Details regarding Gender Resource Centres’ are elaborated in yesterday’s article (Making An Impact - 128). GRCs are established in local bodies in association with Kudumbashree. GRCs acts as the hub for coordinating various programmes for the development of women, and for providing supportive system for women empowerment. When we implemented the activities related to GRC, another idea came to our mind.

It was about forming a task force in each ward which would function focusing at the security, development and upliftment of women and children. ‘Vigilant Groups’ are the ward level activity group formed to act against and reduce atrocities against women. Also the team envisages co-ordination for extending the needed assistance to women in distress. As it is a new programme of Kudumbashree, the implementation is still in the initial
stages, and long term vision is being developed. At present we have achieved our primary target of forming vigilant groups at each ward of local bodies in Kerala. ‘Vigilant Groups’ had already been formed in 19,770 wards in Kerala with 1,36,062 people (both male and female) as its members.

‘Vigilant Group’ is an activity group with 5 to 10 people as its members. Each vigilant group comprises of CDS members, social workers and those people who are interested in partnering in social activities. In the first phase, we gave awareness about such a gathering in the ward level and formed these groups. In the second phase, we gave training to the group members in the Local Self Government Institution level and at district level.

All vigilant group members have completed the first phase orientation and training. Further capacity building of the group members would be completed during this financial year itself. Now, we are focusing on planning future activities and guidelines for the vigilant groups. In this phase, we are also thinking about new ideas and action plan, for their effective functioning and action.

During the floods of 2018, we had unprecedented damage and loss. Government is thinking of formation of local groups in each local body for disaster rescue / relief operations. We are also thinking of integrating vigilant groups with this volunteers corps. As vigilant group members are active in addressing various social issues, we thought that convergence for disaster management will be effective.

In addition to these concepts, Special task Forces have been formed in some districts under the leadership of the vigilant group members. The Pink Task Force of Kozhikode is one such example. Pink Task Force, which have 110 Vigilant Group Members is extending self defense training in martial arts like Karate. Also, they received some job opportunities (like women security personnel). We are supporting such ideas which will make Vigilant Groups into a active force in each ward.