During freedom struggle, the development of Khadi and Village Industries was an instrument to meet the twin objectives of self-reliance through local production and seeking active participation of the poor in the struggle for Independence through removal of hunger and unemployment. Their potential as an instrument of poverty alleviation was also recognized by our early planners in India. Traditional industries particularly KVI faces problems in the procurement of raw materials, finance, labour, inappropriate technology and marketing strategies. Increased mechanization, large scale production and global competition in quality and price pose as threat to these industries.

Kerala Khadi and Village Industries Board (KKVIB) is a statutory body constituted in 1957 as the State level agency for the implementation of schemes formulated by Khadi and Village Industries Commission. The Board is vested with the responsibility of organizing, promoting and developing Khadi and Village Industries in the State. The Board is entrusted with issuing license to units, helping them acquire tools and equipment, ensuring availability of raw materials, upgrading the skill of artisans through training, offering managerial advice, providing marketing support, and conducting proper follow up.

The Board boasts of having set up a large number of units in this sector and extended financial, technological and other support to these units. In spite of the efforts taken by the Board, the rate of dormancy continues to be high. In this context it has been proposed to evaluate the working of the Board as well as examine its role for the development of village industries units in the State. The problems faced by the units have also been brought under the ambit of the study. The study is titled “Role of Kerala Khadi and Village Industries Board in the Development of Khadi and Village Industries in Kerala”.

The study makes use of both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through separate structured interview schedules from
selected village industries units and artisans. Village pottery from mineral based industry, cottage match from forest based industry and bee keeping from agro based food industry are the sample industries chosen based on the criterion of number of units registered from Kollam, Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts. The study covers a period of five years 2006-07 to 2010-11. For collection of data 216 units and 258 artisans were interviewed using convenient sampling technique. Secondary data were collected from Annual Reports and other publications of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission and Kerala Khadi and Village Industries Board, various issues of Economic Review of the State Planning Board, Five Year Plan Documents of Central and State Governments, RBI Hand Book on All India Statistics, newspaper reports, books, and periodicals. The data collected were classified in order and suitably analyzed by taking the appropriate statistical tools.

The study is divided into 7 chapters. Chapter 1 deals with Introduction, statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, methodology and limitations. In chapter 2, a review of available literature on traditional and cottage industries is made. The 3rd chapter concentrates on the origin and growth of KVI sector in India and in Kerala. The 4th chapter deals in detail about the formation, constitution, functions, administrative structure, decentralization and specialized services offered by both the commission and Board. The 5th chapter brings out an analysis regarding the constraints in raw material, finance, production, labour and marketing of village industries products. It also makes an attempt to assess the socio-economic conditions of the artisans working in village industries. The 6th chapter evaluates the Role of KKVIB and various schemes implemented by it. In the last chapter summary of findings, recommendations and future research issues in the area are included.

The findings of the study would hopefully be useful to the Khadi and Village Industries Board in fulfilling their economic and social objectives.