CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT PROFILE OF PDS AS THE LOCAL NGO
Economic growth has been understood as the best means of enhancing the welfare of the people and their standard of living. Economic growth depends, both on the use of factors of production such as capital and labour and in the efficiency in the use of the limited resources. The efficiency in the resource use is referred to as productivity which became very important in the recent development thinking in the context of limits in the availability of resources in production. The productivity gains that are getting transmitted through trade integration, have positive effects on the standard of living as well as the quality of life. The most recent developments in the international economic scenario like liberalization and globalization, are the results of the efforts to enhance productivity and efficiency in the use of resources in production and in such other activities. Globalization intends to achieve disaggregate development which is meant as spreading out the benefits of development from the large concentrated centers to the small and distant peripheries.

Disaggregate pattern of development is instrumental in distributing income and economic power equitably among the people and even among regions thereby eradicating poverty and unemployment and contributing to the emergence of an economically sound, politically stable and regionally balanced society. Such a pattern of development may be possible only with the local participation and the full involvement of the people at all levels. The state action has not at all produced the desired effects in this regard. It has been argued that the centrally planned, rigid, individual oriented costly and manipulation
prone poverty reduction programmes could not at all make a serious dent on the chronic problem of poverty and the complex problem of deprivation of sustenance requires a different treatment. The state planned and directed poverty alleviation and employment generation programmes from above were often subject to corruption and manipulation, not according to the needs and requirements of the local communities and not with the participation and involvement of the people at any stage. Therefore, such programmes did not lead to poverty eradication and employment generation and disaggregate pattern of development in the country to the desired level. Only the community based poverty alleviation and employment generation programmes can lead to better standard of living and quality of life among the weaker sections of the society and thus lead to economic and community development. The experience of success of Kudumbasree, a poverty alleviation and employment generation programme in Kerala initiated in 1999 through community development societies (CDS) points towards the need for initiatives of community based organizations and NGOs in the implementation of such programmes.

The intervention of NGOs in the development scenario has produced the most desirable disaggregate pattern of development in the society. NGOs are somewhat stable groups with defined activities and programmes and have, barring some exceptions, an urge and also an exposure to the horizontal and sometimes vertical linkages within and across their chosen sectors of activity.\(^1\) NGOs have now become the catalysts of policy innovations and social capital, creators of programmatic knowledge that can be spun off and integrated into the government and market institutions and builders of vibrant and diverse civil societies.\(^2\) NGOs in India are working in a situation where they are expected
to do what the governments have failed to do in protecting the interests of the poor and oppressed as well as in reaching the benefits to the poor. NGOs are also expected to take up those issues which are not in the agenda of political parties who actually control the governments at different levels. NGOs have the responsibility of collaborating with the governments at different levels and at the same time fight against the wrong government policies in favour of the poorest. In doing so, the NGOs perform the twin functions of critical collaboration with the government and of organizing the poor and the oppressed in order to empower them.

In India, a large number of NGOs have been working in different parts of the country. BAIF Development Research Foundation Kamdahnu, a Pune based NGO established in 1967, Assam Science Society, Guwhati based NGO started in 1953, Centre for the Environmental Education, Ahmedabad set up in 1984, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, Development Alternatives, New Delhi, set up in 1983, Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal, Gopehwar, set up in 1964, Friends of the Doon, set up in 1983, Green Future Foundation, Pune, set up in 1987, Kalpavriksh, New Delhi, set up in 1971, Narmada Bachao Andolan, set up in 1986, Ramakrishna Mission Lokashiksha Parishad, Belur set up in 1952, Srishti, New Delhi, set up in 1988, and Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad set up in 1962 have been some of the NGOs working in the different parts of the country.

In Kerala, the majority of NGOs working in the field of economic and community development, perform more or less similar responsibilities and functions with a slightly more stress on charity and relief and organizing the poor, the weak and the
oppressed to empower them. Some of the major NGOs working in Kerala in the field of economic and community development have been mentioned in the study below.

Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad has been the largest NGO in Kerala which began in 1962 as a forum for science writers who wished to popularize science and translate scientific literature into Malayalam. Later it transformed into a state-wide grass roots organization that aims to popularize science and technology to bring about a social revolution. Over the past three decades, KSSP has developed into a mass movement with over 73000 members distributed over in more than 2000 units spread across. KSSP has been largely involved in environmental conservation, literacy promotion, health care, science curriculum development in education and in several other areas. KSSP has many specialized centers in the different parts of the state focusing on environment, the rural technology and science education. The Integrated Rural Technology Centre located in the Palakkad district has been the largest research arm of KSSP set up through the funds from the state and central governments.

The Environmental Resources Research Centre is another institution very similar to a traditional research station in some respects but with the aims that are the characteristics of an NGO. Its relationship with the state has been cooperative, with a non-conventional energy program funded by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy of the Government of India. ERRC has been involved extensively in research in the fields of rural development and agriculture. One project by ERRC has been the adoption of the rural village of Kottupuram in the Alappuzha district and it seeks to transform the rural economy of Kottupuram whose main source of income is from coconut. The coconut
trees in the area were dying of a rust for which no solution was in sight and the village income declined. ERRC research seeks to promote a shift from coconut to herbs such that valuable medicinal plants can be grown in the locality on a commercial basis.

Mithranikethan is a large development NGO in a rural village, Vellanad, in the Thiruvananthapuram district. Its founder, Sri. Viswanathan, has won numerous national and international awards for his pioneering work in the field of rural technology and agricultural development. Mithranikethan has 110 staff members and functions as a residential school but there is a research training wing with several young and also retired scientists. The explicit policy of Mithranikethan is that linkages with both farmers and the government are vital for effective research. Many research projects have been completed by Mithranikethan and new technologies have been developed by it in various field like agriculture and related industries. Mithranikethan has been organizing many training and extension programmes for the government and university agricultural scientists.

The Programme for Community Action (PCO) has been a Trivandrum based action oriented NGO seeking empowerment and community development. PCO has been carrying out research in the service of the specific goal of improving the living conditions of the large fisher worker community of Kerala. The PCO originated with a group of social activists who worked with artisanal fishermen during the 1960’s and it cherishes its reputation as a radical organization. The volunteers of PCO approaches the problems of the fisher worker community by what has been called “movement oriented research”. To this end they collect data factors relating to all aspects of fisheries in Kerala to provide an empirical basis for understanding the social, technological, ecological and
the demographical aspects of fisheries. Some past projects included the documentation of the relations of production existing in the fishing sector.

The K J P Research Foundation has been an NGO involved in improving the cashew and the other commercial crops in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It has been the research wing of the KJP Foundation and it is situated at Trivandrum. The director of the Research Laboratory is usually a retired director of extension at the Kerala Agricultural University while the staff consists of young university graduates and retired agricultural scientists. These scientists have been working on tissue culture for the micro propagation of cashew trees, development of bio fertilizers and other technologies for increasing the productivity of plantation and horticulture crops in Kerala. The Research Foundation has been involved in disseminating the knowledge to the farmers through extension and visit and giving training seminars to government scientists as well as publishing research reports.

The Centre for Environment and Development (CED) has been an NGO involved in research focusing on environmental issues and development policy. It has four full time researchers and seven part time researchers. Its founding illustrates all the characteristics of an NGO. The director of the Centre for Environment and Development has been an active member of Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad for fifteen years and was involved in the establishment of its Integrated Rural Technology Centre. CED has been actively involved in environmental issues as well as development policy studies such as resource mapping and technology development. It carries out the research only with the project funding from the World Wild Life Fund.
The Malanadu Development Society has been a major NGO established in 1977 as the official organization of the diocese of Kanjirappally for making social and development interventions. MDS has been registered under Travancore Cochin Literary Scientific and charitable societies Act of 1955. The Society has been committed to the integration of rural development, livelihood security and sustainable environment. The creation of a just society ensuring dignity and sustainability of life to everybody has been the vision of Malanad Development Society. MDS works to enhance the quality of life of farmers, women, children and the other marginalized communities through decentralized institution building, participatory development processes and application of sustainable technologies respecting the environment, culture and heritage.

