CHAPTER – 1

JOB INVOLVEMENT

Organizations around the world including India are facing the twin challenges remaining viable and competitive. There is a premium on quality, innovativeness, uniqueness and cost-effectiveness. Meeting the stringent standards of respective industries coupled with complying with various legal, social, environmental requirements are forcing the organizations to utilize and exploit their resources to the greatest extent possible, prime among them being the skill, commitment and job involvement of the work force. The resources being men, materials and finance, their availability of the required standards or quality and quantity is another daunting exercise. But with the improvement in the economic condition of the country, there has been a strengthening of financial institutions and in turn, their faith and confidence in the Indian customer. Therefore, the opportunity to find ample and cheap financial assistance or loans is becoming easy. Similarly, the liberalization and globalization environment ushered in the country since the last decade have opened the doors for free and easy movement of goods and capital equipment. Also, the curbs, restrictions and tariff barriers have all become industry friendly. This takes care of the material part. So the organizations are left with the most precious resource, that is, skilled, involved and committed workforce to look for.
In the present economic environment there has been an inward flow of finance and material, the same cannot be said of skilled manpower. In fact, in many sectors, there has been the so-called “brain drain” to other countries. Especially the information technology and medical sectors have been most affected. Higher remuneration, better working conditions, bigger opportunities for growth etc. have added to the problem in the present context.

A new phenomenon has also been noticed in the new century. The country has been experiencing an unprecedented economic growth. Not only in the traditional strongholds like agricultural field but also in manufacturing, information technology, financial and other service sectors, there has been a double digit growth. This has prompted many an economist to start predicting that we might well become an economic super power by the middle of the century! This has led to a tremendous increase in job opportunities for all skilled and experienced people, and depletion and scarcity of the required persons for many organizations. The newer organizations on the other hand are left with very short time to establish themselves and become profitable. Traditional methods of recruitment and training are coming under severe strain. Many organizations have devised and resorted to all means to man their projects including poaching on the most valuable personnel from other existing organizations.

The process of migration to most lucrative jobs has caught the imagination of workforce. Similar jobs but better locations, better facilities, perks, growth prospects, better marketability in
terms of varied experiences, higher aspirations etc. have all contributed to the process. Manpower retention, which was hardly on the agenda of any industrial or other organization till recently, has suddenly become the pressing problem.

On the individual level the need to remain with the parent organization is diminishing, which was not an issue at all till recently. Higher aspirations, coupled with vast opportunities have made the organized worker and professional manager less focused on loyalty. Change for better has become the mantra like never before. Suddenly the present working conditions, the remunerations, the growth opportunities etc. have become the talking points for almost every individual. Thus organizational loyalty and job involvement can no longer be taken for granted.

From the above scenario, it can be seen that organizations now-a-days struggle to retain and commit the workforce to meet the organization’s goals and attain their vision. The challenge before the managements is how to recruit, retain and commit the employees to achieve their objectives. The biggest of the above issues is job involvement as it actually translates into quality and productive output by the individual. Job involvement comes from various factors viz. the employee’s motivation, working conditions, the future, match between personal and organizational goals, organizational culture, its reputation and image in the industry, its capacity to add value to the individual’s life, outside opportunities, etc. Each of these factors singly or in combination and in some proportion or other is affecting the individual’s involvement in the organization. In addition there may be many others in the private domain that
may affect his or her performance. So what organizations can do to keep its employees from migrating to other jobs? What makes them perform with involvement? What is required to enhance the individual’s and organization’s value? What is it that maximizes the satisfaction level of employees and the like? These are questions that need to be studied and explored.

Allport (1943) defined job involvement as the degree to which the job meets the need for prestige and self-respect or the level of importance to one’s self-esteem. A worthy and perhaps ethical goal of any organization is to increase an employee’s self-esteem; whether it improves the productivity of the employee is immaterial. Nevertheless, self-esteem and job-esteem are overlapping, yet distinct concepts.

Job involvement has been defined by Saleh and Hosek (1976) as the degree to which the total job situation is a central life interest or the degree to which it is perceived to be a major source for the satisfaction of important needs. The central life interest implies the importance of the job on factors outside the job itself. Individuals are unique in how they view their employment as the most important function in their life (Ramsey, Lassk, and Marshall, 1995). Job esteem, although it does have impact on central issues, has few implications for how the job is perceived in terms of order of importance relative to other life activities. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) defined job involvement as the degree of importance of one’s work in one’s total self-image. This definition also implies the significance of the job on the individual’s work and non-work life. Again, it is expected for a job to affect one’s total life; but the job does not
need to be a major source or central interest in order for job-esteem to be an effective factor in the satisfaction and success of the employee.

