Human resources are organic and complex in nature and so is their development. It refers to the improvement in the capacities and capabilities of the human capital to the needs of the organization. In institutional terms it involves the setting up of a system through which human capabilities and potential can be identified and tapped to the mutual satisfaction and benefit of the individual and the organization.

In the recent decades, software industry has become an increasingly important part of advanced industrial economies. This industry is particularly ideal for the State of Kerala in terms of its potential to generate large scale employment opportunities to the educated and unemployed youths of the State. This industry is also of particular significance due to our strength in human resources, geographical location and large base of non resident Keralites. But the performance of Kerala in the software sector is not up to the expected level compared to that of other South Indian States like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Kerala contributes only a nominal share in the overall software export of India indicating a very low level of IT activities in the state.
The practice of HRM in a knowledge driven industry has assumed greater significance in the recent past. Maintenance of a cordial and congenial industrial relation, creation of an atmosphere of high morale, motivation for retaining the talents, career advancement, and an equitable and fair reward system are critical factors for the success of any industry.

In a tight and competitive labour market attracting and retaining the talents in the organization requires a thoroughly thought out strategy that is tailored to the individual characteristics and needs of the company. The success of every industry depends on the employer employee relationship. In an area like software industry where the nature of labour inputs are highly flexible and mobile, the human resource management practices of the management and a positive response of the employees over these practices are highly critical for maintaining a harmonious industrial relations, in addition to high productivity and greater efficiency.

All these necessitate the involvement of human factor and the whole hearted support and commitment of the employees. How the human factor is managed for solving the above mentioned and similar problems is a matter which needs a comprehensive and in depth study. It was in these circumstances it has been decided to undertake a comprehensive study on the Human Resource Management practices in the Software Industries in Kerala. Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram is the hub of the IT activities in Kerala. It is India’s first IT park and is widely acclaimed as one of the most advanced and promising destinations for IT industries. Technopark, owned by the State Govt. has been conceived as an integrated IT environment with all necessary basic and enhanced infrastructure required by the industry. A number of
Software companies are also functioning in Thiruvananthapuram, outside Technopark. In order to have a meaningful understanding of the HRM practices in the software industries in Kerala, a representative sample of software companies in Technopark and software companies from outside Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Area have been selected by the researcher as his area of study. The study is limited to the Human Resource Management practices pertaining to the software companies in Technopark and outside Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Area.

The focus of the study is to examine the major factors influencing people to opt for a career in software companies, the working conditions in motivating and retaining the employees in the organisation and to understand whether job security is an important determinant among the employees of software companies.

A total of 18 software companies were selected by the researcher for the study. Out of this, 12 companies are from Technopark and 6 companies are from outside Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Area. The criteria adopted to select the 12 companies, out of 104 companies situated in Technopark were i) number of employees and ii) minimum capital investment of these companies. Thus, companies having employee strength of not less than 50 employees with a minimum capital investment of Rs.25 lakhs were selected for the study. The same criteria was adopted to select the 6 software companies from outside Technopark in Trivandrum Corporation Area.
5.1 MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of the study.

1. The major factors which influence people to work in software companies are attractive pay, performance linked salary structure, challenging nature of work, positive work environment, good working conditions, job security, and participation in decision making processes. These factors when analysed across various variables led to the following conclusions:

- The mean score of the employees of Technopark towards pay and performance linked salary structure is 13.17 whereas for employees of outside Technopark it is 13.14 which is only marginally different from that of the employees of Technopark. In other words there is no significant difference between the employees of Technopark and outside Technopark with regard to their pay and performance score.

- The mean scores of responses based on pay and performance pertaining to employees belonging to junior management team is 12.43 whereas in the case of senior level employees, it is 16.03 which is higher than the other two categories of employees. The mean score of respondents in the category of functional managers is 13.18 which fall between the junior management team and senior managers.
The mean scores of the employees of Technopark in matters relating to retention problem is 15.26 whereas for outside Technopark employees it is 15.62 which is only slightly higher than that of Technopark employees. In view of this, it can be inferred that, there is no significant difference between Technopark and outside Technopark employees in matters relating to retention problem.

The mean scores of the employees of Technopark in respect of working conditions is 9.71 whereas for outside Technopark employees it is 9.37 which is only marginally different from that of Technopark employees. The above position reveals that there is no significant difference between the employees of Technopark and the employees outside Technopark in matters relating to their working conditions.

The mean scores of Technopark employees for job motivation is 8.37 whereas for outside Technopark employees it is 8.26 which is marginally different from that of Technopark employees. Therefore, it can be stated that, there is no significant difference between Technopark and outside Technopark with regard to job motivation.

2. Motivation and retaining the talents in the organization are the major problems faced by the software companies in Kerala. 53.3% of the total respondents agree that retention of professionals is a challenge faced by many software companies. Another 26.3% strongly agree with the above view. 58.5% of the respondents opined that many professionals are found to be leaving the organization after two or three years.
service in an organization. Here again 21.1% of the respondents strongly agree with this view.

3. It was found that job security alone is not an important determinant among the employees of software companies. The overall working conditions of the employees, image of the company, a fair pay package and incentives, career advancement, challenging nature of the job, work life balance, participation in decision making process, motivational training etc. are other important determinants among the employees of the software companies.

