative books in each subject area by the establishment of a strong public library base.

3.2.2 Public Library as a cultural center
The public library should function as a cultural center in two senses. It should provide books which will stimulate and bring to expression the creative talents of individuals and develop their faculty for aesthetic appreciation. It should also organize cultural programmes like music concerts, dances, dramas, and painting competitions for children, exhibition of paintings, etc., and thus enrich the cultural life of the community. It should function as a real cultural center.

3.2.3 Public Library as an information center
The rapid growth in the volume of available information and the continuing technological changes, which have radically affected the way information is accessed, have already had a significant effect on public libraries and their services. Information is very important to the development of the individual and of society. The public library should also function as an information center in the sense of providing information relating to the socio-economic needs of the people. A vital role for the public library is to bridge that gap by providing public access to the Internet as well as providing information in traditional formats. Public libraries should recognize and exploit the opportunities provided by the exciting developments in information and communications technology. They have the opportunity to become the electronic gateway to the information world. Some of the areas in which a public library can interest itself to the benefit of its community are career development, agricultural information, health
information and family welfare information. These are only a few examples illustrating the immense potential of an alert public library in this field.

3.2.4 Public Library as a Recreational Center
Healthy use of leisure is a matter of great importance in community life lest the leisure time should be devoted to negative and destructive activities. By providing books suitable for recreational reading and organizing programmes of healthy recreation and entertainment like the performing arts, the public library can play a significant role in meeting this need of the people.

According to Ranganathan, “public libraries generate material happiness, mental joy and spiritual delight.” They are social institutions charged with the duty of providing the means for the perpetual self-education of one and all; and then contribute to the circulation of ideas, the harnessing of leisure, the demands of democracy, and the spread of literacy and the success of commercial and industrial organisation.

3.2.5 Children’s Wing
“Catch them young” is a phrase of great social relevance. Habits picked up at the early impressionable period in one’s life are bound to continue throughout life. Reading is a habit that should necessarily be cultivated in children for, apart from exposing them to the world of knowledge and widening their mental horizon, it will help them to learn through reading. Therefore it is necessary that children should be provided with facilities for reading and this is a responsibility that the public libraries should share with school libraries, by establishing children’s wings and maintaining them in an attractive manner.

3.2.6 Public Library Service for the Handicapped
It is a responsibility of the public library to provide library facilities to the handicapped sections of the society like the blind, whose learning needs are no less important than those of normal people. This should be done by appropriate collections of books
and non-book materials being made available for their use and education.

In fact public libraries are the only institutions which are open to all towards life long education, information, recreation and enhancement of knowledge.

3.3 Public Library movement in India

India has a very ancient history of library systems, techniques and laws. Right from the days of antiquity, Indian culture, Philosophy and religion occupied a place of pride throughout the world and the neighbouring countries were all under the magic spell of its splendour and magnificence. Thousands of scholars from all over the world undertook hazardous journeys to use the huge collections of our recorded knowledge arranged in the most helpful sequence in our ancient seats of learning. Even though they are known as academic libraries those at Nalanda and Taxila and Pataliputhra showed more public library character than any of the present day libraries of that size.13

The first significant date in the development of libraries for the public in India is 1808 when the Bombay Government initiated a proposal to register libraries which were to be given copies of the books published from government funds for the encouragement of literature. Europeans living in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras founded the so called “Public Libraries” at these three presidency towns. As the main use of these libraries was confined to almost the upper strata of society, these were not, in the strict sense, public libraries (not free libraries) that can now be categorized as public libraries. In 1867 the Government enacted the Press Registration of Books Act (XXV) under which the printer of a book was to deliver free to the State Government concerned a copy of the book and one or two more copies if the State Government so desired. Additional copies were transmitted to the Central Government.14
The second important phase in the history of the library development began in 1900 when the reading room of Calcutta Public Library was thrown open to the public. The Calcutta Library was later named the Imperial Library. After independence the word ‘Imperial’ was substituted by the word “National”. It was now called the National Public Library. An important landmark in the second phase came when from 1906 to 1911 Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwad Ili of Baroda, with the help of an American librarian, Mr. A. B. William, built up an elaborate library system consisting of the Central Library, Village Libraries and traveling (mobile) libraries in Baroda. The library movement in Baroda became the torch bearer for libraries in India and thus gave an impetus to the Library Movement in the country.

