8.1 Introduction

The study on the present status of public libraries in Malabar with respect to their organisation, administration, resources, activities and services brought out information to find out their effectiveness and efficiency. In this concluding chapter a summary of the findings of the study, tenability of hypotheses, suggestions for the improvement of functions and operations of the libraries, a blue-print of the future of the public libraries in Kerala, and suggestions of area for further research are presented.

8.2 Summary of the Findings

The study on the various aspects of the public libraries has revealed many findings, which are grouped under various headings as follows:

8.2.1 General Characteristics of the Public Libraries in Malabar

1. In Malabar, Kannur is in the fore-front of establishing a large number of libraries, followed by Kozhikode. Wayanad registers slowness in this progress.

2. Among the grant-in- aid libraries, the highest number of libraries is in E grade (18.7%), followed by C (17.6%), D (16.6%), A(15%), F (15.0%), B (14.4%), and the libraries under other governing bodies are the lowest in number (2.7%).

3. Only 10.2% of the libraries were established before 1947, more than one third of the libraries (36.9%) were established during the period 1948-67, 27.8% of the libraries were established during 1968-87, and 25.1% of the libraries were established after 1988.

4. The number of libraries is more in the rural area (80.2%) than in the urban area (19.8%).

5. As many as 88.2% of the libraries are working independently and only 11.8% are working as part of parent institutions.
6. A majority of the libraries under study (65.8%) have registered as per Societies Registration Act, and 34.2% of the libraries have not registered as per the Act.

8.2.2 Different Sections in the Libraries

1. All libraries have a separate general books section, 68.4% of them have a reference section, and 92.5% a periodical section.

8.2.3 Resources

8.2.3.1 Information Resources

1. Only less than half of the libraries (45.5%) have a book selection committee.

2. No library under study adopts a book selection policy.

3. A large majority of the libraries (84.4%) use publishers’ catalogues as the main book selection tool.


5. The libraries under other governing bodies have the highest mean of 13677 total book stock, 1107 reference books and 557 text books, whereas A grade libraries have the highest mean of 1196 children’s books.

6. The libraries in Palakkad have the highest average number of 6438 books. The libraries in Kozhikode have the highest average number of 443 reference books. The libraries in Wayanad have the highest average number of 465 text books. The libraries in Kasaragod have the highest average number of 864 children’s books.

7. The mean number of different categories of books available in the public libraries is more in the urban area than in the rural area.

8. No district in Malabar agrees with the IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, 2001 for book stock that “an established book collection should be between 1.5 and 2.5 books per-capita.
9. The average cost of books in the public libraries in all districts is much less, the highest in Kozhikode (Rs. 30.96) and the lowest in Palakkad (Rs. 19.27).

10. The public libraries possess an average of 3571 fiction books and 1557 non-fiction books.

11. A grade libraries have the highest average number of 7743 fiction books, whereas the libraries under other governing bodies have the highest average number of 6743 non-fiction books.

12. Palakkad tops first with the average number of 4502 fiction books and the libraries in Wayanad possess the highest average number of 1899 non-fiction collection.

13. The average number of fiction and non-fiction books acquired by the public libraries is more in the urban areas.

14. Nearly 60% of the fiction collection in the public libraries is of cheap quality, mostly detective novels, and non-fiction collection does not cover all subjects.

15. The public libraries in Malabar stocked an average of 4497 Malayalam books, 572 English books, 114 Hindi books, and 189 other language books such as Tamil, Kannada and Sanskrit.

16. The highest average number of 10564 Malayalam books and 300 Hindi books are stocked in A grade libraries. The highest average number of 6330 English Books is stocked by the libraries under other governing bodies. D grade libraries have the highest mean of 330 other language books such as Kannada and Tamil.

17. The highest average number of 5217 Malayalam books and 214 Hindi books are stocked by the public libraries in Palakkad, whereas the highest average number of 663 English books are stocked by the public libraries in Kannur. The public libraries in Kasaragod and Palakkad have the highest average number of “other language” books.
18. The highest average number of Malayalam and English books is available in the libraries in the urban areas, whereas more number of Hindi books is available in the libraries in the rural areas.

19. A vast majority of the collection in the public libraries (87.52%) is Malayalam books, while English, Hindi and other languages occupy a very small portion.

20. There is no steady increase in the acquisition of new books in the public libraries during the period from 1999-2000 to 2003-04, the acquisition ranging from an average of 229 books in 2001-02 to 337 books in 1999-2000.

21. The libraries in Malabar subscribe to an average of 3 children’s periodicals, 12 general periodicals and 5 subject periodicals.

22. The highest average number of 6 children’s magazines, 33 general magazines, and 38 total periodicals are subscribed to in the libraries under other governing bodies, whereas the highest number of 8 subject periodicals are subscribed to in A grade libraries.

23. Kozhikode occupies the first position in the subscription with an average number of 4 children’s periodicals. The highest average number of 14 general magazines are subscribed to by the libraries in Wayanad. The highest average number of 7 subject periodicals is subscribed to by the public libraries in Malappuram. Kozhikode comes first, with a mean of 21 total periodicals.

24. There is only an insignificant variation between the mean number of the children’s magazines subscribed to in rural libraries and urban libraries, whereas the mean number of general magazines, subject periodicals and total number of periodicals are subscribed to by the libraries is higher in the urban area.

25. Only a small percentage of the libraries (25%) keep the bound volumes of some of the important periodicals subscribed to in the library.

26. More than half of the libraries (54.30%) lend periodicals to members.
27. More than half of the libraries (56.1%) subscribe to between 5 and 9 Malayalam newspapers, a high percentage of libraries (93.2%) subscribe to 1 or 2 English newspapers and an insignificant percentage of libraries (3.7%) subscribe to between 1 and 3 “other language” newspapers.

28. Only a small percentage of the libraries (11.8%) have a poor collection of non-book materials such as CDs and Floppies.

29. No library has special collection such as manuscripts and rare books.

30. As many as 72.19% the libraries preserve the books by cleaning them regularly, 17.6% of libraries use pesticides, 76.47% bind the worn out books and 10% of the libraries preserve books by covering them using paper.

