THE present Chapter deals with two significant facets of human resources management viz., (i) training, and (ii) employer-employee relations.

TRAINING

Training has come to be universally accepted as a vital input to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration both — qualitatively and quantitatively. Its capability in improving the performance of public personnel is fairly well recognised and it even seems as if training is no longer struggling for identity. David S. Brown has defined training as: "A function of helping others to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes which they do not now possess but which are needed by the organisation of which they are a part."¹

The significant role of co-operatives in the accomplishment of our national objective of establishing a new social and economic order highlights the need for a well-planned, vigorous and diversified programme of training for the co-operative personnel. The need for training becomes

all the more important because the tasks to be performed by the co-operatives are varied and complex.

In the context of existing role and responsibilities, it can be assumed that training will be needed not only to fill in known performance gaps but, also to prepare the employees for a stream of non-precedented tasks that co-operative organisations have to perform in the days ahead. Emphasising the importance of training for co-operative personnel, one of the several meetings of the International Labour Office held in Mexico in 1955, observed: "The urgent need is to train co-operators even before co-operatives are established." The late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru had also observed that "all enthusiasm in the world will not be enough unless we have trained personnel to run co-operative societies". Thus, it is clear that without competent and professionally trained human resources, the success of co-operative institutions will be put to jeopardy. This increased emphasis on training is a sequel to the growing awareness that co-operatives also need to improve their administrative capability in order to achieve their objectives.

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Markfed, as its records indicate, did not show much keenness in the initial years towards imparting training to its employees. Although the exact details were not available, yet, it was found that right from its inception till 1970, only 83 persons had been deputed to several institutions for training in various courses, i.e., 5 employees on an average during a year. It was only from 1975 that the process gathered momentum. It may be added that during all these years and to-date, Markfed has not evolved any definite training policy. The various methods as used in Markfed over the years, for imparting training to its employees, are discussed here in some details.

**ORIENTATION**

The management

Markfed very rarely resorts to this type of training which is meant, "to introduce the new employees and the organisation to each other, to help them become acquainted and to help them accommodate each other." Infact, the first few days of new employees are very crucial days. The attitudes and impressions developed on the first day of the job have a lasting effect on employees' performance, satisfaction and turnover. Moreover, considerable information is received from the prospective employees.

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through their applications, written test, and interviews, but little job-related information is provided by the organisation to new employees. Thus, the new employees may not really know what is expected of them at the job. Consequently, if there is incompatibility between what the employees expect in their new jobs and the realities they are confronted with 'reality shock'. An effective orientation can help to minimise this shock by way of creating a sense of security, belongingness, and confidence among new employees.

A maiden attempt in this direction was made by the management during 1980. The assistant accounts officers were told through their appointment letters to join the Co-operative Training College for a two days' orientation programme. Infact, orientation or induction starts as soon as the new employee enters the premises of the organisation. Dale Yoder has rightly said: "Such programmes are supposed to familiarise new employees with their job, to introduce fellow workers and to relate the work of the recruit to that of total organisation." Therefore, it may be said, aloofness of initial institutional training would neither serve the purpose of orientation nor would it contribute to the learning process of the new employees.

It is suggested that management may adopt a systematic programme of orientation. The managing director may himself welcome the new appointees, if their number is substantial. Otherwise, the respective heads of departments may give them some orientation as briefed by the personnel department in anticipation. To make an initial impact, a beautifully printed small 'Employees' Orientation Handbook' may be distributed among them on the first day so that they can raise queries on the following days, if there is any.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

This is the most commonly used method of training in Marksfed. Inspite of the fact that the management has so far not formulated any concrete policy, virtually each employee, from an assistant to higher management, gets some sort of on-the-job training. A practical reason for this approach is that the trainees earn as they learn. William Tracey calls it as, "the most common, the most widely accepted, and the most necessary method of training employees in the skills essential for acceptable job performance." 

* Refer Appendix 10, for details.


Training Institutions: The institutional framework for co-operative training in India consists of the National Institute of Co-operative Management (NICM) at the apex, 17 regional co-operative training colleges, and 87 co-operative training centres. The National Institute and regional colleges are directly under the control of the National Council for Co-operative Training, New Delhi, while the training centres are controlled either by the Co-operative Department or Co-operative Union of the respective States. The former are engaged in training of the senior and middle level executives, while the latter are concerned with the training of subordinate officials.

The methodology of the training courses consist of both theoretical and practical framework. Similarly, the duration of various courses ranges between two or three days to one year. It is estimated that every year about 17,555 junior, 8,562 intermediate and 1118 senior management personnel of co-operative department and various co-operative organisations are trained through the network of these co-operative training institutions.

In Punjab, the training of personnel for the middle level executive is arranged at the Regional Co-operative Training College, Chandigarh, which also caters to the requirements of six other States, including two Union Territories.

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The data in Table 6-3 shows that all the three organisations have been uniformly financing the Institute. Besides other courses, it regularly conducts long term basic as well as advanced banking and marketing courses.

