Introduction

The idea of a ‘Learning Society’ was first put forward by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in its famous report (1972), titled ‘Learning to be’. According to this report, a learning society is one in which all agencies of a society are educational providers; not just those whose primary responsibility is education. Similarly, all citizens should be engaged in learning, taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the learning society. True to these words, Kerala has always been a learning society. The educational and social reforms of Maharajas, the relentless efforts of Christian missionaries, the educational pursuits of Nair Service Society, the contribution of Sree Narayana Movement and a galaxy of social reforms laid a strong educational base in Kerala.

The socio-political movements, freedom struggle and trade union movements have played a very significant role in creating a suitable environment for people's participation. Excellent network of rural libraries, better transport and communication facilities, people’s perception towards education, social mobility, political commitments are some major factors which provided a conducive climate for the people to learn. This chapter is set out to analyze the various programmes launched over a period of time and to understand various agencies involved in adult education programmes in Kerala.

The analysis is presented in the following order.
- Literacy and Post Literacy Programmes in Kerala
- Continuing Education Programmes
- Agencies involved in such programmes

The literacy and post literacy programmes in Kerala are presented first.

Literacy and Post-Literacy Programmes

Kerala has attained the unique status of being India’s first total literate state by eradicating illiteracy in record time through the universal campaign approach. It has set the model and trend for a massive people’s movement for literacy and participative democratic development for the country as a whole. This has become a proven model for illiteracy eradication with people’s support by campaign approaches. Programmes launched in the 70s and 80s by the state government, universities and voluntary agencies
and the lesson learned from these programmes provided a good environment for literacy movement in Kerala in 80s and 90s. The 80s witnessed the literacy movement based on campaign mode which really provided a fillip to the literacy level in the state. Some of these major campaign approaches of Kerala are discussed below.

**People’s Education and Literacy Campaign, Kottayam (PELCK)**

The People’s Education and Literacy Campaign, Kottayam (PELCK) known as Kottayam campaign, was started in Kottayam town with the intention to make the town fully literate within a period of 100 days. This venture was launched with the help of National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers of Mahatma Gandhi University. The programme, as a whole, was administered and monitored by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, District Collector, Kottayam and ward councilors of the municipality. The State Resource Centre contributed considerably in the venture in the form of environment creation, technical support, training, materials production, monitoring and evaluation of the programme.³

**Lead Kindly Light (Ernakulam Campaign)**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, sponsored Ernakulam Total Literacy Programme in 1989. The programme enlisted massive voluntary participation of the people with the active cooperation and involvement of government machinery, non-governmental organizations and the local bodies. 1,50,000 persons were made literate within one year. The programme commenced on 26th January 1989 and the district was declared as totally literate on 4th February 1990.⁴

The project identified 1.70 lakhs illiterates and could induct 1.61 lakhs of them through the literacy centres. Of these, 1.41 lakhs were successful in the final evaluation. This included all sections of the people. Majority of them were women. 17000 volunteer - instructors worked hard alongwith many others to make this low budget project possible. It was the synthesis of voluntarism of the people’s movement and the organizational resources of the bureaucracy that contributed to the success. This experiment proved beyond doubt that massive public voluntary participation was a practicable prerequisite for the total literacy campaigns. This had also shown that the highly motivated people’s network created all over, though initially for the purpose of imparting literacy, could be effectively utilized for ensuring public participation in development activities. The district administration and Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) were behind the programme. SRC (Kerala) provided all academic and technical support to this campaign.
Akshara Keralam Project  (Total Literacy Campaign Kerala)

Experience of Ernakulam Total Literacy Project prompted the Government of Kerala to take up the challenging task of achieving total literacy in the whole state in just one year. The programme was formally inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Sri. Rajive Gandhi, on February 4th 1990 by handing over the symbolic torch of literacy to Sri E.K.Nayanar, Chief Minister of Kerala. The objective of Akshara Keralam Project was to attain total literacy in the State by March 1991.5

A detailed survey was conducted to find out illiterates in all the thirteen districts on a single day. Around 6 lakhs volunteers were required to conduct the survey and consolidate the data collected. They were selected across the state and were trained in conducting the survey successfully. The survey was conducted on April 8th 1990. Consolidation of data was also completed within two days. The survey revealed that there were 28.5 lakhs illiterates in the 13 districts; of which 22.8 lakhs were in the age group of 6-60. Around 65 percent of the illiterates were women.

It was proposed that there could be a learning centre for every 10 illiterates. It was estimated that around 2.5 lakhs centres were to be started and the same number of instructors were to be identified and trained. A four tier training strategy was envisaged in order to train these instructors. Key Resource Persons (KRPs) training was arranged at the state level in which 275 key resource persons took part. They, in turn, trained around 2500 resource persons at district level and these resource persons trained 26000 master trainers at block level. Finally, these master trainers imparted training to the required instructors at panchayat level. The training was imparted in four stages, viz. state level, district level, taluk level and panchayat level. The total duration of the training was nine days per year at different intervals.

A high-pitched tempo was created and sustained throughout for continued motivation of the activists and the learners. All kinds of media and popular art forms were utilized for this purpose. Different types of publicity campaigns were conducted one after another to create the environment right from the proclamation date itself.

The National Literacy Mission approved the three-part primer prepared on the basis of Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL) model. In addition to primers, handbooks for the instructors, supplementary notes and other instructional materials were also printed and supplied to all the
activists. Tamil and Kannada primers and handbooks and notes were supplied to the linguistic minorities.

All the study materials like slates, pencils, notebooks etc. were made available through local voluntary sponsorship and contributions. The panchayat and ward level trainings were also conducted with local contribution. Major share of expenditures towards environment creation and publicity was mobilized through public contribution.

An effective Management Information System (MIS) had been developed to monitor the implementation of the project. A detailed calendar of activities was prepared and followed. Monthly and bi-monthly reviews at project and sub project level by the state and district centres were held. A detailed evaluation based on the norms prescribed by the National Literacy Mission to test ability in reading, writing, numeracy and other skills was also conducted. The learners who could secure 70 percent or more were alone declared successful in the evaluation. Of the 18 lakhs learners enrolled in the different centres, 16.5 lakhs appeared for the evaluation; of them 12.22 lakhs were declared successful.

