CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION
1.1 Statement of the problem.

For men and women in the modern world, apart from fulfilling the economic function, work means several things- social statuses, self-fulfillment, self-realization and more. In short, work is the window through which the workers see the world outside. Next to family, work is the second most important in life for every one.

Out of the total world’s population 1/3 of them are engaged in industrial work. Industries adopt one or other type of technology for the production and distribution of its services. The production process and the type of production technology adopted by these industries are observed having definite significance for social and mental well-being of the workers. The work under modern production technology by making the man cog in the wheel deskill him in many ways. And, this invariably results in work alienation. Even though the levels of alienation may vary due to workers’ personal and individual characteristics, the phenomenon of alienation induced by production technology has come to stay.

Work and leisure are considered as the two sides of the same coin. Therefore, any problem in the work domain is naturally expected to reflect in the non-work domain and vice-versa.

It is, therefore, the interest of the researcher to study the dynamics and the nature of interaction taking place in the arena of work and leisure on account of work alienation as it is influenced / induced by the production technology and its consequential effect on the working community, whether the effects stands to signify good or bad.

1.2 Theoretical framework for the study.
The making of modern society may be summarized in several master trends or basic patterns of social history. These include technological development, urbanization, demographic change, the rise of bureaucracy and the emergence of mass society. (Broom, et.al., 1981: 555)
Highlighting on the antecedence to technological development, Borgatta and Borgatta (1992: 914) observes that, in two hundred years since the Industrial Revolution in England, the process of industrialization has had perhaps more impact on all the nations of the world than any other complex set of forces. Therein, it is also observed that Industrial Revolution has several key dimensions, which include:

1. The work that people do for a living (Economic activity).
2. The actual goods they produce (Economic output).
3. The manner in which the economic activity is organized (organization).
4. The energy or power source used (Mechanization).
5. The systematic methods and innovative practices employed to accomplish work (Technology).

Focusing on the Technology dimension of Industrial Revolution, Lee Clarke (1992: 2159) says that, “Sociologists have long been interested in phenomena that harm people and what they value. Until, recently most such work concentrated on harm from natural events such as earthquakes, floods and tornadoes. While we have learned much from that research, there is another class of threat that sociologists now pay more attention to is technical or technological risks (issues)”.

It is also stated that, in general the new emerging discipline in Sociology, “The sociology of risk” is concerned with researching and explaining how interactions between technology and modes of social organization create hazards for the potential.

As is true of much sociology, research on risk can be classified into micro and macro studies. Both micro and macro studies have made significant contributions to understanding the connection between risk, technology, man, and society. Micro-level research, generally speaking, is generally concerned with personal, political and social dilemmas posed by technology and activities that threaten the quality of peoples’ lives. Macro-level work on risk does not by any means deny the importance
of micro-oriented research, but asks different questions and seeks answers to those questions at an institutional level analysis.

It is this particular dimension of Industrial Revolution i.e., Technology, by one its dimensions viz., Production technology is the focus of the present micro-level study undertaken to assess its influence on the work (work alienation) and its consequential effect on the non-work domain (Leisure) of the industrial workers.

a) Technology.
Definitions of technology vary from scholar to scholar. Some focus on machinery used in manufacturing and others focus on the knowledge used. Still others examine human-machine interaction. The use of materials as part of technology is explored by still others. More abstractly, we can think of technology as any and all knowledge pertaining to the activities of people and / or machines in the pursuit of organizational objectives. However, for basic understanding of the concept for the research purpose, the following simple definition is worth considering.

"The term technology refers to the art and science employed in the production and distribution of goods and services." (Ely Chinoy, 1967: 298)

Accordingly, the term ‘production technology’ (Machine technology) can also be understood as

"... such physical elements as the production process, which includes machinery, raw materials, work flow, and tools- and the relationships among them: the layout or planned placement within a building of desks, people, machines, storage facilities, walls and so on; and designs of actions and / or activities that are grouped into distinct jobs." (Herbert, 1976)

In the industrial sector production technology is in other words is commonly known as machine technology.

