Sanskrit, the language of ancient India is the repertoire of Indian wisdom, art, literature and sciences. To study Sanskrit was a must for an Indian student in the olden days, if he had to be considered as a scholar by the society. Although the importance of Sanskrit studies has been diminished by the change of times it has been considered as the cultural language of India, nourishing the modern Indian languages and literatures. Sanskrit is the unique cultural force that contributes to the unity and integrity of India.

As a cultural language Sanskrit influences and interferes in the life of Indians in different ways. An Indian gets enough occasions to learn Sanskrit and its culture during his life time. He can learn Sanskrit from schools and colleges; but above all it is
possible for him to learn Sanskrit by informal means also. The chances for formal and informal education for Sanskrit are very high in Kerala. People show interest in the traditional subjects like Ēyurveda and Vīstuvidya etc. It has given a new energy for the learning of Sanskrit ēśtras now a days. Along with the formal institutions of Sanskrit study, the traditional and informal agencies of Sanskrit education which were sidelined in the course of modern education are getting more and more attention in the society. This state of affairs in the present day scenario of Sanskrit education in Kerala demands a close examination of informal agencies and their activities.

The present thesis titled "A study of Informal Education of Sanskrit in Kerala with Special Reference to Ēyurveda", looked in to the various aspects of informal education of Sanskrit: The history, sources, agencies and the traditional and modern components of informal education.
As the Informal Education is linked directly to the day to day life of the people involved, the researcher had to do much field work to collect data in the concerned areas. The methodology followed included visits to the traditional centres of Sanskrit education, interviews with scholars and activists of informal education, collection of data from the electronic and print media and conduct of survey among the Ayurveda students and doctors of Kerala. During the search for the informal agencies of Sanskrit education it was found that both the traditional and modern types of education are prevalent. Individuals, groups of intellectuals, cultural organisations etc. co-operated with the researcher in this investigation. The data collected were categorized according to the subjects of study, agencies involved and the methods of study followed by them.

The visit to the libraries were beneficial for the collection of data which were helpful for placing the informal education of Sanskrit within the correct historical perspective.
In the first chapter 'Sanskrit Education in Historical Perspective' we discussed briefly narrates the institutions and methods of Sanskrit education of ancient and medieval India upto the modern times. This chapter has been designed to give the proper background from which the discussion on the informal education proceeds.

The unique system of education which was formal during the vedic period and continued till the reign of Buddhism is the Gurukula system. This system insisted that a disciple has to stay in the house of guru and lead a chaste life of Brahmaçārin whose principal duties were to serve the teacher and learn the Vedas and āśtras from him.

The children of Brāhma, Kāatriya and Vyāya varṣas where sent to the Gurukulas where the method of teaching was mainly oral. During the śutra period the system became more analytical and attempts were made to codify the knowledge in various branches as seen in the sutras of Pāṇini. The rules of education were codified in the Dharmasūtras which reveals that the observations of varṣa and ērāma dharmanas
became more rigid and compulsory. Education prescribed for the varṇas in the Dharmaśstras was valid in the epic period also. In the Ṛtis and Purāṇas, Naimiśa forest, the hermitage of Kanva and the asramas of famous sages like Vyāsa, Vālmiki etc were centres of education. āudras were rejected the right for study of vedas and śūstras.

Gurudakṣaṇa was one of the important duties on the part of the students. Military training was given great importance in the epic period. Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata give the subjects of study of a king which includes both the spiritual and political.

During the age of Buddhism, centres of education were monasteries or Vihāras. All education, sacred as well as secular, were in the hands of learned monks. Students stayed with the monks and the inmates of the viharas included members of both higher and lower classes. Ayurveda made marvelous progress in this age. Women were also given education. The educational institutions of the Buddhist period attracted students from distant parts of the world such as China and Sreelanka. The use of
Prakşr and Pñli, the languages of the common people was another positive aspect of Buddhist education.

In the medieval India the invaders destroyed many centres of learning but the tradition of the teaching of Vedas and Ìjstras continued. PñhaÌjlas were established in different parts of the country. Varîasi became the most famous centre of learning in North India. Bhagavadgêta, Bhûgavata and works on Bhakti were held in high esteem. Midhila and Kashmir also became famous for Sanskrit scholarship. The regional languages began to develop with the help of Sanskrit language. Some of the Mughal emperors like Akbar, Jahangir and his son Darashikoh were interested in Sanskrit knowledge.

