In the past, there was a system of recording and preserving human thoughts and ideas for future generations. This system or institution gradually came to be referred to by the term “library”. There are different types of libraries such as public libraries, academic libraries, and special libraries. The essential functions of all libraries are the same, collection, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge. But the basic difference between public libraries and other types of libraries is in the concept that the former are open to all in the community. The term “public” (Latin: publice) means “so as to affect the whole people” (Oxford Latin dictionary).¹

Public library is an integral part of the community. It has the social obligation to serve the whole community. It is a positive agent for change in the community. Ekbote (1987)² states the importance of the library in the community as “a library makes a substantial contribution to socioeconomic changes in a social milieu.” Murison (1971)³ highlighted the great role of public library in a community as “it is a social institution which converts a savage community into a state of civilization.” The public libraries are a gateway to better life. They are capable of enriching the human personality and of helping the people to become responsible citizens.

The relationship between the library and the community it serves is of paramount importance. IFLA/UNESCO (1998)⁴ declares: The public library service must be adapted to the different needs of communities in rural and urban areas.” Totterdell (1981)⁵ stresses the importance of relationship between the public library and community as: “If the library is too responsive to community needs then its involvement with the community must be much greater.”

1.1 Origin and Development of Public Libraries in the World

In order to understand the evolution of relationship between public libraries and the community, there is a need to understand the very origin and development of public libraries in the modern world. It may be noted that there were
well known libraries in the ancient period including those of Alexandria, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Nalanda and Taxashila in India.

1.1.1 Traditional Public Libraries

The concept of libraries is very much related to the nature of society. Generally in a traditional society, knowledge has a very limited role in the life of majority of the population and the available knowledge is controlled by the priest and royal people who constituted an insignificant percentage of the society. Almost all earlier libraries were attached to royal palaces or temples. During this period, parish libraries and monastery libraries were established mainly based on Bible and other religious literary works (Kelly 1966). In the strict sense, these libraries cannot be called public libraries.

Gradually feudal lords and wealthy merchants emerged as socially powerful groups who started to establish and support libraries as a symbol of power and prestige. This is the beginning of public libraries. Thus public libraries extended their service to limited elite of the society other than the priests and royal people (Kelly 1966). During that time a majority of the population remained illiterate and as such public libraries had insignificant roles. With the spread of literacy and education, the society started to recognize the importance of books and public libraries. However, libraries remained very much traditional, limiting their services based on books to an elite class only. In the traditional society, books were the only channel for preserving and communicating knowledge and culture. Their role was passive and it remained static for a very long time without much change.

1.1.2 Modern Public Libraries

The concept of a modern public library originated in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century and later spread to other parts of the world. Great Britain is considered to be the pioneer in the modern library legislation and public library development. The study of modern public libraries can be made by tracing the origin, history and development of public libraries in Great Britain.

1.1.2.1 Public Libraries in the West
Since Great Britain is basically a Christian country, both monastery libraries and parish libraries played a very important role with regard to religious needs. However, these libraries also maintained a limited stock of secular books. Along with renaissance movement and mercantilism movement, several subscription libraries and guild libraries also emerged. With the improvement of general literacy there was a social demand for free public library movement in Great Britain. As a result, Great Britain emerged as a pioneer in library legislation and free public library movement. Public library movement of Great Britain can be considered as the model of the public library movement in the world. The British experiment influenced other Western countries such as U.S. to develop public library movements in their countries.

Modern Public Libraries emerged as the by-product of industrial revolution and changing economic and political policies of Great Britain. During this period, guild libraries and commercial lending libraries emerged. Those libraries acted as a catalyst for industrial revolution in Great Britain. With the industrial revolution there was a need for equipping the workers of the factories with new technical knowledge and managerial skills. The industrial workers realized that by acquiring a new technical knowledge, they could shift to the upper strata from the present position. A good number of literate workers became the members of the guild libraries and they also started to make use of the commercial lending libraries. They are considered to be the initiators of the public library system (Kelly 1977). feather and sturges (1997) state: “For many years public libraries had a working class image, but in the 1930s this began to change as they increasingly attracted members of the middle class.” Public library movement is one of the greatest organisational changes in human history.