It has however, been found that Markfed management has not paid much attention in deputing its employees for training at the various co-operative institutions. The training programmes were conducted by a host of institutions as is shown in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4
Training Institutions which have imparted training to Markfed employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>C.T.C.</th>
<th>VMNICM</th>
<th>F.A.I.</th>
<th>N.P.C. Management</th>
<th>Marketing Institutions</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Courses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Data compiled from the office records of Markfed)

Note: C.T.C. stands for Co-operative Training Colleges,
VMNICM stands for Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Co-operative Management, Pune,
F.A.I. stands for Fertiliser Association of India
N.P.C. stands for National Productivity Council

The data in Table 6-4 indicates that the service of the co-operative institutions was used for only 20 out of 58 courses. The office records revealed frequency of a large number of letters from co-operative institutions to Markfed requesting it to send its nominees, but, management
has very rarely availed of this facility. It may also be pointed out that the co-operative institutions do not charge any fees whereas heavy fees are charged by the other institutions. In such circumstances, management may try to make optimum use of the facilities provided by co-operative training institutions. It is further suggested that the services of other management/training institutions may be used at times when a highly professional training programmes required to be imparted.

ISSUES

Let us now discuss some of the basic issues related to the training.

Identification of Training Needs

Management

Management has not evolved any system whereby the training needs can be identified. The employees are deputed for various programmes without keeping an eye on the objectives and functions of the organisation. Efforts are also not made to judge where and how the personnel have to be trained. The absence of identification can well make or mar the success of any training. Hari Mohan Mathur has rightly opined in regard to training in general that "programmes mounted with no consideration to the exact training needs and with no manoeuvrability to adjust the changing requirements will fail in realising their
objective of being useful to the participants and their organisation.¹⁹ At this stage, it is worth noting that training needs at the levels of the individual and the organisation have to be distinguished. As such, the suitability of any training programme depends upon how well the training needs have been identified from both the angles. Further, similar kind of training should not be provided to every category of personnel. The job requirements vary according to the positions occupied by individual members and the utility of training thus, depends upon how well it suits the requirements of the personnel concerned.

**Linking training with promotion**

The study of the office records and analysis of interview schedule indicate that the training is not linked with any promotion system or to act as a kind of incentive. This may be one of the reasons why the employees were not evincing much interest in the training programme. Seventy eight per cent respondents* were of the view that training should be linked with the promotion system. Probably the employees referred to the system prevailing in the Armed


*The relevant question in the interview schedule was: "Training should be compulsory prior to promotion: Yes/No"
Forces where the employees have to complete successfully specified training courses before getting elevated to higher positions. But, as far as Markfed is concerned, linking of training with promotion may create problems, since those who would not be able to go on training for no fault of theirs would be in a disadvantageous position. As such, promotion cannot be linked with training in a rigid manner.

As regards incentives, 83 per cent respondents stressed the need for the institution of some incentives for training. Incentives play a dominant role in motivating the employees towards their duties and responsibilities. In the interest of overall efficiency and to make the best use of manpower resources, the management may work out proper linkages between training on the one hand, and career development and incentives on the other.

Selection of the Trainees

In Markfed, the management has not evolved any priorities and criteria for selection of the participants for training. Various factors like opportunity, convenience, personal influence and other extraneous factors play a dominant role in the selection. Those in need of training, often do not get an opportunity and others unlikely to gain anything from training get the chance to attend the training.

*The relevant question in the interview schedule was: "Provision for incentives improve the utilisation of Training": Yes/No
Harmonious employer-employee relations is essential for effective functioning of any organisation. Emphasising the importance of this relationship, N.A. Kularajah opined: "A correct and proper relationship can help an organisation to utilise its available human resources to its maximum value." Indeed, the fabric of this relationship is very delicate and the two parties, namely the management and employees through their representatives and leaders design these relationships, which in turn determine the future prospects of growth of an organisation. Harmonious relations between the two also create a feeling of acceptability and identification among the employees towards the organisation goals. Indeed, that is the real co-operative spirit. The employer-employee relationship in co-operative organisations, assumes greater significance because of the basic concepts.


In the Federation, employees represent their views through their union namely the "Punjab State Co-operative Marketing Employees Union." It was set up in 1967, with the main object of improving the service conditions of the employees and to maintain cordial relations with the management.

The Union consists of two organs: General Body and Executive Committee. All the employees who join the Union automatically become the members of the General Body. Elections to the Executive Committee are held after three years. The Committee consists of 21 members, including 9 office bearers. The Executive Committee works under the overall control of the General Body. The organisational structure of the Employees Union can be viewed from Chart 11, as shown on the next page.

The Employees Union of Markfed is neither affiliated to any national trade union nor to any political party. The management has also not formally recognised the Union in spite of the mandatory provisions included in the Act.

