DESIGN OF THE STUDY
Organisations consist of individuals. Their cordial relationship among one another, relations between the work groups or occupational clusters, the effectiveness of these groups and individuals in accomplishing the tasks earmarked to them, their dealings with the outside agencies, organisations and persons, their motivations and their working conditions—all these vitally affect the overall performance of the organisation. In fact, more than equipments, machinery, buildings, furniture and fixtures, an organisation's identity and performance are mainly dependent on the human resources which it can procure, maintain, develop and utilise to accomplish its goal.

Efficient utilisation in terms of money, material and machinery depends upon the efficiency of personnel operating and handling resources. The employees' perception of management and the relation between management and workers depend on the management policies and their bearing on human relations. A statement of management intentions concerning people or formulation of a policy on personnel is, thus, needed in every organisation.

A good manpower policy motivates employees to work hard and produce more. It helps the management utilise the human resources to the optimum level. It also establishes harmonious relationship between the management and the workers. An efficient management, thus, should not only have good
manpower or personal but see to it that these policies are practised so as to achieve the organisational objectives.

Coir industry is one of the most important agro-based, employment oriented, traditional cottage industries in India. The basic raw material of the industry is coconut husk, the fibrous outer covering of the fruit of the coconut palm. Even though coconut is produced in many countries, the coir industry has developed on a large scale only in India and Sri Lanka.

Coir industry is the largest traditional industry in Kerala in terms of the number of persons employed. It is a labour oriented cottage industry in Kerala which provides employment to 3.83 lakh persons in the state, the majority of whom belong to the weaker sections of the society. More than 84 percent of the workers are women. Of the 53 registered coir manufacturing units in India, 418 units (81.44 percent) are located in Kerala. Besides, more than 68 percent of export of coir and coir products from India takes place through the port of Cochin in Kerala. Kerala, with her favourable ecological setting, abundant supply of coconuts and cheap labour, possesses the necessary conditions for the growth and development of the world's largest coir industry.

About 74.4 percent of the labour force and over 90 percent of the industrial establishments engaged in the processing of coir and the manufacturing of coir products in India are spread out in the densely populated coastal areas of Kerala. Production in these units is predominantly carried out on the basis of traditional technologies. Apart from a low level of skills, the income of the workers in this field is also very low, which causes most of them to live under conditions of poverty and malnutrition.
Statement of the Problem

Without manpower management, an institution or industry cannot prosper. For the successful functioning of coir industry, an efficient manpower management is essential. That is why the present study intends to highlight the various aspects of manpower management such as manpower planning, recruitment, selection, induction, training, promotion, development and transfer policy, wage structure, labour welfare measures, trade unions, socio-economic conditions and job satisfaction.

The study is undertaken having in mind the fact that the coir industries in Kerala, especially those in the private and the co-operative sectors, do not have a personnel policy. A comparative study is also made with respect to the public sector to see whether their personnel policies and practices match those of the private and the co-operative sector. Through this study, the researcher expects to find out the reasons for the deviation, if any, with respect to each and every aspect of manpower management and attempts to suggest various measures so as to improve the present condition.

Not only in the private sector, but also in the public and the co-operative sectors, coir industry in Kerala faces various manpower problems. In this context the study intends to examine the following issues:

1. The policies of the coir industry relating to manpower management functions.
2. The extent to which the policies are implemented in actual practice.
3. The process of recruitment, selection and induction of workers in the industry.
4. The nature of the training, promotion, development and transfer policies in the industry.
5. The fixation of wages and wage structure.
6. The adoption and implementation of welfare facilities in the industry.
7. The nature of relationship between the management and the workers.
8. The role of trade unionism in the industry.
9. The socio-economic background of the workers employed in the industry.
10. The varying nature of job satisfaction among the workers in all the three sectors namely public, private and co-operative.

3.2 Scope of the Study

One of the most important rural industries in Kerala is coir industry. Coir industry in Kerala places itself under three different sectors namely public, private and co-operative. The purpose of this study is to make a comparison of manpower management in these different sectors of the industry. Without efficient manpower management an institution or industry cannot prosper. The major aspects of manpower management are selection, recruitment, training and development, wage structure, labour-management relations, welfare facilities and labour unions, grievance handling, job satisfaction etc.

3.3 Objectives

The major objectives of the present study are the following.

I. To examine the manpower planning, recruitment and selection, training of manpower in each sector of coir industries.
2. To examine the mechanics of wage fixation and comparison of wages in the three sectors, namely public, private and co-operative sector.