Employee behaviour plays a crucial role in maximizing an organization’s effectiveness irrespective of technological development. Job involvement as an attitude determines the employee behaviour in the organizational context. Job involvement in simple terms refers to the commitment that a person shows to his job or work. It is devotion to duty in body and spirit. It is something intrinsic to the individual that makes him consider work as the most important part of his life and the major satisfaction that he could derive is from accomplishing his duty effectively. Therefore, any effort to maximize organizational effectiveness depends on achieving the highest degree of job involvement among members of an organization.

How does one achieve the highest degree of job involvement or, for that matter, improve its degree? To find out, one has to go through the literature on job involvement in order to ascertain how it has been viewed or what factors or variables cause job involvement. At the empirical level, Rabinowitz and Hall (1977), in their comprehensive review article, found that job involvement has been viewed in three ways: as an individual difference variable, as a situationally determined variable and as person-situation interaction variable. Studies on job involvement have been primarily of empirical nature and one finds that every one of them falls under one or other categories mentioned by Rabinowitz and Hall.
In recent years, job involvement has been widely studied by industrial psychologists with special reference to employees’ job satisfaction, morale, participation and performance. The concept of job involvement has gained much importance in the recent years because of its pivotal role providing a link between productivity on the one hand and the employees’ need and quality of work life on the other. It plays a vital role in the modern era of employment crisis, disappointment, dissatisfaction and stress. This concept is widely studied in the field of organizational psychology because it is very important to understand the human relations in industry since it explains the concept as to why one man works harder than the other? Why one group of workers restricts its output and another works energetically? Why one group goes on strike and the other does not?

Enhancing job involvement of the employees to their organization has emerged as one of the most important problems for the researchers. Though every employee in an organization works with similar tools, machines and materials, yet individual difference in their level of job involvement are quite evident.

Organizational psychologists have devoted considerable attention to define the concept of job involvement as a potentially distinct job attitude. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) have defined job involvement as “the internalization of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the person and perhaps it thus measures the ease with which the person can be further socialized by an organization.”
Lodahl in 1964 has hypothesized that the main determinant of job involvement is value orientation towards work that is learned early in the socialization process. In some ways, according to him, it operationalizes the Protestant Ethic and because it is a result of the interjection of certain values about work into self, it is probably resistant to changes in the person due to the nature of a particular job.

Lawler and Hall (1970) define job involvement as referring to psychological identification with one’s work, as well as degree to which the job situation is central to person and his identity.

According to Patchen (1970), the involved person is highly motivated and feels a sense of pride in his work. Patchen used the term “identification with one’s occupation” which measures how important one’s occupational role is to one’s self image.

Kanungo, Mishra and Dayal (1975) opine that the “attitude of job involvement represents the degree to which the total job satisfaction is thought of as being central to one’s life or self-concept.”

Rabinowitz and Hall (1977) reviewed the researches done on job involvement and concluded:
*Job involvement is related to three classes of working variables: personal characteristics, situational characteristics and outcomes. No one class of variables shows clearly stronger relationships to job involvement than any other.  
*Job involvement is quite stable.  
*Much of the variance in job involvement remains unexplained.
The data are more consistent with the “importance of work”, definition of job involvement, than with the “extent to which performance affects self-esteem” definition.

*Job involvement seems to be a “feedback variable” both a cause and effect of job behaviour.

*Personal and situational variables have independent effects on involvement and

*Situational variables seem to have more effect on the attitude of low job involved persons than on highly job involved persons.

It is obvious that the various definitions of job involvement have a common feature, that is, they describe the job involved person as one for whom work is a very important part of life and who is affected by much responsibilities of his whole job situation: the work itself, his co-workers, the company etc. On the other hand, the non involved worker does his living off-the-job. Work is not an important part of his psychological life. His interests are elsewhere, and the core of his self image, the essential part of his identity, is not greatly affected by the kind of work he does or how well he does it. It is important to note Guion’s (1958) observation that the job involved worker is not necessarily happy with his job; in fact, very angry people may be just as involved in their jobs as a very happy one.

Job involvement, a vital ingredient in human resource development and management, could be defined as the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in his work. Involvement could be reflected in the person’s willingness to undertake duties beyond the standard requirements of the job. Job involvement arises when the
employee strongly identifies with the organization, agrees to its objectives and value system and is willing to expend effort on its behalf. But it would be unwise to view involvement as a phenomenon only applicable to a unitarist type of organization (that is, a single entity with a united goal). In fact, organizations are made up of a number of factions with different agendas and conflicting objectives and an involved employee’s commitment can be directed to specific aspects of the employee’s experience at work, for example, the individual’s geographic location, his or her section, department or subsidiary company or a trade union.

In recent years the concept of organizational citizenship has been discussed alongside organizational commitment and job involvement. Organizational citizenship is a term used to describe the behaviour of individuals who made a positive overall contribution to the organization. For example, such behaviour could be reflected in satisfactory performance at work in the normal course of events, but in addition the good citizen is prepared to work late when required, devote time to assist new entrants to the organization, is generally perceived as being helpful and is committed to the success of the organization.

