CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 The Context

Education is a means to the enlightenment of human mind by adopting various innovative practices in education for getting solution to the problems faced by educationist. The proper understanding of the educational practices widens the horizons of intellectual potentials and resources. True innovative practices should find solutions for meeting individual differences created by various factors. In a wider sense, education means reaching to unreached in more innovative, meaningful and fruitful ways.

There is increasing evidence that education is a powerful instrument for developing intellectual skills for better adaptations and living. True education should deepen our insight, widen our horizon, and create a meaningful outlook, says Shri Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the great educationalist and philosopher. In the words of Plato “purpose of education was not as it were to till an empty vessel but to turn the eyes or the soul towards light” (Chandy 2000). Gandhiji also believed in integrated development of the child. Thus education is neither limited to a classroom nor to a school nor to a specific period of life. In this sense life is education and education is life.

The process of education has underwent enormous changes in the aims, methods, the process of implementation and structure at different stages of societal development. During the Vedic period, education aimed at obliterating the darkness or ignorance and spreading the light of knowledge. Of the many systems followed in
India at various stages by our sages and saints, the "Gurukula System" seems to have a lot of potential to enrich the conception of true and good education. In the Gurukula system Guru was everything for pupils as he was taking care of their total development based on their interest and aptitude.

Though there are various examples of innovative educational practices in India, the impact of British education system can be seen more after independence. Some changes in the objectives and methodologies of educating the masses in India can be seen during Macaulay period. In words of Macaulay, "we want a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of this country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population"(Fagg, 2001).

An important feature of educational development in India during the past several decades has been the sustained effort to evolve a national system of education. It was Sri Aurobindo who in the year 1910 visualized a National system of Education. School education in post-independent India has passed through different phases. Soon after independence, the Secondary Education commission (1951-1953) was set up by the Government of India and it gave several recommendations for improving the quality of school education. In 1964-66, the Education Commission was set up, which brought out a more comprehensive document on education covering all stages and aspects of education as a whole. This was a major landmark in the history of modern education system in India. Several recommendations of this commission formed the basis for the National Policy on Education, 1968. The acceptance of a common school
structure that is 10+2 and a common scheme of studies as part of general education for 10 years of school throughout the country were important steps towards improvement in the school system.

To implement the recommendations of various education policies NCERT has developed National Curriculum Framework in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005. In the National Curriculum Framework 1988, the general objectives of education were designed to enable the learner to acquire knowledge to develop concepts and inculcate values commensurate with the social, cultural, economic and environmental realities at national and international level. The school curriculum was, therefore, designed to promote qualities that make a man socially effective and happy and also inculcate friendliness, cooperativeness, compassion, self discipline, self orientation, humour, courage, love for social justice, self control etc. The curriculum also emphasized the development of moral character values such as honesty, truthfulness, dependability, courtesy, fearlessness, compassion, tolerance etc.

In the National Curriculum Framework 2000, they pointed out that education, by and large, suffers basically from the gap between its content and the living experience of the students. Education ideally must prepare students to face the challenges of life. For this, it needs to be intimately linked with the different life skills, the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable the individuals to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Again in NCF 2005, recommended that we need to plan and pay attention to systematic matters that will enable us to implement many of the good ideas that have already been articulated in the past. They gave more emphasis to connect knowledge to life outside the school, ensure that learning is shifted away from rote methods, enrich the curriculum to
provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric and make the examinations more flexible and integrated into classroom.

In order to promote scientific temper, the knowledge of scientific methods of enquiry and their use in solving problems were emphasized. The curriculum in schools attempted at development of non-cognitive areas of learning with emphasis on key qualities for personal and social growth of children.

The futuristic perspective of education focused at the development of the desirable core of universal values such as value of social equality and democratic participation in decision making, understanding and tolerance of cultural differences and pluralism, spirit of caring, cooperation, enterprise, creativity, sensitivity to gender equality, open-mindedness and sense of obligation, environment protection and sustainable development. These ideals and values that promote better living conditions in human life were conceived to be inculcated in children during their days of 'schooling'-the term to which education was reduced in the real sense. More and more opportunities for learning out of school are occurring in all fields. In such circumstances there arises the necessity of eliminating the attitude of limiting education to mere schooling.