31. More than half of the libraries (59.6%) weed out out-dated and worn out books from the collection, and keep them separately. This finding agrees with the IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, 2001 that “the library collection requires a constant inflow of new material and outflow of old material to ensure that it remains relevant to the community and at an accepted level of accuracy.”

32. A vast majority of the libraries (95.19%) conduct stock verification regularly.

33. A majority of the libraries (69.24%) do not classify the books, a small percentage of the libraries (4.3%) use Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme (DDC) to classify books, an insignificant percentage of the libraries (1.6%) use modified form of DDC, and 1.1% adopt a local classification method.

34. A large majority of the libraries (87.06%) use the cataloguing method in which the bibliographic details are furnished in a register or loose sheets subject wise. A small percentage of libraries (4.5%) use “Classified Catalogue Code”(CCC) to catalogue the books, 1.7% of the libraries use “Anglo American Cataloguing Rules”(AACR) to catalogue the books.

35. A majority of the libraries (81.6%) use the ledger as the physical form of catalogue, a small percentage of the libraries use the card catalogue (6.2%) and the sheet catalogue (10.3%). Two libraries under other governing bodies under
study, have been replacing traditional library catalogues by machine readable catalogues using locally developed software.

36. In nearly half of the libraries (48.11%), the books are arranged merely on the basis of accession numbers and 44.32% of the libraries adopted subject-wise arrangement of books. In a very few libraries (5.95%) books are arranged scientifically by class numbers.

37. Nearly half of the libraries (45.71%) provide open access system to the members to browse books directly from the stack room.

8.2.3.2 Finance

1. There is a fluctuation in the total revenue of the public libraries from 1999-2000 to 2003-04, the maximum being in 2002-03 with an average of Rs.63, 078.27 and minimum in 1999-2000 with an average of Rs.39, 414.01.

2. There is no steady increase in the total expenditure of the public libraries during the period from 1999-2000 to 2003-04.

3. A very small amount is spent for different items such as books and periodicals, staff, building, furniture, and miscellaneous by the public libraries.

4. More than half of the grant-in-aid libraries (55.6%) have received the RRRLF grant for different purposes such as purchase of books and furniture, construction and extension of library buildings.

5. The per-capita income of the public libraries is found very low in the districts in Malabar. The per-capita income of the public libraries is the highest in Kannur (Rs.9.10) and the lowest in Malappuram (Rs.2.58).

6. The State government allocated only a very small percentage of its expenditure on education for the public library development during the period from 1999-2000 to 2003-04 which varies from 0.20% to 0.26%.

7. In all districts in Malabar, the per-capita expenditure on reading materials is very meagre. Kannur records the highest per-capita expenditure of Rs.2.71 for
reading materials on literate population and Malappuram records the lowest per-capita expenditure of only Rs.1.22 for reading materials.

8. The per-capita expenditure for reading materials on members is too meagre to meet the various informational needs of the community. The libraries in Malappuram have the highest per-capita expenditure of Rs.57.09 on members and Kannur ranks last with the per-capita expenditure of only Rs.32.57.

9. The amount spent for the staff allowance is very meagre. Kannur comes first position with the per-capita expenditure of Rs.1.23 on staff; and Malappuram lags behind with the per-capita expenditure of only Rs.0.45 on staff.

8.2.3.3 Human Resources

1. Among the library staff, a majority of them (80.1%) are part-time and 19.9% are full time workers.

2. A majority of the librarians (85.03%) are not professionally qualified, whereas 12.30% of the librarians have done certificate course in Library Science, and 2.67% of the librarians are graduates in Library Science.

3. More than half of the librarians (56.7%) have participated in the conferences or workshops conducted by library authorities. This finding agrees with the IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, 2001 which stressed the importance of contacts as follows: “In addition to in-service training staff should be given opportunities to attend conferences and workshops, relevant to their ability to carry out their work.”

4. The number of librarians who has basic computer operating skill constitutes only a small percentage (20.3%).

5. No separate fund is allocated for training the librarians by the public libraries under study. This finding does not agree with the IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, 2001 which state that “0.5% to 1% of the total budget should be earmarked for training purpose.”
6. An amount of Rs. 6,000 was given to the librarians of A to D grade libraries and Rs. 3,600 was given to the librarians of E and F grade libraries annually during 2003-04. The former LLA libraries, panchayath/municipality libraries, and libraries formerly under Scheduled Caste Developing Corporation give monthly salaries to the library staff in the State government scale. The salary fixed by the library management is given to the staff in the libraries under other governing bodies.

8.2.3.4 Technological Resources

1. Only a small percentage of libraries (12.83%) possess computers.

2. Only 4.8% of the libraries provide Internet facility to the members, where on an average of 15 to 20 members utilise this facility every day.

3. An amount varying from Rs. 5 to Rs. 30 per hour is collected as Internet usage charges from the users.

8.2.3.5 Physical Resources

1. A majority of the libraries (73.8%) have their own buildings and sites with an average plinth area of 939.03 sq. ft. The average size of the library building is the largest in the libraries under other governing bodies (Mean 3166.67 sq.ft.) and the smallest in F grade libraries (Mean 450.51 sq.ft.).

2. The public libraries in Kannur own the largest sized library buildings (Mean 1036.06 sq.ft.) compared to the libraries in other districts and the libraries in Palakkad own the smallest sized (Mean 644.53 sq.ft.) library buildings.

3. The average size of the library building is larger in the urban area than in the rural area.

4. The size of the library buildings does not agree with the IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, 2001 which state that “the library should have adequate space to implement the full range of services.”
5. More than half of the libraries (50.27%) have television, 34.22% of the libraries have radios, 8.56% of the libraries have tape-recorders, 3.74% of the libraries have other equipments such as public addressing system, and video set.

6. A majority of the libraries have insufficient furniture both for stacking and for reading facilities.

7. In majority of the libraries, the ventilation, fan, and lighting facility are only partly satisfactory. Only 27.3% of the libraries provide drinking water facility to the users.

8.2.4 Visitors

1. There is only a marginal increase in the number of visitors in the public libraries during the period from 1999-2000 to 2003-04.

