CHAPTER - V

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN RUBBER PLANTATIONS

1. IMPORTANCE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN RUBBER ESTATES

In management theory, personnel management is treated to include "manning the organization structure through proper and effective selection, appraisal and development of personnel to fill the roles designed into the structure". Personnel management also includes, manpower planning, recruitment, training, promotion and transfer of personnel. Some writers have also included administration of compensation, demotion and termination from service as part of the same functional area.

Manpower planning is one of the important functions in any organization. Job analysis is the basis for manpower planning. It seeks to discover what is expected from the person on the job, how the job is performed, the skills and experience required and the opportunity for advancement. To find the quality as well as the quantity of work expected from each job, job standards are established. Time study and work load analysis would give the necessary information for establishing such standards.

Manpower planning leads to the concept of recruitment. Recruitment is the calling of candidates for positions to be filled. It includes the identification of the sources of candidates. Recruitment may be simple or complex, depending upon the position to be filled and can be from sources within or outside the organization. Recruitment from outside may involve any one or more of the following methods: selecting applicants already on the file, calling applications by advertisements, recruitment through agencies, scouting for talents in schools and colleges and approaching professional bodies. The sources within the organization are nomination by present employees and trade unions. In plan-inations these agencies are extensively relied upon for recruitment of workers. While this is the case of workers, the managerial and supervisory personnel are recruited
largely by advertisement. The purpose of selection is to find the best candidate from the applicants. Important methods of selection are interviews, tests, references and physical examination. Factors like education and training, skill, experience and physical characteristics are taken into consideration for selection.

Training and development are also part of personnel management. Usually a new recruit is given facilities to acquaint himself with the organization. The purpose is to give a broad understanding of the working of the organization. To gain first hand knowledge, on the job training is also given. Apprentice training is now adopted in most organizations.

Training is aimed at the improvement of skills to perform specific tasks while development emphasises "an unfolding process and carries an implication of growth and maturization". Employment usually provides opportunities for both.

Transfer and promotion would be inevitable in any organization. Transfer is generally a "change in position without a change in status or pay" while promotion may be


either or both. Sometimes a transfer may be resorted to correct an original mistake in selection. Promotion from within is the procedure the employees favour. Sometimes it is incorporated in the collective bargaining agreement concluded between management and workers. Seniority based on length of service is the usual basis for promotion.

Personnel appraisal refers to the procedure adopted for evaluating "the personalities and contributions and potential of group members".83 There are different rating methods many of which make use of specific characters of the person and his work.

Salary and wage policy is the most common subject for collective bargaining in industrial organizations. It forms the usual basis for incentives also. Job evaluation is the usual method adopted to determine the salary and wages in manufacturing or similar organizations. The purpose of evaluation is to find out what a job is worth. There are four principal systems of evaluation:

(1) ranking system
(2) classification system
(3) point system and
(4) factor comparison system.

The application of one or more of the systems will depend on the type of organization and its special features and

requirements. Ranking and classification systems are adopted in the estates.

2. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Manpower planning in estates:

Manpower planning has two aspects in the estates: (1) that at the time of starting of estates and (2) that during the course of its running. At the time of starting a phased plan of recruitment would be necessary. Managerial and supervisory personnel, tappers and factory workers will have to be trained for the future roles. Since plantation industry is already well developed, trained persons are now available for recruitment and selection. This will obviate the need for training them at the expense of the estate.

During the course of running the estate also, advance planning is required. Such planning is necessary when replanting and new planting programmes or large construction projects are taken up for implementation. The seasonal nature of many operations also will entail the planning of recruitment. Since large number of women workers are employed in plantations maternity leave extending upto three months in a year will have to be granted statutorily to a number of women workers. This will also necessitate the planning for
recruitment to fill up vacancies arising from maternity leave. In addition, the retirement and death of workers also involve the planning of recruitment.

An amount of advance planning is made in the majority of estates covered by the study to carry out day-to-day operations. As mentioned in Chapter III, the extent of advance planning is considerably limited. It will not exceed more than ten days in any estate. In the majority of estates a weekly plan is adopted. Since any number of unskilled workers are available in the vicinity of almost every estate it may not be necessary for the management to plan recruitment much in advance. The fact that routine works like weeding and pruning are unskilled in nature may also obviate the necessity of advance planning for training. However, short term planning extending up to a week would be required for recruitment. In the employment of tappers, factory workers and technical and clerical staff, an element of advance planning would be necessary. Excepting tappers, other category of workers form only a small percentage of the total labour force. In view of the above, manpower planning does not present any serious problem in the management of plantations.