1.2 Rise and Growth of Public Libraries in India

The modern concept of free library service has come to India from the western countries. During the first half of the nineteenth century there were public libraries in three presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras and in other parts of the country under the active support and initiative of the Europeans in these
towns (Jogesh Misra 1979).\textsuperscript{10} Calcutta Public Library (1836); Andrews Library, Surat (1850); Gaya Public Library, Gaya (1855); Connemara Public Library, Madras (1860); and Adyar Library, Madras (1886) were some of the early established public libraries in India (Pandey 1985).\textsuperscript{11}

The first three decades of the twentieth century is considered the golden period in the history of the public library in India. In 1903 the Calcutta Public Library was opened by the British for the common man. This library developed later as Imperial Library and still later as the National Library (Kesavan 1961).\textsuperscript{12} Almost simultaneous with this development, subscription libraries were started in many cities of the country. Under the effort of Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekward III of Baroda, the father of library movement in India, a well structured library system was developed in Baroda (Panda 1993).\textsuperscript{13} No such parallel development occurred elsewhere in India during that time.

With the advent of democratic governments in several provinces since 1937, another phase of the library movement started in India. Several village libraries and travelling libraries were established in Assam, Bihar, Punjab, Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar under government patronage between 1937 and 1942 (Ravindran 1990).\textsuperscript{14} S.R. Ranganathan introduced the concept of establishing the public library system in India on the firm foundation of law. The involvement of Union government in the public library movement and enactment of public library laws contributed towards the improvement of public libraries after independence.

In the Five Year Plan projects, the government has included several schemes for the development of public libraries in the country. Important developments that occurred under these schemes are the establishment of the Delhi Public Library in 1951; the enactment of Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act in 1954; appointment of an Advisory Committee for Libraries under the chairmanship of K.P. Sinha by Ministry of Education and Youth Services, Government of India in 1957 to investigate the state of libraries in India; the setting up of a Working Group on Development of Libraries in 1964; the setting up of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) under the Department of Culture, Ministry of
Education for the development of public libraries in the country in 1972; establishment of a library section in the Department of Culture under Ministry of Education in 1979; appointment of a Working Group on Modernisation of Library Service and Informatics in 1983; appointment of a committee under the chairmanship of D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Chairman of the RRRLF, Calcutta to draft a National Policy on Information System in October 1985; the setting up of National Literacy Mission in 1986 which emphasized the establishment of rural libraries; and such other activities. During the Plan periods a large amount of financial assistance was made available for the development of public libraries in the country by the Central government (Jagnayak 1999).15

1.3 Major Role of Modern Public Libraries

On the basis of the services rendered by modern public libraries, the major role played by them can be brought under the following headings.

1.3.1 Educational

The role of modern public libraries is to educate every citizen by providing access to their collection in different formats and various services. It supplements formal education and supports the non-formal education and continuing self-education. It is also the best institution for eradication of illiteracy. In developing countries, the vital role of public libraries is to impart basic education to the common people.

1.3.2 Informational

Information is the basic resource for individual and national development. The public library has a key role in collecting, organising, and providing access to a wide range of information resources to meet the heterogeneous needs of the people. The public library has a particular responsibility to collect local information and make it readily available. Thus the public library can act as a community information centre.

1.3.3 Cultural
The public library has an important role in the cultural development of the society. A public library can collect and preserve the cultural heritage of the locality and this will enable the people to enrich their cultural awareness. Public libraries can promote the participation, enjoyment and appreciation of all art forms. The public library can foster culture by stimulating the creative talents and conducting cultural programmes.

1.3.4 Leisure

The public libraries can play a part in encouraging a positive use of leisure and providing materials for change as well as relaxation. Cultural and recreational activities enhance the social, physical and mental development of the people.