2. The total average number of visitors of the public libraries per year ranges between 21732 and 30794.

3. The average number of visitors is the highest in A grade libraries (mean 27034) and the lowest in F grade libraries (mean 10162).


4. Users are more from the urban community and less from the rural community.

8.2.5. Members

1. On an average of 317 men, 102 women, and 82 children registered themselves as members of the public libraries at the end of the year 2003-04.

2. The public libraries under other governing bodies have the highest average number of 1710 members. Among the libraries, which are affiliated to the State
Library Council, the average number of members is the highest in A grade libraries (Mean 1085) and the lowest in F grade (Mean 235).

3. The average number of members is the highest in Kozhikode (Mean 619) and the lowest in Palakkad (Mean 393).

4. The average number of members is more in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

5. A majority of the libraries (90%) provide membership to children.

6. The percentage of members with total literate population in six districts of Malabar appears insignificant. The highest is in Kannur, where 8.33% of its literate population are members of the public libraries; and the lowest in Malappuram, where only 2.13% of the literate population are members.

7. In addition to the ordinary membership provided by all libraries, 42% of the libraries issue life membership, and 4% of the libraries issue patronage.

8. No library provides free service to adults and only half of them (50.3%) provide free service to the children.

9. Nearly one third of the libraries (32.83%) collect membership fee which varies from Rs. 11 to Rs. 100. More than a quarter of the libraries (25.28%) collect above Rs.100/- as membership fee. In the case of life membership, the fee varies from Rs.100 to Rs.2500. In patronage, the membership fee ranges from Rs.1, 000 to Rs.10, 000.

10. The practice of charging users for services and membership does not agree with the IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, 2001 which state that “charging users for services and membership should not be used as a source of revenue for public libraries, as it makes the ability to pay a criterion in determining who can use a public library.”
8.2.6 Administration

1. A vast majority of the libraries (90.9%) are directly under the control of the State Library Council; 6.4% of the libraries, even though affiliated to the State Library Council, are under the control of local administrative units such as panchayaths/municipalities; and 2.7% are under the administrative control of other governing bodies.

2. All public libraries have a separate library committee for managing the library activities. A majority of the library committees (81.8%) have included social workers, 69.5% of them have included political workers, 59.9% have academicians, 40.11% have panchayath/municipal council members, and only 10% of them have members from other categories such as government employees, labourers, and students.

3. A majority of the library committees (87.17%) meet once a month, 6.42% of the committees meet twice a month, 4.81% meet bimonthly and 1.6% of the library committees meet once in 3 months.

4. In a majority of the public libraries, the membership registers are incomplete and inaccurate and are poorly maintained. Visitor registers are not maintained in most of the libraries.

8.2.7 Services

1. Nearly half of the libraries (48.1%) lend one book at a time, 39.6% of them lend 2 books at a time, 11.2% of them lend 3 books, and 1.1% of them lend 5 books at a time to the members.

2. More than one third of the libraries (36.4%) lend books for 7 to 10 days, more than half of them (56.1%) lend books for two weeks, a very small percentage of the libraries (2.7%) lend books for 3 weeks, and 4.8% of the libraries lend books for one month.

3. A majority of the libraries (94.1%) provide the facility to extend the loan period of books.
4. More than half of the librarians (56.45%) have taken action to recover the overdue books from the members.

5. Nearly half of the libraries (48.11%) do not collect any fee from the members for the overdue books.

6. A majority of the libraries (88.2%) adopt the ledger system for the circulation of books.

7. Only in one library under study the circulation system is computerised using a locally developed software.

8. On an average of 4300 fiction, 1184 non-fiction and 1566 children’s books were issued during 2003-04.

9. The average number of different categories of books lent out during 2003-04 is high in A grade libraries, fiction (mean 9658), non-fiction (mean 2018), children’s literature (Mean 2639) and totalling (mean 13972). The number of different categories of books lent is less in the libraries of F grade, fiction (mean 2597), non-fiction (mean 270), children’s books (mean 493) and totally (mean 3970).

10. Malappuram occupies the highest position in the total number of fiction books lent out during the year 2003-04 (Mean 6861) and Kasaragod occupies the last position (mean 3568).

11. Wayanad occupies the first position in the total number of non-fiction books lent in the year 2003-04 (Mean 2241) and Kozhikode comes last (mean 809).

12. Palakkad occupies the first position in the total number of children’s books lent in the year 2003-04 (Mean 2023) and Kozhikode occupies the last position (mean 1175).

13. Malappuram occupies the first position with regard to the number of the total books lent in the year 2003-04 (Mean 8511) and Kasaragod occupies the last position (mean 5502).
14. The libraries in the urban areas stand first in the average number of different categories of books issued.

15. There is no steady increase in the number of books lent out during the period from 1999-2000 to 2003-04.

16. A majority of the libraries (60.43%) provide reference service to the members. But the resources available in the libraries for this service are too meagre and not constitute standard reference books to provide this service satisfactorily.

17. Referral service is offered by only a small percentage of libraries (25.67%) and the activities undertaken under this service is only minimal.

18. Only a small percentage of the libraries (29.41%) offer service to the self education of neo-literates and it is at a minimal level.

19. Only a small percentage of the libraries (8.56%) function as academic study centres and their services are not satisfactory.

20. Only a small percentage of the libraries (10.70%) provide service to distance education, but not at a satisfactory level.

21. A majority of the public libraries fail to fulfil the educational function.

22. More than half of the libraries (53%) offer community information service to the public at a minimal level.

23. The public libraries fail to fulfil the role of disseminator of information at a satisfactory level.

24. A majority of the libraries (78.6%) offer children’s service.

25. The number of children utilising the public library is very less. Only an average of below 10 children utilise the children’s services per day in 38% of the libraries, 10 to 15 children in 23.5% of the libraries, 16-20 in 11.8% of the
libraries, 21-25 in 5.3% of the libraries and above 25 children in 4.8% of the libraries.