The educational establishment therefore needs to be reconceptualized as a, system of lifelong learning resources in which the schools are primarily concerned with developing the skills and attitudes of "self-directed learning". In order to equip the present educational machinery to fulfill the demands of the modern world, essential inputs have to be guaranteed equitably for the concept of quality to become meaningful in practice. The flaws of the present educational system must be kept in view and drastic changes must be encouraged in order to turn the thoughts of great
educational philosophers fruitful and meaningful. It is obvious that armchair thinking alone will not help in improving our educational system.

1.1.2 The Present Scenario in Schools

Till very recent years, majority of the schools in India have been following the conventional methods of schooling with strict rigidity and blind adherence to the prescribed textbooks, curriculum and teacher centered teaching, methodologies. The school system has been regretted to a great extend owing to its constraint attitude with over emphasis on examination rather than the development of innate potentialities and creative talents of the young minds. This has necessitated the need of reviewing and exploring the possibilities of relating education to the needs of the learner.

A teacher who teaches from text books does not impart originality to his pupils. He himself become a slave of textbooks and has no opportunity or occasion to be original. Ganhiji also recommended that textbooks particularly for the lower students must mean text books for teachers and not for pupils. He felt that the multiplicity of text books would deprive the vast majority of village children on the means of instructions. (NCTE, 1998). National Curriculum Framework 2005 emphasis that we should enrich the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centered.

The problem with respect to the text books is not only their multiplicity there by increasing the ‘load of the school bag’, but their ‘prescription’ prescribed text books with their heavy content and linkages with examinations put an additional burden on children with disabilities as they leave little scope for teacher to explore original strategies to involve their children in classrooms, so as to make learning a participatory experience. The aim of the teacher gets reduced to finishing
examination, which means learning the contents by rote memorization as questions in the examinations are asked mostly to recall the content of their textbooks.

In the report 'Learning without Burden' The Prof. Yesh Pal committee (1994) observed "Teachers routinely complain that they do not have enough time to explain anything in detail, or to organize activities in the classroom. 'Covering' the syllabus seems to have become an end in itself, unrelated to the philosophical and social aims of education".

A hierarchy of curriculum, syllabus and prescribed textbooks has become unique to the Indian school system. But one does not find such sharp and unrelated distinctions between the three in the curriculum of developed countries. In U.K, schools are required to develop their own curriculum, but in India, this would seem quite impossible.

Regarding methods of teaching, the conventional schools refrain from child centered and activity based process of learning. Learners are not allowed to set their own pace. Lack of opportunities for child ‘involvement’, experience and contribution make learning a boredom. Thus, joyful learning finds no place in conventional schools.

The Salamanca (1994) framework for action has been eloquent on the use of child-centered pedagogy for the education of children. Under the section on ‘School factors’, the framework states ‘the World Declaration on Education for All’ underscores the need for a child-centered approach aimed at ensuring the schooling of all children. Similar statements have been made in Indian policy documents in favour of child-centered pedagogy ‘at the primary stage’ in the National Policy on Education 1986. However, there is very little clarity among practicing teachers on the concept
and how to translate it into practice. The concept is not taking root in schools for two reasons: First, other factors, the early grade or class prescribed textbooks as the main source of learning and the early standardized tests that are meant to filter out and 'fail' children operating in schools run counter to the concept of child-centered pedagogy though the policy recommends non-detention at primary stage.---making evolution as disaggregated as feasible (MHRD, 1998). Second, Indian culture is dominated by a stage belief that the teacher is the prime source of knowledge and there is a deep respect for the teacher. On the other hand, under the child-centered approach, teachers treat children as valued individuals who come to the classroom with some experience and knowledge, which could be the basic of learning and teaching. Teachers need interpersonal skills to treat a child as an individual learner with areas of abilities that need to be explored. The essence of a child-centered approach must be that of respect for children as individuals and a concern for their rights and welfare. (Dissent, 1987).

Under child-centered pedagogy teachers become facilitators, children learn by discovery of mixed ability resulting in non-graded or mixed age schools, most appropriate for multi-grade situations in Indian Schools. Standardized tests are inappropriate for child-centered education.

