

**KERALA ASSOCIATION FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:
DEVELOPMENT, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES- AN IDEATIONAL
FRAMEWORK**

Shinith Chandran. K¹ & Jisha D Nair² , Ph.D.

¹Research Scholar Kannur University

²Research Guide

Paper Received On: 21 APRIL 2021

Peer Reviewed On: 28 APRIL 2021

Published On: 1 MAY 2021

Content Originality & Unique: 100%

Abstract

Education is an instrument which helps individual to develop his personality regardless of sex, race, and stage of development. It is through education that individuals can attain different kinds of knowledge and skills which can help them to appreciate their environment and to respond positively. Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development was documented under the Travancore-Cochin Charitable Societies Act No 12 of 1955, encompassing the members of the Literacy Expert Committee aiming to eliminate illiteracy and strengthening developmental activities with non-formal education. P. N. Panicker was the founder of Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development and this association was registered on 30 June 1977. This research paper carries an in-depth analysis of role played by Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED) as a voluntary organization in providing opportunities for continuing education for all people in need through its literacy activities and further investigates the reason for the emergence of Kerala as the first totally literate state in India.

Key words: Non formal Education, human resource, development, Adult education, KANFED, challenges etc.



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Introduction

Education is not only the acquisition of textual knowledge, but also continuous process of achieving a complete personality and culture. Non-formal education can be described as a lifelong learning process in which each individual acquires knowledge, skills, and attitudes through everyday interactions at home, at work, and in the community. Literacy is an important factor in human resource development. Education provides educated and skilled people with a wide range of jobs and income-earning opportunities. The connection between a person's

education and their earnings is positive. Education is an important opportunity for the poor and vulnerable to increase their income potential and improve their quality of life. Education is a tool for social advancement. The persistence of social disparity is primarily due to illiteracy; but, as education levels increase, biases based on social attitudes and values diminish.

The literacy activities were held in Kerala even before the formation of the state of Kerala. The kings of Travancore and Cochin carried out cultural activities for the welfare of the people. Rani Gouri Parvathibhai initiated the school centred education in Travancore. In 1818, formal schools were established in Cochin. Soon after Swathi Thirunaal came to power, the public library was established at Thiruvananthapuram. Subsequently a number of libraries were established under the patronage of monarchy. Since then, the Grandhashala Sangham which has grown in the democratic system has worked for the literacy of Kerala. The Christian missionaries, CMS, and LMS, began their educational work in the first quarter of the 19th century. In Malabar during the British rule, the Basel Missionaries also started their education. In spite of this, a significant number of Kerala remained illiterate.

The literacy progress of the illiterate Kerala Society is only possible through Non-formal Education. A Kerala State Literacy Council was set up in 1974 but after producing Saksharatha (Literacy), a collection of articles about literacy teaching. It ceased to have much effect. In 1977, however the members of the Literacy Expert committee of Kerala State Library Council formed the Kerala Association for Non-formal Education and Development (KANFED), a non-governmental organization. The aim of this organization was to eradicate illiteracy from Kerala. As a result of the work of Kerala Association for Non-formal Education and Development, Ezhome village in Kannur district has achieved complete literacy. KANFED also succeeded in making Ernakulam the most literate district in Kerala. This research paper deals about the literacy activities carried out by the KANFED and problems faced by KANFED.

Problem Statement

As most studies conducted in this area are mainly on Grandhashala Sangham and Kerala Shastra Sahithya Parishad, a much-needed study on Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development is required. Kerala is the first Indian State to achieving complete literacy in Kerala. Therefore, the problem under investigation is the role of KANFED in the literacy progress of Kerala Society. The paper deals about formation of KANFED and literacy progress of Kerala Society.

Objectives

The goal is to understand the history of Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development and literacy progress of Kerala Society. To understand the contributions of Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development in the socio- cultural field.

Literature Review

The study is mainly based on census reports, newspaper reports and articles related to the topic published in journals and the secondary data is used to supplement and support the foresaid documents. Pattam G. Ramachandran Nair 2004: has written a book P. N. Panicker. The book deals about formation of KANFED, and literacy activities of KANFED. The book written by Sivdasan Pillai entitled Anaupacharika Vidhyabhyasa Darshanam has focused on the literacy scenario of Kerala as well as on the non-formal education and its importance.

Research Gap

A reasonable big quantity of literature each on small scale and large-scale ranges may be visible with reference to literacy. The literature survey has benefited to the researchers for the identification of the role of Kerala Association for Non-formal Education and Development (KANFED) in the literacy progress of Kerala Society. All previous studies have focused on the progress of literacy through the library movement and Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad. This paper additionally analyses the history of Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (KANFED) and literacy progress of Kerala Society.