26. The children’s collection includes books on different subjects, but science books are less.

27. The children’s book collection has a mean of 577 Malayalam books, 118 English books, and 65 books in other languages such as Hindi, Tamil and Kannada.

28. A majority of the libraries have poor special collections such as atlases, charts, and audio–video cassettes for children.

29. A majority of the libraries which provide children’s service (70.07%) conduct different programmes for children.

30. Only less than a quarter of the public libraries (21.39%) provide special services to women. Under this service an average of 931 books were collected especially for the women only.

31. The libraries which provide special services for women conduct several programmes for them.

32. Only a small percentage of the libraries (25.13%) provide mobile library service in the community.

33. An average of 70 women, 20 men, and 23 children have taken membership under mobile library service in 2003-04.

34. Only less than half of the libraries (43%) have participated in literacy activities.

35. An average of 59 illiterates have utilised literacy service provided by the public libraries.
36. Only an insignificant number of libraries (4.28%) provide some social services to the disadvantaged groups such as old-age persons, patients in hospitals, and orphanages.

37. Only one library among the surveyed libraries provides service to ethnic groups.

38. A significant majority of the libraries (88.77%) conduct various cultural programmes for the people.

39. Only a small number of libraries (8.6%) have been engaged in literary activities through their hand written magazines.

40. A very small percentage of the libraries (2.67%) provide user education programme.

41. More than half of the libraries (54.12%) provide personal assistance to the members to locate the books, to consult the catalogue and such other assistance.

42. Only one fourth of the libraries (26.74%) provide service to schools and it is at a minimal level.

43. Only one library under other governing bodies participated in resource-sharing.

44. Among the surveyed libraries, only one grant-in-aid library enjoys the facility of borrowing books from the book-bank established by the State library Council.

45. Most of the public libraries make the public aware of the importance of libraries.

46. More than half of the librarians (56.7%) have adopted direct observation for evaluating the various services and activities of the libraries.

47. Public libraries have contributed more in fulfilling the recreational and cultural roles rather than informational or educational roles in the society.
48. The role of public libraries has not been realized much in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas.

**8.2.8 Access to Service**

1. A majority of the libraries (68.4%) keep their lending sections open only for one to four hours a day, whereas more than half of the libraries (55.6%) keep their periodical sections open for more than 9 hours a day.

2. More than one third of the libraries (34.8%) are kept open all days in a week, more than half of the libraries (59.4%) are kept open six days in a week and 5.8% of the libraries are kept open 3 to 5 days in a week.

**8.2.9 Problems of the Public Libraries**

1. The district library authorities of Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Malappuram, and Palakkad and a majority of the librarians (87.70%) find inadequate finance as the main problem in the proper functioning of the libraries.

**8.2.10 Measurement of User Evaluation**

**8.2.10.1 Individual Characteristics**

1. There is an active participation of youth in using the public library. Employed people, the school educated, and the middle income group constituted the core users among the members, but the hard fact is that women have a poor representation among the members.

2. Children around 13 years of age are the common users of the public libraries. Children of both genders represent almost equal percentages, boys (51.6%) and girls (48.4%) in library membership.

3. A large majority of the members (87.2%) required information to solve various problems of their day-to-day lives.

4. The adult members visit the public libraries more to borrow and return books than for other purposes.
5. Among the child members there is no significant difference in the motivation to visit the public libraries. A majority of children (76.7%) give highest preference to borrow and return magazines and books.

6. The members are interested more in general books than in other categories of books in the public libraries.

7. The members visit the public libraries more for the benefit of acquisition of knowledge than for other motivations.

8. Among the members, there is no significant difference in the preference to books in different languages. A majority of members (84.4%) prefer to borrow more Malayalam books from the libraries than books in other languages.

9. A vast majority of the members (90.1%) do not visit other libraries to meet their information requirement.

10. The use pattern of members in different locations differs significantly to meet their reading requirements. Members in urban areas visit other libraries more frequently than those in rural areas.

8.2.10.2 Measurement of Library Use

1. There is significant difference in the frequency of visits to the library by the adult members. As many as 51.4% of members visit the public libraries more than once a week, whereas 27.1% of members are daily visitors. The frequency of visits to the library by the remaining members are low, the percentage of which varies from 12% to 0.8%.

2. There is significant difference in the frequency of visits to the library by the adult members of both genders. Male members visit the library more frequently than female members.

3. The frequency of visits to the library by the members belonging to various education groups is not significantly different. A majority of the members of different educational levels visit the library frequently.
4. There is significant difference in the frequency of visits to the public library made by the members of different occupational status. Unemployed and retired categories visit library more frequently than the students and employed groups.

5. No significant difference is observed in the frequency of visits to the public library by the children of both genders. Most of them visit the library frequently.

6. More than half of the library members (55.9%) spend 1-2 hours in the public libraries, whereas the remaining members spend less than 1 hour in the public libraries.

7. Significant difference is observed in the duration of library use between men and women. Male members spend more time in the library than female members.

8. The time spent by members of different education groups is significantly different. The members having a graduate degree and post graduate/technical qualifications spend more time in the library than members having only school education.

9. The time spent by the members belonging to various occupational groups is not significantly different. Members of various occupational levels spend almost equal time in the public library.

10. There is significant difference in the method adopted by male members and female members to locate books in the library. A majority of male members (63.4%) consult library catalogue to locate the books, whereas a majority of female members (65.5%) locate books directly from the library collection.

11. There is no significant difference in the methods of location of books in the library collection by the members of various educational levels and occupational status. A majority of the members of different education groups
and occupational categories primarily consult the library catalogue to locate books in the library collection.

8.2.10.3 Evaluation of Services

1. On the whole, less than half of the adult members (49.8%) rated the library collection as good, nearly one quarter of the members (24.9%) rated the collection as very good, 23.9% rated as only partly good, and the remaining small percentage of members rated it as poor or very poor.

2. The opinion of members of both genders regarding the quality of collections in the libraries is significantly different. More percentage of female members (80.4%) and comparatively less percentage of male members (73.2%) have a good opinion regarding the quality of collections in the libraries.