Recruitment:

Recruitment had presented many problems in the
early days of rubber plantation industry. The estates were developed in remote areas often away from human habitation. This had led to the recruitment of workers from outside. For this purpose the estate management used the services of Kanganies. The employers used to intimate their requirements of workers to Kanganies who were paid some advance also. Workers brought by a particular Kangany worked under his supervision. The employer in turn paid commission to the Kangany called 'head money'. This was usually on the basis of the number of workers brought by him.

Sometimes other agencies were also employed for recruitment. The Labour Investigation Committee (Rege Committee) found professional labour suppliers and subordinate estate staff also engaged in recruitment. As pointed out in Chapter I, the Kangany system had led to various abuses and was criticised by the Rege Committee. The question of abolishing the system was discussed at the Third Session of the Industrial Committee on Plantations in November 1950 and subsequently at a tripartite meeting held in Madras in February 1951. The employers and employees generally favoured the continuance of the system for some more time. Subsequently the Government of India formulated in consultation with certain State Governments a scheme for limiting the number of workers under a Kangany and providing for the establishment of estate gangs with a view to checking the evils of the
system. In 1958 a State wide agreement was concluded in Madras (Tamil Nadu) settling an industrial dispute relating to the conditions of work and employment of Kanganyes. The agreement made provision inter-alia, for the payment of compensation to the Kanganyes on the termination of their contracts as labour suppliers either by merging their commission in their wages or by an outright payment at a prescribed rate. For Kanganyes opting to continue in service, the agreement created a cadre of Labour Supervisors.

A Committee appointed by the Government of Kerala also recommended the total abolition of the Kangany system and the creation of a new cadre of Labour Supervisors. The State Government accepted the recommendations of the Committee with certain modifications in 1959. The employers agreed to discontinue the system from 1960 and the abolition was completed in 1962.

There had been parallel development in Mysore (Karnataka) also, though the system was not widespread there. By means of individual agreements several estates in the State had been able to rehabilitate their Kanganyes as Labour Supervisors and to compensate those reluctant to continue in employment.

With the increase in settled population near the
plantations, recruitment from outside has become negligible. The problem now is how to give employment to dependants of existing workers who are too numerous. In a number of estates agreements have been concluded between management and workers restricting future recruitment only from among dependants.

Estate managements have separate policies with regard to the recruitment of ordinary workers and clerical, technical, supervisory and managerial personnel. The majority of non-Indian estates make recruitment of ordinary workers from dependants only while preference is shown to dependants by the rest. A minority of Indian estates make recruitment of workers from dependants. In these estates the trade unions have been able to enforce a policy of recruitment exclusively from dependants. This has been made either a part of agreements between management and workers or practice evolved over the years. The method of recruitment of workers is shown in Tables 42 and 43.

In all non-Indian and thirty-three Indian estates recruitment is made by the manager. In the remaining two Indian estates recruitment of workers is made by the managing director of the company controlling the estate. Very often field workers are promoted as tappers or factory workers depending upon their experience and suitability. Tables 42
## TABLE - 42

**METHOD OF RECRUITMENT OF WORKERS**

*(INDIAN ESTATES -1974-75)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF WORKERS</th>
<th>FROM LOCAL PEOPLE</th>
<th>LOCAL PEOPLE PREFERENCE TO DEPENDANTS</th>
<th>DEPENDANTS ONLY</th>
<th>TOTAL ESTATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tappers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory workers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch &amp; ward</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

@ No factory workers in five estates.
TABLE - 43

METHOD OF RECRUITMENT OF WORKERS

(NON-INDIAN ESTATES - 1974-75)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF WORKERS</th>
<th>FROM LOCAL PEOPLE</th>
<th>LOCAL PEOPLE PREFERENCE TO DEPENDANTS</th>
<th>DEPENDANTS ONLY</th>
<th>TOTAL ESTATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tappers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory workers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch &amp; ward</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

