Across the world the Governments have been taking keen interest in rural development. Even in Indian context this is true for many reasons. Rural India has 70 per cent of its billion plus population in the villages. Even after 60 years of independence and in spite of concerted efforts of the successive Governments, the conditions in rural India remain unchanged. The rural India projects a very gloomy picture of their living conditions: the residential facilities, the infrastructural facilities including roads, electricity, safe drinking water through pipes, sanitation, educational and health facilities, communication and entertainment facilities and financial institutions like banks etc.,

Poverty alleviation of rural folk or rural development has become a big challenge to any Government. All governments failed equally at Rural Development. The Governments failure in improving conditions through its limited machinery, gave rise to the creation of other private institutions namely the NGOs or Voluntary Organisations to take up this herculean task of rural development, who strive to alleviate poverty and address other problems at the grass root level with their programmes designed appropriately exclusive to the rural areas.

Rural development is improvement of agricultural productivity through knowledge of new technology available and the progress of rural areas in culture towards modernization. The NGOs should influence and motivate certain aspects of rural people like access to resources (natural, human, physical, technological and social capital) and services to enable them improve their livelihoods by their own initiatives.

Any strategy or program should be based on welfare of the rural masses; welfare in the sense of absence of poverty, hunger, ignorance, disease, unemployment, inequalities and low quality of life (basic amenities). The important role of NGOs is to motivate people, move resources, train leadership and involve people in development programs and
processes to attain self reliance and self confidence that people start developing by their own initiative. It is only when the people think that they are also a party to decisions that the people will develop a real sense of involvement. It may be observed that voluntary organizations play an important role in creating awareness, imparting education and ensuring people's active participation in the process of development. Because of close association with local tradition, culture, custom and environment these voluntary organizations play an effective role in the modernization and transformation of rural societies. They try to reduce hierarchical distance between leaders and the people at village level.

The history of NGOs initiatives in India is quite well known but they assumed larger role in the last few decades. In view of their collaborative, independent and grass-root initiatives the study of their strategies, programmes, impact elucidate important aspects on policy perspectives on social, human and economic development of rural areas.

Keeping this in background, the present study is taken up in West Godavari and East Godavari district (Konaseema) of Andhra Pradesh with specific emphasis on the impact of initiatives. One of the leading NGOs in southern part of India is Social Service Centre operating from Eluru, the district headquarters of West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh. Social Service Centre has emerged as comprehensive service-provider to the needy across the districts of West Godavari, East Godavari districts.

The study is to see the impact of the programmes undertaken by Social Service Centre. There are many voluntary organisations working for rural development in this area. The present study is confined to one such organisation i.e. Social Service Centre. And the findings may not be useful to form an opinion about the other organizations in general.

The present study is relied more on the perceptions of the respondents for assessing the impact and it could not evolve any quantitative methods or tools to measure the impact.