3.3.1 Post independence era

After independence there has been a fast library development in the country. The Delhi Public Library was established in 1951; as a pilot project of the UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Government of India. There were two British librarians, Frank Gardner and Edward Sidney, under whose expert guidance the Delhi Public Library was set up.

The library was planned to provide complete library service as provided in USA and UK. Based on that concept it started as an open access library. Besides the usual sections and departments a social service department providing lectures, discussion groups, film shows and other extension work was established. A section for the blind, where sufficient braille books were available, was also set up.

The Advisory Committee appointed by the Government of India in 1955 with K.R. Sinha as its Chairman, in its report, submitted in 1958, recommended that library service should be free to every citizen of India and that the library pattern in the country should consist of a National Library, District Libraries, Block Libraries and Panchayat Libraries. Besides the National Library at Calcutta, (Kolkata) the
Cannemera Public Library, Madras (Chennai), and the Central Library Bombay (Mumbai) were declared recipients of all books and magazine published in the country under the Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act, 1954.\textsuperscript{18}

The Planning Commission constituted a working group on libraries in 1964. This group brought out a survey of libraries in India. According to this survey the per capita expenditure on public libraries per annum in India was Rs.00.03 whereas in USA and UK it was Rs.12.47 and Rs.6.00 respectively.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1952 the Government of India initiated the community development programme in which social education was assigned an important role. The libraries became an integral part of this programme.

Today India has a national library system that serves a population of 1000 million in an area of 3.3 million sq.kilometers. The country is divided into 28 states and 7 Union Territories for the purpose of administration.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation}

The Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation was established as an autonomous body by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India in 1972 at Calcutta on the occasion of the bi-centenary of Raja Rammohan Roy. The main objective of the Foundation is to promote and support the Public Library Movement in the country by providing adequate library services and by developing the reading habit all over the country in active co-operation with State Governments and Union Territory Administrations and Voluntary Organisations (NGOs) working in the field; it was created to give an ever-lasting push to the library movement in the country. The Foundation dedicated itself to do this noble job with the slogan "Books For The Millions At Their Doorsteps", with the operation of several schemes of assistance as given below. There are three schemes under which financial assistance is rendered to organisations, viz. assistance towards binding and preservation of rare books,
journals and manuscripts, assistance towards organisation of library workshops, seminars and books exhibitions and assistance towards storage of books.

Objectives of the Foundation
The main objectives of the Foundation, as given in the Memorandum of Association, are as follows:

1. To promote library movement in the country.
2. To enunciate a national library policy and to work towards its adoption by the central and state Governments.
3. To help build up a national library system by integrating the services of National Libraries, State Central Libraries, District Libraries and other types of libraries (Children’s, Academic and Special) through inter-library lending system.
4. To propagate the adoption of library legislation in the country.
5. To provide financial and technical assistance to libraries.
6. To establish Regional Library Service Centers.
7. To act as a clearing house of ideas and information on library development in India and abroad
8. To advise the Government of India on all matters pertaining to the library development in the country.
9. To take all such measures conducive to the promotion of library development and its utilisation in the country.

3.4 Public Library Movement in Kerala
According to the Kerala District Gazetteer the Trivandrum Public Library, established in 1829, was the first Public Library in Kerala and the oldest of its kind in India. In 1881 the Kottayam Public Library was established which is the oldest next to the
Trivandrum Public Library in the State. At Neyyattinkara, in the southern part of Travancore, a library with the name “Janana pradayini’ was formed in the year 1925. Later, in the central part of the state, at Chengannur, the Sankaravilasom Library came into being. In the next one decade a few more libraries appeared. The names of the most prominent among them are: YMCA Library at Keezhkara, Sri Chitra Tirunal Library at Trivandrum, the Raja Raja Varma Library at Oachira, the Lalitha Vilasini Library and Reading Room at Padmanabhapuram, the Jnana Pradayini Library at Mavelikara, the Marthandavilasam Library at Ernaiel, the Sri Mulam Silver Jubilee Library at Thodupuzha and the Bharathee Vilasom Library at Karapuzha, Kottayam. The Kottayam Public Library, established in 1881, is the oldest next to the Trivandrum Public Library, in the State.