Malankara Development Society at Kumily, Voluntary Organization for Social Activities and Rural Development (VOSARD) at Kumily, Vikas Yojana Social Services Society at Ayyappancoil, Habitat Technology Group at Munnar, the Anakkara Vikasana Sangham at Anakkara, Vandanmedu Development Society at Kattappana, the Vijayapuram Social Services Society at Munnar, The High Range Plantation Workers’ Society at Rajakkad, and The Peermade Development Society at Peermade have been the major NGOs working in the Idukki district.

Of the above NGOs working in the backward district of Idukki to bring about the community development, Peermade Development Society has been the largest NGO which has taken special attention and importance in the economic and community development scenario and have made a sustainability approach in their development interventions. PDS is a major NGO in Kerala working for the economic and community
development of the people in the district of Idukki and in Kerala. Even though, PDS has concentrated in the Peermade Taluk of Idukki district, its development interventions, especially, in the field of environment and natural resources management have been spread throughout Kerala and also in the south India.

Peermade Development Society was established in the year 1980 and was registered as a Non Governmental Organization under the Travancore - Cochin Literacy, Scientific and Charitable Societies Act of 1955. The establishment of PDS was the culmination of the long interaction of Mar Mathew Arackal, the present bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kanjirapally, with the people of High Ranges of Kerala during which he got sensitized on some of the dire predicaments the people suffered at large. The PDS resolved to cater to the development needs of the tribal people, marginal farmers and the women and children of the Idukki district by undertaking the various local community development programmes. Fully dedicated service, successful implementation of a large number of development activities, increasing support and participation from the people and genuine efforts to address the rural poor have won high reputation and phenomenal growth for PDS. Today, PDS has become one of the largest NGOs in India engaged in the efforts towards economic and community development and it has got the support and credibility from the various government departments and other voluntary agencies. It has established good links and association with other institutions and resource centers thereby taking a leading role in the field of economic and community development in the district of Idukki. PDS actually worked with the marginalized rural population living in the most rural setting in the Idukki district and it has tried to address all categories of rural people,
covering all the major sectors. In fact, the tribal community has been the first target group of PDS. Later, all the vulnerable sections of the society including marginalized people, women and children received the attention and support of PDS.

The Peermade Development Society was founded by Mar Mathew Arackal, the present bishop of the catholic diocese of Kanjirapally. When took charge as the pastor of Peermade parish in 1977, the suffering s of the various categories of people in the parish like tribals, dalits, small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers came to his notice. The living conditions of these categories of people in the Idukki district were really miserable, they suffered a lot of hardships and they were subject to severe exploitation as well. He studied their problems and wanted to solve them by extending all the possible services for their uplift. The establishment of PDS was the result of his dedicated efforts in the regard. In the year 1980 he founded a society known as the Peermade Development Society and got it registered later. The PDS is situated at Peermade in Idukki district of Kerala, by the side of K K Road, (Kottayam – Kumily Road) 75 k.m away from Kottayam and 35 k.m away from Kumily. The vision of PDS is the “empowerment of the village communities especially the tribals, women and the marginalized farmers towards sustainable development by conserving and enhancing the local resources in order to have the fullness of life.”

In order to realize the above vision PDS has organized various community development programmes and activities with the following objectives.

* To engage in charitable as well as social service activities aimed at improving the living conditions and the general welfare of the poor, particularly the
farmers, the tribals and also those who are backward financially, physically and in the matter of education and the other working people as well as poor indigent persons of whatever occupation, inconsiderate of caste, creed or community.

* To engage in activities for the uplift of small farmers by promoting farmers’ consortium, collective farming, application of organic fertilizers, eco farming, and by providing financial and administrative help to the small and marginal farmers at the time of harvesting season to avoid distress sale of agricultural produce and also to avoid intermediaries.

* To provide, encourage initiate and promote facilities for the research and improvement or development of new methods of production and technology in the fields of agriculture, environment and livestock including the establishment and the running of Rural Technology Parks.

* To promote people’s organizations and initiatives towards community development with particular emphasis on Self Help Groups (SHGs) and similar other thrift and micro credit ventures in the backward and underdeveloped rural areas.

* To promote, establish, conduct, equip, maintain and administer social welfare centers, development training initiatives and other similar service establishments for the purpose of promoting and assisting rural development.