3. There is significant difference in the opinion of members belonging to various educational levels regarding the quality of collections in the libraries. A higher percentage of members having only school education and graduate members rated the collections in the libraries as good, whereas a higher percentage of post-graduates/technically qualified members rated the quality of collections in the libraries as only partly good.

4. The opinion regarding the quality of library collections among the members of different occupational status is not significantly different. A majority of the members of different occupational groups have a good opinion regarding the quality of the collections in the public libraries.

5. Among the children of both genders, the difference is not significant regarding the perception on the quality of children’s collections in the libraries. A majority of the child members (60.8%) have a good opinion regarding the quality of collections for children in the public libraries.

6. The opinion of members of both genders regarding the adequacy of availability of books in the libraries is not significantly different. A majority of
male members (78.3%) and female members (75.7%) are of the view that the books they required are only partly available in the libraries.

7. The opinion of members belonging to different education groups regarding to the adequacy of availability of books in the libraries is significantly different. The higher percentage of graduate members (81.1%) as well as post-graduates/technically qualified members (86%), and comparatively a lower percentage of school educated members (75.1%) are only partly satisfied with the availability of books in the libraries.

8. There is no significant difference in the opinion of members belonging to different occupational status regarding the adequacy of availability of books in the libraries. A majority of students (77.9%), employed (77%), unemployed (79.2%), and retired categories (81.1%) are only partly satisfied with the availability of books in the libraries.

9. The perception of child-members of both genders on the availability of children’s books in the collection is not significantly different. A majority of children of both genders, male (68.5%) and female (67.6%) are of the view that their reading requirements are only partly met by the children’s collections.

10. There is no significant difference in the perception of children studying in different classes on the adequacy of availability of books in the children’s collection.

11. A majority of the library members are satisfied with the location of the libraries and the various physical facilities available in the libraries.

12. On the whole, a majority of the library members (63.3%) find that the classification and cataloguing system followed in the libraries are helpful to them to locate books easily; whereas for 31.8% of members, it is only partly helpful; and for 4.9% of members, it is not at all helpful.

13. There is significant difference between the perception of members of both genders regarding the helpfulness of classification and cataloguing systems
followed in the libraries. The percentage of members who find that the classification and cataloguing system followed in the libraries are helpful to them to locate books easily; are more among female members (68.9%) and comparatively less among male members (61.7%).

14. There is no significant difference in the perception of members belonging to different educational levels regarding the helpfulness of classification and cataloguing system followed in the libraries. For a majority of members of different education groups, school educated (62%), graduates (65.3%), and post-graduates/technically qualified members (65.7%), the classification and cataloguing system followed in the libraries are helpful to them to retrieve the books easily.

15. The members of different occupational categories show no significant difference in their opinion regarding the helpfulness of the classification and cataloguing system followed in the libraries. A majority of members of different occupational status, students (61.7%), employed (64.6%), unemployed (61.5%), and retired (60.2%) are of the view that the classification and cataloguing system followed in the public libraries are helpful them to retrieve the books easily.

16. On the whole, many of the members (36.9%) are not fully satisfied with the method of arrangement of books in the libraries. Only a little more than half of the members (56.7%) are satisfied with the method of arrangement of books in the libraries, and some of them (6.4%) felt dissatisfied with the unscientific organisation.

17. The opinion of members of both genders, different education levels, and various occupation groups regarding the arrangement of books in the shelves is not significantly different. A majority of the members of both genders, different education groups, and different occupational categories felt that the arrangement of books in the libraries is easy for them to locate the books they required.

18. There is no significant difference in the perception of members of both genders regarding the adequacy of number of books lent at a time. A majority of
members of both genders, male (67.6%) and female (68.5%) are satisfied with the number of books issued at a time.

19. Among the members of various education groups, there is a significant difference in the perception regarding the adequacy of books issued at a time. A majority of members with only school education (69.4%), and graduate members (68.0%), whereas only 55% post-graduates/technically qualified members are satisfied with the number of books issued at a time.

20. There is no significant difference in the opinion of members of different occupational groups regarding the adequacy of number of books lent at a time. A majority of students, employed, unemployed, and retired categories are satisfied with the number of books issued at a time.

21. A vast majority of the adult members (94.3%) felt that the existing working hours of the public libraries are convenient.

22. There is no significant difference in the opinion of members of both genders regarding the convenience of working hours of the public libraries. A vast majority of male members (94%) and female members (95.4%) opined that the working hours of the public libraries are convenient.

23. A majority of members belonging to different education groups- school educated (95.4%), graduates (92.4%) and post-graduates/technically qualified members (93.1%) felt that the working hours of the libraries are convenient.

24. The opinion of members belonging to various occupational categories regarding the convenience of working hours of the public libraries is not significantly different. A vast majority of the students (93.2%) employed (94.0%), unemployed (96%) and retired groups (98.4%) reported that the working hours of the library are convenient.

25. No significant difference is observed in the perception of child members of both genders regarding the convenience of working hours of the public
libraries. A vast majority of them opined that the working hours of the public libraries are convenient for them.

26. There is no significant difference in the perception of members of both genders regarding the adequacy of total working days of the public libraries. A majority of both male members (72.5%) and female members (76.9%) are satisfied with the total working days of the public libraries.

27. There is significant difference in the perception of members belonging to various educational levels regarding the adequacy of total working days of the public libraries. The members who acquired only school education (74.6%) and graduate members (74%) are more satisfied with the total working days of the public libraries than post-graduates/technically qualified members (63.2%).

28. There is a significant difference in the perception of members of various occupational status regarding the adequacy of total working days of the public libraries. The retired category has a high degree of satisfaction with the total working days of the public libraries than students, employed, and unemployed categories.

29. There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of various services and programmes between the members of both genders and among different education categories. A majority of them are aware of the various library services and programmes.

30. The members of different occupational groups show significant difference in the level of awareness of the various services and programmes of the public libraries. A higher percentage of employed (72.9%) and retired categories (77%) are aware of various services and programmes of the public libraries than the other groups of students (60.6%) and unemployed (64.8%).