There has been a phenomenal growth of public libraries in the state from the beginning of the 20 century. Rising of political consciousness and the mass movement for Home Rule resulted in the recognition of the increased importance of the individual. Creating public opinion and spreading political ideas warranted an educated and informed public. Political workers therefore gave emphasis to social and educational activities including the establishment of public libraries.

The Madras Library Association (1928), the Samstha Kerala Pustakalaya Samithi (1931), the All Travancore Library Association (1933), the Malabar Vayanasala Sangham (1937) gave good support for starting many libraries. “Kerala Granthasala Sangham, founded in 1945, in a short span of time, grew up into a very big cultural, social and educational organization in the State having about 4,000 libraries affiliated to it by 1977” In 1989 it became a statutory body under the Ministry of Education, Government of Kerala, which was then named the Kerala State Library Council, and the name “Kerala Granthasala Sangham” was retained. At present the number of grant-in-aid libraries in the State is 6,000. The Sangham receives grants from the Government and in turn releases the grant to these public libraries in the state.
The libraries of the Malabar area, consisting of Palghat, Kozhikode and Cannanore, were covered by the Madras Public Libraries Act 1948 till 1956. Malabar became a part of Kerala State in 1956. In these three districts the Local Library Authorities of Kerala had been managing the libraries. As per the Public Libraries Act 1989, the libraries which were under the three Local Library Authorities (LLA) have been taken up by Kerala Grandhasala Sangham.\textsuperscript{26}

The library movement of Kerala is a massive and extensive organization led by the people, the kind of which is not seen anywhere in India. This has helped Kerala to become the most literate state in India. It has played a vital role in the Total Literacy Campaign. Nearly 5000 libraries are actively associating through various programmes for the awakening of the people, creating awareness and preparing them for a leap towards a cultural renaissance.\textsuperscript{27}

4 Concept of Non-Formal Education

The process of education can be classified into three categories though they are highly inter-related and overlapping. The major categories of educations are Informal, Formal and Non-Formal Education. The knowledge an individual acquires by continuous interaction with his surrounding and the influence of the environment is called informal learning. This process continues from birth to death of an individual.\textsuperscript{28}

Formal education has an organized structure in all dimensions. It is consciously and purposefully planned for the modification of behavior. It has a specific aim which is a time bound programme and normally ends with the award of a degree or diploma given by an organization or Government or University or similar institutions.\textsuperscript{29}

But formal education leaves a large part of the population without any education. In developing countries the population is increasing and hence it is not possible for all people to get formal education. Moreover formal education will not meet the life long educational needs of the people because one has to stop it either at school
level or at university level. There are many other aspects also. To fill the gap and ensure “education for all” another system of education called non-formal education (NFE) is being developed.  

NFE is defined by Philip H Coombs and Manzoor Ahmed as “any organised or semi organised educational activity operation outside the formal system - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives.”

The term ‘NFE’ embraces all learning activities which are organized outside the formal education system and, therefore, includes adult education, distance education, continuing education, lifelong education, including hobby courses, etc. Any education offered to beneficiaries according to their needs, spare time etc. at the most convenient place and time, using appropriate content and method, where skills matter much, is called non-formal education. The system is so flexible that there is no restriction of age, sex or occupation. It is learner oriented and environment based. The content is totally diversified and relevant mainly to community life. The teaching method is not rigid as in the formal system; it mobilizes local resources and will help to enrich human potential as well as environment potential.

Even though NFE is not a full substitute for formal education, it will help the dropouts of any level to go back to the formal system. R.P. Singh states that NFE should be treated as alternative and not as supplementary or complementary to formal system.

4.1 Adult Education

Any education given to an adult is considered adult education by Julius Neyrere the famous African adult educator and administrator. The concept of adult education has undergone many changes. At one time it was mostly confined to literacy. Later on it was widened to include, in addition to literacy, other aspects of the life of the
adults, their health and hygiene, their domestic, economic and social life. It was therefore christened social education. Further, in the context of change in the areas of emphasis and the contents of the programme it became fundamental education. From fundamental education it was again re-christened functional literacy. It too underwent a further change and was replaced by Non-Formal Education (NFE), which is defined as any organized programme of learning outside the formal education system and is regarded as a means of universalizing elementary education in a less formal way and in a short duration. So, if we have to go into the history of the programme, we will have to look at everything that went under the names of social education, fundamental education, functional literacy, adult education and non formal education.