* To create and develop the market network especially for the agricultural produce and to promote value added processing so as to ensure reasonable and better prices for the primary producers.
* To promote the health conditions and health care especially in the rural areas by advocating the concepts and practices of community health care, giving special emphasis on indigenous and natural system of health care developed through research and above all providing research oriented service in support of practices of community health care.

* To promote environmental concern among the people and to integrate agriculture with environment by propagating sustainable eco farming practices.

* To promote and support women’s actions, aiming at their empowerment and equality in the society, including those concerned with income generation and micro credit supported women enterprises.

* To promote education in the rural areas by establishing and running the various educational institutions and training centers and also instituting scholarships for the students.

* To undertake rescue and relief operations especially during times of natural calamities by mobilizing adequate resources from the internal as well as external sources.

* To collaborate with the government and other credible organizations and groups in the various programmes aiming at the betterment of the target population.

The Peermade Development Society has 18 Departments specialized in the different areas of rural, social and community development. The various departments run by P D S are the following.
1. Training cum Human Resources Development

2. Agriculture/Animal Husbandry

3. Eco-restoration, Organic Farming and Bio-technology

4. Integrated Watershed Development

5. Applied Research, Documentation and Rural Innovation

6. Rural and Appropriate Technology Programme

7. Community Health Development

8. Women Development, Rural Credit and Income Generation Programme

9. Ayurvedic and Traditional Medicines

10. Housing and Social Welfare

11. Tribal Development

12. Vocational Training and Small Scale Industries

13. Bio-technology

14. Innovators Technology Development Centre

15. Micro Enterprises Development

16. Organic Pest and Disease Management & Research Development

17. Natural Resources Management Department

18. Export Department

A total number of 352 staff members are working in the various departments and they take care of the various programmes and projects organized by these various departments. The staff consists of professionals and technicians in various disciplines like medical sciences, engineering, agricultural sciences, anthropology, the social work,
geology, bacteriology etc. and most of them have excellent academic records in their respective fields.

The Peermade Development Society has developed vital resources linkages and made working arrangements with many regional national and international agencies and institutions. The contributions and help from these agencies were very valuable to the Peermade Development Society in its growth as the leading Voluntary Organization in the Idukki district of Kerala. The important agencies with which the P D S has resources linkages and working arrangements are the following.

* Department of Science and Technology, Government of India
* Department of Bio-Technology, Government of India
* CAPART, Government of India
* Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM), Calicut
* Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi
* Kerala Agricultural University, Mannuthy
* Agency for Non Conventional Energy and Rural Technology (ANERT)
* Gandhigram University, Dindugal
* Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI), Palode
* Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), Bangalore
* Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Trivandrum
* Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development Studies of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (KIRTADS), Calicut
* Cardamom Research Centre, Myladumpara
The Peermade Development Society has built up the necessary infrastructure with the participation of the civil society and the local people for providing various community development services to the needy. The society, at all times, has been eager to ensure that all the above facilities available with the society are thrown open to the public for the sustainable development of the communities. The major infrastructural service facilities available with the Peermade Development Society are:

* Sahyadri Research Institute for Eco Farming and Rural Technology at Thattathikkanam.
* Office cum Training Centre at Peermade.
* Sahyadri Training Centre at Thattathikkanam.
* Biotechnology Lab at Koovappilly.
* Bio Control Agents Lab at Thattathikkanam.
* Vermiculture Centre at Thattathikkanam.
* M K J M Training Centre at Nallthanny.
* Sahyadri Farmers’ Consortium at Kumily.
* Carpentry Training cum Production Centre at Peermade.
* Regional Offices at Mundakkayam, Kumily and Kattappana.
* Grama Silpa Sales Outlet for Handicrafts and Small Industrial Products.

* Ayurvedic Research Institute at Pallikkunnu.

* Herbal Garden

* Sahyadri Ayurvedic Pharmaceuticals at Pallikkunnu.

* Ayurvedic Hospitals at Mundakkayam, Pallikkunnu and Cochin.

* Herbarium and Drug Museum at Pallikkunnu.

* Innovators’ Technology Development Centre.

* Organic Tea Factory at Valanjamganam.