The state was declared a total literate on 18th April 1991 in a colourful function held at Kozhikodu. Thus, Kerala became the first literate state in the country.

**Post Literacy Campaign**

The total literacy campaign has accentuated the percentage of literacy in the state (93.64). It has also led to the emergence of 12.22 lakhs neo-literates. These neo-literates need to sustain their achievements. They should not relapse into illiteracy. Hence, post literacy and continuing education programmes have been planned not only to sustain the interests of the neo-literates but also to bring about a desired attitudinal change among them. Special emphasis was given to re-enroll the illiterates who dropped out and could not be covered during the TLC. All the fourteen districts including Ernakulam were brought under the purview of post literacy campaign.

The major objectives of the post literacy programme were to:

- organize activities for the sustenance of basic literacy and awareness among the neo-literates;
- ensure retention of literacy skills and upgradation of skills, especially of women;
create an atmosphere for the application of the skills acquired by them;
• supply reading materials for neo-literates;
• continue literacy classes for drop-outs and those who were not covered by the total literacy campaign;
• promote the developmental activities;
• take up non-formal education scheme for the dropouts from schools.

(*A state with 90 percent and above can be declared as a total literate state)

Kerala Saksharatha Samithy was the chief agency to implement the Post literacy campaign. The organizational structure similar to the one adopted in the TLC was used. The literacy centres were continued. The three-pillar concept of involving the official project network, the people’s committee networks and departmental official network was used in the PLC. The literacy centres, which functioned during the total literacy campaign, were continued as such. Around 1.5 lakhs instructors were required to run these literacy centres. The training imparted to these 1.5 lakhs instructors was based on Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL) method. Instructor’s handbooks were also prepared and distributed. Four-tier training strategy as adopted in total literacy campaign was followed. Because of this, the training was effective and all the instructors could be trained.

In addition to the post literacy primer and connected handbooks for the instructors, supplementary reading books for neo-literates were also prepared. State Resource Centre and Kerala Saksharatha Samithy published nearly 100 such books during this period. The books published by Centre for Adult and Continuing Education of the universities of Kerala and Calicut were also selected for distribution to the neo-literates. State Resource Centre published ‘Akshara Deepam’ a fortnightly newspaper, for neo-literates.

An effective monitoring and evaluation system developed as was done in TLC period. Monthly and bimonthly reviews were held regularly. Detailed calendar of activities was prepared. In addition to the state level and district level saksharatha samithies, taluk level and panchayat level saksharatha samithies were formed as was done during the TLC period. Project officers and assistant project officers were appointed to monitor and evaluate the progress.

A permanent set up for implementing continuing education programme consisting of aksharasanghoms and Jana Vidya Kendras had been set up in all the fourteen districts. When post literacy phase was completed on 31st
May 1993, 2500 Jana Vidya kendras and 21901 Aksharasanghoms were in operation. The conveners of these centres were also trained for effective functioning. The post literacy campaign was for the sustenance of literacy skill achieved by the neo-literate. But, due to some unforeseen reasons there was some time lag in the implementation of the post literacy campaign. 10.62 lakh learners were enrolled in the 1.19-lakh literacy centres. Of this 4.02 lakh learners could complete the post literacy primer-I and were successful in the evaluation. Remaining 6.6 lakh neo-literates continued with literacy primer. These learners were fresh illiterates and those who were not successful in the evaluation. Aksharasanghoms and Jana Vidya Kendras constituted network for the implementation of the post literacy and continuing education.

**Tribal Literacy Programme - (Special Sub project)**

The total-literacy campaign (1990-91) failed to include the tribals due to non-accessibility and dearth of qualified instructors. Kerala Saksharatha Samithy therefore chalked out a scheme for tribes, which was known as Tribal Literacy Project. Squads were constituted with instructors and literacy workers under whose supervision literacy survey of all colonies was conducted. This, among other things, helped the fixation of the strength of instructors and assessment of the number of resident and non-resident instructors. Jathas, squad work, home visits and kalajatha helped in creating a proper environment for starting the project.

The primer used for TLC was adopted for tribes too. Handbooks dealing with peculiarities of customs and conventions, languages of various tribal groups were published. Audio and video-cassettes, newsletters, posters etc. were published. Meaningful and rhythmic songs of tribal community were chosen and recorded in audio-cassettes.

A foolproof system of monitoring and evaluation was envisaged under the project. The officials of Kerala Saksharatha Samithy, committee members and key resource persons could assess the progress of the scheme. The local committees also monitored and supported the field programme. A special team was constituted with an outside evaluator under whose supervision evaluation was conducted. Learners registered much improvement in their standards. Non-availability of qualified instructors from tribal community was a major difficulty.

Of the 93,000 tribal population, 83,000 learners were brought to the literacy centres. 64,000 of them were successful. The rate of literacy percentage among the tribal population was 80.71. Thus Kerala became the
first state to attain total literacy among tribal population in the country. The formal proclamation was made at Kulathupuzha, Thiruvananthapuram.

Coastal Literacy Programme

Even though the state as a whole could achieve a literacy percentage of above 93, the literacy in the coastal belt was around 50 percent. It was estimated that there were around 1.5 lakh illiterates among the fisherfolk even after the successful completion of the post literacy campaign. The main stumbling block was the special nature of their work. The male population would be available on the shore only for a short period during daytime. Lack of instructors in the coastal belt and difficulties in mobilizing resources were other hurdles.

Considering the above facts, a special sub-project called ‘Akshara Theeram’ was implemented in this area covering nine coastal districts namely, Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod. The basic objective was to eradicate illiteracy from the coastal area within one year. The specific objectives were to:

- educate the fisherfolk the benefit of co-operative fishing;
- educate them on the vices like alcoholism, gambling etc;
- educate them against exploitation;
- foster health care habits and hygiene;
- encourage saving habits;
- train them for better fishing and fish processing operations; and
- encourage them to send their children to schools.

Kerala Saksharatha Samithy provided required coordination through its coordination centres at state, district, corporation, municipal and panchayat level. All the nine coastal districts of Kerala were divided into 81 sub-projects. This was based on the operational divisions made by the Kerala State Fishermen’s Federation of Fisheries department (MATSYAFED) for its working especially to monitor and supervise its constituent units. This was for coordinating and synchronizing the activities of the project. An Assistant Project Officer (APO) headed each sub project. One of the district coordinators was assigned the responsibility of the coastal sub projects and an assistant director was in-charge at the state centre.