While the advantage of the advent of the machine technology being the single most advantage of increasing the productivity, it has also transformed the work in the industrial area in many ways much to the detriment of the man at work. The first major change introduced by the machine technology was the imposition of a steady
race or rhythm for work. The second major change in work resulting from the introduction of the machine has been the discipline imposed on the worker. Third, both workers and work become increasingly time-oriented as a result of the machine’s discipline; workers have to arrive and have to work at set times. This time factor in turn affected the social relations of the workers. The fourth important development of machine technology was first observed by Marx: the reduced need for individual dexterity and skill. (Goode: 1977: 432-434)

While a great many investigations conducted over the years to determine what employees want from their jobs indicating the fact that the workers beyond getting the essentials (good pay, safe and healthy working conditions, and steady employment) fulfilled, they also want (1) interesting work, (2) opportunities for advancement and growth, (3) co-operation and help to get the job done right, (4) treatment with respect and dignity, (5) opportunity to influence decisions affecting them, and (6) reasonable social interaction on the job.

For many organizational sociologists and behavioral scientists, it is evidently felt that the conditions of work in modern life is observed to frustrate the above mentioned desires for many blue-collar and white-collar workers. (Beach: 1970: 42)

In this regard, the observation of Coleman and Cressey (1989: 48) are worth mentioning here. They stated that:

“The mechanization of the workplace during the industrial revolution led to a progressive dehumanization of workers. Although the hours may not be as long as they were in the past, many of today’s factory workers still find their jobs dull and trivial and see themselves as little more than cogs in a machine. These feelings are so common that they have been given a name: the “blue-collar blues.” It is hardly surprising that some workers who perform the repetitive tasks hundreds of times a day, year in and year out, becomes dissatisfied.”
Now, the question before us is what in the production technology leads to these consequences? To get an answer to this question it becomes necessary to have a look at the types of production technology with particular reference to manufacturing industries and their characteristic features.

Several classifications are available for explaining the different types of production technology in application today. Whereas, the framework given by Joan Woodward (1965) is an apt description of the production technology adopted in manufacturing industries.

Several scholars like Korman (1978:182-183) Herbert (1976: 93–94) and many others have elaborated the Woodward’s typology. According to Woodward’s typology, there are three types of production technologies adopted in the manufacturing industries. They are identified as, 1) Unit (or) Small- Batch production technology, 2) Large- Batch (or) Intermittent (or) Mass (or) Assembly line production technology, 3) Process (or) Continuous production technology.

In assembly line production technology, Broom., Selznick et.al., (1981: 555) point out that 1) Jobs are subdivided into small segments, 2) Work methods are predetermined, 3) The speed of the conveyor belt is mechanically controlled. These features create a unique climate of the assembly line, 4) The average assembler’s job consists of only one or two operations, 5) Engineers and time study experts have figured out how each job is to be done and little skill training is required, 6) The work is repetitive and there is no room for initiative, 7) As a result, assembly line workers have almost no control over their socio-technical environment.

Also, as pointed out by Woodward herself, the assembly line technology is associated with 1) Medium levels of management, 2) Wide span of management, 3) Medium ratio of direct to indirect labor, 4) High formalization, 5) High centralization of decision-making.

As a result, the work in Mass (or) Assembly line results in 1) High task uncertainty, 2) High workflow uncertainty, 3) Sequential interdependence for the workers. All of
them, no doubt, are potential sources of origin for the work dissatisfaction and frustration for workers.

b) Work Alienation.

Man is the focal point of the dialectic of history and work is at the heart of human existence. It is through work that man as a subject is able to perceive the external world as objective and problematic. It is through work that man is able to create and re-create the social, economic and political fabric of his existence. However, the tragedy of human existence is that man often experiences work as dehumanizing and alienating with all its poignant consequences for human existence.

As Nisbet (1971: 263–264) pointed out that the founding fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber have all made their indelible contributions to the understanding of the concept. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that the Marxist use of the concept of alienation is “the principal channel by which the work itself had created twentieth century writings.”

We shall begin with the concept of alienation that has had most effect upon the contemporary view of the process, that of Karl Marx. Particularly in his early writing, Marx was influenced by Hegel’s idea that there is a “universal essence” of man, which constitutes the self-fulfillment of mankind. According to Marx, this process of self-fulfillment takes place only through productive or creative labor. He states that labor is the “essential activity of man, his free conscious activity- not a means for maintaining his life but for developing his universal nature. It is through his labor that man should achieve the development of his full potentialities. With the mechanization of production under the capitalistic system, however, the process of self-realization is frustrated and alienation of labor results.

As William (1968: 85-93) elaborates in his book “Problems of Industrial Society”, to Marx, alienation takes a number of forms. The laborer is, first of all, alienated from the product of his labor. He has no control over the disposition of the commodities he produces. Regarding this type of alienation, Marx states that “the
object which labor produces, its product, is encountered as an alien entity, a force that has become independent of its producer."