The modern history of Sanskrit education began with the discovery of Sanskrit by the European colonialists. Sir William Jones and Charls Wilkins wrote about Sanskrit language. But Lord Macaulay in his minutes rejected the main role of Sanskrit
in the education and decided to give western type of education. The Europeans were interested in Sanskrit research and publication of books in Sanskrit. It made the Indians aware of the great literary and cultural heritage of India. Sanskrit was the source of Indian languages and culture for centuries. The formal system of modern education had to recognize this fact and give a place for Sanskrit education in the mainstream.

The recommendations of education commissions appointed by the central and State governments and state in independent India unanimously pointed out that Sanskrit education is necessary for the unity and integrity of India. Sanskrit education in Kerala has some peculiarities which are not seen elsewhere in India. Sanskrit was studied by all sections of Keralites irrespective of caste or religion. In ancient Kerala, along with the local language, Sanskrit language and literature were taught in village schools. Another speciality was the establishment of salais at places like Moozhikulam
and Parthivapuram by the ancient Kerala rulers. During the later medieval period centres of Sanskrit education were temples and the houses of Nampêthiri's and royal palaces. The study of Vedas, Darñanas, Ēyurveda, Viṣṭuvidyā and Jyothiṣāstra, especially the Gaṅga developed in Kerala during this period.

Modern education incorporated Sanskrit but it has not used the knowledge contained in Sanskrit sufficiently. Sanskrit is taught in schools and colleges as a second language. The subjects like Ēyurveda are taught parallel to the modern medicine. In the present system of education in schools, Sanskrit is an optional subject where as the study of Malayalam, English and Hindi are compulsory. In a number of Sanskrit schools the study of Sanskrit language is made compulsory.

In Kerala a number of Sanskrit schools are teaching Sanskrit as main language. In the college level Sanskrit is taught as a second language for all other subjects and as a subsidiary subject for Malayalam. Graduate and Postgraduate
courses in Sanskrit is offered in college departments. In the University level students do research in the field of Sanskrit.

Like the formal agencies of education informal agencies was also active in ancient society. Informal education is a life long process in which family, community, state and such social and cultural agencies contribute and supplement to the educative needs. Sanskrit was taught traditionally in families. Festivals, travels, pilgrimage, rituals, religion and state were some other sources of informal education of Sanskrit and its culture.

In the past, Kings organised assemblies of scholars in their courts. In the temples Sanskrit āstras and purāṇas were recited. Various performing arts and theatre also inspired Sanskrit education. All these were discussed in the second chapter titled 'Informal Education: Definitions and Agencies'. The influence of the traditional agencies are still found in the modern society. However due to the advance of science
and technology, modern tools of education are available now. These include print and
electronic media... etc.

The informal education given by the traditional institutions of Kerala existing
in some places was examined in the third chapter. In the field of vedic education the
contributions of Brahmasvam Matham at Thrissur, and Kanci Kamakoti Yajurveda
Vidyapetham etc are examined. It is noted that some devotional organisations are
interested in giving informal classes in Veda partially imitating the traditional mode of
vedic education.

In the same way many students learn vistuvdyā and Jyotiā from traditional
scholars as these subjects are not taught in the main stream Sanskrit education.

The traditional forms of theatre and performing arts like kētiyām and
kēttu have been attracting the younger generation and they are fortunate to get
educated in these arts from the families traditionally engaged in this field.
Marathukali, Bhāgavatasaptām, Pṛthakam Krisānām, and Kathakali are some other areas of performance where Sanskrit has a major part to play. It is noted that these traditional institutions of arts are reforming their orthodox approaches and changing several conventions and rules in order to cope with the modern social realities.

In the next forth chapter titled "Informal Education of Sanskrit in Kerala: Modern Streams" we have examined the informal means of Sanskrit education in contemporary Kerala. It discusses the role of print and electronic media, seminars and conferences, youth festivals and other cultural activities in the context of Sanskrit education.