Jangira (1995) have related a number of elements that constitute the child-centered approach such as above involvement, cooperative learning, expectations from children, responding to individual needs, praising and encouraging and team teaching and collaborative effort. Wolfendalus (1987) has explained the 'essence of a child-centered approach'. The essence of a child-centered approach have been the emphasis upon encouraging whole-child development within a' progressive frame....
Where a child was less encouraged into learning than encouraged towards the learning opportunities available. In short, it made the child the subject rather than the object to be slotted into a predetermined curriculum.

In conventional schools, the execution of the principles of a child-centered approach seems quiet impossible where teachers given upper hand in every activity and tend to exhibit superiority everywhere. Whole class direct teaching, which is the traditional method, is prevalent in conventional schools. It is the most familiar style of teaching, which parents and students expect. In a typical Indian school classroom, teachers read out textbooks which occasional explanation of its contents, or one of the students is asked to read out for the best of the class. At times, teachers write themes from the textbooks on the blackboard and the students are expected to take notes. These notes replace the textbooks, students' memories the notes and write answers in examinations from these notes. A teacher is typified with 'walk, chalk and talk'. These unhealthy methods of teaching have led to the degradation of the entire education system. The adoption of these undesirable methods owe to the wrong attitude exhibited by the present system of schools to learning.

Regarding this Illich (1971) has made a very critical observation. “A major illusion on which the school system rests is that most learning is the result of teaching. Teaching, it is true, may contribute to certain kinds under certain circumstances. But most people acquire most of their knowledge outside school, and in school only in so far as school, in a few rich counties, has become their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives”.

In Indian schools, examinations determine the future and fate of children. The system of examinations, internally associated with the concept of pass and fail with is
an area where the gap with the policy and implementation is the widest, though a
serious of commissions and committees have been recommending reforms.

The Indian university commission had observed “the teaching in Indian
education stood subordinated to examinations and not examination to teaching”
(MHRD, 1990).

The NPE 1986 considered examinations and "illegal part of any teaching and
learning". It should be recast so as to ensure a method of assessment that is a valid
and reliable measure of student development and a powerful entrance for improving
teaching and learning.

Connecting on the present examination system, the examination system is
actually cheating the master by connecting the deep divisions that exist within the
education system, where a poor mill-worker's child from a neglected government
school is made to concept with children from well-to-do public schools. The system
submerges these ugly relations under a veneer of total parity among candidates.
(Public Report on Basic Education in India, 1999)

The preset schooling system tends to forget that education has been with
mankind from times immemorial, while the institution of school is only creation of
the industrial age. Years spend in school are vital, but it is only one of the many
dimensions of education. However, today, there is a trend to equate education with
schooling. The 19th and the 20th century schools have destroyed much of the natural
learning process. Thus there is a tendency to eclipse the ultimate aim of education
under the outward core of excellent academic achievement.
It is in the light of these priorities and drawbacks of the conventional schools, that the concept of innovation gains importance. Experience has shown that any change introduced in the conventional practices is unsettling for staff and students alike and these trends to be a considerable time-lag between the modification in the society and the changes introduced in the educational scene. There is hesitation to upset the conventional ideas concerning, both educational content and method owing to a fear that the change may not result in the expected outcome at all.

1.1.3 The Concept of Innovation

Innovation, in the real sense, may not or does not necessarily mean something which is entirely novel. It is something, which is fresh and new from the point of view of those people using it.

The literature bounds with varied and sometimes conflicting definitions of innovation, but there appears to be general agreement about three aspects: first that it is fundamental in nature: secondly that it is deliberate and planned: and thirdly, that there is the intention of improvement.

Miles (1964) in the introductory chapter of his book on 'Innovation in Education writes that “an innovation is a deliberate, novel, specific change which is I thought to be more efficacious in accomplishing the goals of a system”.

Richard (1965) has given a laborious definition of the term, as "innovation is a creative selection, organization and utilization of human and material resources in new and unique ways which will result in the attaining of a higher level of achievement for the defined goals and objectives."
An often-quoted definition regards innovation as a deliberate attempt to improve practice in relation to certain desired objectives.