**APPROACHES TO JOB INVOLVEMENT FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The first approach was suggested by Allport (1943), emphasizing job involvement as a job attitude characterized by an active participation at work. Job involvement is the “degree to which an employee is participating in his job and meeting such needs as prestige and autonomy” (Blau, 1985). Similarly, Wickert (1951) suggests that job involvement “could be measured by the
degree to which he feels that he is actively participating in his job.” In this conceptualization, job involvement depends on the “extent to which an individual seeks some self-expression and actualization in his work” (Gurin, Veroff, Feld, 1960, Saleh, Hosek, 1976), or on “the opportunity to make job decisions, the feeling of contribution to a success, the chance to set one’s own work pace and self-determination” (Bass, 1965, Saleh, Hosek, 1976).

The second approach is based on the central life interest type of job involvement, developed by Dubin (1956). Job involvement is defined as the “degree to which the job is perceived to be the main source for the satisfaction of important needs versus non job-oriented activities” (Blau, 1985). Dubin (1956) suggests to measure job involvement with a forty-item questionnaire with a choice of job-oriented, non job-oriented and indifferent responses. Along the same lines, Lawler and Hall (1970) consider job involvement as the “degree to which a person perceives his total work situation to be an important part of his life and to be central to him and his identity because of the opportunity it affords him to satisfy his important needs.”

The third approach considers job involvement as central to self-esteem. For example, job involvement is referred to as “the degree to which the employee perceive that his job performance is central to his self-concept” (French, Kahn, 1962), or “the importance of work to a person’s self-esteem or sense of worth” (Siegel, 1969). As Hackman (1968) puts it, “this type of job involvement operates in zero defect and MBO programmes, by getting the employee to commit himself to goals he set for
himself. Thus, goals are important to an employee’s self-esteem and he or she becomes involved in achieving such goals.

Saleh and Hosek (1976) also suggests a fourth approach based on the work of Vroom (1962, 1964), who defines job involvement as the “degree to which the employee perceives that his job performance is consistent with characteristics that are central to his self-concept.” According to Saleh and Hosek (1976), the difference between the third and the fourth approach is that “while Vroom considered the consistency of performance with the existing self-conception, French and Kahn emphasized the consistence with the valued self-conception.” However, data clearly support a three-factor solution, with the third and fourth approaches loading on the same factor (Saleh, Hosek, 1976). The authors make an interesting comparison between their three factors and Gergen’s (1971) structural definition of the self along three dimensions: the identity self, the conative self and the evaluative self. Saleh and Hosek conclude that job involvement is a complex concept, based on cognition, action and feeling.

**Kanungo’s Approach to Job Involvement**

Job involvement conceptualization suffers from conceptual fuzziness. The four previously mentioned approaches illustrate not only the complexity of the job involvement concept but also the need for clarity (Saleh and Hosek, 1976). Lodahl and Kejner (1965) considered job involvement successively as “the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his work or the importance of work in his total self-image.”
“the internalization of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the person and perhaps it thus measures the ease with which the person can be further socialized into an organization.”

“the degree to which a person’s work performance affects his self-esteem.”

These definitions fail to single out one definition. Kanungo (1979) suggests the use of a motivational framework for the study of alienation and involvement, referred to as bi-polar states of the same phenomenon. Kanungo’s approach to job involvement cuts out conceptual fuzziness by emphasizing the following considerations:

(a) “The approach limits itself to the analysis of behavioural phenomena at the individual level. It identifies the state of alienation with the cognitive belief state of the individual.”

(b) “The state of work alienation must be clearly distinguished from its causes and its effects.”

(c) “The present approach can integrate and adequately explain the different types of alienation at work.”

Based on this motivational framework, we can define job involvement as a generalized cognitive state of psychological identification with work, insofar as work is perceived to have the potentiality to satisfy one’s basic needs and expectations. In other words, the conative and affective dimensions of job
involvement are simply eliminated from the definition of job involvement. Kanungo’s restricted approach to job involvement focuses on the psychological identification factor, brings back conceptual clarity and eliminates cultural biases related to the self-esteem and intrinsic motivation factors.

FACTORS DETERMINING JOB INVOLVEMENT
The following activities have been identified as being the most prominent in the building of job involvement.

Fairness and satisfaction
The most important ingredients for a loyal workforce are positive and equitable work experiences. New employees must believe that the company is fulfilling its obligations. This is a leading factor in determining job involvement in an employee.

Fair remuneration
Job involvement seems to suffer when people face increased workloads in companies with record profits and senior executives earning lucrative bonuses. Other companies have fostered job involvement by sharing profits and distributing company shares to the employees. If the rewards are not commensurate with the effort put in, then it can lead to depletion in job involvement.

Job security
Lay-off threats are one of the greatest threats to employee involvement, even among those whose jobs which are not immediately at risk. Building involvement does not require lifetime employment guarantees, but employees should have
enough job security to feel some permanence and mutuality in the employment relationship.