@ No factory workers in two estates.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF WORKERS/PERSONNEL</th>
<th>INDIAN ESTATES</th>
<th>NON-INDIAN ESTATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>% TO TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tappers</td>
<td>2845</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers</td>
<td>1615</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory workers</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans, watch and ward</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial, supervisory,</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerical and other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>5508</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and 43 show the position when they are recruited directly. Sometimes field workers are also posted as watch and ward and vice versa. The strength of different categories of workers in the estates covered by the study is shown in Table 44. The table shows that the percentage of field workers is lower in Indian estates compared to non-Indian estates. The shortfall is due to the following reasons.

In the first place nine Indian estates have no immature area. These estates would require more tappers and less field workers. Further, seven Indian estates have not manured their mature rubber area in 1974-75. As a result the number of field workers required for manuring will be reduced. The tapping of rubber tree every third day is widely practised in the non-Indian estates while it is not common in the Indian estates. In most Indian estates rubber trees are tapped once in two days. Consequently the percentage of tappers employed would be lower in the non-Indian estates.

It has been found from a number of other studies that a hectare of rubber plantation would require anything between 0.9 and 1 worker. From the present study it is seen that the worker per hectare is 0.8 and 0.6 respectively in the non-Indian and Indian estates. This would show that some more workers are to be accounted for, particularly in the Indian estates. Generally the workers who are not included in the muster rolls are the casual workers employed for short periods in the field.
The higher percentage of managerial, supervisory, clerical and other personnel is mainly due to the small size of Indian estates. The average extent of rubber area of Indian estates is only 234 hectares while the average of non-Indian estates is 633 hectares. It needs no emphasis that irrespective of the size, a manager and certain complementary personnel would be required in all estates. Further the accounting work is centralised in fourteen non-Indian estates and the analysis is made with the aid of mechanical and electronic devices. This reduces considerable clerical work at the estate level. In addition, the span of control is found to be smaller in Indian estates compared to non-Indian estates. This has necessitated the employment of more supervisory personnel in the Indian estates than in the non-Indian estates.

In all non-Indian estates recruitment of clerical and other personnel is made by advertisement by the companies controlling the estates. However for the selection a Board is constituted in thirteen non-Indian estates. The Board usually consists of two or three estate managers belonging to the same company. These thirteen estates belong to a single company. There is a growing tendency to show preference to dependants in the matter of employment of clerical and other personnel also.
In the Indian estates also the recruitment of clerical and other personnel is made by the company controlling the estate. In five estates recruitment is made by advertisement. In the remaining thirty, recruitment is made by other methods. In five estates preference is shown to dependants.

Managerial personnel are recruited by the company controlling the estate in both groups. The initial recruitment made is as assistant manager. In the non-Indian companies this is done by advertisement. In one estate belonging to a non-Indian company, a division conductor has been promoted as assistant manager and later as manager. This is an exception to the usual practice.

In five Indian estates the managerial personnel are recruited by advertisement. In the remaining thirty estates there is no clear policy as to their recruitment. This is because vacancies are very rare and when a vacancy arises a decision is taken as to the best method of recruitment, taking into account the then existing situation.

Qualification for recruitment:

In the early days when plantations were developed,
the whole managerial personnel in the non-Indian estates were Europeans. The maximum an Indian could aspire to become was a division conductor. However during the Second World War there was scarcity for European personnel due to their leaving the estates to join the defence forces. This necessitated the engagement of Indians. The emphasis at that time was not on any formal qualification but on the ability to get things done and the capacity to move in the company of Europeans. At that time trade union movement was practically unknown in the plantations and the Government of the day was largely run by European Civil Servants. Legal knowledge was not an essential part of the qualification of the manager as labour legislation was in the process of development. The ability of handling workers was also not essential since workers were by and large submissive to the manager and manager had been generally following a paternalistic policy.

In those days some Indian estates also employed European managers. With the dawn of Independence the European personnel in the estates began to leave. Some estates passed into Indian hands also. Since Independence a number of legislative enactments have been brought into effect with a view to improving the lot of workers. The trade union movement began to acquire strength and respectability. This resulted in the employment of more qualified persons who could
handle large number of workers in the changed circumstances.