“We understand innovation to mean those attempts at change in an educational system which is consciously and purposefully directed with the aim of improving the present system. Innovation is not necessarily something new but it is something better and can be demonstrated as such.” (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1969)

Oxford English Dictionary (1970) defines innovation as a change made. Change, however, can be incidental or accidental or planned and deliberate and is for the better. Innovation refers to the second category of change. It may, therefore, be stated that all innovations are for changes but all changes are not innovations. It is an idea perceived as new by a person or a group of persons who initiate and adopt it on the basis of planned and deliberate efforts for the qualitative improvement of the system though it may not be very new for others.

While there is a good measure of agreement about the fundamental, deliberate and improvement aspects of innovation, there is less agreement about their uniqueness. While the CERI (1969) definition says that an innovation is not necessarily something new, Owen rejects the notion that an innovation can be a rearrangement of old constituent parts and looks for essential newness. A significant contribution to this debate is made by Rogers and Shoemaker (1971). “An innovation is an idea, practice or object prescribed as new by an individual. It matters little so far as human behavior is concerned, whether or not an idea is objectively new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery. It is the perceived or
subjective newness of the individual that determines his reaction to it. If the idea seems new to the individual, it is an innovation.”

The emphasis on the qualitative aspects of innovation implies that innovation is not introduced simply for its own sake, and this point is given explicitly in another definition.

"By innovation we mean any change in any one component of the educational system which is not made simply for the sake of change but with the intention of promoting improvements in the aspect concerned and having regard to the close interdependence of all such aspects- in the system as a whole " (Noel, 1974).

The Dictionary of Education (1977) defines innovation as “promotion of new ideas or practices”. Newness is a relative term. The novelty may be more apparent than real. What is new for one person may not be new for another."

Joshi, (1980) defines it as “an idea perceived as new by the adopter though it may be an old one for others”.

Bhola,(1980) defines the term as “a concept, an attitude, a tool with accompanying skills or two or more of these together introduced to an individual or culture that have not functionally incorporated it before”.

John Adair (1990) states, “Innovation is more than having new ideas, it includes process of successfully introducing them or making things happen in a new way. It turns ideas into useful, practicable and commercial products or services.”
According to Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (2002), “Innovation is a new idea or method that is being tried for the first time or the use of such ideas or methods in the latest innovations in education”.

Thus, from the above definitions, it is clear that an educational innovation is an ingredient of the process of educational change, application of a novel idea and is a deviation from the old, traditional and current ways of doing things. It occurs as a result of a planned and deliberate effort. It has a reference to the local conditions or the local system and is in line with the educational objectives of the stage.

While institutions adopt innovations they have different levels of implications to those who are associated with them. Sometimes just one or two individuals alone may be involved whereas good number of persons is involved in some others. The nature of innovations decides the type and the consequent degrees of change as follows.

a) Unencumbered: Some innovations require simply the adoption by an individual member of staff within the limits of his own classroom. He is free to use any new aid or method himself in his class and therefore he is unencumbered in his acceptance of this type of innovation.

b) Encumbered: - If the innovation is in the form of a project involving more people, the innovating teacher is at the mercy and co-operation of others. Thus the involved innovative capacity is encumbered by a variety of contingencies related more to human relationships.
1.1.4 Factors Conducive to Innovations

Nicholls H. in his “Consideration for Creative Teaching” gives the following conducive factors:

a. Teachers' being favorably disposed towards innovation

b. Teachers' clear understanding of innovations

c. Innovation being within teacher-capabilities

d. Provision for necessary resources for innovation

e. Making necessary administrative and organizational arrangement.

f. Ability to carry out the correct diagnosis of the pupils.

g. Channels of communication being used for giving information, seeking cooperation, removing fears and changing attitudes

h. Adequate time being given for the development of the above listed factors.

Due to the interaction of these various factors, the time between conception of an idea and its application varies. However, in educational systems the rate of implementation of ideas and innovation lags still behind those of the medical, agricultural and industrial systems.

1.1.5 Need for Innovation in Education

Education, by and large, suffers basically from the gap between its content and the living experience of its pupils. Education in its real sense should prepare pupils to face the multifarious challenges that they are bound to face in the society. The
growing complexity of the world demands education to provide maps of a world in constant turmoil and compasses that will enable people to find their way in it.

In this view of the future, traditional responses to the demand for education that are essentially quantitative and knowledge-based are no longer appropriate. It is not enough to supply each child early in life with a store of knowledge to be drawn on from then on. Each individual must be equipped to seize learning opportunities throughout life, both to broaden her/his knowledge, skills and attitudes and to adapt to a changing, complex and interdependent world.