Literacy centres were opened and instructors were appointed. Most of the centres had more than 10 learners as the density of population was
high.. Sheds were constructed for conducting classes. Akshara Sanghoms and Jana Vidya Kendras were also started in these areas.

Primers and special primers prepared exclusively for fisherfolk were supplied to learners. Slates, pencils, books and lamps were supplied. Spectacles were also distributed to the needy persons.

Three tier training system was developed. The resource persons were trained at state level. They in turn imparted training to the master trainers at district level and the master trainers trained the instructors/conveners at sub-project level. Kerala Saksharatha Samithi prepared the training materials in consultation with fisheries department, Government of Kerala. Special programmes were organized for creating an environment to start the programmes.

Of the 2.94 lakh illiterates in the coastal belt 1.31 lakhs were made literate during TLC phase along with the general population. But in the post literacy period 20,000 neo-literates and 60,000 illiterates successfully completed the programme.

Tamil Literacy Programme

The Tamil speaking linguistic minorities are spread over all the districts in the state. However majority of them are concentrated in the border districts of Palakkadu, Idukki, and Thiruvananthapuram. It was estimated that around 1.5 lakh Tamil speaking illiterates were in the State. Eighty percent of them were plantation workers.

A special sub-project had been started for Tamil speaking people at state level. An assistant director monitored the programme at state level and district coordinators at district level. Special Tamil primers were prepared by modifying the primers used in the Arivoli Iyakkam- the total literacy campaign of Pondicherry state. Three primers for the literacy programme and one primer for post literacy was developed and published. A monthly news bulletin was also published. Supplementary reading materials were also published following the norms prescribed by National Literacy Mission. Series of awareness camps against AIDS, alcoholism, use of tobacco and health problems were organized with the help of the governmental agencies.

A short-term programme called ‘Akshara Pulari’ was launched for the benefit of such students whose standard was below average. Special textbooks were prepared for this purpose under sponsorship. As in the general literacy programme, Jana Vidya Kendras and Akshara Sanghoms
were started. Some of these centres started income generating programmes for the benefit of the learners and activists. It was found that 40 percent of the Tamil illiterate population was made literate after the project. Lack of qualified instructors from the local area and non-co-operation from plantation owners were the major problems of the project.

To sum up, Kerala has made consistent and concerted efforts in the field of literacy and post literacy to make the state a total literate state. It started with a pilot project in Ernakulam district. Having seen the success, it extended the experiment to the whole of the state. It took cognizance of the loopholes in the experiment especially in coastal and tribal districts and therefore launched special projects targeting fisherfolk, tribals and Tamil speaking people. These special projects yielded the desired results in spite of a few problems in implementing the project. It was these efforts along with location specific strategies ably supported by different stakeholders that earned a prime place for Kerala in the literacy map of the country.

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Kerala is the only state in India, which has successfully completed total literacy and post literacy campaign in all the fourteen districts. The outcome of these campaigns can be sustained only when they are effectively followed up with continuing education programme. Experience in Kerala indicated that in spite of successful completion of TLC and PLC there were a good number of illiterates and semi literates who dropped out of literacy centres. Such a situation, it was felt, was not conducive for promoting and sustaining literacy. Hence continuing education programme was introduced in Kerala.

Continuing education programmes in Kerala have been carried out in two distinctive periods. The Govt. of Kerala on its own initiatives launched the first one in 1993. The second one was launched in 1993 based on policy documents of National Literacy Mission and supported by Govt. of India. The salient features of each of these programmes are listed below.

Continuing Education Programme (1993-96)

The Govt. of Kerala on its own initiatives launched the continuing education programme during the period 1993 to 96. The Government designed all the objectives, activities and strategies.

The major objectives of the Continuing Education Programme were to: 8
- retain the literacy level achieved by the neo-literates by providing them supplementary reading materials;
- impart skill-based literacy programme so as to improve the skills of the learners;
- improve the quality of life and to provide awareness for better earnings;
- identify dropouts from schools and to re-enroll them to schools, if possible;
- impart coaching to poor performing students in the schools so as to improve their academic standards;
- encourage setting up of production/service centres to improve the employment opportunities;
- assist the learners to start self-employment schemes;
- participate in the development activities in the locality;
- solve problems faced by women and weaker sections of the community;
- conduct Kudumba Sadas (family gathering) to discuss and to find out solutions to the problems faced in the locality;
- conduct programmes for encouraging communal harmony among the people;
- implement post-literacy phase among the tribes;
- contribute literacy/post-literacy activities among fisher folk, coastal belt and Tamil linguistic minorities;
- continue literacy/post-literacy work among the general population as well; and
- conduct open school systems and correspondence courses in future.

Kerala Saksharatha Samithy was the main implementing agency. The District Saksharatha Samithies continued to function as in the previous phases. The block co-ordination committee was reconstituted for monitoring the activities in all the panchayats under the purview of the block concerned. Thus, people’s committees at state, district, block, panchayat and ward level were constituted to ensure people’s participation at all levels. These committees had representation of all political parties, voluntary agencies and social workers. Parallel to this, there was the project official setup from State, district and panchayat levels.

In addition, the government departments and agencies were also linked with the activities of the Samithi. Government had issued necessary orders for the active involvement of all the departments and agencies under its control. This was to avoid duplication of activities and money. With the involvement of voluntary agencies, KSS ensured that all major agencies in the field were associated.
Akshara Sanghoms and Jana Vidya Kendras: With the culmination of the post-literacy campaign, three to four literacy centres were clustered into what is known as Akshara Sanghoms (Literacy Circles). In order to coordinate the activities of the Akshara Sanghoms, two or three Jana Vidya Kendras (JVK) were established by saksharatha samithies, which functioned under each local self-government institution. These local samithies were responsible to identify the number of JVKs required in each local body. The people around the Akshara Sanghoms would use this as their meeting place to discuss common problems in the locality.

