PREFACE

The Kerala Grandhasala Sanghom -- an apex body of the voluntary association of libraries in the state -- gave a charismatic leadership to the library movement in Kerala. It was a mass movement, which stood apart from other library movements in the country. For the last one hundred years the public libraries of the state have been serving the people of Kerala as nonformal educational institutions for enhancing educational, political, cultural, and social enlightenment throughout the state. It provides not merely an intellectual development, but diffuses as an integral part in the socio-cultural developments.

The present study is intended to evaluate the history of the public libraries, during the pre and post Grandhasala Sanghom period. The public libraries of the state have played a vital role in the social life of Kerala. The study is relevant and unique in the sense that, so far, no scientific and systematic studies have been conducted on the activities and contributions of this popular movement. The major objective of the study is to trace out the origin and development of this mass movement and assess its contributions in the socio-cultural fields.

The relevant data and information obtained from the primary sources -- like Annual Report of the Kerala Grandhasala Sanghom, State Administrative Report, Diary of P.N. Panicker, Minutes of the
Sanghom meetings, Government Orders, Official Files etc., and also from secondary sources -- like News Papers, Journals, periodicals and published books related to the Kerala Grandhasala Sanghom, socio-cultural history of Kerala etc. In addition to this some valuable data were collected by interviewing some important persons, who are mainly responsible for this movement. An Opinionnaire Survey was also conducted to understand and to arrive at general conclusions about the present position of the public libraries in the State. Moreover, many eminent personalities, who are strongly involved in this movement, have been contacted personally for the purpose.

It is really an inquiry into the public library movement in the state, which played a substantial role in the process of social transformation of the state. The study concentrates on the library movement from its very inception to the year in which the Kerala Grandhasala Sanghom was taken over by the Government in 1977.