31. The members of both genders show significant difference in the degree of satisfaction regarding the library services and programmes. A larger percentage of female members (87.5%) expressed their satisfaction regarding the various library services and programmes than male members (77.6%).
32. There is no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction regarding the library services and programmes among the different education groups of the members. A majority of members belonging to different educational levels – school (80.9%), graduate (76.7%), and post-graduate/technically qualified (80%) are satisfied with the various services and programmes of the public libraries.

33. There is no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction with the services and programmes of the public libraries among the members of different occupational categories. A large majority of members of different occupational groups- students (81.9%), employed (78.2%), unemployed (78.5%), and retired (85.3%) are satisfied with the various services and programmes provided by the public libraries.

34. A majority of the members have a positive attitude towards the library staff.

8.3 The Hypotheses Tested

The following are the hypotheses tested for the study:

1. The development of public libraries in Malabar is in a slow pace.

2. The existing condition of public libraries in Malabar with respect to library resources including staff, finance, technology, and physical facilities are inadequate and not satisfactory to meet the various requirements of the users.

3. The library resources of the public libraries are not organised on a scientific way, and fast and efficient retrieval of information has not been provided to the members.

4. The various services provided by the public libraries are not effective and not efficient to meet the various needs of the users.

5. The public libraries have contributed more in fulfilling the recreational or cultural needs rather than the informational or educational requirements of the society.
6. The use of the public library resources and services by the different categories of community is very low.

The analysis of the data discussed in detail in chapter 4, 5, 6, and 7 helped to answer the basic questions raised in the study and test the tenability of each of the hypotheses. The study on the whole, substantiated hypothesis 1. The study of the genesis and development of public libraries in Malabar, as presented in chapter 4 has revealed that the development of public libraries in Malabar is in a slow pace.

The analysis of the data in chapter 5 substantiated hypothesis 2. Examination of the existing condition of the public libraries with respect to their collection, finance, staff, technological resources, and physical facilities has revealed that they are inadequate both in quantity and quality to meet the various requirements of the users.

The analysis of the data in chapter 5 also substantiated hypothesis 3. Examination of the existing methods of organisation of reading materials such as classification, cataloguing, and arrangements reveals that a vast majority of the libraries do not organise them on a scientific way, and fast and efficient retrieval of information has not been provided to the members.

The analysis of the data in chapter 6 substantiated hypothesis 4. Examination of the various services provided by the public libraries show that they are not effective and efficient to meet the various needs of the users.

The study also provides ample evidence to substantiate hypothesis 5 that the public libraries under study have contributed more in fulfilling the recreational/cultural role rather than the informational/educational requirement of the society.

The analysis of the data in chapter 5 and 6 also substantiated hypothesis 6. Examination of utilisation of the library resources and various services by the public libraries by different categories of community members are less, especially by women and children.
8.4 Suggestions

The study has revealed that the quality and quantity of resources, services, and facilities in the public libraries are very far from the standards and guidelines proposed by the *IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Public Library Development, 2001*. They fail to meet effectively the basic functions of the public libraries for which they are established. The following suggestions have been made for the proper functioning and operations of the public libraries.

8.4.1 Need for a Standard

Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Kolkatta established by the Government of India for the development of public libraries in India, in collaboration with all the State library authorities and library associations should develop public library standards and guidelines considering all its aspects. The *IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Public Library Development, 2001* can be used as a base for the formulation of the standards.

8.4.2. Role of Governments

The role of governments in the development of public libraries is stressed in the UNESCO Seminar on Public Library Development held in Africa in 1962 at the University of Nigeria. It has recommended that “the government should be asked to include the development of public libraries as an integral part of the general educational development plan of the country.” Likewise the Government of India/Kerala should take the following steps:

1. The State and Central governments should recognise public libraries as national assets and should provide adequate funds and facilities for the proper development of them.

2. In Kerala Public Libraries (Granthisala Sanghom) Act, 1989; there is a provision for an amount of not more than 1% of total education budget to be set apart for public libraries. Since this amount is meagre, it is suggested that the State
government should raise their grant at least to 5% of the total education budget for the public libraries.

3. The library network should be designed at State level by linking State central library, district central libraries, research and special libraries by the State government.

4. The three tiers of local administrative units should include public libraries in their development priorities and should extend adequate support for their proper development.

8.4.3 Real Leadership

The three tier library authorities at State, district, and taluk level; library committees; and librarians have a prime role in the public library development. The library under real leadership can become an active and effective education centre. The role of the library councils should be extended to the following.

1. The State Library Council as the apex administrative body has a crucial role in the establishment of uniform library procedures within the State.

2. The State Library Council should take steps to develop comprehensive library software suitable for public libraries which can accommodate Malayalam language with the help of government agencies.

3. The State Library Council may take the initiative to prepare a union catalogue of books in the public libraries and this should be updated periodically.

4. The State Library Council should endeavour to establish more libraries in the rural areas.

5. Strategies should be employed by the State Library Council to cultivate a reading habit among rural populace especially in women and children.

6. The State library authority should make a separate allocation in the budget to enable the staff of the public libraries to get training in information and communication technology.
7. The library councils at different levels and librarians themselves should create awareness among the public about the importance of the public library and its services through user education programmes.

**8.4.4 Free Public Library Service**

1. Public library service should be free to provide access to all irrespective of their economic status, otherwise a nominal fee of not more than Rs.10/- for adults as membership fee can be collected.

**8.4.5 District Central Library**

1. Each district should have a district central library with a lending division, a good reference and periodical section, and Internet facility. It should be kept open for 12 hours or more and be operated by adequate professionally qualified staff.

2. The collections in the district central library should include special materials such as Braille, tapes, films, slides, CDs, DVDs, and Floppies.

**8.4.6 Collection Development**

1. The library should provide a wide range of standard reading materials in all formats such as books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, Internet, CDs, DVDs, and films.

2. The books in the non-fiction collection in wide ranges of subjects and fiction of worthy titles should be provided in adequate number to meet the different needs of today’s society.

3. It should have up to date reference books on all subjects to satisfy the different queries of people.

4. All libraries should include some scholarly journals covering different subjects especially on current topics to meet the educational needs of the students.
5. Library collection should include information bulletin about the programmes and policies of the executive departments of the government and should act as a liaison agent between the community and government departments.