* Spice Processing Factory at Valanjamganam.

The Peermade Development Society has registered a steady and envious growth during the last twenty five years since its establishment in 1980. The interactions with the people in the rural areas at the grassroots level provided the Society with a lot of learning and vital experiences which enabled it further to face the new challenges and solve the problems of the most aggrieved people with more clarity and greater confidence in the 21st century. PDS has been viewed as a multidimensional development institution and it has a team work with varying combinations and role specifications. It has a very healthy association with professionals in the different fields of services from different parts of the country and it has significantly contributed to the growth of the institution in terms of conceptual framework build up, programme planning and implementation of the various programmes.

At present PDS has become a large institution and it has now come to be recognized by the various ministries and government departments as Regional Resource
Centre and Nodal Agency in the field of social services and community development. The Society has made its options loud and clear by interacting and working with poor and marginalized rural population living in the most rural setting. Accordingly, the villages that are spread over a wide area along the eastern hill ranges are the main target areas of the Society and they are characterized by many contradictions and uncertainties. The vast majority of the population in these areas comprises of tribal people, harijans, small and marginal farmers and plantation labourers. A very large segment of the population lives under great stresses and strains with the deprivation of even basic facilities like drinking water availability, electricity, transport and communication facilities, health care systems, education, and banking and insurance services. Agriculture constitutes the backbone of the economy of the district and it is in a derailed position because of agricultural product prices falling heavily and the people thrown to miseries and deprivation. The crisis faced by the small and the marginal farmers is a real threat to their survival. Moreover, there is the overemphasis on the cash crops in the district and the prices of cash crops fluctuate very heavily in the national and international markets. The traditional land management practices have been neglected and excessive application of chemical fertilizers took place which led to degradation of soil and deterioration in the fertility of land. Crop diseases and the consequent destruction of crops brought agony and frustration to the farmers and most of them were placed in irredeemable debts.

The Peermade Development Society has organized various economic and community development activities with the intention of addressing all the categories of people and covering all the major sectors of the economy. In fact, the Society stepped in
to the above fields of activity with initiating such programmes for the uplift of the tribal community and it was tribal people who got the attention of PDS first. Later, all the vulnerable sections of the society belonging to different categories, especially women and children received attention from the part of PDS. The Society started its mission towards the accomplishment of economic and community development, giving a special emphasis on health and environment. In all the programmes organized by PDS, an earnest attempt has been made to give a touch having a scientific base and sustainable order. PDS has played a crucial role in bringing science and technology in harmony with rural agriculture in a comprehensive manner and it has to be seen as a mission in the context of the many challenges of the twenty-first century. The environmental concerns generated by the PDS among the people by way of specific formulations and action plans have led to a new awakening in the development scenario of the state.

The Peermade Development Society made its first appearance in the voluntary sector by starting a variety of programmes in 1979 for the tribal welfare and tribal development. The Society started its voluntary endeavour in ‘Vanchivayal’, an isolated tribal colony in the Peermade Taluk and later the coverage of its activities was expanded to include a large number of tribal settlements in Peermade and Thodupuzha Taluks of Idukki district. Already, twenty tribal settlements were reached out by the Society, responding to the physical, cultural, educational and the psychological needs of the people.

In every social intervention, the Peermade Development Society has the specific aim of building up of people’s organizations and a new leadership pattern from
among the people to bring about self-reliant communities. Nearly thirty one Self Help Groups promoted by PDS have been functioning in the various parts of Idukki district. They are basically thrift groups organized to inculcate the saving habits among the tribal people, especially among the tribal women. A large number of employment and income generation programmes have been initiated by these SHGs through the micro credit and micro finance operations by which the varied micro credit requirements of the tribal SHG members are met. Presently, the tribal people rely mostly on these SHGs for their credit needs and the SHGs are of great relief to them. Again, the SHGs promoted by PDS have popularized the need for resorting to sustainable agricultural practices like the organic farming and the watershed development. Most of the farmers in the tribal colonies have already been converted to organic farmers. The organic agricultural products and organic spices produced by the farmers are exported through PDS thereby earning a good margin to the organic farmers.