Organizational comprehension
Job involvement and commitment are a person’s identification with the company so it makes sense that this attitude is strengthened when employees have a solid comprehension of the company. Employees feel disconnected when they don’t know what is going on. This uncertainty calls for improved communication process as well as opportunities to work in various parts of the organization. It also requires more social interaction, particularly where employees are often separated from each other.

Employee participation
Employees feel that they are part of the organization when they make decisions that guide the organization’s future. Through participation, employees begin to see how the organization is a reflection of their decision. Employee involvement also builds loyalty because giving this power is a demonstration of the company’s trust in its employees.

Trusting employees
Trust occurs when we have positive expectations about another party’s intentions and actions towards us in risky situations. Trust means putting faith in the other person or group. It is also a reciprocal activity, to receive trust you must demonstrate trust. Trust is important for job involvement because it touches the heart of the employment relationship. Employees identify with
and feel obliged to work for an organization in a involved manner, only when they trust its leaders.

The whole concept of job involvement would be incomplete until the area of organizational commitment is thoroughly dealt with. Job involvement is an aspect of the much broader concept which is organizational commitment. The concept of employee attitude comprises of organizational commitment of which job involvement is a major aspect. Till we study organizational commitment in detail, the study of job involvement would be incomplete.

**Organizational commitment**

It refers to the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in a particular organization. It is the person’s affective commitment his or her loyalty to the organization. Affective commitment can also refer to loyalty towards co-workers, customers, or a profession. It can be further defined as a state in which an employee identifies with the goals of his organization. Thus high organizational commitment means identifying with one’s employing organization. Organizational commitment can be identified as a predictor and indicator of turnover.

Along with affective commitment, employees have varying levels of continuance commitment. Continuance commitment occurs when employees believe it is in their own personal interest to remain with the organization. This form of commitment is a calculative bond with the organization rather than an emotional attachment. For example, there are people who do not
particularly identify with the organization where they work but feel bound to remain there because it would be too costly to quit. Continuance commitment is the motivation to stay because of the high cost of leaving. On the other hand, like a strong magnetic force attracting one metallic object to another, organizational commitment is a measure of the employee’s willingness to remain with the firm in the future. It often reflects the employee’s belief in the mission and goals of the firm, willingness to expend effort in their accomplishment and intentions to continue working there. Broader in scope than just loyalty, it is normally stronger among longer term employees, those who have experienced personal success in the organization, and those working within a committed employee group. Organizationally committed employees will usually have good attendance records, willing adherence to company policies and lower turnover rates.

Some firms try to buy involvement and commitment by tying employees financially to the organization through low cost loans and stock options. Many knowledge based firms offer stock options that are vested for two or more years. Anglo-Irish Bank uses loyalty bonus to reduce turnover of new staff. These ‘golden handcuffs’ do tend to reduce turnover, but they also increase continuance commitment, not affective commitment. Evidence suggests that employees with high levels of continuance commitment have lower performance ratings and are less likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviours. Although vested options may be necessary, continuance commitment should not be a substitute for strategies to build and maintain employee loyalty. Employers still need to win
employees’ hearts (affective commitment) beyond tying them financially to the organization (continuance commitment).

Meyer and Allen’s (1991) Three-component model of organizational commitment has identified another form of commitment, that is, the normative commitment, which reflects a perceived obligation to remain in the organization. They found that the three forms of commitment are related, yet distinguishable from one another as well as from job satisfaction and job involvement. Also, as expected, all three forms of commitment related negatively to withdrawal cognition and turnover, and affective commitment had the strongest and most favourable correlations with organization-relevant (attendance, performance and organizational citizenship behaviours) and employee-relevant (stress and work-family conflict) outcomes. Normative commitment was also associated with desired outcomes, albeit not as strongly. Continuance commitment was unrelated or related negatively to these outcomes.

During the 1990’s, organizational commitment continued to be a major focus of research. There was also considerable attention given to theory development. It is now well recognized, for example, that commitment is a multi-dimensional construct, and that the antecedents, correlates and consequences of commitment vary across dimensions.

Meyer and Allen (1984) initially proposed that a distinction be made between affective and continuance commitment, with affective commitment denoting an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization and continuance commitment denoting the perceived costs
associated with leaving the organization. Allen and Meyer (1990) later suggested a third distinguishable component of commitment, normative commitment which reflects a perceived obligation to remain in the organization.

An important rationale for the development of the three-component model was that although three forms of commitment relate negatively to turnover, they relate differently to measure other work-relevant behaviour (example, attendance, in-role performance, organizational citizenship behaviour). More specifically, affective commitment is expected to have strongest positive relation, followed by normative commitment, continuance commitment is expected to be unrelated or related negatively to these desirable work behaviours.