Second, the worker is alienated from the means of production. With the advent of the factory system, the worker no longer owned the tools or the machinery with which he worked. Through the wage contract he sold his labor as a commodity; and because he no longer had control over his life, his activity at work was estranged from the rest of his existence.

There is another type of alienation, however, that concerned Marx, which was written almost twenty-five years later. And this type of alienation is even more common today than when Marx first described it. This form of alienation has been labeled self-estrangement; it results from the fact that work no longer provides the opportunity for creative self-expression and hence, alienates man from himself. Marx notes the "separation of the intellectual powers of production from manual labor" through the use of machine technology and suggests that the "special skill of each individual, insignificant factory operative vanishes as infinitesimal quantity before science, the gigantic physical forces, and the mass of labor that are embodied in the factory mechanism."

It is the fact that work is a means rather than an end – is an instrumental rather than a consummatory activity- that gives it its alien character. According to Marx this form of alienation resulted not just from change in production technology, but also from the advent of the capitalist system economy.

Kohn (1976: 111-130) approaches the two fold hypotheses suggested by Marx’s analysis of the conceptual sources of alienation- one stressing control over the product of one’s labor; the other emphasizing control over the work process. Utilizing data from a sample of U.S. males employed in civilian occupations, it is concluded that, in this large-scale capitalist system, control over the product of one’s labor (ownership and hierarchical position) has only an indirect effect on alienation,
whereas control over work process (closeness of supervision, routinization, and substantive complexity) has an appreciable direct effect on alienation.

Today, several occupational sources of alienation have been identified – bureaucratization, centralization, formalism, authoritarianism, ownership of production process, hierarchical position in the organization, closeness of supervision, routinization, substantive complexity and type of industry. Alienation has been found to be the experience of not only workers, but also professionals, intellectuals, managers and scientists.

From the vantage point of the present, it seems clear that the complex differentiated division of labor generated by industrial technology would produce alienation from the work irrespective of the type of economic system in which it is embedded. (Faunce: 1968: 85-93)

On the other hand, Seeman has identified five alternative meanings of alienation (dimensions) that represent the major ways in which the concept has been used in traditional sociological analysis.

The first and perhaps most common of these usages is in terms of Powerlessness. It is this type of alienation with which Marx was primarily concerned in his analysis of the working class. It stands to mean loss of control over the important events that affect our lives. A second major usage of the term alienation may be labeled Meaninglessness. It refers more specifically to the difficulty in making appropriate standards for judgment regarding courses of action or patterns of belief. Situations have meaning to us to the extent that we are able to anticipate their outcome. Industrialism has increased the incidence of social situations that are meaningless in this sense. A third type of alienation is Normlessness. As this has been used in contemporary sociology, it has come to mean a circumstance in which there is no legitimate means to achieve socially prescribed goals. The expectation that it is necessary to use socially unapproved means to be successful illustrates normlessness in Seeman’s sense. Isolation represents a fourth way in which the concept of
alienation has been used. According to Seeman, “the alienated in the isolation sense are those who, like the intellectual, assign a low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society. The final variant of alienation found in sociological writing is Self-estrangement. A person is self-estranged when he engages in activities that are simply means to other ends. A person being alienated from himself under this circumstances because what he is doing is not something that he regards as being important.

Although these five types (dimensions) of alienation are conceptually independent, there are some ways in which they are linked. They may form a causal chain in which one or more types of alienation tend to produce another.

From the foregoing discussions, it seems that not necessarily in the capitalistic system but also in the modern industrial production system alienation is a possible reality and unavoidable risk.

c) Leisure

Leisure is one of the amorphously defined areas of human activity. A lot of ambiguity is reflected in the definitional attempts in the available writings to define the concept leisure and to distinguish it from work and recreation.