A convener and some activists managed these Akshara Sanghoms. They were not paid any honorarium or allowance. In order to pay attention to all the developmental activities in the locality, the activities undertaken by each of the Akshara Sanghoms was divided into four vedis or forums namely, Vignana Vedi (Educational Forum), Vikasana Vedi (Developmental Forum), Vanitha Vedi (Women’s Forum) and Kala Samskarika Vedi (Cultural Forum).

The Vignana Vedi took care of the educational activities in the locality while the Vikasana Vedi took care of the developmental activities. The Vanitha Vedi provided a forum for the women in the area to discuss their problems and the Kala Samskarika Vedi encouraged cultural activities. There were conveners for each of these forums and these conveners were mostly the activists of the earlier phases.

The JVK worked as a resource-cum-guidance centre in each area. Details about all the welfare schemes of the government and related application forms were stored for the benefit of the people. The supplementary reading materials prepared by KSS was stored in the JVKs for circulation among the neo-literates through the Akshara Sanghoms.

Since the JVKs required minimum infrastructure facilities, most of them were accommodated in village libraries. Some JVKs functioned in public buildings while some in private buildings. Some JVKs had own buildings with required furniture and amenities. Some local bodies had contributed audio-visual equipments such as T.V and radio. Some had come forward to pay honorarium to the conveners of JVKs and spent money for activities from their budget.

In order to provide employment opportunities for the neo-literates and the activists, the Akshara Sanghoms/ JVKs were encouraged to start production and service centres wherever possible. The JVKs and Akshara Sanghoms were encouraged to get involved in all developmental activities in the area. Construction and repairing of village roads, maintenance of houses
for poor people and other petty works had been undertaken by the Akshara Sanghoms and JVKs. Financial resources were also mobilized by them locally.

The KSS had a good network from state level to ward level through JVKs and Akshara Sanghoms. Many organizations made use of this facility to propagate their messages. A number of awareness camps were arranged under the Akshara Sanghoms on various relevant topics. Medical camps and eye camps had also been organized from time to time. The KSS had a separate wing for the production of relevant materials for the beneficiaries and functionaries. The supplementary reading materials were prepared and produced by this wing had been distributed to JVKs. 75 such neo-literate books had been prepared. Training materials, motivational materials, and a monthly news bulletin (Akshara Keralam) had also been published.

The activists and learners were motivated regularly so as to sustain their interest in the programme. The volunteers and conveners were trained frequently with the help of State Resource Centre. The four-tier training system followed in TLC and PLC were continued in the continuing education as well. A centralized computer based management information system was used for monitoring the project. All the relevant data were collected from Akshara Sanghoms and JVKs were documented at districts and at State head headquarters and used for effective monitoring and control of the system.

**Condensed Course:** Of the neo-literates, there were a few in the age group of 9 to 35 who wished to improve their academic standards. With this in view, Kerala Saksharatha Samithy had arranged an examination equivalent to 4th standard for the benefit of those neo-literates who had better literacy skills. Interested learners attended the classes for six months and appeared for an examination equivalent to fourth standard. Once they passed the examination, they were eligible to continue their studies for higher examination there by providing an opportunity for improving their academic standard and also attaining higher qualification. The State Resource Centre arranged special training for the teachers who took classes for neo-Literate. In order to equip the neo-literates to appear for the examination, they were exposed to a model examination one month prior to the final examination. Around 18000 learners attended the classes organized by the JVKs. 12000 of them wrote the examination conducted by the education department of the govt. of Kerala. 6000 had passed and got the 4th standard certificate. The enthusiasm to this course was highly encouraging and there was a demand to have similar examination for higher standards as well.

The Government of Kerala started the continuing education programme with all seriousness in 1993. They could not continue the
programmes beyond 1996 for obvious reasons. They were: (i) the programme did not receive any financial support from Government. of India nor from Govt. of Kerala; (ii) the functionaries of Jana Vidya Kendras (CEC) did not evince much much interest as there was no financial incentives for their work; (iii) lack of political will on the part of the Government; (iv) most of the centres functioned as government units with out any linkage with non-governmental and other govt. departments; and (v) failure to introduce innovative programmes to sustain the interest of the beneficiaries. As a result the programme was discontinued.

**New Scheme of Continuing Education (1998 onwards)**

The Scheme of Continuing Education (CE) was launched in 1997 as a fully funded centrally-sponsored scheme. The scheme initially envisaged 100 percent assistance to the states for the first three years of implementation. The State Governments were required to share 50 percent of the expenditure during the 4th and 5th years of the project, and thereafter take over total responsibility of the programme. The programme was to be taken up after the conclusion of the total/post literacy campaign in a district with the objective of providing life-long learning facilities. The basic unit of the scheme was the Continuing Education Centre (CEC) with a Nodal Continuing Education Centre (NCEC) overseeing the working of a cluster of CECs. Assistant Preraks had also been appointed to continue ongoing literacy programmes with the assistance of volunteers as in total literacy campaigns/post literacy programmes.

**Objectives:** The main objectives of the scheme include the following:

- Provision of facilities for retention of literacy skills and continuing education to enable the learners to continue their learning beyond basic literacy.
- Creating scope for application of functional literacy for improvement of living conditions and quality of life.
- Dissemination of information on development programmes and widening and improving participation of traditionally deprived sections of the society.
- Creation of awareness about national concerns such as national integration, conservation and improvement of environment, women’s equality and observance of small family norms.
- Improvement of economic condition and general well being by organizing short duration training programme and orientation courses for providing vocational skill.
- Taking up linkage activities for establishing direct linkage between continuing education and development activities.
• Provision of facilities for library and reading rooms for creating an environment conducive for literacy efforts and a learning society.
• Organization of cultural and recreational activities with effective participation of people.

Target Specific Programmes

The target specific programmes were specially designed programme for the participants to improve their level of knowledge/awareness, change their attitude/behavior and acquire new skills so that they could feel themselves empowered socially, economically and educationally. Such programmes were largely functional in the sense that these focussed on development of functional knowledge with the aim of making learning relevant to living and working.

The target-specific functional programmes are to be designed with clearly defined targets, which are realistic and practicable and based on identifiable indicators of change. This programmes is to be implemented through a variety of delivery mechanisms, which may include learning centres, open and distance education systems, self-directed learning, mass media, print materials, short courses, public education campaigns, and so on. The type of continuing education programme which may sought to be promoted for achievement of the above objectives may vary in different region depending on literacy levels, strength and spread of formal and non-formal education systems and socio economic conditions prevailing in the respective region.

