CHAPTER-2
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

2.1 Research methodology
The study is descriptive in nature and has used the ‘fact-finding’ survey method.

2.2 Methods of Data collection
Interview schedules specifically aimed for the resolution were administered to the respondents to collect primary data. The study involves collection of opinions / preferences from respondents; hence, interviewing was deemed appropriate. The interview was a structured / directive interview. Hence the interview was conducted with a detailed standardised schedule.

In addition, the Researcher interacted extensively with other stakeholders associated with the HRA space like trade and industry bodies (CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, etc), consultants (like E&Y, PwC, Deloitte and KPMG), professional bodies (like ICAI, ICWAI and ICSI), to elicit their views and comments.

2.3 Source of Data
Primary data had been collected from the respondents, viz, Chief Executives-HR, Chief Executives-Finance, Financial Consultants and HR Consultants.

Secondary data has been collected / downloaded in hard version / digital form, from the websites of CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, E&Y, PwC, Deloitte, KPMG, ICAI, ICWAI, ICSI and the financial press.

2.4 Sampling plan

Sampling plan comprises of four categories
1. Chief Executives-HR: 30 Respondents
2. Chief Executives-Finance: 30 Respondents
3. HR Consultants: 60 Respondents
4. Financial Consultants: 60 Respondents
Chief Executives-HR and Chief Executives-Finance: Respondents representing the companies that operate in the area covered by the study, judgement sampling under the non-probability method was deployed. Applying number of years of exposure to HR accounting as the criterion, the researcher selected 30 respondents, each with an exposure of at least three years to the HRA space. What is significant is the typicality and the relevance of the sampling units to the study and not the overall representativeness to the population. Thus it guarantees inclusion of the relevant elements in the sample. Probability sampling plans cannot give such a guarantee.

HR Consultants and Financial Consultants: Given the rather limited number of respondents into HR consulting in the area covered by the study, judgement sampling under the non-probability method was deployed. Applying the number of years of exposure to HR accounting as the criterion, the researcher selected 60 respondents, each with an exposure of at least five years to the HRA space. This yardstick, in the opinion of the researcher, is the most appropriate one for the present study. Essential data is the typicality and the relevance of the sampling units to the study and not the overall representativeness to the population.

2.5 Data collection instruments

Interview schedules, predominantly designed for the resolution, were drafted and piloted in order to identify the possible cons in the instrument. Upon receipt of feedback, they were appropriately modified and given to respondents for collection of primary data.

The Interview Schedules included open questions and closed questions. Open questions were included since the motive was to identify opinions, determine degrees of knowledge and pursue recommendations and more facts. In some cases, the subject substance of the question was outside the assortment of the respondent’s experience and hence open questions were a better alternative. Further, open questions are of help in determining the depth of the approaches and expressions of intensity of the respondent. Open questions may give the respondent a chance to think in depth about the subject through the topic. Since it was practically impossible for the Researcher to assess the level of data influenced by the respondent, open questions came in handy. The response freedom intrinsic in open questions elicited a variety of frames of orientations from the respondent, which may provide unanticipated insights. Given the qualitative nature of the values the variables provoke from
the respondents, they provide themselves preferably to statistical tools like chi-squared test and Likert scale.

2.6 Field work
Field work was undertaken by utilising the services of manpower suitably briefed for the purpose. The respondents were contacted individually and personally and their responses were recorded.

2.7 Data processing and analysis plan
Non-parametric statistical units were used to test the association between some qualitative characters and conclusions were drawn on the basis of formation of \( H_0 \) and \( H_1 \). To be specific, Likert scale and chi-square test were applied to test the hypotheses.

2.8 An overview of the study
The study is presented in eight chapters, as explained in the following paragraphs:

Chapter-1: Introduction
Introductory in nature, the chapter explains the theoretical background of the topic. A statement of the problem follows, which in turn is followed by a review of the literature obtaining on the topic. After establishing the research gap, the study presents its scope, furnishes its objectives and states the hypotheses it proposes to test.

Chapter-2: Design of the study
This chapter explains the methodology embraced by the study. It is followed by the methods of data collection followed. The sources from which data has been collected and the sampling plan follow it. Further, the data collection instruments used for the study, the field work undertaken by the researcher and the data processing and analysis plan concerning the study have been delineated. The study winds up with a statement of its limitations, after presenting an overview of the study.

Chapter-3: Profile of the respondents
This chapter profiles the four categories of respondents from whom primary data has been collected for the fulfilment of the objectives of the study. The four categories of respondents are: Chief Executive – Finance, Chief Executive – HR, Financial Consultants and HR Consultants.
Chapter-4: Respondents’ perception of human resource accounting
Although human resource accounting (HRA) is understood in its broadest sense, one cannot ignore the various nuanced approaches to HRA that obtain in the present-day corporate world. Thus, each stakeholder group adds its own dimension to the concept and practice of HRA. Amongst such stakeholder groups, the groups comprised of C-suite executives from the HR and finance functions and consultants in the HR and finance space are important. This chapter examines the respondents’ perception of HRA. This happens to be the first objective the thesis seeks to fulfil. Towards this end, the chapter analyses the primary data collected from 30 chiefs of HR, 30 chiefs of finance, 60 HR consultants and 60 financial consultants.

Chapter-5: Modus operandi of HRA in the respondent organisations
This chapter examines the modus operandi of HRA, in the respondent organisations. This is the second objective of the thesis.

Chapter-6: Benefits accruing from human resource accounting (HRA)
This chapter identifies the benefits accruing from HRA, from the perspective of the respondents. This is the third objective of the thesis.

Chapter-7: Limitations of HRA from the perspective of the respondents
This chapter isolates the limitations of HRA from the perspective of the respondents. This is the fourth objective of the thesis.

Chapter-8: Summary, conclusions and recommendations
This chapter summarises the findings arrived at, upon analysis of primary data. This is followed by conclusions which are inferences / generalizations drawn from the findings and relate to the hypotheses. They are answers to research questions or the statements of acceptance or rejection of hypotheses. This is followed by the HRA model defined by the researcher for service industries in the Indian organisational milieu. This in turn is followed by recommendations for policy / action. They flow from findings and conclusions. They are actions suggested by the researcher to policy makers / users of the research findings. The chapter winds up after furnishing suggestions for further research.
2.9 Limitations of the study
Sometimes collected primary data has been inferred through persistent subject-oriented deliberations with the respondents. It is possible that a certain degree of subjectivity, even if negligible, has influenced their views. Yet, the fact is that the respondents, being human, could slip up and hence the researcher would like to admit honestly that the accuracy of the findings of the thesis, which draw equally profoundly from the deliberations the researcher held with the said respondents, may have been affected, even if to a negligible extent. Hence it will not affect the quality of the verdicts of the study.

2.10 Conclusion
The next chapter, namely Chapter-3, profiles the four categories of respondents from whom primary data has been collected for the fulfilment of the objectives of the study. The four categories of respondents are: Chief Executive – Finance, Chief Executive – HR, Financial Consultants and HR Consultants.