POLITICAL sovereignty of 1947, adoption of democratic system of the Government and the policy of a planned economy in India provided a new environment for social and economic development of the country. The initial emphasis on the much needed economic growth began to be modified later on, so as to give stress on social development, self-reliance and equity, in the subsequent Five Year Plans. The new strategies of development—being multidirectional in nature necessitated a befitting infrastructure. In this context the Government launched a massive programme of mixed economy inviting participation of private, public and co-operative sectors. While some of the old institutions and administrative agencies were reorganised, reoriented and expanded, while several new ones were established. Co-operatives were amongst the institutions which underwent considerable revamping, diversification and expansion to meet the new challenges.

The importance attached to co-operatives was largely due to certain inadequacies in the functioning of private enterprises as well as governmental organisations in certain sectors of development. With the primary aim of making maximum profits, private enterprises were not much concerned with social justice, self-reliance and a balanced spatial development. It was not prepared to
undertake the development of neglected sectors/regions, which had low investment-returns on capital. The private sector accentuated the concentration of wealth in a few hands. Similarly, the public sector organisations, which were set up with lofty ideas to combat concentration of wealth in a few hands and to augment scarce resources for economic growth of the country, could achieve tangible results in only a limited number of fields. It has however, paid a lip service to the advancement of the interests of consumers and small producers.

Keeping the above limitations of private and public sectors in view, it was felt by the planners and the administrators that the co-operatives could play a very useful role in certain fields of productive activities, distribution of goods and services and allied activities. Co-operatives basically aim at diffusion of ownership and participative decision making. These aim at a new social order embodying the values of democracy and socialism.

The co-operative sector offers the most suitable agency for the modernisation of agriculture in a rural economy like ours. Agriculture provides the very basis of life for its people. Accelerating the tempo of agricultural production is, thus, a pre-requisite for providing the barest food to the expanding millions of the vulnerable sections of society suffering from abject poverty, squalor and hunger. Higher production is also inevitable for improving the general standard of living of the majority of the population engaged in agriculture. Co-operatives
can contribute very substantially to the raising of agricultural production through supplies of credit, marketing services, warehouse facilities and the processing of agricultural commodities. Co-operative credit institutions have attempted to curb the exploitative practices by money-lenders against the farmers. These protect the consumers' interests by distributing essential inputs at fair prices. Further, co-operatives endeavour to provide wide employment opportunities through labour-intensive activities like dairy-farms, poultry-farms, fisheries, weaving, piggeries and rural industries.

Out of the various types of co-operatives, marketing co-operatives are the most potent organisations to assist small farmers in improving their financial position through enhanced food production, and in making their position respectable in the market. These societies provide not only agricultural inputs at reasonable rates, but also pool the farmers' produce so as to secure a remunerative price for them. Co-operatives also arrange better returns to the farmers by processing their agricultural produce through agro-processing plants.

The structure of marketing co-operatives in India comprises the National Federation, State Federations, District/Regional Societies and Primary Societies.

On the basis of a survey of literature on co-operative
marketing, and as a result of informal discussions with a number of functionaries, non-officials, and the beneficiaries, it has been found that the apex level marketing co-operatives which are supposed to provide leadership and guidance to the lower-level societies and above all, to act as a catalyst of their development, are themselves encountered with a number of managerial and organisational problems. It is being felt that there is governmental interference in their functioning. The relationship between the non-officials and the professionals are not co-operative and on equal terms. Co-operatives generally suffer for want of sound principles of organisation viz., authority, delegation, hierarchy, departmentation, etc. Human resources management appears to be governed more by extraneous reasons than by the considerations of merit. Besides, most of the trading and manufacturing operations are carried out without adopting sound business practices.

**Review of Literature**

The accumulation of scientific knowledge is a slow and gradual process, in which an investigator builds on the works of the past and his findings serve as a starting point for the future. The more links that can be established between a given study and other studies or a body of theory, the greater the contribution. A review of the existing literature
co-operatives bears that the Government has been 
endeavouring to popularise this sector at all levels. 
It appears however, not much systematic research work 
has been done in this field.