Adult education has now been defined in the Indian context as the education of those who are illiterate in the age group 15-35 years in the skills of literacy, functionality and awareness. But it should be clearly understood that the 3FIs are not the sole objective. It also includes learners’ awareness of social, economic and political realities and the functional use of the skills learned.

According to UNESCO, “the term, Adult Education denotes the entire body of organised educational processes, whatever content level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and Universities as well as in apprenticeship, where by persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. Adult Education embraces all forms of educative experiences needed by men and women according to their varied interests and requirements, as their differing levels of comprehension and ability, and in their changing roles and responsibilities through life.”
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The International Directory of Adult Education, UNESCO 1952, states, “Adult education has been associated with the teaching of literacy and such remedial measures as night schools for adults who have missed the opportunity for schooling. The concept of adult education has been broadened considerably so as to cover the activity of a wide range of institutions or agencies and to include content as wide as life itself.”

4.2 Continuing Education

Continuing education (CE), as the term indicates, is essentially a follow-up education. Its starting point, unlike that of adult education, is undefined because it depends on from where one wishes to take off and continue one’s education in whatever field one wants. It can be in the nature of post literacy to post -post graduation programmes or anything in between. But in most cases it could be highly flexible and unstructured --a point closer to the nature of non-formal education. Continuing education is obviously a component, an essential strategy, in the life long education concept. In the Indian context the problem of continuing education is more pronounced at three levels, namely, neo-literates, school dropouts and the secondary school leavers. For the college and university leavers or those who have completed these, there is a necessity of continuing education, though not as acute as to warrant priority over the neo literates and dropouts.37

N.K. Ambasht, while presenting a paper for the Programme Area 3, under the action plan of ‘Education for All’ for the SAARC countries, made a distinction between adult education and continuing education thus: (Adult education) has a basic input of literacy activity, the (Continuing Education) takes on from where the formal education and/or adult education leaves a learner. Therefore, the starting points for continuing education may be many- neo literates, school drop-outs with permanent literacy skills, secondary school leavers, college and university leavers and those who have completed college/university education. In the Indian context, the problem of continuing education is more pronounced at three
levels, namely, neo-literates (to reinforce the literacy skills to make them permanent), school drop-outs and the secondary school leavers. For the college and university leavers or those who have completed these, there is a necessity of continuing education, though not as acute as to warrant priority over the neo-literates, and school drop-outs with permanent literacy. Women’s welfare programmes and their related educational components are also included in this.

According to the Asia Pacific Programme of Education For All (APPEAL), continuing education is classified into six types:

1. Post Literacy Programmes
2. Equalancy Programme
3. Quality of Life Improvement Programme
4. Income Generating Programme
5. Individual Interest Promotion Programmes
6. Future Oriented Continuing Programme

4.3 Need and Importance of NFE

The effectiveness of the democratic process depends upon the education of the citizen whether the process of education is formal or non-formal, it is the responsibility of the concerned government, society, and individuals to provide facilities for universal compulsory and free education for all. Realizing the importance of education, UNESCO called for “Education for AH” which includes eradication of illiteracy and Universalisation of Primary education. UNESCO in its World Survey of Education recognized the magnitude of the problem in reporting on literacy rates. The 19th edition of world survey of education includes 200 countries. It reveals that illiteracy is not a problem peculiar to developing countries. It is universal problem and even Europe and America is not free from this scourge. In the September 25, 1989 issue of Newsweek an article titled “when Europeans cannot read” reported that 16 million Europeans are illiterate. In Portugal 20 percent of the population (15+) is unlettered. Among women in rural Grace the figure is sometimes as high as 45 percent. In US 0.5 percent of the population (15+ age group) is illiterate. But the situation in Africa is quite aggravating.
The universality of the problem has compelled UNESCO to declare the year 1990 “International Year of Literacy”, and to focus the whole world’s attention on it. An International Conference on the theme was organized in March 1990 in Bangkok by UNESCO in collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank the target of providing education, non formal and distance education, were adopted.