Skrtic (1991) states the essential features expected of the 21st century school—
“Given the relevance of the post-industrial era, the successful school in the 21st century will be one that produces liberally educated young people who can work responsibly and interdependently under conditions of uncertainty. It will do this by promoting in its students a sense of social responsibility, an awareness of interdependency and an appreciation of uncertainty. The successful schools in the post industrial era will be ones that achieve excellence and equity simultaneously—indeed one that recognizes equity as the way to excellence.”

Apart from them, in the 21st century, everyone will need to exercise greater judgment combined with stronger sense of personal responsibility for the attainment of common goals. None of the talents, which are hidden like buried treasure in every person must be left untapped. These are to name but a few; memory, reasoning power, imagination, physical ability, aesthetic sense, the aptitude to communicate with each others and the natural charisma of the group leader. They lead to the obligation to better understand one's own personality. But the conventional schools which
concentrate merely on imparting knowledge without laying a foundation for future life fails irrevocably to reach out for these demands of education.

Delores, J (1994) has enunciated the principle of the four pillars of Education as a basis for effective and successful learning, namely,

a) Learning to know, i.e., acquiring the instruments of understanding. This type of learning is regarded as both a means and an end in life. As a means it serves to enable each individual to understand at the very least enough about his or her environment to be able to live in dignity, to develop occupational skills and to communicate. As an end, its basis is the pleasure of understanding, knowing and discovering. The widening of the field of knowledge, which enables people to understand the various aspects of their environment better, arouses intellectual curiosity, stimulates the critical faculty and enables people to make sense of reality by acquiring independence of judgment.

b) Learning to do, so as to be able to act creatively on one's environment. It is more closely linked to the question of vocational training. In order to equip oneself for a highly technological world, technical skills must be achieved to a fairly good extent. The attainment of skills essential for daily living proves inevitable for all round development of one's individuality. This forms the basis of Gandhiji's Basic Education which sought to equip individuals in vocational proficiency.

c) Learning to live together, as to participate and co-operate with other people in all human activities. The contemporary world is too often a world of violence that belies the hope some people placed in human progress. Education therefore must encompass two complementary paths: on one level gradual discovery of others and, on another,
experience of shared purpose throughout life which seems to be an effective way of avoiding or resolving latent conflicts.

d) Learning to be, an essential progression, which proceeds from the previous three. This enables one to develop one's personality and be able to act with every greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. Thus education must accentuate every aspect of a person's potential: memory, reasoning aesthetic sense, physically capacities and communication skills.

But formal education has traditionally focused mainly, it not exclusively, on 'learning to know' and to a lesser intent on 'learning to do'. The two others are to a large extent left to chance. However, for attending the ultimate aim of education, equal attention should be paid in all organized learning to each of these four pillars, so that education is regarded as a total experience throughout life, dealing with both understanding and application and focusing on both the individual and the individual's place in society. This means going beyond an instrumental view of education, as a process one submits to in order to achieve specific aims, to one that emphasizes the development of the complete person, in short, learning to be.

Formal education systems; however tend to emphasize the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning. This drawback of the conventional schools accelerates the need for innovative practices that would lead to the realization of the principles of education.

The World Health Organization has recommended the attainment of certain 'life skills' as an indispensable and ultimate aim of education. The attainment of these life skills ensures abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables one to deal effectively and impressively the demands and challenges of everyday life. WHO has
identified 10 life skills, which must be imported to every child during the educational period. They are:

1. Decision making which helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives.

2. Creative thinking which enables one to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of one’s action and non-actions.

3. Critical thinking which enables one to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner.

4. Effective communication which makes one able to express oneself: both verbally and non-verbally in ways that are appropriate to one's culture and situations.

5. Interpersonal relationship skills which helps one to relate in positive ways with the people with whom one interacts.

6. Empathy, which enables one to imagine what life, is like for another person, even in a situation with which one may not be familiar.

7. Coping with emotions involves being aware of how emotions influence behavior, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately.

8. Coping with stress involves recognition of the source of stress in our lives, recognition of how this affects us and acting in ways that help to control one's level of stress.