For the efficient administration and effective implementation of the various programmes, the activities of PDS in the Idukki district have been divided into three on a geographical basis. In all the three regions the PDS has got regional offices and a highly qualified and committed staff are working in the regional offices to take care of the day to day administration of the regions. The PDS staff comprises of highly qualified personnel from various fields like the science and technology, the Ayurvedic medicine, agricultural science, social work and personnel management.

The community development thrust of Peermade Development Society received streamlining and a better direction with the establishment of a specially designed
Women Development Department. The women development department is working for the development and empowerment of women through capacity building and PDS has got the support and the financial assistance from Panchayat Raj Institutions and government departments under special provisions for women development. The PDS has organized about 36000 rural women in Idukki district into Mahilsamajams in the first phase and later into Self Help Groups in the second phase. Through PDS the women groups and the women SHGs secured the legal status and obtained the linkages with the banks and other formal financial institutions. The women SHGs have largely organized employment and income generating activities by way of starting micro enterprises.

Another pioneering effort from the PDS is in promoting and popularizing organic farming. Eco friendly, and organic farming methods have given a new life to the agricultural sector which, otherwise was deteriorating in quality and quantity regarding production. PDS has organized research in theoretical knowledge extensively and also applied the research and technology options at the practical level. The Society has also acquired much expertise with respect to the organic farming which has been nationally accepted and widely demanded. Within a short span of time PDS could convert many small and marginal farmers to organic farmers. The initiatives of the Society in the field of organic farming is an effective counter movement against degenerative, environment inimical and costly application of chemicals and fertilizers and against the strategy of neo colonialisation adopted by the multinationals and big entrepreneurs in rural agriculture.

Watershed Development Management is an important strategy in the development of rural agriculture and the identification of such a knowledge gave a new
enlightenment to PDS in watershed development. The Society holds the distinct status of introducing the concept of watershed development management in the Idukki district in the early 1980’s. In the later years PDS could become an authentic body in the field of watershed management and related activities. At present, PDS has assumed the role of promoter, programme implementing agency, supporter to voluntary organizations and a resource center, in the field of watershed management. Presently, the Society has been supporting fifty-six voluntary organizations in South India in the development and the management of watershed programmes. PDS has implemented watershed development programme covering 15000 hectares of land in Idukki district.

The development of appropriate rural technologies is very crucial to the economic and community development of the village agricultural communities. For this, technologies have to be developed suiting the local area and utilizing the local resources. In this regard, PDS has organized special programmes bringing science and technology inputs in refined forms with specific application strategies. Such programmes basically aimed at the development of rural community through the dissemination of scientific information, transfer of skills, quality production management systems and marketing. PDS has been working as ‘Center of Excellence’ in the field of science and technology under the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. PDS has been conducting researches on a regular basis in the various fields like agriculture, Ayurvedic medicines, animal husbandry and Anthropology.

PDS has a comprehensive involvement in the village health care and has organized various activities relating to the preventive, curative and promotional aspects
of health development. The indigenous health care programmes of PDS has got great popularity, support and encouragement especially from the village population. Presently, PDS has an ethno medicinal forest, herbal nursery, seed and raw drug museum and a community programme which has the participation of nearly four thousand families. Sahyadri Ayurvedic Pharmaceuticals, which is a GMP certified institution, is producing almost two hundred and thirty six varieties of Ayurvedic medicines. The less costly and healthy practice of Ayurveda has been promoted and popularized by PDS through the network of Self Help Groups and other organizations under it and here the Society has upheld the motto ‘people’s health in their own hands’. The Society has been running an Ayurvedic Nursing Course of eight months duration every year in order to promote the practice of Ayurveda and indigenous medicines by which intensive training has been provided to boys and girls who become the promoters of the practice of the Ayurvedic and indigenous medicines.

Another area which got the attention of PDS is the renewable and rechargeable energy. The Society has initiated and implemented four micro hydel power projects in the watershed area already promoted by it and three of them are located in the far villages near the forests. There is a lot of potential in the high range areas for tapping the natural resources of water and convert them in to productive energy without incurring much additional costs.

