ABSTRACT

Even before the formation of the voluntary agencies and organisations, there were groups, which have affiliations with religions and some other sectors continuously working for the development of the people in the rural areas India. Group’s activities were carried out generally in the rural areas and this has been written very clearly and explicitly in the historical data. Later on the foreign people who dominated our country did not give adequate care and importance for the welfare of the people in the rural areas. Sadly these rulers’ intention was more or less to exploit the human labour and natural resources which were abundant in the third world countries like India.

However, after the arrival of Mahatmaji in the national politics great changes and awakenings took place in all over the country. He always stood for the upliftment of poor people and worked among them throughout his life. He had suggested more than eighteen programmes known as Constructive Programmes for the development of the villages which were scattered all over the country. Besides, Gandhiji himself had taken initiatives for starting several voluntary organisations all over the country. The People from many parts of the country had shown great interest to work with them.

A trust known as ‘Gandhi Smarak Nidhi’ was started in Delhi by Gandhi’s disciples and fellow activists soon after his death. This organisation had several branches in different states of the country and began to function in Kerala from 1951 onwards. In the initial period this organisation [KGSN-Kerala Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi] was focusing its attention in many areas such as implementation of constructive programmes, development of women and
children, sanitation, self-employment training and generation, promotion of small scale industries, propagation of Gandhian ideologies etc..

Under the auspices of the KGSN- in Alappuzha district, Mararikulam Gandhi Smaraka Grama Seva Kendram had started to function in 1958 for giving medical treatment to the leprosy patients. From the initial period onwards, this Centre had been very enthusiastically working among the poor people in the rural areas of this district. From 1990 onwards, the leadership of the organisation had decided to start the Microenterprise programmes among the rural masses. This attempt had made great changes in the life of the members of the group as they could fulfil many visions of Mahatma Gandhi in practical fields. Here, the Researcher’s attempt is to study the organisational activities in the areas of rural development and the efficacy and relevance of Gandhian principles in the practical fields at the grass root level.