The study has shown that for the direct recruitment of assistant manager a degree was prescribed in all non-Indian estates. In five non-Indian estates a degree in Agriculture was preferred. In seventeen Indian estates a degree in any subject was prescribed as the minimum qualification. Out of the seventeen, five estates require a degree in Agriculture or Botany. Of the remaining, seven estates would require Secondary School Leaving Certificate as the minimum qualification. In the rest no formal qualification is prescribed. This is due to the fact that vacancies of managerial personnel are very rare in these estates. A decision is taken on the qualification as and when a vacancy arises.

The minimum qualification of clerical and supervisory staff recruited directly is a pass in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination in all estates. In the case of technical personnel, qualification in the particular field or trade is usually required.

There is no prescribed qualification for ordinary workers. The only basis of selection for workers is good physique and some experience in work. This is the case with field workers, tappers and factory workers. The Plantations
Labour Act prohibits the employment of children below twelve years. For the employment of young persons between the ages of twelve and eighteen, a certificate from a Certifying Surgeon (a surgeon recognised by the Chief Inspector of Plantations) should be obtained and they should carry a token showing a reference to the certificate. Employing women and young persons during night is prohibited by the same Act.

Type of recruitment:

In rubber plantations the recruitment of workers is made either on a permanent or a casual basis. The model standing orders prescribed for workmen by the Association of Planters' of Kerala define a permanent workman as "one who has been passed by the employer as fit for work and who has been registered on the check roll for the period of contract" and a casual worker as one "who is engaged for work of a purely casual or temporary character". Casual workers are also called temporary workers. The initial recruitment is

84. Chief Inspector of Plantations is the official appointed by the State Government to enforce the provisions of the Plantations Labour Act in the respective State. His powers and duties are prescribed under the Act.

85. Association of Planters' of Kerala, Model Standing Orders for Estate Workmen, para, 3(1).

86. Ibid., para, 3(2).
often made as casual workers and as and when permanent vacancies arise the casual workers are appointed to these vacancies.

The plantation industry is characterised by the employment of large number of women. This is a feature of all plantation crops. The proportion of women workers is higher in tea and coffee than in rubber. The employment of husband, wife and grown up children is also a feature of plantations. The details collected from the estates regarding employment are presented in Table 45.

Table 45 shows that eighty-seven per cent of workers and staff in Indian estates was permanent as against eighty-five per cent in the non-Indian estates. Among the male workers and other personnel ninety-one per cent was permanent in Indian and ninety per cent in non-Indian estates. Among women, permanent persons formed seventy-seven per cent and seventy-eight per cent respectively in Indian and non-Indian estates. Of the casual workers, men formed fifty per cent in Indian and forty-one per cent in non-Indian estates. Of the total workers and other personnel, men formed seventy-three per cent in Indian and sixty-one per cent in non-Indian estates.

It has been observed during the study that casual personnel in the managerial, clerical and supervisory category
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INDIAN ESTATES</th>
<th></th>
<th>NON-INDIAN ESTATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PERMANENT</td>
<td>CASUAL</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3651 (91%)</td>
<td>348 (9%)</td>
<td>3999 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(76%)</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
<td>(73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1164 (77%)</td>
<td>345 (23%)</td>
<td>1509 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(24%)</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4815 (87%)</td>
<td>693 (13%)</td>
<td>5508 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
was only two per cent of the total workforce. The rest was employed on a permanent basis. This would show that the bulk of casual personnel belonged to the category of field workers, tappers and factory workers.

Training and development:

There is no formal training for workers or clerical and other personnel in any estate examined for the study. They acquire the necessary training on the job. This is the case with supervisory personnel also. Assistant managers of fourteen non-Indian estates are required to undergo a test in local language before confirmation. Managerial personnel of five Indian estates were trained in a management institute while the manager of one non-Indian estate had acquired qualifications in management before joining the estate. In addition to this training, eight Indian estates and two non-Indian estates had deputed their managerial personnel to the short term course on estate management organised by the Rubber Board.

A source of management development on the technical side is the conferences held by the Rubber Board in the cultivation and processing of rubber more or less annually. It is found that twenty non-Indian and twenty-eight Indian estates had deputed their managerial personnel (usually the manager) to the conferences during the five year period
preceding the year of study.

