INTRODUCTION

Co-operation is a human instinct. It impels a man to live and work together. Co-operatives have emerged as a consequence of this instinct and human effort to work jointly for some common purpose. The development of co-operatives in India particularly after independence has been remarkable. They undertake a variety of activities in both social and economic fields. The enthusiasm and mission with which the co-operative movement sprouted with the enactment of Co-operative Societies Act, 1904, particularly to involve people in the development process, could not be pursued because of the neglect of human resource.

There are certain underlying forces which determine the performance of co-operatives. The success of co-operative movement largely depends on constructive leadership, efficient management, enlightened membership and above all freedom from political high handedness. It is emphasized that the democratization of the co-operative movement is a must for developing the co-operatives. On the other extreme, infiltration of politics in the administration and management of co-operatives and mismanagement are the problems affecting their growth. The members, who are in fact, the owners of the co-operatives,
are illiterate and disinterested in day-to-day affairs of the co-operative societies. ACRC (1989) observed that 70 per cent managers/secretaries in India are unpaid and majority of them is untrained. Thus, the societies are either defunct or mismanaged.

The main strength of co-operatives lies in the potential of their members. Human resource is the core force in such institutions as it determines the effective integration and utilisation of other resources such as finance, materials, machines, etc. It is, therefore, essential that human resources be managed and developed properly. Human resource strategies exist to ensure that the abilities, commitment, motivation and skills of members, and the strengths of the organization are optimally utilized to achieve organizational objectives. They include other sub-strategies, namely, manpower planning, training and development, performance appraisal, salary, wage administration, etc. Among this all, the most important is the training and development of human resources.

Human Resource Development (HRD) can be defined as a holistic development of the individual in the context of organization. Daftuar defined HRD as a system and process concerned with an organized series of learning activities, within specified time limits, designed to
produce behavioural changes in the learner or available human resource in such a way that it acquires desired level of competence for a present or future role.

It is considered as development of persons to their maximum potential. The conservation of talent is the gist of HRD concept. In the areas of training, education and development it means, (1) a series of organized activities, (2) conducted within a specified period, and (3) designed to produce behavioural change.

Hatbinson and Myers have aptly defined human resource development as the process of increasing the knowledge, skills and capacities of all the people in a society. In economic terms it could be described as the accumulation of human capital and its effective investment in the development of an economy. In political terms, human resource development prepares people for adults participation in political processes, particularly as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural point of view, the development of human resources helps people to lead fuller and richer lives.

The World Bank in its 1980 report considered HRD as a complementary approach to other development strategies, particularly employment and reduction of inequalities. It also considers HRD as synonymous with Human Development, which encompasses education, training,
better health, nutrition and fertility education.

The Maclagon Committee in 1915 has stressed the need for co-operatives training. Dr. Gorwala Committee in 1954 has categorically stated that training is a must for achieving the success in co-operative sector. The co-operatives require professionally competent as well as co-operatively oriented personnel because there is consequent growth in their size, expansion and extension in their functions and diversification in their economic activities. Human resource development is the significant source for developing sound infrastructure of professional management in co-operatives.

One of the International Co-operative Alliances' Seminars on Co-operative Leadership held in New Delhi in 1960 rightly declared that co-operative education and training should be organized in appropriate forms at all levels in every branch of the movement activity. Bhushan has also emphasized the need for the development of professional management in co-operatives. Jyoti (1986) has advocated that there should be full-fledged department called HRD to look after the training and development. Kulkarni (1981) has expressed that adequate number of well qualified and professionally trained staff is an essential requirement for the efficient functioning of a co-operative organization. Reddy (1977) has also stressed the need for
scientific and professional management in co-operative sector.

A group of studies undertaken by Gorwala Committee (1954), Dinesh (1978), Trivedi (1989) and Bose and Sinha (1994) reveal that training is essential for the development of co-operative. They further advocate that emphasis should be given to impart co-operative training and education. Bhushan (1973) Sharma (1977) Dhari (1978) and Balaji (1994) highlight the need of professionalisation of management in co-operative sector.

A set of studies undertaken by Taimini (1972) Jyoti (1986) Trivedi (1989) point out the serious drawback in the employee-employer relations and suggest that cordial human relation must be established in the development of co-operative institution. Samiuddin (1973) Misra (1976) Dinesh (1978) and Rao (1982) advocate that sound recruitment policy be framed and preference should be given to professionally trained personnel in the co-operative institution.

should be given due consideration in order to maintain healthy industrial relations. Sapru (1990) reveals the fact that in order to increase the efficiency of the individuals, reward and punishment system be introduced.

Dharia (1978), Din'esh (1978), Rao (1982), and Verma & Garg (1994) reveal in their studies that manpower planning plays a significant role in the development of the organisation. They further observe that the said aspect has been neglected in the co-operative sector. Bhushan (1973) and Dinesh (1978) have suggested effective promotion policy on the co-operative sector whereas Goel (1979) and Basu (1987) emphasise the need for reward and other incentives to motivate the employees.

An indepth study of the existing literature leads us to the conclusion that majority of the studies are focussed on identification of training needs for the development of co-operative institutions, professionalisation of co-operative management, significance of human relations, causes of grievances, role and significance of sound and effective recruitment and promotion policies for the development of human resources.

Despite, certain attempts made to study the HRD mechanisms in the co-operative banks, there remain certain very pertinent gaps. While studying HRD in co-operative banks, some of these gaps revolve around the questions such
as:

(a) Does the HRD mechanism develop the human resources?

(b) Is there any significant relationship between HRD practices adopted in co-operative bank and certain variables?

(c) Does employees' attitude toward the management of co-operative banks differ on different variables and in any way affect HRD?

(d) Does the level of employees' satisfaction with regard to HRD mechanism differ on different variables?

(e) Is there any correlation among HRD sub-systems?

In view of the above partially explored questions by certain scattered attempts made by some of studies, there arise an urgent need to conduct a critical study on Human Resource Development practices adopted in co-operative banks of Himachal Pradesh.