The notion Education for All was incorporated in the famous “World Declaration of Education for All”, popularly known as the Jomtien Declaration, has the following vision:

“The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems. Literacy is a necessary skill in itself and foundation of other skills. Literacy in the mother tongue strengthens cultural identity and heritage. Other needs can be served by; skill training, apprenticeships, and formal and non-formal programmes in health, nutrition, population, agricultural techniques, the environment science, technology, family life, including fertility awareness and other social issues.” (World Declaration of Education for all)

4.5 Need of NFE in Indian context -

India’s population is increasing at a very fast rate and the literacy rate of India is really alarming. NFE is one of the most important and formidable issues of Indian education. It has more relevance among the common people of Indian society. In India it is very difficult for the backward classes and other deprived groups to get formal education as the majority of educational institutions are in the private sector.

In our country people are of different religion cultures and languages. Because of this diversified nature of the community there are problems in all communities. Only NFE can help to solve these problems of the individual groups and it encourages the right community life. This system is imparted through discussions, puppet shows, exhibitions, films, demonstrations, street drama, mime, radio, video, audiotapes, T.V, posters, charts, graphs, slides, books, newspaper, motivational songs, storytelling etc. The
themes mainly discussed in NFE classes include the problems of family planning personal health and hygiene, reproductive health care, women empowerment, sanitation, child care, breast feeding, HIV/AIDS, farm management, agriculture, scientific and technological development, law related to women and children, child labor etc. By way of this non-formal interaction even the learner can be motivated to come back the formal system.

**Policies and programmes of Non-formal education of Government of India (GOI)**

Eradication of illiteracy is a major concern of the NFE programmes of the Government. Since independence there have been myriad efforts from the part of Government as well as from voluntary agencies for the success over the evil of illiteracy.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>41.43</td>
<td>53.46</td>
<td>28.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Literacy rates - 7+ age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>56.38</td>
<td>29.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>75.85</td>
<td>54.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India- 2001 (Series 1) Provisional Population Totals (Paper 1 of 2001)
An attempt was made to extend primary education and spread literacy among adults when the Congress Government first came to power in 1937. The campaign could not be sustained as the Government resigned in 1938-40. The Central Advisory Board of Education, in 1944, proposed that by 1984, the country should provide universal education for children and liquidate illiteracy.  

In 1948 the aim and objective of NFE was formulated on the conviction that mere literacy was not enough, that the adult should be made to responsible citizen to the new society. NFE is also linked with development, health, sanitation, family planning, environment etc., which improve the quality of life of the people.  

The First Five Year Plan 1951-56 proposed that the social education work of the country should be co-ordinated with similar activities in basic education and a common committee of experts should advice the Centre in the matter of initiating and financially aiding experimental work in both these fields in the states and guide it assessing the results and make them available to the States.  

The Indian Education Commission 1964-66, appointed by the Government of India under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari, was the first body to give serious thought to the problem of AE. It recommended that an effective programme of AE in the Indian context should involve: (i) liquidation of illiteracy, (ii) continuing education, (iii) correspondence courses; (iv) libraries: (v) role of universities in adult education and (vi) organization and administration of adult education. According to this Commission, there should be 80 percent literacy by the year 1976. But this target has not yet been achieved.  

The Government, through the National Policy of Education announced in 1968, virtually endorsed the recommendations concerning spread of literacy and AE put forth by the Committee of Members of Parliament. It, however, laid special emphasis on the education of young practicing farmers and on the training of youth for self employment.
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The National Policy of Education stressed that there was a great need for the development of part-time education and correspondence courses not only for university students but also for the secondary school students, teachers, agricultural, industrial and other workers.\textsuperscript{48}

During 4\textsuperscript{th} Five Year Plan, 1969-1974, efforts were proposed to be made to spread literacy amongst adults through the mobilization of voluntary workers and local community resources. The National Board of Adult Education was set up to advise Government on the development programmes. The programmes of farmers’ education and functional literacy were the main programmes to be developed.\textsuperscript{49}

The framers of 5\textsuperscript{th} Five Year Plan (1974-79) proposed to integrate AE with all development programmes where large masses were involved as producers or beneficiaries and the AE and functional literacy were to be supported by a network of village and block libraries. The National Book Trust was to concentrate on production, promotion and distribution of books and distribution and the training of personnel involved in publishing. The library programme was to be strengthened in respect of buildings, acquisition of books, staff, etc. The attempt was to develop a library system at the district level so that the district library was properly linked to the smaller units and could feed them. The states were also to be assisted by the Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation to strengthen the district, block and village level libraries for promoting non-formal education.\textsuperscript{50}