Four major target specific functional programmes have been suggested. They are as follows:

• Equivalency Programmes (EPs)
• Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (QLIPs)
• Income Generating Programmes (IGPs)
• Individual Interest Promotion Programmes (IIPPs)

Equivalency Programmes (EP): The objective of the programme is to provide an alternative education programme equivalent to the existing formal system of education, be it related to general or vocational education. This programme is targeted towards those neo-literates who aspire to continue their education and acquire a degree/certification that would place them on an equal standing with others who have successfully completed their studies from the formal system of education. Thus, the underlying objective is to bring parity between different systems of education, thereby ensuring that
every learner has equality of opportunity if he/she desires to continue studying.

The target groups of the programme are:
- Neo-literates who have successfully participated in the TLC/PLC
- School dropouts who have competencies of class I
- NFE programme completers and dropouts who have competencies of Class II level.

**Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (QLIPs):** It aims to equip learners and the community with essential knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that enable them to improve the quality of life as individuals and as members of the community. QLIPs are, therefore, development focused and has a strong future orientation. With the help of such programme, the community establishes a vision of future and devises and undertakes development activities to achieve that vision through education.

The target group comprises neo-literates, youth groups, interested individuals, farmers, small entrepreneurs, unskilled/semiskilled workers and panchayat functionaries. Women and other vulnerable groups would be especially targeted.

**Individual Interest Promotion Programme (IIPPs):** The objective of individual Interest Promotion Programme (IIPPs) in continuing Education is to provide individuals the opportunity to participate in, and to learn social, cultural, spiritual, health, physical and artistic interests of their choice. In operational terms, activities under the IIPPs can be identified as those that are largely meant for spending leisure time, especially hobbies.

**Income Generating Programmes (IGPs):** The IGP helps the participants acquire or upgrade vocational skills and enables them to conduct income-generating activities. IGPs are those vocational continuing education programmes delivered in a variety of contexts, which are directed in particular towards those people who are currently not self-sufficient in a modern world. Providing vocational skills means equipping people for their direct involvement in some economic or productive activity. Acquiring vocational skills is the ability of engaging oneself in an occupation or gainful employment. The target group of the IGP is each member of the community with special focus on neo-literates and those who have little or no formal education.

**Participants of CECs**

The Participants of CE programmes are:
• Neo-literates who complete functional literacy/post literacy courses under TLC/PLC or other programmes;
• School dropouts;
• Pass-outs of primary schools;
• Pass-outs of non-formal education programme; and
• All other members of the community interested in availing opportunities for life-long learning.

**Major Functionaries of CECs**

The major functionaries, who support the continuing education programme, are briefly stated.

**District Project Coordinators:** One District Project coordinator and two or three assistant project coordinators have been appointed by KSLMA in all the 14 districts of the State. They co-ordinate all activities in a district and gear up the machinery of district literacy mission. The activities of the districts are reviewed and evaluated by KSLMA through the district project coordinators and assistant coordinators.

**Key Resource Persons:** Key resource persons are identified from each district to ensure academic support of the continuing education programme. 140 key resource persons are nominated - 10 from each district by the district authorities. The KRPs are mainly drawn from educational experts, committed literacy workers/social workers and officials from various departments. They are working in the districts fully on voluntary basis.

**District Resource Persons:** In addition to the KRPs, each district literacy mission has selected resource persons for their district. A resource person will be responsible for his Panchayat/Municipality or City Corporation. The DRPs are expected to monitor continuing education centres in their respective area and ensure their academic and physical support to all activities of the centre.

**Preraks and Assistant Preraks:** The person in charge of a CEC is called prerak. An assistant preraks has also been appointed to assist the prerak and also to undertake literacy activities. The local body concerned is responsible to select the preraks, as per a selection procedure prepared by KSLMA. They are responsible for the day-to-day activities of the centres.

**Project Implementation**

The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA) is the state level implementing agency of the project. At district level, district literacy missions coordinated the task. The KSLMA intends to transfer the power and
resources to the local bodies to ensure people’s participation in the decision-making and implementation of the continuing education programme. This process has generated a new set of values and style of functioning that emphasizes leadership of local bodies and public participation. The District Literacy Missions (DLM) is responsible for the implementation of the continuing education project of the districts.

**Involvement of Local Bodies**

Involvement of local bodies and non-governmental organizations is an important factor of continuing education centres. The govt. of India would finance the programmes only for a period of five years. Then the State or the local bodies have to completely take up responsibility of running the programmes. The state may not be able to do justice as: (i) it involves huge financial commitment; (ii) it may not be able to effectively involve the people; (iii) it is likely to become state sponsored or state run programme. If programme are to be sustainable, it has to be owned by the community. The local bodies can pitch up with the programme as: (i) they are close to people (ii) they can ensure participation of the people in the project (iii) they can also mobilize local resources required for the programme. The local bodies are sufficiently oriented on the concept of continuing education. They started participating in the programme even before the withdrawal of government of India from the programme.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring of CE programmes in a scientific way is very important for quality and functional control. Suitable monitoring mechanisms have been evolved at all levels. The overall responsibility of monitoring the programme is with the district literacy missions. Monitoring review meetings have been organized every month from panchayat level to state level. The Prerak of the CEC must submit his/her monthly progress report to the prerak of the nodal CEC. The nodal CEC prerak should submit the collected monthly reports along with their reports to the district coordinator. The district coordinator would review and consolidate the whole reports and send it to the SLMA. The SLMA send the consolidated report to NLMA every month on the basis of predetermined MIS format. In addition to this the Kerala State Literacy Mission organizes regular monthly monitoring review (MMR) meetings for district coordinators for monitoring the implementation. Such review meetings are organized in one district in each month. A representative from Govt. of India (NLM) attends the MMR meetings.

The systematic and scientific approach of the reporting system, using various proformas helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the
project. KRP s and DRPs are also asked to visit CECs in their locality to monitor the day-to-day programmes.