1.3.5 Social

The social role of public libraries is the provision of materials and services to the people which will help them to understand the different social conflicts, problems, and the different measures to control them. By eradicating the social evils in the community, the public libraries can establish order in the society. In addition to these, the public library has an important role as a public space and meeting place. Use of the library for various purposes brings people into informal contact with other members of the community and can be a positive social experience.

1.3.6 Developmental

The public library is the most effective instrument for the economic development by disseminating recent information in Agriculture, Industry and related fields.

1.3.7 Political

One of the modern roles of public library is to make contribution to democracy and citizenship through well informed people. The public library is the only agency which can provide a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas, and opinion through the provision of resources and services in a variety of media to the
people; which will enable them to know, defend, and enjoy their rights and realise and discharge their duties in a society.

Thus the public libraries play significant roles in the universal diffusion and enhancement of knowledge among the populace of a nation, in the moral and cultural enrichment, and in the economic, scientific, and industrial development of society.

1.4 Public Library: Definitions

The various definitions of public library stress on its crucial role in the society. An appropriate and universally acceptable definition of a public library stated by Mc Colvin (1956)\textsuperscript{16} is that “it is provided by the local authority, the town, or county council, entirely or mostly at its own expense; governed and administered by the authority or a committee, wholly or largely appointed by itself; available free of any charge to all who live in its area; and offering a wide selection of materials chosen to embrace as completely as possible the varied interests of the individual and the community, free from bias or religion, political or other motives.”

K.P. Sinha (India. Ministry of Education and Youth Services 1959),\textsuperscript{17} Chairman of the Government of India’s Advisory Committee on Libraries describes the public library as “a library which is financed, for the most part, from public funds, and which is intended as an auxiliary educational institution providing a means of self-education, housing learning materials, giving reliable information freely and without partiality or prejudice on a wide variety of subjects as well as satisfying the interests of readers.”

Viswanathan (1990)\textsuperscript{18} defines it as “a centre of communal study, an information bureau, a continuation school and a training school for democracy.”

Kalia, et.al (1991)\textsuperscript{19} describe public library as “an institution, established and administered under a State law by a local government or an adhoc autonomous library authority or a government department maintained wholly out of public funds, open to all without distinction and free of charge.”
The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994)\textsuperscript{20} define public library as: “The local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for life long learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups;” and “a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women;”

Feather and Sturges (1997)\textsuperscript{21} state: “Libraries that are provided through public funding for public use and the public good are public libraries.”

1.5 Objectives of Public Libraries

The basic objective of a public library is the circulation of books, which have values and can develop personality to its full potential. Johnson (1938)\textsuperscript{22} describes it as “the people’s university,” capable of extending its services to all groups in the community, irrespective of age, race, colour, nationality, religion, language, states, sex, political conviction, or educational attainments.

The functions of a public library have been precisely stated in the Kenyon Committee Report: “The public library is no longer regarded as a means of providing casual recreation of an innocent but somewhat unimportant character, it is recognised as an engine of great potentialities for national welfare and as the essential foundation for the progress in education and culture without which no people can hold its own in the struggle for existence” (U.K. Board of Education 1927).\textsuperscript{23}

The first seminar on “The Development of Public Libraries in Asia” which was held in Delhi under the auspices of UNESCO (1955)\textsuperscript{24} concluded with the statement that “the public libraries should be an independent service for use according to the individual needs of the citizen. It can give special assistance in the advancement of technical knowledge and skills by distribution of literature at two levels, advanced and elementary.”

According to ALA (1956)\textsuperscript{25}, the objectives of public libraries are:
1. To facilitate information for self-education of all people in the community;

2. To enrich and further develop the subjects on which individuals are undertaking formal education;

3. To meet the informational needs of all;

4. To support the educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organisation;

5. To encourage wholesome recreation and constructive use of leisure time.

The Library Association, London (1971) has stated that the objective of a public library is “to contribute to sustaining the quality of life in all aspects, educational, economic, industrial, scientific, and cultural and promote the concept of a democratic society in which equal opportunity exists for all to develop into true citizens with whole and balanced personalities leading to an increase in the sum total of man’s happiness and his environment.”