Until recently, organizational commitment theory and research has focused primarily on outcomes of relevance to employers. There is now a growing body of research examining the links between commitment and employee-relevant outcomes including stress and work-family conflicts. Employee health and well-being is included as an outcome category in the model. There is some disagreement, however, about how commitment, particularly affective commitment, relates to buffer the negative impact of work stressers on employee health and well-being (Begley and Czajka 1993), whereas others suggest that committed employees might experience more negative reactions to such stressers than those who are less committed (Reilly 1994).
IDENTIFICATION OF COMPONENTS RELATED WITH JOB INVOLVEMENT

The literature on many of the variables or constructs that were considered to be possible components of job involvement was explored. The most applicable included job related anomie, job satisfaction, job specific esteem, self esteem, work ethic and occupational prestige.

Job related anomie

Anomie is defined by traditional sociology as a negative social condition resulting from the collapse of values and norms. Individuals with anomie feel alienated, lack a sense of purpose, and are confused about acceptable behaviour (Durkheim, 1951). In doing so, they lost contact with family, traditions and agrarian norms. They had become lost and confused with no identity and no sense of purpose. Durkheim claimed anomie was a result of egoistic individualism. In other words, individuals with anomie focused on satisfying the ego or personal needs, while ignoring the needs of the group. (Kendall, 1996). However, Durkheim proposed a solution for anomie. He reasoned that combining the individual needs with the group (or society’s) needs would satisfy the identity of the individual and the need for group norms and values.

There is a difference between anomie and job related anomie. Job related anomie is defined as the level of an employee’s belief that his or her organization is void of values and norms. Many authors have warned of an increased potential for anomie in today’s work environment. Recently, social bonds have loosened while new forms of alienation and domination of profit motives
are increasing (Muckenberger, 1996). Popular literature (e.g. Corbo, 1997) has claimed that generation X members, those born between 1965 and 1980, are particularly prone to feelings of alienation, cynicism and detachment—classic symptoms of anomie. It is this age group (18 to 35 years old) that makes up the largest percentage of front office employees.

**Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is defined as “the emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job and as such can be negative, positive or neutral” (Arvey, 1995). Spector’s (1997) widely used job satisfaction survey dissects job satisfaction into these nine parameters representing both affective and cognitive aspects: pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work and communication. Other studies have shown support for these job satisfaction parameters as well (Smith, 1992).

Job satisfaction makes up a part of job involvement, but the two concepts are not the same. There are four possible combinations of an individual’s level of job involvement and job satisfaction. First, it is possible for the job incumbent in service role to have high job satisfaction but low job involvement. This combination would seem to be less likely of the four. An individual who perceives cleaning rooms for strangers as demeaning will have low job involvement as a housekeeper at any hotel. However, this housekeeper is not precluded from having high job satisfaction because of low job involvement. Many hotel companies go to great lengths to improve satisfaction of employees by manipulating the work environment. It is possible
for employees to ignore their feeling of low job involvement and job esteem if they have excellent work conditions, benefits, pay and supervision resulting in high job satisfaction. Second, it is possible for an employee to have high job satisfaction and high job involvement. This combination is not uncommon and intuitively makes sense. Emotionally and cognitively, the job holder who is highly satisfied with pay, benefits, supervisors and all the other elements of job satisfaction will also be more likely to find the job to have elements of pride and dignity. Third, some workers may experience low job satisfaction but have high job involvement. This relationship is not common but possible. An employee may find dignity in his work and may value the role of providing the required service with full involvement. However, the employee’s job satisfaction may depend on such factors as work condition, supervisors and co-worker relationships. The fourth combination is the low job satisfaction and low job involvement state. Not much have to be explained about this factor.

**Job-specific esteem**

The next component investigated was what is titled as job-specific esteem. Job esteem is proposed to be a global construct that is relevant in any industry. Therefore, for the concept to be effective in a measurement situation, a unique set of items addressing the specific job studied must be included. It is a natural fact that if an employee perceives his job in a positive light and feels his job holds an esteemed position in the eyes of others, it can motivate him to put in his best of efforts.
**Self-esteem**

Self-esteem is defined as one’s overall self-evaluation composed of respect, competence and worth (Cast and Burke, 2002). It is the attitude individuals have about themselves as good or bad and whether they like themselves. People with high self-esteem are psychologically better adjusted, better students, better at handling criticism and better at coping with failure (Baron and Bryne, 1991). Tharenou, (1979), found that high self-esteem was positively related with high job satisfaction and intention to stay on the job. Although research has failed definitively to show a connection between self-esteem and job involvement (Marsh, 1993; Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham, 1989), business practitioners insist that there is a connection. Job involvement arises out of job esteem and is similar to self-esteem because it encompasses the attitude, feelings and emotions that one has for his or her specific job. Respect and dignity associated with a job affects one’s self-esteem and vice-versa, the level of one’s self-esteem affects the level of respect and dignity that an individual associates with his or her job. These factors ensure job involvement of an employee.