Sahyadri Farmers’ Consortium for marketing is yet another area where the Society has established a firm and distinguished mark of its own. PDS, with its effective intervention in the market has ensured reasonable prices for the produce of the farmers.
At present the Society is one of the largest exporter of organic tea and organic spices in the country. The Internal Control System of PDS has been doing the monitoring work among the organic farmers so as to ensure that they stick on to the organic farm practices. PDS has undertaken the work for the expansion of infrastructure and other facilities for the purchase and processing of spices on a large scale.

The tea estates and the tea production have been in a crisis over the last two decades especially in the Idukki district as a result of which several tea estates were closed down and several labourers were thrown out of employment. The people in those localities were deprived of their livelihood and in such an aggrieved situation PDS came forward to help the tea sector by establishing an organic tea factory with an installed capacity of eight hundred million tons of organic tea every year. The organic tea factory has been producing CTC, Orthodox and Green Tea which are largely exported. This has brought an additional income to the small scale tea growers in the area. It has helped to ensure the minimum essential prices to the tea growers and thus recover from the very serious crisis in the tea sector.

PDS is rendering great service to the people of the locality and to that of Kerala by working as the Technology Resource Center. Under the programme, the task of technology dissemination and technology development are being taken up in a variety of areas like organic agriculture, indigenous health, tissue culture and through a programme called ‘Land to the Lab Approach’. The Technology Resource Center disseminates these technologies at varying levels to the different voluntary organizations and to the model farmers in Kerala.
The Peermade Development Society is the regional collaborator for Kerala and Lakshdeep in promoting the innovations under the National Innovation Foundation, Government of India. So far PDS could unearth almost six hundred innovations during the last three years and many of them won prizes and were widely accepted. Today, the various national level agencies like NABARD, KVIC, DIC and RMK have selected PDS for conducting various training programmes under different schemes. All the facilities and infrastructure at PDS are given open to the people for their development. The various enterprises under PDS provide regular employment to about three hundred and fifty two individuals and it may be treated as a big service to the society especially in a situation where has no much industries and enterprises in the Idukki district to provide work and employment to the people on a regular basis. The leading enterprises under the PDS providing employment to the people are Sahyadri Pharmaceuticals, Ayurvedic hospitals, Sahyashilpa, Gramashilpa, Farmers’ Consortium for Agro marketing, the Laundry unit, Organic Tea factory and Organic Spices Processing factory. Thus PDS is both a resource center and an implementing agency relating to technology and development. The various national agencies have acknowledged the ability of PDS to contribute to the economic and community development. The major recognitions of PDS are the following :-

* Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) has recognized PDS as the Technology Resource Center for the state of Kerala.
* Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) has made PDS the support voluntary organization for watershed development programme for the South Indian states.
* Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) has recognized PDS as the facilitation center for the state of Kerala.

* Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India also has conferred ‘Center of Excellence’ on PDS and DST has been giving core support grant to the Society for its scientific and technical staff since the last ten years.

* The PDS holds the distinction of being the programme implementing agency for watershed development management and agro forestry programmes for the entire district of Idukki.

* Rashtriya Mahila Khosh (RMK), a national credit agency under the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has appointed PDS as the Nodal Agency for women micro credit programme for the eastern districts of Kerala.

* The state government has assigned the Society the responsibility of training the government personnel and members of Panchayat Raj Institutions on watershed development management, programme planning and monitoring in four districts in Kerala and it is a special recognition conferred on the Society.

* National Innovation Foundation (NIF), Government of India, has recognized the Society as the regional collaborator and included the Society in the honey bee network programme. The Society has been awarded the second prize by NIF for promoting innovations at the national level.

* PDS is the first NGO in the state of Kerala to host Kerala Science Congress in association with STEC, Government of Kerala and Department of Science and
Technology, Government of India.

* PDS is the programme implementing agency of NABARD for conducting the Rural Entrepreneurship Programme in Idukki district.

* The Society has been conferred the status of Scientific and Industrial Research Organization by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

* The Khadi and Village Industries Commission has approved the Society as an Extension Center under Bio Manure Programme.

* The Peermade Development Society has been enlisted as the major NGO for implementing the micro finance scheme of the Kerala State Backward Classes Development Corporation Ltd.

* Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Kerala, has selected PDS for the government sponsored PMRY beneficiaries in Idukki district.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