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* Registered under The Trade Unions Act, 1926.
** Refer Appendix II for details.
CHART II

Organisational Structure of Markfed's Employees Union

General Body

Executive Body

President

Senior Vice-President

Junior Vice-President

Finance Secretary
Joint Finance Secretary
General Secretary
Ordinary Secretary

Joint Secretary
Organising Secretary
The Employees Union for the fulfilment of their demands has made use of several measures like mass casual leave, demonstrations, dharnas, strikes, gheraos and interventions by public men.

PERCEPTIONS

Employer-employee relations are not static but dynamic in nature and are influenced by a number of factors including awareness of each other's expectations and obligations, which play a decisive role in governing such relations. These relations are largely based on a theory of reciprocity, i.e., 'something for something'. In other words, these relations are founded on the concept of 'give and take' and are largely governed by the behavioural disposition of the parties.

The perceptual process is of utmost significance in understanding human behaviour. The experts feel that the perceptual worlds of the management and the employees

*Refer Appendix 12, for details.
generally differ markedly from each other. Moreover, both of them may diverge substantially from reality. These perceptual gaps create hurdles in developing harmonious employer-employee relations. Therefore, in order to get some information regarding the state of affairs of employer-employee relations in Markfed, an effort has been made to study the perceptions of the management and the employees. The employees' perceptions were assessed with the help of the interview schedule, while the management's viewpoints were obtained through informal discussions with senior officers.

**Attitude of the Management**

One hundred and twenty two out of a total of 150 respondents pointed out the indifferent attitude on the part of the management towards the Union. In their opinion, the Employees Union is looked upon with hostility and suspicion and efforts are made by the management to suppress it. For instance, during the strike in the year

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*The relevant question in the interview schedule was "Do you find management's attitude towards Union, indifferent?"* Yes/No
According to late, R.C. Vyas, former President of Rajasthan branch of Indian National Trade Union Congress, "the main cause of ineffectiveness of employer-employee relations is the bureaucratic attitude of the management. Many a time the spokesmen of administration are arrogant, indifferent, and unsympathetic in their attitude towards the representatives of the workers." The management thus, should not only show a sympathetic and helpful attitude, but, should also give a patient hearing to their grievances. Jeggan C. Senghor rightly remarks that effective personnel management seeks to improve personnel management through various means, of which the elimination or reduction of dissatisfaction and grievances, and of their causes, is fundamental.

On the other hand the Employees Union should endeavour to express their grievances in a civilised way rather than resorting to strikes and demonstrations. B. Siva Rao says: "A general strike ...however, it might

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27 R.C. Vyas, 'Labour Committee in Rajasthan', in the Indian Workers, April 22, 1969, p.3.

be described by its leaders, is a political weapon. Its success must mean the collapse of the administration.  

A strike by the employees of co-operative organisations is a pistol aimed at the very beneficiaries whom they are supposed to serve. It is, therefore, suggested that the disputes between the management and employees should be settled through negotiations and peaceful methods. One of the possible solutions is to set up Staff Councils/Joint Committees based on the model of the Whitley Councils in the United Kingdom. Whitleyism is a method of periodical discussions at various levels between the representatives of both employer and employees. The spirit of Whitleyism is a readiness on both sides to make the machinery of joint discussion work, in order to arrive at the best possible settlement amicably and to the satisfaction of both sides. James E. Martin quotes that the policy makers

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about the objects of the co-operative movement and about their importance therein. In the opinion of N.K. Somani, this would require a great change in the attitude of the management and the employees.35

Recognition of the Union by the Management

Out of 150 respondents, 115 were sold over the management's cold and passive attitude towards granting recognition to the Employees Union. Even some of the senior officers were of the view that the Union needs a formal recognition. According to V. Bhaskara Rao, "the object of granting recognition is to encourage legitimate trade union activity and to make negotiations with management easy."36 A similar observation in respect of the Association of the Government Employees has been made by the Second Pay Commission. To quote it: "Reasonable conditions for recognition are essential for the successful working of service Associations. We, therefore, consider it necessary that the rules of recognition should be conceived and recognition granted in a liberal spirit."**


* The relevant question in the interview schedule was:
"Do you appreciate management's reluctance to recognise your Union?" Yes/No

36 V. Bhaskara Rao, op. cit., p.197.

Personal discussions with Union leaders and some of its senior officers revealed that the employees had struggled hard for the recognition of their Union - even to the extent of holding demonstrations and strikes. It is suggested that the management may adopt a more flexible policy in this regard. It may even provide the necessary infra-structure for the effective functioning of the Employees Union.

The above study brings to light the fact that there is a wide gap in the perceptions between the employers and the employees. There is an imperative need to bridge this gap. It will help to develop mutual respect and understanding for each other which is a precondition for harmonious employer-employee relations. This calls for a change in the attitude of the management which should try to understand the human behaviour through employees' perception. As H.J. Levitt has observed, "If the management intends to improve the behaviour of individuals at work which is largely the product of their perceptions of environmental factors, it should attempt to understand their perceptions with a view to identify the situations under which behaviour is improved."\(^37\)

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At the same time, employees should not resort to militant methods. They should consider co-operatives as their own organisations and adopt constitutional methods for the redressal of their grievances.