**Work Ethic**

Many definitions of work ethic exist, the most notable being the protestant work ethic which implies the religious obligation to work hard—a commandment from God (Grenholm, 1993). This concept was first proposed by Weber (1905) and has undergone exhaustive study ever since. Furnham (1987) defined work ethic as “dispositional variable characterized by a belief in the importance of hard work, rationality and frugality which acts as a defence against sloth, sensuality and religious doubt.” Work
ethic has been used as an index of job satisfaction and job involvement (Pietrofesa and Splete, 1975), providing a theoretical connection to job esteem and job involvement. Job involvement is expected to be associated with work ethic because work in itself is a source of pride for some workers and they are happy to be totally involved in it.

**Occupational Prestige**

Some may assume that occupational prestige is the same concept as job esteem. However, occupational prestige is determined by perceptions the public has for particular job classifications (Hope, 1972). Therefore occupational prestige is different from job esteem because only an incumbent in the particular occupation being analysed can make a personal evaluation of his or her job esteem. For example, an individual who has never worked as a school teacher may rank teaching job as having low prestige but this individual is not able to evaluate the job esteem without having experienced the job. This component may or may not affect job involvement.

To have the desired effect on job involvement, the beliefs and attitudes that are components of this construct must be influenced. Job involvement is a fluid and dynamic phenomenon. The overall performance of employees may be improved through interventions focused on the improvements related to components of job involvement. Hence, it stands to reason that there may be a direct correlation between the increased levels of job involvement components and increased overall involvement.
Each of the job involvement components is a contributor to job involvement but is not synonymous with job involvement. Each component has been determined to be important in overall job involvement of an employee. For many employees, job involvement can make the difference between poor and excellent work performance.

Components of Job Involvement at a glance

- OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE
- JOB RELATED ANOMIE
- JOB SATISFACTION
- JOB SPECIFIC ESTEEM
- SELF ESTEEM
- WORK ETHIC

JOB INVOLVEMENT
LEVELS OF JOB INVOLVEMENT

Levels of job involvement reflect both the degree of power over the decision and the number of decision steps over which employee can apply that power. An employee will be more involved in his job if he get a free hand in the policy making, judgment capacity and innovative functioning in his work field. His level of identification with his work is definitely marked by the above mentioned factors.

Low Level Of Involvement

The lowest level of involvement is selective consultation, in which employees are individually asked for specific information or opinions about one or two aspects of the decision. The employee is not interested in recommending solutions and might not even know details of the problem for which the information will be used.

Moderate Level Of Involvement

A moderate level of job involvement occurs when employees are more fully involved and consulted either individually in a group. They are aware of the problems and offer their diagnosis and recommendations, but the final decision is still beyond their control. They do not want to be the authority and responsibility bearer.

High Level Of Involvement

The highest level of involvement occurs when employees have complete power over the decision process and they voluntarily exert that position. They are totally dedicated in the process of discovering and defining problems, identifying solutions, choose
the best option and monitor the results of their decision. These high involvement conditions are characteristics of the dedication, teamwork, identification and answerable to the job.

**FORMS OF JOB INVOLVEMENT**

Job Involvement exists in many forms. Formal Involvement such as the nursing teams in many hospitals and medical center are founded on codified policies and institutionalized practices. In other words, the organization has established structures and formal expectations that support this form of participation.

In contrast, Informal Involvement includes casual events, such as approaching a supervisor about an idea or suggestion.

Job Involvement can be voluntary or statutory. Voluntary Job Involvement occurs when employees participate without any force of law, where as statutory involvement is when government legislates activities of the employees. Joint health and safety committees represent a statutory form of job involvement in countries where they are required by law. This type of involvement is more widespread in Europe.

In the third form of job involvement, employee participation is either direct or representative. Direct Involvement happens when employees personally influence the decision process. Representative involvement on the other hand, occurs when employees are represented by peers. In many cases representatives of many associations and unions are there in the Board of Directors.
CONSEQUENCES OF JOB INVOLVEMENT

Research suggests that a loyal workforce can be significant, competitive and advantageous. Employees with a high level of job involvement are less likely to quit their jobs and be absent from work. Job involvement also improves customer satisfaction because employees have better knowledge of work with high affective commitment and they also have higher work motivation and organizational citizenship.

However, there are potential problems where employees have too much job involvement. One potential problem with a highly loyal workforce is that the organization may have very low turnover. This limits the organization’s opportunity to hire new employees with new knowledge and fresh ideas. Another concern is that loyalty arising from job involvement results in conformity, which holds back creativity. Some critics also argue that total involvement and loyalty is a vestige of ancient ‘master-servant’ relationship that should be replaced by more professional relationships between employer and employee.

When employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, lack of job involvement is there and are low in their commitment to the organizations, a wide variety of consequences may follow. This is specially true if the feelings are both strong and persistent. Dissatisfied employees may engage in psychological withdrawal (like day-dreaming on the job), physical withdrawal (unauthorized absences, early departures, extended breaks or work slowdowns), or even overt acts of aggression and retaliation for presumed wrongs. Satisfied employees may provide acts of customer services beyond the call of duty, have sparkling work
records, and actively pursue excellence in all areas of their jobs. A large number of studies have addressed the outcomes of work involvement and non-involvement, and the basic nature of the results are reported here in the areas of performances, turnover, absence and tardiness, theft and other behaviours.