Education and Human Resource

Education means enabling the mind to find out that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of dust and gives us wealth not of things but of inner lights not of power but of inner lights not of power but of love, making this truth its own and giving expression to it. Education is a continuous process. It develops know how and inculcates thinking ability in working population. Literacy promotes human resource which is very significant for the country. Education is an investment which in the long run brings in development. According to Amartya Sen, solutions to all problems related to economy and development lies in education.

Human resources are essential for development activities and planning. Development begins with people with education, organization, and discipline. Without these factors, development in the country would not be possible. Education is the door to social change and modernization. Literacy is a tool for many complex problems. According to the 1961 census, the number of

illiterates in the country was high. Non formal education is an educational system designed to address illiteracy.

Adult Education

In the modern period, education has come to be strongly identified with organised preparation of the young in schools and colleges for both their personal development and their subsequent social and economic roles in society. Throughout recorded history, however it has been recognized that to deny oneself of later adult education is to deny oneself of a great part of education that is meaningful only to grown, experienced men and women.

The term "adult education" refers to the whole of an organized educational process, regardless of whether its content, level, and methods are formal or other forms, or whether they extend or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities, and apprenticeships , In any case, people who are regarded as adults by the society to which their ability belongs, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualities, or make them develop in a new direction, thereby changing in two attitudes or two behaviours Their attitudes are the perspectives of overall personal development, as well as the perspective of participation in balanced, independent social, economic and cultural development. When India became independent, the number of illiterates in India was high. The government of Post- Independent India has given importance to Adult education policies. The constitution of India entrusts state Government with the responsibility of implementing adult education programs. The Operation Black Board, the education policy of the Government of India, also emphasised adult education.

Educational institutions across the country have become centres of community life for adult education. Developed curriculum with general knowledge and basic information for adult education in educational institutions across the country. Libraries were set up across the country to literate people. Neo literate people were also given books of their choice. Even Universities have become centres of Adult Education. Adult education agencies were also active in Kerala. Nehru Yuva Kendra, Mitranikethan, and Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED) are the major agencies working for adult education in Kerala.

Non- formal Education

The term 'Non formal education' appeared for the first time at the end of 1970s where there began to be talk of a global education crisis in formal education system. Non-formal education encompasses all educational objectives with knowledge and skills. The Kothari Commission
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recommended no-formal education for adults and dropout students to eliminate illiteracy. The main goals of non-formal education are 1) Raise awareness among the people that education and literacy program are the means of personal and national development. 2) Provide equal educational opportunities so that everyone has equal access to benefits and employment. 3) To provide man power and establish national infrastructural needs. 4) Empower communities with improved management skills that are involved in the planning, organization, and implementations of programme. 5) Transfer of technologies to more need-based areas. 6) To mobilise existing un potential local resource in the community. 7) Promote programs that are directly related to the skills and tangible benefits of non-formal education.

The villagers in Kerala suffer from basic education facilities and so the rural people are systematically discriminated with the benefit of development. The illiterate people in the Kerala Society could not be literate through formal education. Because illiterate people in Kerala who are above 18 years of age cannot be literate through formal education. It is in this context that non-formal education emerges in Kerala. Non-formal education is not just adult education. Non-formal education is also an approach to improving people's lives through collective action. Non-formal education aims to liberate people from illiteracy, poverty, illness, homelessness, superstition, alcoholism, smoking, money laundering, and many more. Non-formal education made people aware of illiteracy and social issues. Awareness program were organized in the organized and unorganized sectors under the auspices of the non-formal education. Labourers and their families are being promoted through literacy and they are best trained in the field of labour. Non-formal education was introduced to select specific areas with the objective of comprehensive development, ranging from literacy to vocational skills. Non formal education has enabled people to become literate and make social progress with their help.

Formal education and non-formal education have become essential to eradicate illiteracy from Kerala Society. Formal education and non-formal education have been complementary in Kerala society since 1956-1991. There is no provision for non-formal education as to what to study or how much to study. Non formal education was not the only instruction for certificates. The non-formal education was provided either at the work place or at the convenience of the learners. Non formal education taught learners literacy, numeracy and work experience. Non formal education helped students who dropped out of school to complete their studies according to their desire. Non formal education worked to improve learner's knowledge and

skills and to change attitudes and habits. The functions of non-formal education ease the restrictions of formal education.