6. It should serve as a heritage library with documents on arts, history, literature, culture and such others.

7. It should have a special collection for children, women, students, neo-literates, career guidance, and visually and hearing impaired.

8. A book selection committee with language and subject experts as its members should be constituted for selecting standard books.

9. Each public library system should require a written collection management policy, endorsed by the library committee.

10. Weeding out of old and unused materials should be ensured to maintain the collection alive.

8.4.7 Access to the Collection

1. The public library should provide open access so as to ensure optimum utilisation of the library collection.

8.4.8 Library Staff

1. The librarian should understand the objectives and improved work methods of the public libraries so as to provide effective service to community.

2. The librarian should have interactions with user groups in encouraging and guiding the users in the use of libraries and be fully acquainted with the book collection in the library.

3. The librarian should improve their proficiency by acquiring professional qualification and update their knowledge by attending training programmes, seminars, and workshops.
4. The government salary scale should be introduced for the professional and semi professional staff and status, and working conditions should be enhanced to improve the standard of service.

**8.4.9 Physical Facilities**

1. For effective library service, the library should have a well situated building with sufficient space for reading and for stacking, proper lighting and ventilation facility, clean and congenial atmosphere.

2. It should provide sufficient number of standard furniture for the users, for stacking, and other purposes.

**8.4.10 Access to Service**

1. It should have sufficient working hours convenient to the users and should be kept open on Sundays, and other holidays except a few national holidays.

**8.4.11 Computerisation**

1. Computer service should be gradually introduced in the following areas of library operation such as house keeping, acquisition, cataloguing, bibliographical services, circulation, and serial control.

2. Internet facility should be provided to the members to enable them to access the world wide information and it should be free to all citizens.

3. Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation and Kerala State Library Council may provide special funds for the computerisation of the public libraries.

**8.4.12 Co-operation with Other Organisation**

1. The library should take part in the programmes of civic, cultural, and educational organisations.
2. The library should require the co-operation and co-ordination with the government agencies for rendering information and referral services.

3. Co-operation between independent libraries in sharing their services and materials will be extended to meet the full needs of users.

8.4.13 Effective and Efficient Services

1. The library service should be adapted to the different needs of the communities in the rural and the urban areas.

2. The lending service, the technical organisation of reading materials such as classification, cataloguing, and shelf arrangement of books should be based on scientific method to improve the standard of library service.

3. A well-equipped and organised children’s library should form an integral part of every public library and different programmes such as story hours, film shows, contests, and puppet shows should be organised for their creative development. Their collection should be on all formats and subjects.

4. The libraries should have an important role both in formal and informal education by providing and improving the different activities and services through adult education, act as academic study centre, supporting distance education, providing text book collection and such other services.

5. Service to schools should include talks in schools and in parent-teacher association meetings, instruction in library use, the loan of material for school projects, provision of special library facilities for teachers, book mobiles to the schools, provision of a public library corner at schools under a student in charge and such others.

6. Mobile library service and rural book deposit centers should be provided especially to the disadvantaged sections of the community.

7. The public libraries should provide community information service to ensure access for citizens to all sorts of community information.
8. Service should be provided to special groups such as in patients of hospitals, prisoners, old people, and other disadvantaged groups such as blind and mentally handicapped people.

**8.4.14 Publicity and Extension Activities**

1. Publicity and extension activities such as seminars, workshops, lectures, and film shows should be a service for every public library to serve the primary purpose of converting non-users to users and to obtain optimum use of services and collections.

2. Display of newly arrived books at prime location; effective interior and exterior sign posting; circulation of library brochures, annual reports and library publications such as resource lists are important publicity programmes.

3. Inter library loan, an effective extension activity to maximise the use of books should be provided in the libraries.

4. Reader’s forums should be formed by each library for the participation in various activities to make the members more active.

5. Day-care centers, nursery schools, tuition centers, short term computer courses, classes for different art forms such as dance, music, painting etc. can be started as extension activities of the library.

6. Since educational and social backwardness of women still persists, the library should concentrate more for the development and empowerment of women.

**8.4.15 Cultural Activities**

1. The public libraries should support various cultural activities in the community by providing accommodation, giving publicity, and organising cultural and recreational activities for the enhancement of social, physical, and mental development of the public.

**8.4.16 Evaluation**
1. All programmes and services of the public libraries should be evaluated by the library authorities on a regular basis to ascertain whether they are:

- Achieving the objectives and declared goals of the library,
- Able to meet changing needs,
- In need of improvement, and
- Adequately resourced.

2. User survey and library survey may be used to evaluate and monitor the achievements of the library’s objectives and to improve the quality of service.

**8.5 Suggestions of the Librarians**

The librarians of public libraries covered in the study were requested to offer suggestions for the improvement of their respective libraries. Their key suggestions are analysed and the results are presented as follows: The highest percentage of librarians (56.9%) have suggested for an enhanced library grant and librarians’ allowance, 54% of them for adequate physical facilities including functional library building, furniture and such others, 43.1% of them for more qualitative collection, 32.1% of them for computerisation of the library and provision of internet facility to the users, 19% of them for conducting library awareness programme to the public, 14.6% of them for organising various cultural programmes. A small percentage of them have offered many other useful suggestions such as scientific organisation of books, separate grants for children’s section, appointment of full time librarians, provision of modern equipments, a well functioning children’s section and women’s section, mobile library service, participation in various social activities, function as an information centre, co-operate with schools, more working hours, free library service, user education programmes, and open access for more improved library performance. The suggestions made by the librarians from their personal experience are valuable and deserve special attention. Library authorities of six districts also reported that adequate funds and full time librarians are necessary for the proper development of the libraries.
8.6 Future of the Public Libraries in Kerala

The analysis of the strength and weakness of the resources and the past performances provide meaningful inputs to take better decisions in planning the future of the public libraries. On the basis of the data obtained in the study, and also considering the changing concept of public libraries in the present knowledge based society and technological advancement, the future of the public libraries in Kerala are discussed under six headings. Since socio-economic and cultural status of the people in Kerala is almost the same, the study in Malabar is taken as representative of all areas in Kerala.