Providing the manager with information on the latest technical advances in rubber is another method adopted for management development on the technical side. There are a number of publications on rubber. A few of them are published abroad. The important publications on the subject in India are the Rubber Board Bulletin a quarterly in English and Rubber, a monthly in Malayalam published by the Rubber Board. It is found from the study that all estates belonging to both groups were receiving the Rubber Board Publications and making good use of them.

A few publications are brought out by the rubber plantation industry of Malaysia and Sri Lanka. In the field of rubber plantation industry Malaysia has made spectacular progress. Hence the publications of that country are considered to be indispensable aids for management development on the technical side. Table 46 shows the number and interval of receipt of these publications in the estates.

It would be seen from Table 46 that almost all non-Indian estates were receiving foreign publications.
TABLE - 46

RECEIPT OF TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLICATIONS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF INDIAN ESTATES RECEIVING</th>
<th>NUMBER OF NON-INDIAN ESTATES RECEIVING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubber Board publications</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications of Malaysia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications of Sri Lanka</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transfer:

The transfer of managerial personnel arises only in companies owning more than one estate. However the place of employment of workers within the estate may change frequently. This is particularly the case with tappers and field workers. Due to the nature of tapping which is usually either every two or three days, tappers are required to work in different blocks in a week. Tappers are transferred to other divisions also. The place of work of field workers will be the entire estate. As far as practicable they are deployed near their residence. When the company has other estates the supervisory, clerical and other personnel are liable to be transferred to such estates also. Such transfers
are not very frequent. The Estates Staff Union of South India (ESUSI) which is the only union representing the staff has come to agreements with managements on these matters. If the company has tea, coffee or cardamom estates, the transfer may take place among these estates also.

The assistant managers and managers are liable to be transferred to other estates. It is a policy of companies producing more than one crop to post the managerial personnel to different estates so that they may acquire experience in different crops. There is no fixed duration for holding the post continuously in one estate.

Promotion:

The customary practice in plantations is to recruit persons as casual workers as and when work is available. When permanent vacancies arise, the casual workers are appointed to permanent posts. There is therefore an element of promotion in the arrangement. The length of service is the usual basis for promotion. When vacancies arise permanent field workers are given promotion as tappers, if they have the experience and are otherwise suitable. Similar procedure is adopted in the case of temporary tappers and factory workers. Tappers and factory workers are rarely appointed directly.
The responsibility of granting certain statutory benefits is the basis for giving permanency. The number of workers to be given permanency is very often a point of dispute in the estates. The terminal benefits to be given under the Industrial Disputes Act have something to do with this matter. Under the Act if a person completes employment for a period of two hundred and forty days continuously in a year he is entitled to certain benefits at the time of retrenchment.

Apart from managers and assistant managers, the benefits of promotion are mainly available to supervisory, administrative, hospital and technical personnel. They are conductors, assistant conductors, clerical assistants, teachers, hospital staff and technical personnel. The conductors are usually appointed from assistant conductors. For the conductor there is a higher post of head conductor. The head clerk is promoted from clerical assistants. Similar is the case with the headmaster.

In the case of hospital and technical personnel, promotion may not always change their designation. For example a nurse after promotion may be designated as special grade nurse. This is because usually they have only different grades. Doctors are generally given a higher starting
salary at the initial appointment as they have less promotion opportunities.

There are four grades of pay to the supervisory, administrative, technical and hospital personnel. The grades are General Grade, Senior Grade A, Senior Grade B and Special Grade. The four grades are available to the personnel in large estates. In the medium and small estates there are only general grades and senior grades.

The assistant managers are promoted to the post of managers as and when vacancies occur. There are different grades of managers, the details have been discussed in Chapter IV. The basis for promotion adopted in the estates is seniority or merit or both. There is no special test for the promotion of managerial, supervisory and other personnel in any estate examined for the study. The bases of promotion are shown in Table 47.

