G. Ramachandran's (1904-1995) life, an invaluable gift to our nation, is a golden string binding together two generations, one that won our independence and the other that enjoys its fruits. Undaunted by personal feelings and considerations, G. Ramachandran had served the nation, unstintingly sharing with his fellow citizens the immense wealth of his knowledge and experience. He had the rare privilege of imbibing idealism and patriotism at their purest source. His mentors were no less personages than Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Rajagopalachari and men of their caliber. Together with them and under their direct leadership, he was drawn from his very youth into the main stream of our national life at its most crucial and decisive period. He has had an eventful life as freedom fighter, educationalist, editor and parliamentarian. Through his articulation and dedicated work especially in Gandhigram, he had upheld principles and causes dear to our nation.

A study of G. Ramachandran's multifaceted personality, who at a very young age fearlessly responded to the call of freedom and who without looking back went forward with uncommon courage, dedication and honesty to work for the cause of rural development and rural higher education for over seven decades would reveal extremely interesting facets of a very courageous and daring man who had a penchant for going off the
beaten track. His life is a study in courage. G. Ramachandran was in every sense of the term a great confluence of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. It is not easy for any scholar to delimit and say that Tagore’s influences on G. Ramachandran are on such and such aspects and of Mahatma Gandhi in some other. Probably the better way to look at this very important and complex aspect is to realise the fact that G. Ramachandran from his younger days displayed a kind of individuality that revealed penetrating far-sightedness and resisted any blind acceptance of anything that he came into contact. He had his own approach to everything that he did. Yet it cannot be denied that it was Tagore who influenced him at the most impressionistic period of his life as a student in Shantiniketan. Shantiniketan in those days was a heaven of individual freedom and it fostered liberal thinking and Tagore’s ambition was to provide a type of education which infuses not only courage and conviction in the students but an inner strength, which often stems from the Upanishadic ideal of beauty and every learner is transformed into an inspired agent in the divine dispensation.

History is the biography of great souls of different ages. The services rendered by great men like the Buddha, Alexander, Jesus, Mohammed the Prophet, Napoleon, Mahatma Gandhi etc; are always remembered by posterity because they enriched the heritage of man’s history. Buddha’s ideas of castelessness and cosmopolitanism and Mahatma Gandhi’s idea of non-violent satyagraha are novel ideas and ideals to all humanity. These
ideas of great men are always beacon lights to humanity born and not yet born. Their ideas inspire the people of the whole world. Heroes as poets, men of letters, statesmen, politicians, kings, all leaders are divine beings whose lives and achievements fill the pages of history to be followed by people for enriching their lives. So, history is the sum total of the contributions made by great men. Here, in India, there are a number of great heroes. G. Ramachandran was one among them.

1. Statement of the problem

This work tries to answer the following questions

1. How far G. Ramachandran's studies in different educational institutions helped him in the development of his personality?
2. How much did Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Rajagopalachari and others influence G. Ramachandran?
3. What are the constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi? Was G. Ramachandran a constructive worker of Mahatma Gandhi and how the ideas and principles of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore have inspired G. Ramachandran?
4. How G. Ramachandran's Life was caught in the currents and cross currents of political and economic controversy?
5. Why did he hesitate to join the struggle for Responsible Government led by Travancore State Congress in its initial period?
6. Was he a biased politician in the case of local politics? Did his love and reverence towards the royal family hinder his active participation in the struggle for responsible government in Travancore?

7. How far his reports of Travancore enabled Mahatma Gandhi to understand the Travancore politics in its true perspective?

8. How far the decisions of Mahatma Gandhi affected the internal politics of Travancore and the fate of Travancore State Congress?

9. Was G. Ramachandran an opportunist? How was he able to reconcile the Gandhian approach and the mind of poet Rabindranath Tagore who stood as the sentinel of the spirit of intellectual freedom?

10. How far the Gandhigram Rural University and the Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust fulfill the visions of Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore?

2. Aims and objectives

The thesis, Dr. G. Ramachandran: A Historical Biography has the following aims and objectives.

1. To analyse the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, the two great luminaries of the twentieth century on G. Ramachandran.

2. To examine how he had synthesised the views of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

3. To evaluate the conclusion that the education of heart and head must always go together.
4. To assess, how far the learning at Sabarmati Ashram had influenced him in the popularisation of adult education, Khadi, Harijan services, constructive programme etc.

5. To make an in-depth study of his role as the General Secretary of the Travancore State Congress in the struggle for responsible government in Travancore.

6. To examine how far the learning at Shantiniketan moulded him as a man of courage and freedom.

7. To examine how G. Ramachandran found delight in being an agnostic and held that the very idea of God was against all reason. Spiritual life was for him, the artistic life of poise, dignified behaviour, integrity of character, the readiness to do good and above all intellectual clarity. Why he believed that if he had not seen Mahatma Gandhi he would have been a life long atheist.