Cultural influences of television serials like Mahābhīrata and Rāmāyaṇa are also noted. A limited number of newspapers and periodicals are available in Sanskrit. Some periodicals in Malayalam have allotted pages for informal Sanskrit education. A
variety of Sanskrit self study materials are available. All these show that a person residing in Kerala acquires Sanskrit knowledge from his surroundings in one way or another.

The fifth chapter titled "Sanskrit and Ayurveda: The Role of Informal Education", started with a brief history of Ayurveda in Kerala upto the modern times.

In Kerala the traditional ‘vaidyans’ approved by the government and the Ayurveda doctors practice side by side. Ayurveda colleges give the formal and professional education. There is a vast area of the traditional and informal modes of Ayurvedic education. The informal education of Ayurveda is noteworthy because of the activities of outstanding scholars. The educational activities of Ayurveda scholars like Raghavan Thirumulpad and Vellar Mana Sankaran Nampétiri are examined in order to find out the scope and relevance of informal education in this area.
A survey was conducted among the teachers and students of Government Ayurveda colleges to find out the scope, relevance and means of informal education in Sanskrit in the field of Ayurveda.

The survey reveals that in the education of Ayurveda, Sanskrit is not given the place it actually deserves. The current Sanskrit knowledge of the college students does not enable them for the reading of the original texts and the conducting of higher studies. The students feel that Sanskrit is a difficult language to study. But they are also aware the great knowledge existing in the basic texts of Ayurveda. A remarkable number of students therefore, approach traditional Sanskrit scholars and Ayurveda ‘vaidyans’ to get more knowledge. This shows that there are limitations for the system of present day Ayurvedic education and much is left behind when the knowledge is modernised or adopted to suit the syllabus and curriculum.

The major findings of the study may be summarised as follows:-
1. A remarkable section of Sanskrit education in Kerala exists in the informal sector, when we take the traditional subjects like Ēyurveda JyotiĀa, Vedas, Tantra, Vjstu etc.. Students are coming forward to study these subjects. Some individuals are very much interested. In the fields of traditional arts like Kētiya¶¶am, Kēttu, Kris,anį¶¶am and Kathakali etc, the study of Sanskrit is essential. The teaching of Sanskrit is taking place in various centres where these arts are being taught.

2. People of all ages are interested in the study of Sanskrit, therefore the informal Sanskrit studies often bears the characteristics of adult education.

3. There is a tendency that the traditional families who taught Sanskrit subjects like JyotiĀa, Ēyurveda, Veda etc are in the midway of transforming themselves, into modern institutions and organisations. They admit students of all castes and try to follow a fixed syllabus prepared by themselves, conduct
examinations and give certificates. Thus they are a meeting place of tradition and modernity. Some of these institutions are conducted under the family trusts and some are managed by committees and organizations in which people outside the family or castes also joined. Thus shows that changes are occurring in this field according to the change of time.

4. In the study of Ēyurveda and other traditional sciences, translations of Sanskrit texts are profusely used. As a result there is a tendency to overlook the study of Sanskrit language.

5. Another aspect of the traditional theatre and other performing arts is that, as they are now publicly performed Sanskrit is reaching to all sections of society. The temple art form like kēṭtu, kēṭiyaṉam etc are being presented on public stages. This gives the common people chances for learning Sanskrit and literature.
6. It is also noted that the cultural wing of the religious organisations use the Vedas and Upanisads etc for the propagation of particular cults. Likewise the recitation of epic and Purāṇa, classes on Bhagavadgita and Vedanta etc are being conducted inside and outside the places of worship. Many people take part in these activities. These shows that religion is a source of informal Sanskrit study. Community organisations take some interest in these activities. However, it is also noted that, the extreme activities by certain religious and cultural groups are capable of damaging the secular quality of Sanskrit education.

7. The print and electronic media also contribute to the informal education of Sanskrit. The television gives religiously oriented programmes where as radio programmes are more secular. The informal study and propagation of Sanskrit is comparatively better in the print media than the electronic media.
The Internet also provide facilities for Sanskrit education and it plays a great role in Informal Sanskrit Education.

8. Sanskrit teachers and scholars, Voluntary organisations etc.. committed to the propagation of Sanskrit, organisations of professional peoples working in Ēyurveda, Vįstu, JyotiĄa, competitions like Youth festivals, seminars and conferences etc.. contribute to the informal education and propagation of Sanskrit.