87. Classification of estates made by the Association of Planters of Kerala for fixing scales of pay of staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Estate</td>
<td>(A) 21 to 60 hectares (both inclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(B) 61 to 141 hectares (both inclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Estate</td>
<td>142 to 324 hectares (both inclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Estate</td>
<td>Above 324 hectares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE - 47

BASES OF PROMOTION OF MANAGERIAL AND OTHER PERSONNEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIS OF PROMOTION</th>
<th>NUMBER OF INDIAN ESTATES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF NON-INDIAN ESTATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seniority only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority and merit</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ESTATES</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appraisal:

The extent of appraisal of workers and staff depends upon the importance of the role they play in the management of estates. The role of each field worker is not very important from the point of management and therefore there is not much scope for appraisal. Even when temporary workers are made permanent, the scope for appraisal is limited because it is generally made on the basis of seniority rather than on any other consideration. Similar is the case with tappers and factory workers. Since these categories of workers have very little promotion opportunities, their worth is appraised only rarely.

In the case of supervisory and other personnel, though there is no regularity of appraisal in any estate, it
has been agreed with the Estate Staff Union of South India that unless there is any black mark in the service records of the concerned person, his due promotion will not be withheld. This has been the accepted practice in most estates.

There is a system of appraisal for assistant managers in the non-Indian estates. An annual confidential report is maintained on each of them. At the time of confirmation and promotion the report is made use of. In the case of managers the visiting agent makes a sort of appraisal of their performance in relation to the fulfilment of various targets assigned to them. This is made use of by the company at the time of confirmation and promotion. Excepting six estates there is no regular system of appraisal of managerial personnel in the Indian group. In these estates the system followed is on the lines of non-Indian estates. Though there is no systematic appraisal in the remaining Indian estates, the ability to fulfil the targets fixed by the company is taken to be the test of appraisal. This is usually taken as the basis for giving higher grades or promotion to the manager. Excepting the appraisal for managerial personnel, there is no appraisal worth mentioning in the estates covered by the study.

Administration of compensation:

The system of wage payment adopted in plantations
has certain special features. In fact all systems of wage payments are in vogue in rubber plantations. There are monthly rated as well as daily rated persons. The daily rated persons are paid either time rate or piece rate. A type of incentive wage payment has also been in existence for tappers in most of the estates covered by the study.

Managerial compensation:

Managers and assistant managers are paid monthly salaries. In addition, managers of certain estates are entitled to a commission as a percentage of profit. The salaries are on a sliding scale with annual increments. They are also entitled to medical benefits, free furnished accommodation and servants. Office vehicles are also provided to the majority of managers. The vehicles are either motor cycle or car. They are also entitled to gratuity and provident fund contribution at varying rates. From the study it has been found that the managerial personnel in the non-Indian estates have better salary and facilities compared to their counterparts in Indian estates.

Remuneration of supervisory, clerical and other personnel:

The supervisory, clerical and other personnel are also paid monthly salary. The salaries and other benefits are based on the agreement between the United Planters'
Association (UPASI) and the Estate Staff Union of South India (ESUSI). In addition to salary the agreements cover such matters like recruitment, probation, promotion, transfer, classification and grading of staff. The earliest settlement was in 1948. The settlements are usually revised every three years.

They are also entitled to sickness benefits, servants, travelling allowances, leave with wages, annual bonus and retirement benefits such as provident fund and gratuity. Retirement benefits are governed by the legislative enactments on the subject.

Review of wage fixation in rubber plantation industry:

Before Independence, there was no legislative enactment to regulate the fixing and revising of wages. The wages were generally decided by the forces of demand and supply. At that time there was no trade union worth the name. The Labour Investigation Committee noted the existence of time rate and piece rate wages. Tappers were usually paid on piece rate basis. The tapping task was between two hundred to three hundred trees. In some cases a combination of piece rate and time rate was also in existence.