8.6.1 Electronic Resources

The books have for centuries been the primary channel for the distribution of knowledge and culture. The use of Information Technology brings changes in the communication of knowledge in the society. The future generation will not depend on books for purposes of academic study or knowledge, or leisure. The future public libraries will include books and electronic resources such as internet, CDs, and DVDs. The new medium has given a scope for more efficient means of storage, maintenance, and quick access from remote places.

8.6.2 Computer Based Value Added Services

In future, the public libraries will become attractive by the introduction of new services based on new technology. Libraries offering traditional services are likely to face increasing competition from new technology and new media. The computerised library services and operations will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of library services and can provide value added services to the society.

8.6.3 Public Library Network

The public libraries should provide access to its own resources and to those of other libraries through the participation in an electronic network at the local, State, and national level. Through the network, the public libraries can provide the widest possible access to the vast resources of the public libraries.
8.6.4 New Role of Public Libraries

In the present society, where knowledge and information have a crucial role, technological advancement dominates all services, the public libraries have to play new roles in the society. In future, the public libraries will be key information and learning centres in the community. Information revolution and information technology brought about sweeping change in the character and scope of Community Information Service (Sarada 2000).² Digital revolution is an opportunity for the undeveloped countries for bridging the gap in access to information across the world (Ramaiah and Ramachander 2000).³

8.6.5 Highly Qualified and Skilled Librarians

In the context of changing concepts of public libraries, librarians should be highly qualified and skilled to handle the application of Information and Communication Technology in the libraries. There will be a change in the role of the librarian in the new technological environment. Librarians can act as an effective interface between users and technology. Gaddagimath and Suresh (2000)⁴ listed out the following paradigm shifts that the librarians have to face in an ever-changing society:

- Transition from print to electronic media.
- Passive user to active user.
- Demand for accountability on the part of the librarian.
- Concept of networked environment.
- Individual to team work.

8.6.6 Strategic Planning

In the context of the fast changing society and technology, strategic planning is becoming an important management tool for the successful management of public libraries. In this process, the present position of the libraries are analysed
and based on the changing concepts of public libraries, decisions are made for the
designed future. Balasubramanian (2006) defined it as “the determination of basic
long-term goals and objectives of the enterprise and adoption of courses of action
and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals.” At present
the administrative authorities or library committees do not make any successful
planning to meet their goals and objectives. Strategic planning is important to
provide effective and efficient library services.

The fore-going remarks provide perspectives for visualising a public library
with new dimensions. The provision of Information and Communication
Technology (ICT) in public libraries in Kerala will provide a crucial development in
the libraries and they will be placed at the central place of the emerging Cyber
Kerala Society.
8.7 Areas for Further Research

1. An evaluative study on the current status of public libraries in terms of resources, services and facilities in other parts of the State can be conducted.

2. A survey of the reading habits of users of public libraries in the State can be carried out to determine the cross-sectional and cross-disciplinary interests.

3. The Historical survey of public libraries in the State shall be an interesting topic of heritage value.

4. A perspective plan for computerisation of the public libraries in the State shall be a useful topic.

5. An in-depth analytical study of the finance of the public libraries in the State can be taken as a research topic.

6. The impact of the library Act on the growth and development of public libraries in the State can be studied.

7. The role of public libraries in national and political movements can be studied.

8. Library services on different rural areas and urban settings can be studied to find out how effective it is to meet the various needs of the community.

9. An examination of the role of the public libraries in education and information can be undertaken to suggest ways and means to improve their services.

10. Public library community service such as adult education service, literacy activities can be studied to find whether they meet the social objectives.

11. The analysis of the reading habits of adult non-users of the public libraries is a useful study to convert them into active members.

12. An in-depth study on the various problems faced by the public libraries in the State to suggest valuable solutions.
8.8 Conclusion

Public library is a dynamic social institution which has many important roles in upgrading the status of people in the society. A well developed public library can fulfil the objectives of prosperity and the development of society.

The historical survey carried out to explore the genesis and development of public libraries in Malabar shows that the special characteristic feature of the public library movement in Malabar is that it is a mass movement. The library association which came to be known as Kerala Granthasala Sanghom has an important role in the growth of public libraries in Malabar. Under the control and management of Kerala State Library Council formed under the Kerala Public Libraries Act, there is alertness in the public library functions and services. The study undertaken on the existing condition of the public libraries revealed that their functions and operations are not satisfactory and cannot meet the changing needs of the community. Malabar is predominantly rural in character. But the role of public libraries has not been realized much in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas.

A vast majority of public libraries in Malabar are under resourced in terms of collection, finance, staff, and physical facilities. So they cannot provide effective and efficient services to their users. A lion’s share of the collection is in print-media and books are mainly fiction. Most of the collection is not in a satisfactory standard. The reading materials are not organised scientifically. No libraries spend optimum on reading materials and staff. A majority of the staff in the libraries are not professional or semi-professional. A majority of the library buildings are not functionally useful. The physical facilities are also not satisfactory and cannot provide even adequate seating arrangements for their users. A negligible number of libraries are computerised and provide internet facility to the users. Even though the literacy rate of Malabar is very high, there is a low library consciousness among the public.

The educational, informational, and social functions of the libraries have been completely neglected. They are mainly acting as a recreational centre and have failed to make a significant impact in the national development process. The
peculiar needs of the public were not reflected in the library collections and services of the libraries. Therefore the impact of the public libraries on the society was marginal. The public libraries do not cope with the changing needs of the society and with the advancement of information technology. Thus it can be concluded that the present scenario of public libraries in Malabar does not give an encouraging picture.

The current state of decline of public libraries is not merely due to various socio-economic factors, but to the lack of awareness among the public about the importance of public libraries in the society and the non-inclusion of libraries in the government’s development priorities. The public library development is the collective responsibility of the central, State, local governments, and voluntary organisations. The government should include public libraries in their development priorities and this will help the emergence of new strategies and provision of adequate support for the establishment of a well developed public library system in the State.
REFERENCES