In 1978 the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was launched for eradication of illiteracy. The target of the programme was to cover by 1983 the entire illiterate population in the 15-35 age group. The programme had three integral component, literacy and general education, functionality and awareness.\textsuperscript{51}
In 1979 a committee chaired by D.S. Kothari was appointed to assess the working of the NAEP (largely confined to literacy which is not effective as it should be). Its functional aspects were almost non-existent according to the committee.\footnote{52}

In the Sixth Plan (1980-85) NFE for adults, particularly in the productive age group, was given priority. The Plan fixed the target of the age group 15-35 by 1990 along with another programme, the \textsuperscript{16}th point under the 20 point programmes of Prime Minister, where in NFE was given importance. For this all state governments were instructed to open specific numbers of Adult Education Centers. For the achievement of the objective it was felt that different programmes of formal, informal, and non formal nature will have to be organized; all available sources, organizations and agencies, universities, schools, media and people’s organizations will have to be involved in the programme. As a result of the efforts during the Sixth Plan, nearly 2.3 crore adult illiterates were covered.\footnote{53}

The National Education Policy 1986, developed by the Government of India on the basis of the Education Commission, identified that one of the major problem areas of education is that of adult illiteracy. So a new strategy was evolved to extend the education facilities to the disadvantaged sections of the society- the so called non-formal education.\footnote{51}

In May 1988 the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched which the aim of imparting functional literacy to 80 million illiterates in the age group of 15-35 by 1995. The focus of NLM would be on rural areas particularly women and persons belonging to SC and ST. And it aimed at creating a national consensus for mobilization of social forces and for active participation of the people to promote a qualitative change in the living and working conditions of the people.\footnote{55}

To ensure eradication of illiteracy by 1990 it becomes necessary that this segment of population is given special attention and very high priority during the Seventh Plan. In
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1986 a new programme Galled Mass Programme for Functional was introduced adding a new dimension to literacy work. “Each one teaches one” was the motto. Along with the mass movement of A.E., the Government of India has suggested a plan called “area approach” for the effective implementation of the programme. According to this programme each agency should take its own area or block and is fully responsible for the development of that area.\(^{56}\)

In 1988 February the government decided to establish Jana Siksha Nilayam (JSN) all over the country in a phased manner. The intention behind establishing JSN was to institutionalize post literacy and retention of literacy skill, providing facilities to enable the learners to continue their learning beyond elementary literacy and to create scope for application of their learning for improvement of their living condition.\(^{57}\)

4.6 National Literacy Mission in Kerala (NLM)

The NLM was launched in Kerala in 1988. As a result all the districts (except Ernakulam) were covered under the Total Literacy Campaign. Kerala was declared a totally literate state on 18 April 1991, covering all the districts of Kerala. The main focus was on development, with special attention to institutionalization of the programme. In brief the literacy programme of Kerala took on a new dimension from campaign approach to institutional approach.\(^{58}\)

Agencies Involved in NFE - Kerala

The following agencies were involved in the different stages of the programme:

State Resource Center, Kerala Saksharata Samithy, Kerala State Literacy Mission, Kerala Grandhasala Sangham, Kerala Assosiation for Non-Formal Education and Development, Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad, University Centers /Department of Adult &Continuing Education (Kerala, M.G and Calicut University), District Literacy Mission of all Districts, Panchayatraj Institute (3 tier) of Kerala, Development Department, Education Department, Jan Sikshan Sansthan, Literacy Forum etc.
In addition to the above agencies, a number of grass-root level organizations including women’s groups, youth groups etc. have actively participated in the programme.

In Kerala the Total Literacy Campaign was a grand success because of the remarkable cooperation and coordination among these agencies which was supported by “political will”.

Now these agencies are involved in the follow-up programmes, post-literacy programmes and continuing education programmes.

5. Need and Significance of the Study
Kerala is the first state in India to achieve total literacy. According to the 1991 census Kerala has achieved the highest rate of literacy, 90.6 percent as against the national average of 52.2 percent.