3. To assess the effects of labour welfare measures and their usefulness in creating cordial employer-employee relations.

4. To identify the role and importance of trade unions.

5. To study the socio-economic background and job satisfaction among coir workers.

3.4 Methodology

As personnel problems are connected with management and labour, it has been decided to collect data from the managerial staff and workers with the help of a questionnaire for managerial stall and an interview schedule for workers.

The study is confined to Alapuzha District of Kerala because 80 percent of the industrial units are located in this district. It is not possible to study all the coir industries in the district due to financial and time constraints. Depending upon the nature of work to be carried out, it has been decided to use stratified random technique to select the units from the universe. Here, the word 'universe' would mean only the units registered with the Coir Board. The list of registered coir industries has been obtained from the Joint Director, Coir Board, Cochin. The total number of coir industries registered and functioning in Alapuzha district as on February I, 1996 were 112. The units have been divided into three categories, viz., public, private and co-operative sectors. From the public sector two industries were selected and from the private and co-operative sectors eight industries each were selected where
manufacturing and marketing have been taking place. The total sample units, comprising 18 industries, cover six percent of the universe. The personnel sample size is 288 workers and 54 managerial staff.

The common and important processes in these industries are weaving, passing, stenciling, dyeing, packing, loading and unloading. Two workers were selected for each of the six processes from the eight industries in the private sector and from the eight industries in the co-operative sector. In the case of the public sector, since there were only two industries, eight workers were selected for each of the six processes from each of these industries. Thus, ninety six workers were selected from each of the three sectors - private, co-operative and public for the study. It has been decided to collect information from the union leaders in each and every industry and from the offices of labour unions of coir industries.

3.5 Tools of data collection

For the purpose of data collection, the following tools were devised by the investigator and used in the study.

1. Schedule for workers in coir industry.
2. Questionnaire for the managerial staff.

While developing the tools, the important aspects of manpower management were selected in consultation with the experts and literature available on the subject. On the basis of this, the following aspects were included for both questionnaire and schedule. These aspects were personnel policies, recruitment, selection, training, wage details, welfare facilities, trade
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unionism, employer-employee relations and job satisfaction. The items on the various aspects were edited and presented on a sample of 9 managerial staff selecting 3 each from public, private and co-operative sector. The schedule, on the other hand, was subjected to pretesting on a sample consisting of 36 workers, 12 each from public, private and co-operative sector. On the basis of the pre-test, the items on the questionnaire and the schedule were modified and again sent for opinion from the consultants. Based upon the recommendation of the consultants, both the questionnaire and schedule were edited and the final drafts were prepared. Thus emerged the pre-designed, held tested questionnaire and the schedule which were used for the data collection. The questionnaire and the schedule are given in Annexure 1 of the thesis.

3.6 Collection of Data

The data used in this study are a product of two field surveys. The first one is the management survey for collecting data from the managerial staff of the 18 units included in the sample through a pre-tested questionnaire. The second one is the workers’ survey for collecting data from 288 workers through another pre-tested interview schedule. In addition to this, the survey records, information from the union leaders through formal and informal discussions and interviews were used to collect the relevant data and information. The survey of literature has been conducted throughout the study period from the libraries of Gandhigram Rural Institute, Tamil Nadu, Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu, Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, Kerala, Coir Board, Cochin, Kerala, and, Coir Directorate, Trivandrum, Kerala.
3.7 Analysis of Data

The data collected have been analysed in terms of size of employment, nature of the industry and other variables which are major aspects of manpower management, are presented in the form of tables and exhibits, percentages and averages. Non-parametric chi-square method has been used to test the significance of variables advanced in the study.

3.8 Limitations of the study

The study suffers from some of the defects of the survey type design. The primary data from the management personnel and the data on job satisfaction from the workers in the coir industry were gathered through questionnaire and schedule devised for the same. However, every care has been taken to get accurate and valid data through field work, the investigator personally contacted the workers right in the industries. The workers could not be freely interviewed during the working hours as the units were all commercial in nature and they were all conscious of time. The investigator had to be conscious that the time consumed for the study would naturally affect the production and hence workers were interviewed carefully without much disturbance to the units. The investigator was not in a position to cover coir industries from other parts of the state. The researcher focused on Alapuzha district because 80 percent of the industries are located in this district and hence the other areas like Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram were not considered for the study. However, the sample represents all types of coir industries.