8. An exhaustive study of the Gandhigram Rural University at Chinnalapatti, the Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust at Neyyattinkara, etc.

9. To make an in depth study of G. Ramachandran as a Gandhian.

10. To study the life of G. Ramachandran and his style of functioning.

11. To examine the leadership qualities of G. Ramachandran and its impact on Gandhian constructive programmes.
3. Scope and importance of the study

The investigation of this topic deserves importance owing to various reasons. This study is relevant and important in the Indian context. This study may induce other researchers who wish to undertake similar studies of biographies. A thesis like this may bring to light certain leadership qualities of the living Gandhian leaders to the civilized world and help the younger generation of our time to know the Gandhian values. There is ample scope for highlighting the leadership qualities of unknown Gandhian leaders. This study may help the present generation and the coming generations to understand the different aspects of Gandhian and Tagorian ideology and their similarities and differences. This study may help to understand G. Ramachandran’s services to humanity. This work reveals the services of a Rural University, Gandhigram and the functioning of Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust. G. Ramachandran’s biography should be an inspiring source to other leaders. This work tries to convey the message of G. Ramachandran to the present and future society. History is the record of past events and study of past is essential for a good present and future. If it is true G. Ramachandran’s works and message helps to build a Sarvodaya society. This work gives an opportunity to study and spread the education policy built by Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. This study emphasis the importance of non-violence in a war liking, competitive society. This work tries to uphold, maintain and spread of ancient Indian culture. This work tries to spread Gandhian dictum, self sufficient village
and small scale economy against global and industrialised economy. This work promotes the services of Rural Universities like Gandhigram.

4. Limitations of the study

This work is a pioneering study and written with the help of available literature in Gandhigram and Neyyatinkara. The researcher also tapped available sources from Kerala Secretariat, Trivandrum. The researcher has contacted only a limited number of persons in Gandhigram and Madhavi Mandiram Neyyatinkara who have had close association with G. Ramachandran. Though it is a very interesting and valuable subject, no systematic work has been done on this topic. A few pamphlets and an autobiography of G. Ramachandran are available but they are not written in a systematic way. Only the first part of the autobiography is published.

5. Sources of the study

The thesis is based chiefly on the contemporary original sources which contain a mine of information about the life and services of G. Ramachandran. The documents dealing with the subject are found in the Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust Archives, Ooroottukala, near Neyyatinkara. GR Library, Gandhigram, works of Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation, etc. The Government orders, circulars and the documents related to Travancore State Congress which are available at the State Archives, Nalanda. Trivandrum also add valuable pieces of information about the topic. The 'Harijan'. Newspapers in different
languages. **articles and sources through interview** also serve the purpose of this study. Journals, brochures, pamphlets, Souvenirs, Annual Reports, letters, Convocation Addresses, College Calendars issued by the Gandhigram Rural University and Gandhigram Trust and its sister institutions have helped to fulfill this thesis.

6. **Methodology**

The following methodology has been adopted by the researcher in this study. This study has been undertaken by the researcher with the help of primary and secondary data. Secondary data have been collected from books, journals, articles, reports, mimeographed papers, pamphlets, research papers, brochures and the writings of G. Ramachandran. Besides, primary data have been collected from original documents like reports, orders, letters, circulars and the colleagues who were associated with G. Ramachandran during his social life. In order to collect the primary data, the researcher has **personally met** G. Ramachandran’s colleagues in Gandhigram and Neyyatinkara.

This thesis is a biographical study. History is the sum total of the contributions made by great men. The collected data have been arranged under different heads. It is the most appropriate method of collection of information about an individual. It is a qualitative intensive study through which one can know precisely the factors and causes of a particular phenomenon. The biographical method helps to formulate a valid
hypothesis, in which human nature and behavior, patterns can intensively be studied

7. Scheme of presentation

The thesis is presented in 7 chapters including introduction and conclusion. The introductory part of this research work consists of statement of the problem, the objectives, scope, limitations and methodology.

Chapter one deals with the life sketch of G. Ramachandran: his early life, family background, education, important posts held etc.

Chapter two deals with the influence of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi on G. Ramachandran, their ideology and the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi. This chapter also explains Ramachandran’s involvement in Mahatma Gandhi’s Constructive Programme and his contribution in socio-economic field.

This Chapter also examines the ideological differences and similarities between Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi and G. Ramachandran’s attempt to reconcile the Gandhian approach and the mind of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. It is a comparative study of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi and their influence on G. Ramachandran.
The third chapter deals with G. Ramachandran’s education policy and his activities in Gandhigram. It also examines the educational experiments of G. Ramachandran in Gandhigram.

G. Ramachandran’s political career and his participation in the Travancore State Congress for Responsible Government are presented in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter examines Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust and the last days of G. Ramachandran.

In the concluding chapter, conclusions, major findings and suggestions of the study are presented.