The concept of leisure derived from the Greek Schole meaning school. According to Greeks, School was pleasurable and leisure was a process of contemplation- a time for the cultivation of the mind and the self. (Duberman and Hartjen: 1979: 464)

Whereas from the contemporary point of view, Leigh and John (1971) suggest that the simplest definition for leisure is that “it is not work.” Similarly, according to Klausner and Samuel (1969) leisure implies temporal dimensions that “it is free time from moral, formal and obligatory demands of work and recreation implies engaging in mental or physical activity for its own sake.”
Though a number of variations may be found, most of the definitions tend to share one common element in essence that “leisure is that which remains after work is completed.” (Promila Sharma: 1980: 12)

Leisure in all societies whether tribal, peasant and industrial acquires significance when viewed against the dimension of work. Leisure experienced today is really a product of industrial society (Roberts, 1970). In the industrialized conditions leisure has acquired an almost equal importance in society as work. Writing about British society Burns (1967) argues that in industrial society leisure ceasing to be overshadowed by work and is becoming the element that gives the individuals meaning in every day life. In his study, The Worker in Affluent Society, Zweigs (1961) discovered that the workers felt the nature of their jobs gave no indications of the type of the people that they really were. It was the interests that they cultivated and the styles of life they adopted during their leisure upon which the workers based their self-identity.

Work and leisure are both important elements in people’s lives in terms of the time they consume. The rhythm of the individuals’ life is largely determined by the interplay between the demands made by work upon the individual and the demands that he makes upon its leisure (Kenneth Roberts, 1970:34) Here it is pertinent to note the observation made by Doberman and Hartjen (1979:465) that leisure energies are related to the world of work.

Several social thinkers have attempted to explain this interconnection between work and leisure theoretically. Rapheal (2002: 178) points out that as regard to seeking an explanation on ‘work-non-work relations’ in general, and on ‘work-leisure relations’ in particular, three basic models have been suggested in the literature; spillover, compensation, and segmentation.

The ‘spillover model’ states that the nature of one’s work experiences will carry over into the non-work domain and affect attitudes and behaviors there (Wilensky: 1960). According to segmentation model workers who experience a sense of
deprivation at work will compensate in their choice of non-work activities (Wilensky: 1960).


Thorkildsen (1986: 84) also makes reference to the ‘work- leisure models’. The approach adopted in his explanation is the same but he adopts different terminologies. For him there is one ‘Unconditional- leisure’- this is independent of work freely chosen; ‘Coordinated- leisure’ – this is similar to work such as undertaking a hobby; and ‘Complementary leisure’ which is independent of work in form and content, but the need to take part is influenced by one’s work such as being obliged to participate when it is expected of you.

Like Thorkildsen, Rapheal (2002: 178) also makes reference to third type of model viz., segmentation model proposed by Dubin (1958, 1973). This model claims that no relation exists between one’s work and one’s non- work domains; the two are lived out independently.

On the working of these models we can see some specific references in literature. For instance, in the section “Notes and communication” of the Journal of Economic Issues (P.996) it is mentioned, “workers, it seems, are entirely indifferent toward the content and intensity of the work they perform. Once at work, workers are the very models of obedience and hard work. Consent by workers is an inevitable consequence of their being paid wages that exactly compensate for their lost hours of leisure time.”

Like wise on the spending of leisure time Doberman and Hartjen, (1979: 465) says that leisure energies are related to the world of work. They also note that, research shows that rather than choosing leisure activities that are in opposition to
work activities, many people spend leisure routines reminiscent of their jobs. They engage in structured, organized leisure pursuits. In these activities the fun people have and the things people do are often highly programmed and standardized just as in the work settings they are supposedly escaping.

According to Roberts (1970: 26), a large number of sociological inquiries that probed the effects that various types of work have upon the ways in which leisure is spent have found that variations do exist in the way in which leisure time is used at different levels in the social scale. Many of the variations that have been identified have confirmed in repeated investigations.

Apart from the above, on exploring the relationship between the work and non-work domains when the worker is in the alienated state, Kelly and Kelly (1994: 253) observe, that leisure may be an extrinsic reward for alienated work. They quoted Mills, that 40 years ago that “each day men sell little pieces of themselves in order to buy them back each night and week end with the coin of fun.”

From the foregoing discussions it becomes evident that:

1. There is a interconnection between “Work and Technology”, “Technology and Work alienation” “Work and Leisure”, and “Work alienation and Leisure.”
2. Form time to time social researchers have attempted to unravel the theoretical and empirical interconnections between them, (whereas),
3. Most of them focused on either one of the each one of the pairs of relationship,
4. A combined effort to explore the totality of the relationship among them is very less and limited.

Hence, there is a need to fill this gap. The present study is therefore, undertaken to empirically ascertain the relationship between the key variables viz., “Assembly line production technology”, ‘Work alienation’ and Employee leisure orientation” and “Leisure participation.” And, that is the rationale for undertaking the present study as well.