Mc Colvin (1978), carried out a survey of the public library service in Great Britain. He reported that the purpose of the public library is the development of the “whole personality.”

The objectives of the public library as enunciated by Ranganathan (1988) are as follows:

1. To help the life-long self-education;

2. To furnish up-to-date facts and information on all subjects;

3. To distribute in an unbiased and balanced way all shades of recorded views and thoughts so as to help in the discharge of political functions in respect of local, national, and international affairs;

4. To contribute to the productivity drive by informing top management of the latest trends in diverse enterprises by ploughing back, promptly, and pin-pointedly into the minds of researchers, designers, and technologists every piece of relevant
new thought, promptly and pin-pointedly;

5. To provide a harmless and elevating use of leisure;

6. To preserve the literacy remains of humanity for posterity as vehicles of culture and as source material for antiquarian research; and

7. To work for continued social well being as the agency in charge of all socialised recorded thoughts.

Thus a library has educational, informational, political, economic, industrial, cultural, and antiquarian functions.”

The IFLA/UNESCO (1994) outlines four key missions which are at the core of public library services:

1. Education: Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;

2. Information: Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information; providing adequate information to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;

3. Culture: Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations; providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts; fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity; supporting the oral tradition;

4. Literacy: Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

The Finnish Library Act (1998) states: “The objective of the library and information services provided by public libraries is to promote equal opportunities among citizens for personal cultivation, for literary and cultural pursuits, for continuous development of knowledge, personal skills and civic skills, for internationalisation, and for life long learning.”
The IFLA/UNESCO (2001)\textsuperscript{31} states: “The primary purposes 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.”

U. K. Department of Culture (2004)\textsuperscript{32} lists out the objectives of public libraries inherent in its standards for public libraries as follows:

- They underpin education, providing essential support for school children, students, and life long learners;
- They enhance public access to the world’s storehouse of knowledge and information;
- They promote social inclusion, by helping to bridge the gap between those who can afford access to information and those who can’t;
- They have a role to play in the modernisation and delivery of public services; and
- They provide information which underpins commercial and economic endeavour.

Various statements on the purpose of public libraries confirm that “the public library makes an essential contribution to democracy and citizenship. It is also vital to a nation’s literacy and productivity” (Feather and Sturges 1997).\textsuperscript{33}

In order to fulfil their objectives, public libraries should establish resource sharing networks, possess trained manpower, and build up strong need based collections. It must be based on certain standards and methods of evaluation. Co-operative bibliographic service and automation should be introduced. Public libraries have to change their concepts in order to meet the various issues and information needs of the society.
1.6 Changing Concepts of Public Libraries

The very concept of public libraries has undergone drastic changes in the recent period, though it remained almost static for a very long time till the modern information technology revolution. Recent advances in information and communication technology, changing societal attitudes towards information and knowledge and increasing digitalization of libraries have brought about revolutionary changes in the very concept of libraries. Toffler (1980) sees this present technological force as the “third wave” following the previous waves of agricultural and industrial civilizations.

The IFLA/UNESCO (2001) states: “Public libraries have an exciting opportunity to help bring every one into this global conversation and to bridge what is often called ‘the digital divide’. They can achieve this by providing information technology for public access, by teaching basic computer skills.” The new concept of collection in the public libraries is the blending of traditional and electronic media. Potential users are attracted to the library by the introduction of new services based on new technology. In this new concept of public libraries, the traditional librarians are being replaced by the “knowledge workers” and they are going to be highly-skilled professionals. Public libraries are getting transformed as the open-gate to knowledge so as to exploit the digital resources to the fullest extent, they are championing e-literacy to the masses.

The traditional difference between public libraries, academic libraries, and research libraries has become obsolete. In other words, there is not much difference between all these libraries. The digital connectivity of various types of libraries and the new concept of management of knowledge paved the way for such kinds of revolutionary changes. Through this network, the public libraries enable all citizens to have access to their own resources and to those of other libraries through participation in electronic network at the local, national and increasingly international levels.

