CHAPTER III

PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESES
Absenteeism is one of the major problems in industry which results in loss of production, increased labour costs and reduced efficiency of the operations. The seriousness of this problem is realised and recognised more in modern industry than in any other concern. The absence of a foreman or supervisor leads to dislocation of work and indiscipline. The absence of trained hands leads to great loss in production.

It is an industrial malady affecting optimum utilisation of human resources, productivity, profits, investments and the absentee themselves. Increasing rate of absences adds very considerably to the cost of industry and hampers industrial progress. The economic or social loss occurring from absenteeism can not be determined accurately.

Traditional approaches to the study of absenteeism have emphasised the centrality of the work situation. Various aspects and characteristics of the work situation were considered as main causes of absences or in other words absenteeism was treated as organisational behaviour. But some industrial psychologists interested in this field have also reported that absenteeism is both organisational (work) and extra organisational (non-work) behaviour. Besides, organisational factors, certain personal and psychological factors are of vital importance in influencing absenteeism.
The psychological contracts of individuals with their organisations seem to have changed in congruence with changes in employees' needs in recent years. Employees have become more educated and so their working values and attitudes have changed. Besides earning money, they also want to feel a sense of meaning in performing their jobs. Similarly, the employers pay more attention on developing personal relationships with their employees rather than just enforcing certain rules and regulations. They also pay more attention on the well being of the workers. So, both employers and employees want to enhance the quality of life at work and find out ways for higher order need satisfaction. Researchers have also started emphasising on redesigning the job framework so that management, unions and employees could be equally involved and ways could be found out to improve the quality of working life of employees.

Quality of working life is an important determinant of absenteeism. Studies have shown that high absenteeism occurs when the quality of working life of employees is poor. Providing better quality of working life leads to reduction in absenteeism (Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Tharakar, 1983; Marks et.al. 1986).

The concept of quality of working life is not very common in India or other developing countries. As Trist (1975) argues that, 'best strategy for developing countries would be to ignore
nineteenth century models of industrial organisations and dehumanising values embodied in them and experiment in ways suitable to the conditions in the third world, with new forms of organisations, that give importance to quality of life in work place.

But before starting a quality of working life project in an industry, one should know the prevailing quality of working life (QWL) of the employees of that industry. QWL is conceptualised as stemming from an interaction of personal and organisational factors. Its personal roots are found in values, aspirations, attitudes toward work and life, psychological needs etc. of the workers. Its organisational roots are located in working conditions, various job characteristics, organisational mission, supervisory style, pay etc.

On the basis of this interaction of personal and organisational factors, Warr, Cook and Wall (1979) in their study have emphasised quality of working life in the light of eight factors which are work involvement, intrinsic job motivation, higher order need strength, perceived intrinsic job characteristics, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, happiness and self rated anxiety.
All these eight factors seem to be important determinants of absenteeism behaviour of employees. Existing literature advocates the relationship between some of these variables with absenteeism in one way or the other independently. But not even a single study is available in which all these eight variables are being studied in relation to absenteeism as the factors of quality of working life. This vacuum tempted the investigator to design the present study for in depth understanding of the relationship that exists between quality of working life and absenteeism. The problem was formulated to study the effect of work involvement, intrinsic job motivation, perceived intrinsic job characteristics, higher order need strength, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, happiness and self-rated anxiety as independent factors of quality of working life on absenteeism of both White-collar workers and Blue-collar workers. The hypotheses formulated were:

1. White-collar and Blue-collar-workers would differ significantly on their quality of working life scores and their absenteeism levels.

2. Work involvement and intrinsic job motivation would be inversely related to absenteeism.
3. Perceived intrinsic job characteristics and higher order need strength would be responsible for reduction in absenteeism.

4. Higher levels of job satisfaction, life satisfaction and degree of happiness would lead to lower rate of absenteeism.

5. The high self rated anxiety would lead to high absenteeism.

With this we may now pass on to the next chapter dealing with design and methodology.