9. Problem solving which enables one to deal constructively with problems in our lives.
10 Self awareness which enable, one to have an insight into oneself, one's capabilities and limitations, one's strengths and weaknesses.

These life skills can be acquired only through learning and practice. In life skills education, children are actively involved in a dynamic teaching and learning process. The methods used to facilitate this active involvement include working in small groups and pairs, brainstorming, role-play, games and debate.

Majority of the schools in India following the conventional methods of teaching fail to equip children with these life skills. Without innovative practices and methods the attainment of these life skills would merely remain a dream.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs also provide an impetus to the urgency of creating an innovative climate in educational institutions. Maslow proposed that human motives are organized into a hierarchy of needs—a systematic arrangement need, according to priority, in which basic needs must be met before less basic needs are aroused. This hierarchical arrangement is usually portrayed as a pyramid (ladder).
The physiological or security needs, which come at the bottom of the pyramid, are the most basic. The growth needs coming towards the top of the pyramid are less basic needs. These include the needs for knowledge, understanding, order and aesthetic beauty. Foremost among the growth need is the need for self-actualization, which is the need to fulfill one's potential.

Maslow(1970) called people with exceptionally healthy personalities “self-actualizing persons” because of their commitment to continued personal growth. He identified various traits characteristic of self actualizing people, namely, spontaneity, simplicity, naturalness, efficient perception of reality, limited but strong friendship, feelings of kinship and identification with the human race, ethical discrimination between means and ends, between good and evil, unhostile sense of humor, balance between polarities in personality etc. Molding personalities of such characteristic traits is the ultimate aim of education which can never be accomplished without a tremendous change in the educational methods applied in the conventional schools.
Failure of formal education to equip and train children for lifelong learning and the tendency to view institutions of higher education as the provider of the last cycle of education necessitates the need to jeopardize unhealthy teaching methodologies adopted in these schools. Life long learning is a prerequisite for today's society and even more so for the future. The relevant definitive characteristics of life long education have been summarized by Dave (1973) which include:

a) totality and universality in settings covered and clientele served

b) dynamism and diversity in teaching and learning methods and materials

c) focus on promotion in learners of the personal characteristics necessary for life long learning.

As the 21st century approaches, education is so varied in its tasks and forms that it covers all the activities that enable people from childhood to old age, to acquire a living knowledge of the world, of other people and themselves. Education should become a continuum, coextensive with life and widened to take in the whole of society. It should make an individual a life long learner with an increasing awareness of the modern world, the rapidity of changes occurring in all walks of life, the phenomena of expansion and obsolescence of knowledge and of changes in life-roles as well as psychological conditions at different stages of life. Unlike traditional education, it would reveal the originality of the individual. In the 21st centuries, learning throughout for life will be essential adapting to the evolving requirements of daily life and for better mastery of the changing time frames and rhythms of individual existence. So, unless the educational machinery readjusts itself to train individuals for life long learning by adopting innovative measures for improvised
educative process, they will not be able to fulfill the demands of the highly technological world.

1.1.6 Educational Innovations in India

Educational innovations in India need to be regarded as one aspect of a multidimensional effort for the transformation of Indian life since the achievement of independence in 1947. It is an extremely complex task to convert an economically underdeveloped traditional society into a self-reliant and modern nation.

In affluent countries, the launching of innovations is comparatively easy because financial aid can be readily provided. But in a developing country the scarcity of resources adds greater intensity to the challenge of change. Therefore, the first and the foremost concern of the educational innovator in India is how to give positive values of such scarce resources as money, time and expert personal. The second concern is to operate within an educational system which requires a thorough overhaul of its structures, functions and processes (Naik 1974)

The fact that our government in the post independence period has appointed many commissions and committees on different aspects of education is proof of the nation’s interest and concern for the improvement of educational system in the country. During the late fifties and early sixties a good number of innovations were introduced in our educational system. The NCERT's report of the National Seminar on Innovations in Education in India gives an account of innovative practices collected from all over the country. The NCERT, through the Extension Services Department and National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration- a Deemed University from 2006, has come forward to promote educational innovations in India (ANTRIEP News letter 2001). In pursuance of the recommendations of
various conferences and seminars, the UNSESCO established the Asian Programme of Educational Innovations for Development (APEID) in 1973. APEID is an organization of innovation for effecting international co-operation in education where participating members co-operate, develop and implement mutually beneficial educational programmes for development (MHRD, 1993). The NCERT as the Manger of National Development Group (NDG) for Educational Innovations in India under the APEID prepared a long list of such innovations all over the country. (NCERT 197^

The government has also launched several schemes like Operational Black Board Scheme, NFE, and introduction of the DPEP system, SSA and other voluntary initiatives in elementary education. A lot of funds are also allotted for implementation of these schemes. But the better truth is that they have not been operationalized to the desired extent.