1.7 Statement of the Problem
“Organisation, Administration, Resources, Services, and Utilisation of the Public Libraries in Malabar: An Evaluative Study” is a topic of social value and academic interest in the context of the dynamic role of public libraries in the development of individual and society.
1.8 Operational Definition of Key Terms

1.8.1 Organisation

Organisation means “the act or process of organizing”; organise means “to form as or into a whole consisting of interdependent or coordinated parts, especially for harmonious or united action” (Webster 1996). Organisation in the public library context means to define the extent and scope of different sections in the public libraries and their activities, which are necessary to carry out the library’s plan and purpose and put them into practice.

1.8.2 Administration

Administration means “the management of any office, employment, or organisation” (Webster 1996). Administration in the public library context means the directive functions of administrative machinery at different levels through which the objectives of the libraries are fulfilled.

1.8.3 Resources

Resources mean “sources of supply, support or aid, especially one held in reserve” (Webster 1996). Here the term refers to the information sources including book materials and non-book materials, finance, staff, physical facilities, and technological resources available in the public libraries of Malabar.

1.8.4 Services

Services mean “the act of helpful activity” (Webster 1996). Here the term refers to the different services both in house services and community services offered by the public libraries of Malabar to the people of the area.

1.8.5 Utilisation

Utilisation means “to put to use” (Webster 1996). Here the term refers to the use of various sources and services provided by the public libraries in Malabar to different categories of users.
1.8.6 Public Libraries

A public library is an organisation which provides access to knowledge, information, and works of 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’ (IFLA/UNESCO 2001). Here the term refers to all public libraries affiliated to the Kerala State Library Council and the public libraries under other governing bodies in the six districts of Malabar.

1.8.7 Malabar

The term “Malabar” denotes the geographical area covered by the northern part of the political map of Kerala comprised of six districts of Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Malappuram, and Palakkad.

1.8.8 Evaluative Study

Evaluative means “pertaining to or tending to evaluation” and evaluate means “to determine or set the value or amount of, appraise” (Webster 1996). Study means “application of the mind to the acquisition of knowledge, as by reading, investigation, or reflection” (Webster 1996). Here the evaluative study means the acquisition of data by the investigation to determine how well the public libraries in Malabar/North Kerala are functioning, how good the resources in these libraries are, how appreciated a service is or how thoroughly the community is served to meet the objectives of the public library.

1.9 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

1) To study the origin, development, organizational pattern, and present scenario of the public libraries in Malabar;

2) To evaluate the role played by public libraries in the educational, cultural and socio-political development of Malabar;
3) To assess the use behaviour of members and their evaluation of public library resources, services, and facilities; and

4) To visualise the future of public libraries in Malabar by taking into account the emerging needs of the knowledge society and new technological developments.

1.10 Hypotheses

For the purpose of the present study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

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, physical facilities, and technology 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.

1.11 Significance of the Study

The need for this investigation arises from the fact that no comprehensive studies on the existing state of public libraries in Malabar have been conducted. In Malabar, the library movement was mainly a part of the nationalist movement. But in the erstwhile States of Travancore and Cochin, the government had their own role in the genesis and growth of public libraries. Considering the unique characteristics of the library movement in Malabar, and also its socio-economic backwardness in
relation to Travancore and Cochin, the genesis and development of public libraries in Malabar together with the current status of public libraries in Malabar have been selected for the present study to find out their social objectives. In developed countries, the public libraries have been particularly active recently in trying to define, measure, and promote library effectiveness. But in India, no such comprehensive evaluative studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of the public libraries. Effectiveness is a major concern in the organisation of all sorts; so in addition to investigate the current status of the public libraries, an attempt is being made to find the effectiveness of this social institution.

The IFLA/UNESCO (1994),\textsuperscript{44} recognising the significance of the public libraries through its Public Library Manifesto states that “freedom, prosperity, and the development of society and of individual are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to plan an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information. The public library, the local gateway of its knowledge, provides a basic condition for life long learning, independent decision making and cultural development of individual and social groups.” The IFLA/UNESCO (1994)\textsuperscript{45} also recognises its role as “a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.” In the light of these roles of public libraries in a society, the significance of the present study is confirmed in terms of their dynamic part in the development of community life.