There was an upward movement of wages after 1945.
With the inclusion of plantation industry in the schedule to the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, wages of rubber plantation workers also came within the sphere of State regulation. Accordingly in 1952 the State Government of Travancore-Cochin (now part of Kerala), Madras (Tamil Nadu) and Mysore (Karnataka) fixed minimum rates of wages for rubber plantation workers. The wages were revised in Madras in 1956 and Mysore and Kerala in 1957. In Kerala the rates were further revised in 1960. In 1961 the Government of India appointed a Wage Board along with similar Boards for coffee and tea. The Wage Board granted an interim increase of wages to workers in Kerala and Tamil Nadu in 1961. For workers in Mysore the increase was given in 1962. Another increase was given to workers in Kerala in 1964. The Board made the final recommendation in 1966. It was modified by the Plantation Labour Committee of Kerala in respect of that State. The wages fixed by the Board were in operation up to 1969. Subsequent revisions till 1974 took place as a result of tripartite agreements. In 1974 the Government of Kerala revised wages by a notification issued under the Minimum Wages Act. The notification made changes in the payment of dearness allowance which was related to the cost of living index number of Ernakulam centre and would be revised every three months. In other States, the revision took place by tripartite agreements.
There have been occasions when the wages were revised by the decisions of the Industrial Tribunals when disputes relating to wages were referred to them by Governments. Most often revision took place by collective bargaining. Collective bargaining has been a successful form of wage fixation in rubber plantations since Independence. The agreements have been generally concluded at the instance of the State Governments. Tripartite Committees have also been useful in the industry. The Plantation Labour Committee of Kerala has had a successful history of negotiating wages and other matters during the last two decades.

In addition to wages, workers are also entitled to medical benefits, leave with wages, annual bonus, provident fund and gratuity. Women workers are eligible for maternity benefits. The above benefits are usually granted to permanent workers. The details of benefits are discussed in Chapter VII.

Incentive wage payment:

Incentive wage payments are based on the psychological law that human behaviour or effort is largely conditioned by stimulus. The essential aim of all such schemes is to encourage workers to augment productivity by establishing a more or less direct relationship between output and
earnings. The advantages of time rate and piece rate wages have been combined to form a number of incentive systems. Incentive wages can be broadly classified under two heads (1) ordinary forms of incentive wages which are modifications of time rate or piece rate and (2) incentive wages utilising time and motion study.

Rubber is one of the industries in which the concept of payment by results was introduced early in India. Incentive wages prevailing in rubber are a combination of piece rate and time rate. It is applicable to tappers only. The existence of it was noticed by the Labour Investigation Committee in 1946. The minimum wages notification of 1952 of Travancore-Cochin State gave a statutory basis to the system. Under the notification piece rates for tappers are fixed on the basis of a standard output of an average worker. Since the yield of rubber tree varies according to the planting material, the rubber area has been arranged into four classes on the basis of yield. For each class a standard daily output and a rate per kilogram of rubber, collected in excess of the standard output are fixed. There is also a guaranteed minimum time rate. An extra allowance called 'over pound allowance' is given as incentive for the rubber collected in excess of the minimum. As explained in Chapter III, the fields in the estates are classified on the basis of average yield of the previous six months or one year as
the case may be. The system was in existence in thirty-three Indian and nineteen non-Indian estates covered by the study.

Demotion and termination:

The standing orders prescribed under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act for workers and staff separately provide the procedure for initiating punishment including demotion and termination. The Industrial Disputes Act further provides safeguards against unjustifiable terminations. Under the Standing Orders prescribed for workers and staff, any employee can be dismissed for misconduct. The term misconduct has been elaborately defined in the standing orders. The employee accused of misconduct is given opportunity to defend his position. Usually an internal enquiry will be conducted before taking such action. Dismissal is awarded only for very serious misconduct. Demotion, barring promotion or stopping increment are usually imposed for less serious misconduct.

Retrenchment is also a form of termination of employment. This takes place due to surplus labour or discontinuance of certain operations. Under the Industrial Disputes Act retrenchment should be strictly on the principle 'last come, first to go'. Demotions and terminations
have been the subject matter of industrial disputes in a number of estates covered by the study.

3. EVALUATION OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN RUBBER ESTATES

Training:

The findings of the study in the light of the theory of personnel management show that there is considerable deficiency in respect of training. It is true that at the level of field workers and factory workers, there is less scope for training. However at the tappers level a degree of training would be necessary. In fact the Rubber Board has set up a Tappers' Training School attached to the Rubber Research Institute. But this school is imparting training to tappers employed in small holdings only. In the estates where hundreds of tappers are employed, there is no formal and systematic training. The present arrangement is to allow dependants of tappers to understudy tapping. This has the disadvantage that in the process of training the apprentice tapper is likely to harm some of the trees. Some theoretical knowledge of the rubber tree, particularly its anatomy and physiology, is also necessary for properly training a person to become a good tapper. Tapping is a semi-skilled job. Too deep a cut will harm the tree while too
shallow a cut will reduce the quantity of latex. Hence some organised attempt for training the tappers is necessary.