In India, the origin of the idea of educational innovations can be traced to a very early period in history. Right from the days of Gandhiji and even earlier, attempts have been made to impart a practical view to education, contrary to mere theorizing. Gandhiji's Basic Education as envisaged in the Wardha Scheme was a powerful indigenous model rooted firmly in the Indian soil. It was a sincere and serious effort to completely change the educational scene of India. Kabir (1956), Kurien (1983), Pachmukhi (1983), Kumar (1994), Dyer (2000) and Fagg (2001) has made in-depth and extensive studies of Basic Education. Fagg has gone back to original sources to explore Gandhiji's educational philosophy and strategy where Gandhi sought the, development of the body, mind and spirit together. The author finds a 'silent social revolution' in the 'child centric' pedagogical scheme of Gandhji.
Fagg (2001) has also noted the 'alternative pedagogy' based upon learning through the application of a variety of crafts. Gandhiji believed that 'literacy in itself was no education'. It was neither 'the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and women can be educated'. Gandhiji opined that the importance of book learning must be relegated to the background and held that “a proper and harmonious combination of the body, mind and spirit is required for the making of the whole man which constitutes the true economics of education.”(Fagg 2001). But the fact that India could not implement Gandhji's education policy as a national curriculum indicates the magnitude and complexity of the problems involved in changing the established structure of education and the existing pattern of curriculum. Likewise, Rabindranath Tagore experimented with an alternative approach to education by setting up Shantiniketan in 1901 where classes were held in the open air and children learnt by engaging themselves in nature study and craft work.

In recent years ago two major incentives have been launched by the government for achieving the goals of education—the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). Both programmes are inclusive in nature as children with different needs are also given educational attention as a commitment. The DPEP system has been also advocating innovative practices in methods of teaching by enhancing and promulgating the significance of child-centered teaching in schools. It has been making several interventions to achieve its objectives towards inclusion of all children by promoting and organizing community mobilization and early detection, in-service teacher training, resources support, educational aids and appliances and barrier free architectural design of schools.
In addition to the educational; innovations by the governmental organizations many non-governmental organizations, philosophers, educational reformers, educationalists etc have developed many new innovations for updating, renewing and upgrading the curriculum, methodology, management, administration, supervision and the use of media and materials based on their experiences and implemented in many parts of the country, for the benefit of the society.

Some of the successful programmes in the educational process conducted at different parts of India include:

1. Eklavya project in Madhya Pradesh: The programme is organized on the philosophy that given the chance, children have the capacity to imagine and create traits that need to be nurtured and encouraged. The school curriculum has been developed on the principles of learning by discovery, learning through activity and learning from the environment. Textbooks are in the form of workbooks. Vocabularies are local and simple. Subject matter is meaningful and contextual. A system of open book examinations and practical examinations has also been developed.

2. Digantar in Rajasthan: The programme does not practice the existing pattern of dividing children into different classes. The freedom of pace of learning is its cardinal principle. Children are divided into groups with different levels of learning. The system of multi-level teaching is used. The school has its on curriculum and has developed its own textbooks, which are in modular forms. Teachers' training is a very critical component of the programme. Participatory training methodologies are used and every teacher has to go through training for four months in phases before joining
the school. Teachers meet weekly to reflect on the problems faced by them, find solutions collectively and plan for the next week.

3. Nali Kali in Karnataka: The programme is being run in the formal school system. Schools follow the state curriculum but have developed their own methods for transaction, which is not based on textbooks. A lot of learning materials, such as cards containing the learning items, have been groups are partially teacher supported, fully teacher supported or peer group supported. There are also self-learning groups. Multi-grade and multi-level learning are organized through group activities and children move to learning ladders. The whole process is well organized and demonstrative.