There is an abundant literature of a general type on the evolution and growth of co-operatives in the 
country, vis-a-vis the individual states. For instance, 
Huliya Ram Sharma, History of the Co-operative Movement 
in the Punjab, 1932; Ata Ullah, The Co-operative Movement 
in the Punjab, 1937; G.R. Madan, Co-operative Movement in 
the Punjab (India), 1949; B. Dass Vrij, Co-operation in 
Punjab, 1959 have described the general development of 
the co-operative movement and co-operative organisations 
(including co-operative marketings) during the Five Year Plans. There are very few books which have attempted 
to discuss co-operative marketing in detail. Some of these 
books are Marvin Sack, The Economics of Co-operative 
Marketing, 1937; G.S. Ram, Marketing : The Co-operative 
Way, 1974 and B.S. Mathur, Co-operative Marketing in India, 
1975. These books provide some insights into various 
problems of co-operative marketing in India and abroad. 
However, these books have not been written from research 
point of view. Besides, the managerial and organisational 
aspects of co-operative marketing have been ignored—though 
they are so vital for the survival of these institutions.
On the other hand, the Central Government has from time to time set up a number of committees/study teams and has organised conferences/workshops to examine the different aspects and problems of co-operatives. The Committee on Co-operative Processing, 1961, highlighted the importance of agro-based co-operative units with a view to enhancing the farmers' income. The Committee on Co-operative Marketing, 1966, dealt with the existing pattern of marketing co-operatives and its relationship with other tiers, both vertically and horizontally. Its recommendations relating to the two tier structure have not been fully implemented in some of the states, including Punjab. The Committee on Co-operation, 1960, the Committee on Co-operative Administration, 1963, the Working Group on Co-operation (Administrative Reforms Commission), 1968, the Informal Expert Group on Co-operative Education, Training and Research, 1974 have dealt in the managerial, organisational and personnel aspects of co-operatives in general.

Various Indian Co-operative Congresses organised by the National Co-operative Union of India (N.C.U.I.) have also deliberated on the various issues pertaining to co-operative marketing. The first National Congress of Marketing Co-operatives was organised and held in 1978 by Nafed. The Congress examined some of the key problems being faced by the marketing co-operatives.
A review of the existing literature indicates that some attempts at helping the marketing co-operatives maximise their performance, have been made. An extensive study of the literature however, reveals that no effort whatsoever has been made so far to examine the functioning and role of an apex federation vis-a-vis the marketing co-operatives in the state of Punjab. It was, therefore, felt that a micro study on the management and functioning of an apex marketing co-operative may be undertaken in detail. Hence, a case study entitled "Management of a Complex Organisation with special reference to The Punjab State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd. (Markfed)" has been taken as the theme for present research.

Objectives

(i) To study the composition, functioning and role of policy making organs of Markfed.

(ii) To examine the organisational structure in terms of its growth and differentiation and suggest remedial measures to make it responsive to change.

(iii) To analyse the policy framework of human resources management and to investigate the key problem areas.

(iv) To review the functioning of Markfed in procurement of wheat, distribution of chemical fertilisers and processing of agricultural produce, as an agent of the State Government.

(v) To examine the performance of Markfed through financial ratios.
Scope of the Study

In the present study, genesis of the co-operative sector has been studied at the global/national level, with its historical perspective. The development of the co-operative organisations in the state of Punjab with special reference to Markfed has been discussed thereafter. The growth of Markfed has been examined in the light of policy framework at the various levels of management. The organisational structure has been analysed to find out as to how far structural and functional differentiation has taken place and whether the present structure is conducive to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Various aspects of human resources management have been discussed and analysed with particular reference to manpower planning, process of recruitment, problem of deputation, promotion policies, and imparting of training to the employees. The perceptions of the employer and the employees have also been studied with a view to finding out how far their mutual relations are harmonious. A brief study of financial management of Markfed has also been undertaken. In addition, an indepth study has been made to evaluate the role of Markfed in the procurement of wheat, distribution of chemical fertilisers and functioning of processing plants as an agent of the state government.

Methodology

This study has been based on case study and survey.
method. The data was collected through several sources, such as office records, observations, questionnaires, interview schedules, etc. Office records constituted a very substantial source of data. It included office files, proceedings of the meetings of the Board of Directors, Administrative Committee and Executive Committee, various circulars and instructions, annual reports, byelaws, common cadre rules (C.C.R.) and several other published and unpublished documents. Informal discussions with a large number of functionaries at all levels of the management were also held to facilitate identification of critical and relevant issues.

A social science researcher has also to rely upon his critical observations of a phenomenon or an organised activity. In the present study ample use of this method has been made. It helped the researcher in identifying several problems. Mention may be made of a separate interview schedule, which was framed and administered after observing discontentment among the newly recruited employees, for understanding the employees' perceptions.

The following set of interview schedules and mailed questionnaires were used. The schedules were administered carefully through personal contacts with all the respondents selected at random.
• A schedule for 150 employees for eliciting their reactions with regard to various aspects of human resources management in Markfed.

• A schedule for 250 consumers for finding out the popularity and marketability of Markfed's products.

• A mailed questionnaire for 110 plant employees to know their views on the causes responsible for the dismal performance of various processing plants of Markfed.

For exploring and analysing some of the significant management issues, certain case studies, as stated below, were undertaken.

• A large number of fresh appointments were made during 1969 and 1979. Case study of a few categories of newly appointed personnel in both these years was undertaken with particular reference to the number of applicants for each post; ineligible applicants; time taken in sorting out applications for each post; and the number of candidates who appeared for interview.

• Case study of recently appointed internal auditors with regard to their placement.

• Case study of 50 deputationists was undertaken to study four variables, namely, status of deputationists; their parent department; method of selection; and their stay in Markfed.

• Case study of 50 employees to find out the number of promotions they got since their appointment in Markfed.