**Employee Performance**

It is an undisputed fact that one’s level of satisfaction leads to either greater or lesser involvement and commitment in their job, which then affects effort and eventually performance. The result is a continuously operating performance-satisfaction-effort loop.

An accurate portrait of the relationship is that high job involvement and better performance contributes to high job satisfaction. The sequence is that better performance leads to higher economic, sociological and psychological rewards. If these rewards are seen as fair and equitable, then improved satisfaction develops because employees feel that they are receiving rewards in proportion to their performance. Involvement to the job is an obvious development in this phenomena.

**Turnover**

As might be expected, higher job involvement is associated with lower employee turnover, which is proportion of employees leaving an organization. More involved people are less likely to think about quitting, to search for a new job, or to announce their intention to quit and thus they are more likely to stay with the employer longer. Employees with lower job involvements usually have higher rates of turnover. They may lack self-
fulfillment, receive little recognition on the job, or experience continual conflicts with the supervisor or peer or they may have reached a personal plateau in their career. As a result they are more likely to seek greener pastures elsewhere and leave their employers, while their more committed associates remain.

Employee turnover can have several negative consequences specially if the turnover rate is high. Often it is difficult to replace the departed employees and the direct and indirect cost to the organization of replacing workers are expensive. The remaining employees may be demoralized from the loss of valued co-workers and both work and social patterns may be disrupted until replacements are found. Also, the organization’s reputation in the community may suffer. However, benefits may arise from turnover, such as more opportunities for internal promotions and the infusion of expertise from newly hired employees.

**Absences and Tardiness**

It has been seen that those employees who have less job involvement tend to be absent more often. The connection is not always sharp, for a couple of reasons. First, some absences are caused by legitimate medical reasons and therefore an involved employee may have a valid absence. Second, less involved employees do not plan to be absent, but they seem to find it easier to respond to the opportunities to do so. These voluntary (attitudinal) absences often occur with high frequency among a certain of employees and usually occur on Mondays or Fridays, whereas involuntary (medically related) absenteeism can often be reduced through the use of more thorough pre-employment physical examination and work history records checks. Different
approaches are needed for absences caused by poor attitudes like lack of involvement, commitment and satisfaction, etc.

Another way in which employees may exhibit their lack of involvement with their job is through tardiness. A tardy employee is one who arrives at work late. Tardiness is a type of short period absenteeism ranging from a few minutes to several hours for each event and it is another way in which employees physically withdraw from active involvement in the organization. It may impede the timely completion of work and disrupt productive relationships with co-workers. Although there may be legitimate reasons for an occasional tardy arrival (like a sudden traffic jam), a pattern of tardiness is often a symptom of negative attitudes requiring managerial attention.

**Theft**

In certain cases of low-paying jobs, as indirect compensation the employees steal. The perception of inequity produced dissatisfaction, which apparently cause employees to lower their involvement and commitment enough to rationalize stealing from the firm.

Some employees steal directly whatever products are available in the workplace. Others use company services without authorization, such as when they make personal long-distance calls at work (thereby ‘stealing’ both the cost of the call and their productive time). Others forge cheques or commit other types of fraud. All these acts represent theft or the unauthorized removal of company resources. In their own way, the employees may justify this unethical behaviour as a way of re-establishing a
perception of lost equity, or even gaining revenge for what they consider ill-treatment at the hands of a supervisor. But the underlying fact is that the lowering of the job involvement is one of the main determinants of such behaviour.

**Other Consequences**

Low productivity, turnover, absenteeism, tardiness and theft are all typically negative behaviours for they harm the organization and sometimes its members. Many employees, however, hold positive attitudes towards their work and organization and these pay off in both obvious and more subtle ways. In particular, employees sometimes demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviours which are discretionary actions that promote the organization’s success. Someone may exhibit unusual conscientiousness in carrying out normal job responsibilities, while others may voluntarily exercise a high level of innovation and creativity on a troublesome problem, even volunteering for extra assignments or sharing one’s equipment with another worker as a demonstration of organizational citizenship which is a by-product of job involvement.

**BENEFITS OF JOB INVOLVEMENT**

For the past half century, organizational behaviour researchers have advised that self-directed work teams and other forms of job involvement offer potential benefits for both the employees and their organization. These benefits include improved decision quality and commitment, as well as employee satisfaction, empowerment and development.
**Decision Quality**

Probably the number one reason corporate leaders embrace employee involvement is that it can potentially improve decision-making quality, particularly for complex decisions where employees possess relevant information. Employees are closer to customers and production activities, so they often know where the company can save money, improve product or service quality and realize unused opportunities.