4. The Rishi Valley project in Andhra Pradesh: In this school, the learning activities are planned through more than a thousand systematically designed study cards and work cards together with an achievement ladder. Multiple steps in each unit of learning include introductory, reinforcement, evaluation and remedial activities. Students learn in groups or individually and peer support is evident. Sixty per cent of the curriculum is core while 40 percent is left to be organized by teachers with the help of students. Training helps teachers to prepare their own materials. The Nali Kali programme in Karnataka is based on the Rishi Valley experience, the difference being, however, that the former is being run in the formal system.

Thus, there are many educational innovations developed, experimented and implemented in small samples in many parts of India. In Kerala too, there are schools which have media innovations in the area of curriculum, methodology of teaching, teaching-learning process linking education with life-skills, giving individual attention to students and so on. The present researcher attempts to undertake a study
on the comparative features of the innovative schools in Kerala and to find out the impact on the development of life skills of the students studying in those schools.

1.2 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Even though many innovative ideas and practices are being implemented through the governmental organizations in the country, it could not satisfy the need of the children, society etc. The quantity being increased, but the quality of education provided is not satisfactory for the overall development of the individual and society. In this context, the efforts put forward by the nongovernmental organizations, philosophers, educationalists etc in the field of education are worthwhile. There are many educational innovations developed, experimented and implemented in small samples in many parts of India especially in Kerala which have many innovative features which are not practiced in conventional schools like, innovation in the area of curriculum, methodology of teaching, teaching learning process, importance given for total development, linking education with life skills, individual attention, satisfying the needs of the bright, average and below average, learning from the nature, relationship of the school with the parents and community around, management, administration, supervision, evaluation, use of media and materials etc.

In this new era of searching for the new developments in the field of education, to improve the quality and quantity of education it is an urgent need to study the innovative practices followed by these schools for the benefit of the education. It is expected that the present study may throw light on the impact of these practices on academic achievement and development of life skills of the students from the selected primary schools of Kerala.
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present investigation is a comparative study of the institutional profiles of primary schools in Kerala following innovative educational practices. By using new ideas, methods, curriculum, evaluation, management, administration supervision, media and materials with that of the conventional schools. It also aims to find out the impact of the innovative practices on the academic achievement and life skills of students. so the problem is stated as “COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN KERALA”.

1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

1.4.1 Innovative Practices

A deliberate, novel, specific change which is thought to be more effective in accomplishing the goal of education.

1.4.2 Primary School Students

The selected students from upper primary schools should be in the age group of 12-13 years and the schools should be using innovative practices in the education of students at this level.

1.4.3 Life Skills

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. In this study the investigator confined the life skills in the three areas such as creative thinking, interpersonal relationship and communication skills.
1.4.4 Creative Thinking

The ability of the person to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of his/her action or non action. It is the ability to look beyond his/her direct experience and to respond adaptively and with flexibility to the situation of his/her daily lives.

1.4.5 Interpersonal Relationship

It is the ability to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. Being able to make and keep friendly relationship, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well being.

1.4.6 Communication Skills

The ability to express ourselves, both verbally and non verbally, in ways that are appropriate to their own cultures and situations. This means the ability to express opinions, desires, needs and fears and being able to ask for advice and help in time of need.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1 To develop the institutional profiles for selected innovative schools and conventional schools of Kerala.

2 To compare the institutional profiles of the innovative schools and conventional schools.
3 To find out the effect of innovative practices on the life skills such as creative thinking, interpersonal relationship and communication skills of the students studying in the selected schools.

4 To find out the effect of innovative practices on the academic achievement of the students studying in the selected schools.

1.6 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1 There is no significant effect of innovative practices on the creative thinking of the students from the selected schools.

2 There is no significant effect of innovative practices on the interpersonal relationship of the students from the selected schools.

3 There is no significant effect of innovative practices on the communication skills of the students from the selected schools.

4 There is no significant effect of innovative practices on the academic achievement of the students from the selected schools.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The present study is delimited to the three life skills i.e., communication, creative thinking and interpersonal relationship only.

2. The study is delimited to three innovative schools of Kerala.

3. The study is delimited to the students of age group 12-13.