The libraries of Kerala played a vital role in the literacy programmes of Kerala. In 1937, as a first step, the libraries in Malabar started night classes for the illiterate adults. Later, in 1945 the libraries in Travancore (Travancore Grandhasala Sangham) voluntarily took up the literacy programme as one of its main activities. As a result, in 1975, UNSECO awarded KRUPSKYA mention to KGS in recognition of their activities in the field of NFE.

Kerala stands first in many such developing fields. Statistics shows that, in population control, health, school education, girls’ education, child mortality rate, health awareness etc. the position of Kerala is among the developed countries. These achievements are certainly because of its advanced literacy level.

So it would be very important to investigate the background of such an outstanding achievement. For this we should go through the educational and literacy programmes implemented in Kerala.
Yet no in-depth studies about the role of the KGS in the field of NFE have been reported. So this study will be helpful to the policy makers in the state to make necessary changes.

Another significance of the study is that now the second stage of the literacy programme, i.e., the post-literacy programme/continuing education programme, is being launched. This study attempts to analyse the performance of various public libraries of the KGS in the field of NFE, with special reference to continuing education.

8. Statement of Problem
The problem is stated as the “Role of Kerala Grandhasala Sangham in Non-Formal Education in Kerala.”

Definition of terms
The definition of public library approved by UNESCO and IFLA is “Public libraries are those libraries which serve the entire population of a community or region free of charge or for a nominal fee.”

In the Kerala context public libraries include State Library, District Libraries, Taluk Libraries, Panchayat Libraries, and libraries affiliated to the Kerala State Library Council.

Ahmed and Coombs (1975) defined the term ‘non-formal education’ as any organised educational activity outside the formal education system—whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity—that is to serve an identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives.

In the present study focus is on NFE programmes organised by Kerala Grandhasala Sangham (KGS). Hence an operational definition is necessary. KGS organises a variety of programmes like empowerment programmes for women career development.
for youth general awareness programmes, aiming at total education of the community outside the established formal system. These programmes are organised by mobilising resources from the community with a view to enhance the knowledge level, positive changes in behaviour and desirable skills of the target groups for a better living.

Kerala refers to all 4 districts of the state chosen for the study.

7 Objectives of the study

7.1. To study the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham in relation to

   7.1.1 Organization and conduct

   7.1.2 Administration

   7.1.3 Resource mobilization

   7.1.4 Information dissemination and Extension programmes

7.2 To analyze the role, functions and programmes of the public libraries affiliated to the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham.

7.3 To identify the areas of Non-Formal Education implemented through public libraries.

7.4 To explore the possibility of improving the performance of public libraries in Kerala

7.5 To suggest remedial measures based on the study to strengthen the situation.

8. Scope of the Study

The study has focused on activities such as literacy, continuing education activities, cultural and social awareness programmes, extension and outreach and all other community interactive functions of the public libraries, other than just lending reading materials.
The different aspects analysed include the methods, relevance, effectiveness, financial aspects and follow-up programmes. By studying the functions and programmes of public libraries in NFE the present status of public libraries in providing NFE can be revealed. By analysing different NFE programmes conducted by libraries, their strength, opportunities and limitations can be identified. The study can work as a guideline for future. It will also help to improve the performance levels of public libraries.

9. Methodology in Brief
The universe of the study is the public libraries all over Kerala. Five districts out of 14 districts have been selected as sample. Primary and secondary data have been collected and analyzed for the study. Survey method has been adopted for collecting primary data. The tools used were questionnaires, interviews and observation.

The secondary data have been collected from annual reports of the KGS, journals, Silver and Golden Jubilee Souvenirs of the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham, published and unpublished research reports and other relevant publications of the Government (State and Central).

Appropriate statistical techniques such as averages and percentage have been used in analyzing the data. In addition, maps diagrams and charts have also been used in appropriate places.

10. Organization of Thesis
The report of the study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the concept of public libraries and the concept of Non-Formal Education and the whole work is briefly described. The second chapter deals with the Public Library movement of Kerala and the unique nature of the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham. Related studies and literature are reviewed in the third chapter. The fourth chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the study. The fifth chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data. The final chapter gives findings, suggestions and conclusions emerging from the study. At the end a bibliography, appendices and tools used for the study are given.
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