The officials of State Literacy Mission, State Resource Centre and District Literacy Mission regularly conduct inspection visits to centres as part of the monitoring system. Monitoring studies have been conducted district-wise by SRC for continuing education centres of the state.

**Evaluation:** State level internal evaluation of the project has not been conducted so far. At the same time State Resource Centre, Kerala has conducted evaluation studies at district level. The external evaluation after three-year completion has to be done.

**MAJOR AGENCIES IN KERALA**

**Non-Governmental Agencies:** Adult Education Programmes on a large scale have been carried out in Kerala since 1970-71. Non-Governmental Agencies stood by such activities. The major agencies engaged in the field are described here.

**Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development:**

Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (KANFED) is a voluntary organization. Registered in June 1977, it aimed to organize programmes and activities in the state to provide leadership to the people through new knowledge and skills. The main objectives are to:

- promote the educational, cultural and economic development of all sections of the people;
- help universalization of education by propaganda for it and by the institution of non-formal education activities as supplementary to the formal educational system;
- establish institutes for research and training in all aspects of non-formal education, publishing hours for production of literacy materials, and centres for the eradication of illiteracy; and
- plan and carry out projects in continuing education, correspondence courses and research.

KANFED, initiated efforts to popularize and to give a conceptual clarification to non-formal education. The sanctioning of the State Resource Centre, Kerala to KANFED in July 1978, gave a fillip to the activities of the organization. Similarly the financial support received from the German Adult Education Association (DVV) facilitated the launching of a “weekly” for neo-
literates, a “fortnightly” for non-formal education workers and “wallpaper” for conscientizing the people.

KANFED first concentrated in securing 100 percent literacy in some selected areas. The first was ‘Ezhome Village’ in Kannur District (1983). A three months programme was evolved and implemented successfully resulting in securing the desired results. The need for preparing appropriate reading materials for the neo-literates was felt and KANFED prepared nearly 200 titles through workshops. Statewide padayatras and vehicle jathas were organized to spread the message of KANFED among the public and secure their support. Agencies like UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, German Adult Education Association, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ford Foundation came forward to support KANFED’s manifold activities.

The present activities of the KANFED are through eleven forums. They are open learning centre, educators forum, school club, senior citizens forum, women’s development forum, health club, agriculture development forum, arts and cultural forum, youth forum, neethi vedi children’s forum.

KANFED celebrated its silver jubilee in June 2002. Thus, within two decades KANFED rose to such heights surpassing the expectations of its founders.

Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad: The Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) is a scientific, cultural organization, promoted to popularize science among ordinary people. It was established in 1957. It organizes classes, lectures, science clubs, science corners, science fair, adult literacy classes and so on. KSSP led the total literacy campaign of Ernakulam district and Akshara Keralam Project of the state.

Through the Panchayat Resource Mapping Campaign of KSSP have mobilized very large number of citizens. The field level resource mobilization led to Kerala Total Literacy Campaign and later to the People’s Planning Campaign. It has published more than 100 books to cater to the needs of different sections of the community. This includes children’s literature, social science, popular science, life history and references. In addition the KSSP has published research reports on current issues of Kerala. Today KSSP provides resource support to other states for their literacy campaigns, continuing education programmes, resource mapping, popularization of science, local survey, micro planning and so on.

Mitraniketan: Mitraniketan is a non-governmental organization dedicated to non-formal education programme. It is a rural community centre open to all
individuals and families irrespective of race, colour, creed or nationality and provides motivation to better their lives and to serve the common men.

Mitraniketan has also started adult literacy centres in villages. Programmes of non-formal education are organized for propagating functional literacy, family planning and childcare and health education. Training programmes have been organized targeting farmers, women children and out of school children. Mitraniketan has started a rural technology centre where, rural technology are intended to be promoted.

**Quilon Social Service Society:** Quilon Social Service Society (QSSS) is functioning as a registered voluntary organization for social action in Quilon Diocese from 1960 onwards. The society's aim was to start one comprehensive non-formal education centre attached to each of its local units and also to have all the three stages of adult education viz. literacy, post-literacy and continuing education. QSSS launched a new scheme for converting adult education centres as centres for helping the very poor families of the localities, to involve themselves in development oriented self-help programmes. Teaching learning materials are mainly purchased from State Resource Centre, Centre for Adult Education and Extension (CAEE) of Kerala University and Kerala Grandhasala Sangham.

**Literacy Forum:** As a non-governmental organization, Literacy Forum is popular in Kerala for its significant contribution in the field of Adult, Non-formal Education. Its major objectives are:  

i. to give professional advice and provide leadership in matters concerning adult/non-formal/continuing education, literacy work and extension in the state;  
ii. to locate and analyze problems concerning adult and non-formal education in the state;  
iii. to carry out evaluation and research on adult/non-formal education;  
iv. to initiate studies on problems affecting the non-formal sector;  
v. to provide opportunities for the members to meet in conferences, seminars and discussion groups;  
vi. to publish from time to time the results of discussions and investigations;  
vii. to provide a common forum for all interested in adult education and literacy programmes;  
viii. to evolve follow-up programmes appropriate to the State;  
ix. to foster co-operation among the different Voluntary Agencies working in the field and the University/Governmental sector;
x. to bring about better understanding through concerted effort among all educated people for the improvement of the literacy situation in the state; and

xi. to work for the welfare of the people in the area of disaster management, scientific temper, population education, environmental education, health education, youth education etc.

**Governmental Organizations**

**Rural Development Department:** The Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP) was started in 1982-83 by the Rural Development Department of the State government. The programme was started in 11 districts. Adult education centres were organized in villages with the help of libraries, mahila samajams, youth clubs, and arts and clubs. An instructor managed each centre.

Instructors have been appointed and paid honorarium. At district level Assistant Development Commissioners (ADC) and Functional Literacy Project Officers (FLPO) are in charge of the programme. At block level, Block Development Officer (BDO) and Village Extension Officer (VEO) monitor the programme. Later, adult education supervisors were appointed temporarily to supervise and monitor the programmes. Certain developmental programmes are implemented through the block development offices and they were linked with RFLP. When the TLC started, the programme had stopped.

**Education Department:** State Adult Education Programme (SAEP) was launched by the Education Department, Govt. of Kerala. The scheme was introduced in 1983-84. State Adult Education Officer (SAEO) was in charge of the programme. Each revenue district had District Adult Education Officer. The main functions of the State Adult Education Programme were, framing of policy and guidelines and coordinating of different agencies of adult education.