4. It is found that the mean score of responses of Technopark employees for working condition is 8.02 whereas for employees outside Technopark, it is 7.98 which show only a marginal difference. What could be inferred from this is that, there is no significant difference between Technopark employees and outside Technopark employees in matters relating to job security scores. The chi square test conducted to test the association between the area and the variables like groups, age, gender, marital status, experience at the present organization and also experience at the previous organization shows that there is no significant difference between the employees of Technopark and outside Technopark in these characteristic except age. That is, in terms of various personal factors examined, the employees of both Technopark and outside Technopark did not vary much.

5.1.2. OTHER FINDINGS
The social and personal characteristics of both the employees of Technopark and outside Technopark did not vary much among variables like age, groups, gender, marital status, experience at the present organization and experience at the previous organization.

There are no significant difference between Technopark and outside Technopark on the basis of average pay and performance.

There are no significant difference between the retention problem among Technopark and outside Technopark employees.

There is no significant difference between Technopark and outside Technopark employees in the average competence score.

There is no significant difference between Technopark and outside Technopark employees in the average grievance redressal score.

There is no significant difference on the working conditions between Technopark and outside Technopark employees.

Job security is no longer enough to guarantee loyalty and commitments of the employees

Employees place high value on career growth followed by learning and empowerment.

There is no significant difference between Technopark and outside Technopark employees in matters of expression of their feelings /grievance.
There is no significant difference of job motivation factor between Technopark and outside Technopark employees.

There are no significant differences between the HRM practice followed in Technopark and outside Technopark. But the three categories of employees viz. junior management team, functional managers, and senior managers differ in their opinion on HRM practiced in their organization. As to whether HRM is practiced well in their organization, 63.4% of junior management team, 68.5% of functional managers and 88.9% of the senior managers have the feeling that there is an effective HRM in place in their respective organizations.

Similarly regarding the implementation of statutory labour welfare measures by the software companies of Technopark and outside Technopark, the three categories of employees viz. junior management team, functional managers, and senior managers differ in their perception regarding the labour welfare provisions being implemented in their respective organizations. About 52.4% of the employees among junior management team, 51.7% of the functional managers and 86.1% of the senior managers feel that labour welfare provisions are strictly followed in their respective organizations.

5.2. SUGGESTIONS
The success of an organization significantly depends upon the success of its individual. To be successful the employees need to know their organization’s mission, their role, to know what is specifically expected of them, to have the capacity, resources and environment which make success possible.

On the basis of the study conducted by the researcher, following are certain suggestions to make the Human Resource Management Practices more effective and successful in the software companies of Kerala that would help in the creation of the highly productive and motivated work force to meet organizational goals.

- Provide proper and periodic training after assessing the training needs of the employees. Training promotes competence and thereby confidence, the latter being an internal motivator. It also reduces stress and increases productivity besides improving attitude.

- Jobs are to be designed to be interesting and challenging to secure the commitment of workers. If employees’ contributions are not acknowledged they get de-motivated and withdraw. Employees work enthusiastically if their ideas are valued.

- Companies may promote open and effective communication systems, team work and innovation which encourage employees to eliminate redundant work. “Great companies are always built on aspirations”.

Reward programs should be equitable. Be sure that the reward programme is implemented fairly and is based on an accepted measure of performance.

Recognition is a human need, and it is essential to reach out and learn what type of recognition will be most relevant to each individual. This is most easily accomplished by simply asking what the employee wants. Avoid reprimanding a subordinate in front of others. It may cause resentments among members of the work group.

Employees can be motivated if they are allowed to participate in decision making process.

A safe and happy work place make the employees feel good about being there.

Motivation and incentives are important factors to retain the talents in the organization.

A good performance may be appreciated in the form of a pat on the back, incentives or bonuses for a job well executed. This goes a long way in boosting the morale of the employee.

A performance feedback system helps in identifying people who can perform well. A good employee evaluation system links individual performance to the goals and priorities of the organization.
β Knowledge sharing is a good strategy that helps the personal development of the employees and thereby their work.

β Publicise good performance of the employees.

β Provide reasonable working conditions, lighting and ventilations to carry out the work in a healthy and warm surroundings.

β Provide ergonomically designed chairs, tables and foot rests to the employees which will reduce occupational stress in the workplace.

β Work-life balance helps the employees to balance their professional and personal life.

β Connect “results” to promotions and incentives and make people accountable.

β Make sure that the company is hiring the right kind of people on the basis of strategic HR planning. Web based and software based social networking services can be used for recruitment to reduce cost.

β Conduct stay interview and Exit interviews as they are proactive tools to get into the insight of why the employees are leaving the organization.
IT / software industry may not be treated on par with the manufacturing industry or any other industry as securing and losing jobs in IT sector is routine and this may be viewed from a professional angle.

Providing reasonably good canteen, recreation and transportation facilities to the employees free of cost / concessional rate will promote job satisfaction.

Promote employee’s welfare.

5.3. CONCLUSION

IT companies are offering attractive pay packages, performance based salary structure, better job satisfaction, career opportunities and challenging nature of jobs. The study reveals that employees’ motivation and retaining the talents in the organization are the main challenges faced by the software companies in Kerala. It is also found that job security is not an important concern among the software professionals to opt for a career in a particular company. The overall working conditions, a fair and equitable pay package, challenging nature of the job, career growth, work life balance, participation in decision making process, motivational training etc are the important factors in attracting and retaining employees in the organization.