The role of voluntary agencies in non- formal education is very crucial and acknowledged. Charitable institutions, religious organizations, autonomous bodies etc. worked for non- formal education. Formal education and non-formal education started as voluntarily in centuries ago. The formal and non-formal educational system that were originally started as voluntary have come under the control of government. In the early days, people were educated through churches, mosques and temples which were religious bodies. In that period religious bodies were educated as formal and later became non formal. The state become the coordinating agency for non- formal education. Many voluntary agencies worked to eradicate illiteracy in Kerala. Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED), Mitraniketan, Kerala Shashtra Sahithya Parishad are some of the agencies which have assisted non formal education in Kerala.

Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (KANFED)

The state of Kerala was formed on 1 November 1956 by the integration of the major parts of the erstwhile state of Travancore, Cochin, Malabar District and Kasaragod Taluk of the South Kanara District of the Madras state following the promulgation of the State Reorganisation Act of Government of India. According to the 1951 census, the literacy rate in Kerala was 40.47 per cent. Illiteracy was a major problem in Kerala. The Grandhashala Sangham led by P.N. Panicker worked for the eradication of illiteracy. As a result of the work of Grandhashala Sangham, the literacy rate in Kerala increased to 60.42 per cent in 1971.

Grandhashala Sangham was taken over by the Government of Kerala in 1977 and P.N. Panicker was completely expelled from the Grandhashala Sangham. It was in such a situation that P.N. Panicker created the Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED). The aim of the organization is to eradicate illiteracy from the state and provide education, economic and social development to all in the society. P.N. Panicker has been appointed as the Honorary Executive of Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED) and P.T. Bhaskara Panicker, Dr. R.P. Pillai, and Dr.R.V. Krishna Variyer have been appointed as Directors. The organization has survived many issues and challenges.

KANFED - Challenges

The main problem experienced during the formation of the KANFED was financial crisis. The early activities of the organization were very difficult due to the financial crisis. There were

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not even the necessary buildings for the organization to functioning at that time. Large sums of money were required to work in all the districts of the state to eradicate illiteracy. Large sums of money were required to start literacy centres in all the districts of the state and to prepare books for literacy activities.

The objective of this organization was to start literacy centres in all the districts of state and to eradicate illiteracy. As, a private organization, it was a big challenge for KANFED to set up literacy centres in all the districts of Kerala. Impressed by the work of KANFED, many organizations came forward with help from India and abroad. Involved in the work of KANFED, the German Adult Education, UNICEF, World bank, UNESCO, and Ministry of Human Resource Development, provided financial assistance. The Government of Kerala has handed over the responsibility of State Resource Centres in Kerala to KANFED. The financial crisis has been overcome to some extent as a result of the collaboration of KANFED and State Resource centres in Kerala.

KANFED was formed under the leadership of P.N. Panicker, P.T. Bhaskara Panicker, and Sivadasan Pillai, another challenge facing the organization was to find the leaders and activists needed for the organization to function in all the districts of Kerala. The leaders of KANFED travelled through all the villages of Kerala and recruited the youth of Kerala for literacy activities. Special training was imparted to the educated youth of Kerala for the eradication of illiteracy. About 15 educated youth have been deployed in each literacy centres in village. Activists of KANFED went to the tribal areas and gave literacy classes to the tribal leaders. Literacy activities in tribal areas were carried out by tribal leaders who were literate. In some parts of Kerala, the KANFED faced a problem of not having enough leaders and activists. In this situation literacy activities were carried out with the help of other voluntary organizations.

KANFED

The programmes of Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED) mainly thrust to the rural poor and weaker sections of the society. They impart knowledge for the; life and culture apart from literacy. Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED) conducted classes for illiterates using charts, newspapers and pictures. Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development has prepared and published several primers, readers, and guide books. Kerala Association for non-formal Education and Development published the newspapers NaattuVelicham, KANFED news, Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development made a short film 'Lead

Kindly Light' to help people understand the importance of education. Book fairs were organized to promote reading skills among the people.

Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development conducted variety of programmes in the field of Non formal Education, population Education, and Education for dropouts, correspondence courses, justice for women, padayatras, exhibition surveys, and research studies, publications and audio-visual programmes. Kerala Association for non-formal Education and Development had initiated a number of activities aimed at literacy, continuing education and socio-economic development. These activities were under taken mainly through voluntary efforts enlisting the co-operation of all political parties. Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development volunteers are working throughout the state with missionary zeal. Literacy is one of the doors which helps the people understand how they can get rid of poverty, how they can assert their own rights and privileges and how they can fulfil their responsibilities, towards other. They extent their service to mental hospital and central jail.

There were 150 KANFED schools established in northern district of Kerala for school dropouts on 2 October 1989. During the early years, there were more than 4,500 students were coming under these schools and they also returned their mother schools. The spontaneous abilities of students developed through these schools with reading, writing, and simple arithmetic. The Government of Kerala was impressed with the work of Kerala Association for Non formal Education Development, and gave Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development the responsibility of the State Resource Centres of Kerala.

Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development has organised 6000 literacy centres and 850 continuing education centres till 1988. Currently Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development has been allotted 300 literacy centres by the Central Government. Mini libraries are organized as continuing education centres, and these help the neo literates to consolidate and help their literacy skills. KANFED Bhavans have been set up in all the districts of Kerala and literacy activities have been intensified.

Ezhome Literacy Campaign

Ezhome is a village in Kannur district in the state of Kerala. At the 1984 KANFED meeting, decided to achieve complete literacy in the village of Ezhome. The meeting was chaired by P.N.Panicker and P.T.BhaskaraPanicker. Literacy training was imparted to the youth of Ezhome village. The trained youth turned into groups and conducted literacy classes, V.R.V.Ezhome. and Father Zukola were the program coordinators. A three months programme

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was evolved and implemented successfully resulting in securing the desired results. It was the activities of the Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development that lead to the declaration of Ezhome in Kannur district as the first fully literate village in India in 1985.

Kottayam Literacy Campaign (People's Education and Literacy Campaign)

The People's Education and Literacy Campaign 1988 was held in Kottayam town. The People's Education and Literacy Campaign is a project launched in the city of Kottayam to achieve complete literacy in 100 days. The People's Education and Literacy campaign was led by NSS volunteers of Mahatma Gandhi University and activists of the KANFED.

In 1988, there were about 2,000 illiterates between the ages of 6 and 60 in Kottayam town. Many of the illiterate people were reluctant to come and study in the literacy centres and such people were given special literacy classes in their homes. Government, students, and other voluntary organizations helped KANFED in its efforts to achieve complete literacy in Kottayam town. KANFED and other voluntary organizations have published special books for the illiterate people of Kottayam town and organized special training programs for them to lead the literacy activities. About 700 volunteers participated in the literacy campaign. On June 25, 1989, Kottayam was declared the first Indian town to achieve complete literacy through collective literacy activities.

Ernakulam Campaign

The Ernakulam Literacy campaign was inaugurated on January 26, 1989. The National Literacy Mission provided financial assistance to the programme. The Ernakulam District Literacy programme was carried out under the leadership of Ernakulam District Literacy Society. Ernakulam District Literacy Society is a committee comprising of various service organizations and voluntary agencies such as KANFED, Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad.

The District collector was the convener and chief coordinator of the Ernakulam District literacy campaign. The District Planning officer was the joint coordinator of the programme. Ernakulam district has been divided into 20 project areas for eradication of illiteracy. A sub-project area will be under the control of an assistant project officer. Government employees were appointed as Assistant project officers. KANFED and Kerala State Resource Centre worked together for the success of Ernakulam Literacy Campaign. KANFED has produced and distributed a number of teaching learning materials for Ernakulam District Literacy campaign. KANFED and KSSP also played an important role in the Ernakulam Literacy Campaign. Awareness programs of KANFED have created awareness among the people of Ernakulam

district about literacy. Through the joint efforts of other voluntary organization, the KANFED has been able to make the Literacy Campaign in Ernakulam District a great success.

CONCLUSION

Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED) is a literacy movement that has helped to achieve complete literacy in Kerala. Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development was able to achieve great success as a part of the hard work of the founders P.N. Panicker and P.T. Bhaskara Panicker. The Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development was formed at a time when even the government agencies were failing to conduct literacy programs.

The financial crisis was KANFED's first challenge. Intrigued by the work of the Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development (KANFED), the German Adult Education provided financial support to the Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development. Inspired by the work of Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development, the state government entrusted the Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development with the responsibility of State Resource Centre.

After three months of hard work, the Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development was able to achieve complete literacy in Ezhome village in Kannur district. Ezhome is known as the first Indian village to achieve complete literacy. Achieving complete literacy in Ernakulam district and Kottayam municipality was a major challenge for KANFED. The KANFED resolved this issue in collaboration with National Service Scheme of Mahatma Gandhi University. Thus, complete literacy was achieved in the Kottayam Municipality. Achieving complete literacy in Ernakulam district was the problem faced by the KANFED. As a result of the joint effort of the KANFED and Shastra Sahithya Parishad complete literacy has been achieved in Ernakulam district.

The Kerala Association for Non formal Education and Development has been able to increase the literacy rate in the districts of Kerala through the literacy activities carried out by setting up KANFED Bhavans across the states. The KANFED was able to overcome many problems and crisis through good work. Through the work of the KANFED, the illiterate people of Kerala were able to learn the writing, reading and arithmetic required for daily living. As a result, we may infer that non-formal schooling has a significant impact on development and economic growth. Adult education and adult learning programmes should also be prioritised in every economic and social growth strategy.

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