Adult Education centres were also organized under District Education Office. A part time instructor managed the centre. Materials were brought from State Resource Centre. The programme was closed in 1996 as per the directions of the State Government.

**Quasi Government Institutions**

**Nehru Yuva Kendras:** The Nehru Yuva Kendras (NYK) were established in 1975. The Govt. of India provided fund for starting literacy classes through youths and youth organizations. Instructors were selected from among the
youth and were provided training. Later government of India stopped the funding for literacy activities through NYK.

**Kerala Grandhasala Sangham:** Kerala Grandhasala Sangham (KGS), now renamed as Kerala State Library Council, was established in 1945 with 47 libraries. At present, the number has exceeded 6000 and the average number of books in a library is 5000 and above. Most of them have their own buildings, radio sets, T.V, and furniture. Some of the rural libraries have arranged separate sections for children, neo-literates, women, and farmers.

The Sanghom prepared books and other reading materials in simple language in continuation of their experimental literacy project. The Weekly “Sakshara Keralam” for the neo-literates is distributed free of cost to all neo-literates through libraries.

In 1971, the Sanghom started two pilot projects for functional literacy in two selected blocks. The aim was to change the illiterate adulthood to literate citizens. It has published primers for literacy, special primer for agricultural workers, tribal folks, women and slum dwellers. Teaching aids like charts, guide-books for teachers and reference books have also been published. As recognition of its manifold activities, the UNESCO honoured the Sanghom with Krupskaya award in 1975. Now the Sanghom functions under the higher education department of Government of Kerala in the name Kerala State Library Council.

**State Resource Centre, Kerala:** State Resource Centre (SRC), Kerala is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, working under the patronage of General Education Department, Govt. of Kerala. The SRC Kerala commenced functioning on 4th July 1978 under a voluntary Agency called Kerala Association for Non-formal Education and Development (KANFED). In March 1996, SRC Kerala registered itself as a separate organization under the Societies Registration Act and started functioning independently.

The management of SRC is vested with a Governing Body consisting of 15 members, under the chairmanship of secretary, General Education Department, Govt. of Kerala. The staff strength of SRC comprises personnel in three categories viz. academic, administrative and technical and is headed by the Director.

The major objectives of the SRC are:

- organizing training programmes for key resource personnel and extending assistance to the field functionaries;
• preparation of teaching/learning materials and training materials in literacy and continuing education programmes;
• monitoring and evaluation studies on the impact of learning, the communication strategy for learners and the evaluation of learner achievement;
• organizing workshops, seminars and conferences and observance of days of national importance;
• creative conducive environment for literacy and continuing education programmes;
• management of special cell for population education;
• conducting research studies on relevant social issues with the support of grass root level agencies and institution as well as professionals;
• undertaking location specific programmes with the support of community and mobilizing local resources;
• coordinating different sections of the society, governmental and non-governmental agencies, local self-government institutions and converging all development initiatives through continuing education;
• conducting field programmes in rural areas and popularizing the messages on literacy and continuing education.

**Achievements:** The SRC Kerala created a conducive environment in adult/literacy programmes and continuing education programmes through kalajathas, street plays, corner meetings, public meetings, exhibitions, padayatras and so on. Key personnel trainings are one of the prestigious activities of this SRC. Seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings and discussions in adult and continuing education led massive support from the people. The SRC has published a variety of teaching/learning training materials for functionaries and beneficiaries which include literacy primers, work books, resource books, neo-literate books, hand books, information guides, supplementary reading materials, training modules, booklets, posters, stickers, magazines, newsletters, pamphlets, audio–video cassettes, C.Ds, video spots, calendar, slides and transparencies. SRC has published more than 500 titles covering the above materials. The research studies conducted by SRC in relevant topics have received national recognitions. Monitoring and evaluation reports prepared by the SRC help the agencies concerned to implement the project effectively.

The SRC has also trained more than 50,000 functionaries, around 5 lakhs beneficiaries of the state during the last 25 years. They include key resource persons, district resource persons, district coordinators, preraks, assistant preraks, instructors, conveners, librarians, youth club members, women representatives, literacy volunteers, school/college student leaders,
teachers, self help group members, supervisors, project officers, neo-literates, panchayat officials and elected representatives and so on.

Universities in Adult and Continuing Education

The ultimate aim of education is liberation of human beings from ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, ill health, unemployment, superstitions, bad habits and so on. The role of universities in this task need not be overemphasized.

Three major universities viz. Kerala University, Mahatma Gandhi University and Calicut University started separate Department/Centre for Adult Education.

Centre for Adult Continuing Education and Extension: The University of Kerala, with university Grants Commission’s (UGC) financial assistance, started the Centre for Adult Continuing Education and Extension (CACEE) in 1980.13

The CACEE had directly organized literacy centres in three panchayats of Thiruvananthapuram district and also in several affiliated colleges of Kerala University. In each college a professor or lecturer is designated as college programme officer. Full time and part time supervisors and instructors depending upon the number of centres run by the colleges are appointed for effective organization of the programme.

The CACEE has helped more than 52000 adult illiterates to become literate, directly and through collaborating colleges up to 1988. The centre stands for coordinating the university level literacy centres, conducting short term course on adult/non-formal education, P.G Diploma Courses, giving periodical training for literacy workers, arranging extension lectures, conducting workshops, seminars, lectures, discussion, exhibitions etc.

Department of Adult Education and Extension Service: The Adult Education department of the Calicut University organizes adult education centres through colleges with the help of National Service Scheme volunteers. The department published primer and teachers guide book in Malayalam. The department has also started adult education classes and Jana Sikshan Nilayams through affiliated colleges.

National Service Scheme (NSS): The National Service Scheme functioning under the universities intends to involve the students in community service and channelise their energy in nation building
activities. The aim of N.S.S is the education of students through community service and to enrich the student’s personality and deepen their understanding of the social environment in which they live.\textsuperscript{14}

The overall objective of the NSS is educational. Service to the society is the activity through which this objective is sought to be attained.