At the supervisory level there is considerable scope for training. This may be necessary for assistant conductors and upwards. The present arrangement is to allow them to study things by trial and error. With the growth of strong trade unions, the supervisory personnel who control large number of workers must have sufficient knowledge of legislative enactments on labour. Legislative enactments having a bearing on rubber plantation labour now run to twenty. In addition, they must also know the various aspects of scientific cultivation and processing of rubber. There is no internal arrangement in the estates examined for the study to give them training in these matters. The defect in the present arrangement is that they may take more time to acquire the necessary knowledge and meanwhile it is possible that they may unknowingly commit serious mistakes.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the Rubber Board has started a training programme since 1974 for managerial personnel in the estates. The intake of the course is limited to about two dozen persons per year. The training programme covers subjects on the technical side of management. From the study it has been seen that excepting a few estates falling in both groups, there is no training for managerial
personnel. They require training on subjects like labour law, modern management practices and modern techniques of planting, maintaining and processing rubber.

The solution to the problem is to organise short term and long term training programmes in plantation management. There should be separate training programmes for managerial and supervisory personnel. The short term training programmes can be organised by group of estates or large companies controlling a number of estates. It should be a collaborative arrangement availing the help of management institutions and commodity boards. The long term training programmes should be organised by a university. The training could lead to the award of a degree or diploma in plantation management. The combining of the present technical training of the Rubber Board with the management training of a university could also be explored.

**Appraisal:**

The lack of an objective method of appraisal is also a deficiency noted in the majority of estates. It is true that in the non-Indian estates there is some arrangement for objective appraisal of the performance of assistant managers but the practice is yet to become widespread in other estates. Further in no estate there is arrangement for objective appraisal of the performance of supervisory,
Fig. 1. Preparing land for rubber cultivation.
Fig. 2. Seeds of two varieties of rubber trees (actual size).
administrative and other personnel. Because of the lack of such appraisal there is the possibility of promotions and transfers becoming less objective and at times creating serious grievances.
Fig. 1. Preparing land for rubber cultivation.
Fig. 2. Seeds of two varieties of rubber trees (actual size).
Fig. 4. Budgrafting a rubber plant.
Fig. 6. A map of a rubber estate division.
Fig. 7. Tapping the rubber tree.
Fig. 8. A budgrafted rubber plant.

Fig. 9. Tapping—Another view.

Fig. 10. Latex being carried in buckets.

Fig. 11. A tapped rubber tree.
Fig. 12. Ladder tapping.

Fig. 13. Intensive tapping (Herring bone method).

Fig. 14. Applying protectant on tapping panel.

Fig. 15. A hand operated sprayer.
Fig. 16. Method of determining dry rubber content (d.r.c.) of latex.

Fig. 17. Mixing latex with coagulant.

Fig. 18. A hand operated rubber roller.

Fig. 19. Rubber being rolled.
Fig. 20. Rubber sheets spread on racks for smoke drying in a smoke house.

Fig. 21. Inside view of a rubber estate factory showing sheeting batteries.
Fig. 22. Map showing the main areas growing rubber in India.
ORGANIZATION CHART OF A TYPICAL RUBBER ESTATE

ESTATE MANAGER

OFFICE
- HEAD CLERK

FACTORY
- RUBBER MAKER

FIELD

HOSPITAL
- DOCTOR

SCHOOL
- HEAD MASTER

CLERICAL ASSISTANTS

ASST. RUBBER MAKER

SUPERVISORS

FACTORY WORKERS

DIVISION-A
- ASST. MANAGER

FIELD CONDUCTOR

ASST. FIELD CONDUCTOR

FIELD SUPERVISORS

FIELD WORKERS

TAPPING CONDUCTOR

ASST. TAPPING CONDUCTOR

TAPPING SUPERVISORS

TAPPERS

MIDWIFE

WARD BOYS

NURSE

Fig. 23.