Employee involvement in his job may improve the quality of decisions in three ways. First, it may lead to a more accurate definition of the problem. Employees are, in many respects, the sensors of the organization’s environment. When the organization’s activities misalign with customer expectations, employees are usually the first to know. Employee involvement in his job ensures that everyone in the organization is alerted quickly to these problems.

Second, job involvement potentially can improve the number and quality of solutions generated to organizational problems. In a well-managed meeting, team members create synergy by pooling their knowledge to form new alternatives that no one would have designed alone. In other words, several people working together, building on each other’s strength can generate more and potentially better solutions than if these people worked alone.

Third, involving employees in decisions increases the likelihood that the best option will be selected. This tendency occurs because the decision is reviewed by people with diverse
perspectives and a broader representation of values than if one executive made the choice alone.

**Decision Commitment**

Employees who are expected to implement organizational decisions should be involved in choosing the course of action. This participation creates psychological ownership of the decision. Rather than viewing themselves as agents of someone else’s decisions, staff members feel personally responsible for the success of the decision. Consequently, they tend to exhibit less resistance to change and are more motivated to implement the decisions. Employee involvement also increases perceptions of fairness. For example, employees are more likely to believe that a reward system is fair, if they had the opportunity to influence the rules for distributing the rewards.

**Employee Satisfaction, Empowerment and Development**

Job involvement tends to improve job satisfaction, organizational commitment and feelings of empowerment. This improvement, in turns, reduces turnover and increases work motivation. Job involvement is a form of job enrichment, so its benefits are apparent only when employees receive adequate training, are sufficiently happy with their work context and have a high growth need strength.

Finally, it can be said that job involvement gives employees the opportunity to improve their decision making skills and prepare for higher levels of responsibility. Team decision making may offer the additional benefits of fostering teamwork and congeniality as co-workers learn more about each other and come to appreciate each other’s talents.
OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO JOB INVOLVEMENT

Employee involvement is not a panacea for all organizational problems. Involvement may be useful and resistance to it could threaten the company’s effectiveness. Employee involvement is desirable, corporate leaders need to recognize and overcome the major three potential barriers: cultural differences, management resistance and employee and labour union resistance.

Cultural Differences

Job involvement is more compatible with some cultural values than with others. Job involvement is typically an inter-personal or team based activity, so it is adopted more readily in cultures with high collectivism. People with a collective value appreciate and support their membership in a group, therefore they work more comfortable, discussing their ideas with co-workers. In contrast, individualistic people may be less comfortable with job involvement because of their preference to work alone.

Job involvement also works better in low power distance cultures. Employees with low power distance usually want to be involved in corporate decisions, whereas those in high power distance cultures are more comfortable when supervisors give them directions and answers. Mexico has a very high power distance value system, which explains why firms are having difficulty implementing self-directed work teams in that country.

Few cultures are so extreme in either collectivism or power distance to prohibit job involvement.
There seems to be a cultural shift among younger employees in many countries towards values more compatible with employee involvement. “Employees want to function in a more empowerment-driven environment”, says Govind Iyer(2001), consultant with search firm Egon Zehnder in India. “Everybody wants to participate in the decision making process”.

Management Resistance
Research suggests that supervisors and higher level managers often resist efforts to involve employees in decision making. They particularly have difficulty making the transition to self-directed work teams. Their main worry is losing power when employees gain power through participation. Some managers are concerned that their job will lose value, whereas research suggests that supervisors are less likely to resist job involvement when they have personally worked in a high involvement work place and their own jobs are not threatened by the change.

Employee and Labor Union Resistance
Employees resist job involvement for several reasons. Fads of previous managements influence their minds and they do not want to develop false hopes for the latest initiatives. Job involvement also requires new and usually more ambiguous role patterns and new skills. Many employees feel uncomfortable as they explore new roles and may be worried that they lack the skills to adapt to the new work requirements.

Labour Unions have been strong advocates of joint health and safety committees and supported the early socio-technical changes in Europe and India. Some union leaders believe that
involvement is an important right, whereas others reject it for three reasons. First, they believe that job involvement programmes improve productivity at the price of higher stress levels among employees. Second, high involvement practices may require reversing work rules and removing job categories that unions have negotiated over the years. Finally, few union leaders believe that companies use job involvement programmes as a subtle strategy to by-pass the union and thereby weaken its power in the work place.

Taking all the above factors into consideration, it is proposed to study job involvement in depth and undertake a research on the effects of life orientation and occupational stress on job involvement.

Job involvement as an attitude is an important employee behaviour that helps in maximizing organizational effectiveness. The higher the degree of job involvement of the members of an organization, the greater its effectiveness. In order to improve the degree of job involvement, one must have a realistic view of what determines it. Among the various views on job involvement, the most realistic one would be that it is a function of personality and organizational stress. Therefore, an attempt is made to study on the interaction effect of life orientation, and organizational stress on job involvement.