NSS of the Universities of Kerala, Calicut and Mahatma Gandhi have played a significant role in the adult education programme. The students were engaged in the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy (MPFL) and thousands of illiterates were made literate. The NSS volunteers of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam played an active role in achieving total literacy in Kottayam Town. It had a time bound programme (100 days programme), which started functioning on March 4th 1989. The aim of the mission was not only achieving cent percent literacy but also uplifting the living standards of the society.

**Kerala Saksharatha Samithi**

The Government of Kerala sponsored the Kerala Saksharatha Samithi (KSS) as a fully autonomous, registered body formed in 1990 with the Chief Minister as the Chairman, for the implementation of the project. All the adult education activities undertaken by various organizations had been brought under the purview of the Samithi. The Samithi’s constitution is so designated as to involve all sections of political and social leadership in the State. There are district, block, and panchayat level committees with due representation to political and social groups for effective implementation of literacy programme. The major objective of the Kerala Saksharatha Samithy is to eradicate illiteracy from the State. As such, Total Literacy Campaign and Post Literacy Campaigns have been completed successfully. Kerala Saksharatha Samithy steered the programme.

The programmes carried out under Kerala Saksharatha Samithy served as a national model for literacy programme. It has been duplicated in the other states of India during the last ten years. Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority

**The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority:** The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority (KSLMA) is a registered society sponsored by Government of Kerala. The KSLMA coordinates and implements the adult and continuing education programmes of the state. The Kerala Saksharatha Samithy was renamed after the literacy programme and followed the norms of National Literacy Mission. The director is the head and other project staff coordinate the activities. Since Kerala does not have a separate Directorate of Adult
Education/Mass Education/Non-Formal Education, the KSLMA has to perform the role of a Directorate also.

The major role of the Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority is:
- Formulation of Projects;
- Procurement of Financial assistance from Government / Funding Agencies and to channelise funds;
- Supervision of project execution;
- Planning and implementation of special projects and innovative programmes;
- Delivery of technical and managerial assistance to the District Panchayats in the operation of the Panchayat Saksharatha Mission and C.E. Centres;
- Organization of training and extension programmes;
- Production of learning/educational materials;
- Giving operational guidelines to the functionaries;
- Monitoring of project implementation; and
- Project Evaluation.

The organizational structure of the Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority is as follows:

**General Council:** Chief Minister is the Chairman of the General Council and the Minister for Education is the vice-chairman of the General Council of KSLMA. The Secretary, General Education, Government of Kerala is the member secretary of the general council.

**Executive Committee:** Executive Committee is the governing body of KSLMA. Minister for Education is the Chairman of the Executive Committee and the secretary to Government (General Education) functions as Vice Chairman. The Director of KSLMA is the secretary of the committee.

**Sub-Committees:** Sub-Committees were constituted for various purposes such as (i) project implementation and administration (ii) training (iii) evaluation and (iv) monitoring. The director is the member secretary of all these committees.

**Office Structure:** In order to look into the day-to-day affairs of the State Literacy Mission and to implement, monitor and evaluate the state level schemes there exists an official set-up with a full time Director, Assistant Directors, Consultants, Finance Officer and subordinate staff.
**District Literacy Missions:** The DLM provides academic and technical input required for the programme. District project coordinators and assistant project coordinators are appointed directly by KSLMA to implement the CE Projects. It is controlled and supervised by district panchayats.

**Various Missions**

**District Panchayat Literacy Missions (DPLM):** The District Panchayat Literacy Missions have been established in all the 14 districts. District Panchayat Presidents are the chairpersons of the DPLM. He/she will also function as the chairperson of the executive committee of the DPLM. The District Collector is the executive coordinator of the executive committee of DPLM and co-ordinates the services of various development department of the district. The district panchayat secretary is in charge of finance and administration. The District Coordinator is the convener of the district panchayat mission.

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**Fig.3.1**

**Organization set up of continuing education programme in kerala**

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Government of India

Proceeds to:

National Literacy Mission (Ministry of Human Resource Development)

Proceeds to:

Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Govt. of India

Proceeds to:

Directorate of Adult Education, Govt. of India

Proceeds to:

State Literacy Mission Authority (SLMA)  State Resource Centre (SRC)

Proceeds to:

District Literacy Missions (District Panchayat Literacy Missions)

Proceeds to:

Grama Panchayat Corporation

Proceeds to:

Block Panchayat

Proceeds to:

NGOs

Proceeds to:

Municipal/City

Proceeds to:

Ward Saksharatha Samithy
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**Block Panchayat Literacy Missions (BPLM):** Each block panchayat has Block Panchayat Literacy Mission with block Panchayat President as chairman and Block Development Officer (BDO) as block co-coordinator. It also has an executive committee with officials and non-officials. One of the nodal preraks is the convener of the mission.

**Grama Panchayat Literacy Missions (GPLM):** Similarly, Grama Panchayat has Grama Panchayat Literacy Mission with grama panchayat president as chairman and grama panchayat secretary as coordinator. The mission consists of officials and non-officials.

**Ward Saksharatha Samithi:** At ward level, Ward Saksharatha Samithies have been set up with ward member as chairperson. Local representatives from various fields act as members who support and monitor the programmes and activities.

**Municipal/ City Corporation Literacy Mission:** Literacy Missions are also constituted in municipalities and city corporations. The chairpersons of the corporations act as the chairperson of the missions and the secretary is in charge of finance and administration.

**Conclusion**

Kerala is the first state in the country to declare total literacy, which is mainly to effective launching and implementation of various programmers. The state along with various non-governmental organizations have made concerted and continuous efforts over the last 50 years both in formal and non-formal sectors of education which has yielded the desired results. Each programmed was reviewed; lessons were drawn; corrections were made; loopholes were plugged; new programmers were launched, if necessary. All these made the Kerala experiment a model to emulate. Kerala was recognized with the successful completion literacy campaign. It was also a pioneer in post literacy programme as it started continuing education programme on its own initiative. Unfortunately, it could not take off as expected. However, it launched the centrally sponsored continuing education programmes in 1998. The next chapter deals with the performance of the continuing education centres in the State of Kerala.

**References**


5. Ibid, pp.7-18
6. Ibid, pp.28-29
7. Ibid, pp.95-96
8. Ibid, pp.112-113


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