The present study is expected to help the library authorities to adopt the suitable strategies for improving their collection building and providing more efficient library services. It will assist librarians to assess whether the libraries fulfil their various objectives, and how far the libraries are lagging behind in providing satisfactory service to the community. It will remind the librarians of the expected role of public librarianship.
1.12 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Kerala is the southern most State in India. Two erstwhile States of Travancore and Cochin and Malabar, a district of the erstwhile Madras presidency merged together and formed Kerala State in 1956. Malabar is the northern part of Kerala. The present study is confined to the public libraries in Malabar comprising six revenue districts - Kasaragod, Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Malappuram, and Palakkad.

The major emphasis of the present study is on public libraries that come under the purview of the State Library Council formed in accordance with the provision of Kerala Public Libraries Act, 1989. They belong to six grades, from A to F. However, there are some public libraries that are working under other governing bodies which do not come under the State Library Council. One well known public library of this type from each district is also included in the present study. However, the study has the following limitations.

There is no well known accepted criteria/standard for evaluating the public libraries at national level. Some guidelines given by the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Kolkatta are not comprehensive. In the present study, the investigator makes use of the *IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Public Library Development, 2001* for assessing the present condition of public libraries in the area under study.

Performance indicators are valuable tools in monitoring the achievements of the library. As there is lack of reliable information, the following key performance indicators such as loans per capita; loans per item; total library visits per capita; unit costs for functions, services, and activities; and total costs per visitor could not be used to evaluate the library. This is also a limitation of the study.

The evaluation of the users on the library resources and services are not always reliable as these are based on their limited needs and views. A majority of the users are not aware of the various roles of public libraries in the community and these may reflect in their perceptions. It should be noted, however, that user evaluation of libraries are an often used tool in library survey.
1.13 Organisation of the Study

The present study has been organised under eight chapters.

*Chapter 1* of the present study is an introduction that presents the general background to public libraries which also includes the origin and development of public libraries in the world, rise and growth of public libraries in India, major role of modern public libraries, public library - its various definitions and objectives, and the exploration of the changing concepts of public libraries. Statement of the problem, operational definition of key terms, the objectives of the study and the hypotheses formulated, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, and the organisation of the study are also included in this chapter.

*Chapter 2* furnishes a review of literature related to the research area.

*Chapter 3* presents the research design applied in the study, sampling procedure employed in the study, size of the sample, methods used to collect the data, various sources of data, statistical tools used for the analysis of the data collected, and the two approaches to evaluation applied for the study.

*Chapter 4* traces the genesis and development of public libraries in Kerala and focuses on Malabar.

*Chapter 5* presents the general characteristics of the sampled libraries. It also evaluates the current status of the libraries in terms of organisation; resources such as collection, finance, manpower, technology, and physical facilities; visitors and members; and administration.

*Chapter 6* examines the various activities and services provided in the public libraries such as lending service; reference service; referral service; educational services; information services; services for different sections of the society such as children and women; mobile library service; literacy activities; services to disadvantaged and ethnic groups; various cultural programmes; and other activities such as user education, co-operation with other organisations, resource sharing, and literary activities. The working days and opening hours of the libraries are also
analysed in this chapter. The main problems faced by the librarians in the proper function of the libraries are listed out at the end of this chapter. These services offered by the public libraries are evaluated to find out whether they play significant roles in educational, cultural and socio-political development of the society.

Chapter 7 analyses the individual characteristics of library members, their use behaviour and the perceptions of them on resources and services of the public libraries.

Chapter 8 presents the findings of the study, analyses and interprets the data collected to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. The suggestions for the improvement of the existing library system in Malabar are also incorporated in this chapter. The future of public libraries is also outlined in this chapter. Areas of further study are also given at the end to guide the future researchers.
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