CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Industrialization is a vital force in the economic development of a country. The economic history of developed countries reveals that the industrial sector has played and is still playing a major role in economic development. Industrial development, in turn, depends significantly on the availability and stability of a disciplined and competent labour force. Apart from the basic prerequisite of the recruitment of an adequate labour force, industrialization presupposes certain attitudinal attributes among workers such as an intelligent and rational outlook on work and life, willingness to accept routine, authority, discipline and even the monotony of factory work. That is, workers, who are drawn to work in industry, must be ready and able to accept the factory system that introduces changes in the forms of social structure, value orientation, motivation and norms of people. Hiring of workers may be relatively easy but keeping them constantly at work tends to be more difficult. Thus, the benefits of modern technology cannot be achieved unless workers possess attributes appropriate to its optimum utilization.

It is popularly believed that workers in the developing countries do not adequately possess the attributes of a disciplined and competent labour force. They are believed to be less adaptable to the demands generated by modern industrial system. Thus, the
absence of a specialized and competent industrial labour force in developing countries is popularly believed to be the main reason for a relatively low rate of industrial growth in such countries.

The lack of a competent and disciplined labour force in these countries is, in turn, attributed to factors such as traditional social culture (caste system, joint family, religion, etc.), rural origin, village ties, illiteracy of the workers (alleged incompatibility between the traditional culture and the modern industrial culture).

Bangladesh is a developing country with a social and cultural legacy almost similar to that of India. The country represents a composite picture of all the extremes of poverty, inequality, famine and deaths (PIFD) of third world countries. Demographic conditions are so extreme that 87.05 million (1981 census) people are crowded into 55,126 square miles area and over 90 per cent live in rural areas. This makes Bangladesh the most densely populated rural country in the world. Socio-economic conditions of the country are also extreme. Per capita incomes of the people are among the lowest in the world. More than 50 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age and only one quarter of the total population is engaged in economic activities. Less than 15 per cent of the adult population have five or more years of schooling (Chowdhury, E.H. 1983: 175). Agriculture is the major
More than three-fourths of its population is absolutely dependent on agriculture. The contribution of the industrial sector to the country's economy is still insignificant. The problem of development of its industrial sector has been a major issue before the planners, economists and leaders of the country. In view of the important role played by the workers in the development of the industrial sector, efforts are needed to be made in developing an effective industrial labour force in the country. Unfortunately not much systematic information is available about the industrial workers in Bangladesh. Popular beliefs suggest that workers in the country are less efficient and less productive than their counterparts in the industrialized countries. Managers and entrepreneurs in the country often express opinions such as, "industrial workers in Bangladesh lack commitment," "workers are only interested in securing more and more benefits, but are unwilling to work hard," "workers do not have interest in their work" and so on. In the background of such views and beliefs there is a need for a detailed study of workers' social background and attitude to work. Such studies might, in the long run, provide some guidelines in understanding industrial workers' problems and thereby help in formulating policies for developing an effective industrial labour force in the country. The present study aims at making some contribution in this area by examining workers' commitment to industry in two factories in Bangladesh.
In designing this study, I have mostly relied on researches undertaken in this field in countries like India which are similar to Bangladesh in terms of their traditional culture as well as the process of industrialization. The findings of researches in India are assumed to have a particular relevance in understanding the problems of industrial workers in Bangladesh.

Most studies follow the theory of commitment of the work force in dealing with the problems of industrialization in the developing countries. According to Moore and Feldman (1960), commitment involves both performance and acceptance of behavior appropriate to an industrial way of life. Their argument implies that industrial way of life is different from traditional or agricultural way of life and to be committed to industry a worker must accept the norms inherent in modern industry and behave in a way which is appropriate to the demands of modern industry. Similarly, Myers (1958) also says that an industrial way of life is opposed to an agricultural way of life. He states 'we can say that a 'committed' labor force has developed when workers no longer look on their industrial employment as temporary, when they understand and accept the requirement of working as part of a group in a factory or other industrial enterprise, and when they find the industrial environment a more adequate fulfillment of personal satisfactions than they enjoyed
in the village or rural society" (Myers: 1958: 36). Thus, to Moore and Feldman and so to Myers, a committed worker works in industry on a permanent basis and lives mainly on the enterprise earning, he accepts his job, work group and other conditions laid by the factory, and also the general factory discipline. Moreover, he will be a good performer, will not remain absent from his work for reasons other than genuine ones, he will be a permanent member of the city and will take part in community activities. Perhaps the most elaborate meaning of commitment is suggested by Kerr(1960). He says commitment is a complex process and involves the transformation of workers from traditional to modern industrial society. He places workers in four different stages along the continuum of commitment process. These stages are:

1) The uncommitted worker, who has no intention of entering industrial life on a permanent basis. He takes industrial job for a specified period. He is a tribal member temporarily away from his tribe. He is in industry but not yet of it.

2) The semi-committed worker, who works more or less regularly in industry but maintains his connection with the land. His wife and family remain on the tribal land where she(wife) largely supports herself and her children. Such worker generally settles in tribal area after retirement.

3) The committed worker, who has severed his connection with the land and with his tribal background. He is fully urbanized
and never expects to leave industrial life. His family is permanently resident in an urban area and it is not unusual for his wife also to enter the labour market. He leads purely an industrial way of life.

4) The over-committed worker is committed not only to the industrial life but also to his particular employer. He is not just a member of a permanent labour force, but of a small and closely prescribed segment of it.

According to Kerr, the industrial labour force in the developing countries will be dominated by the first two types of workers.

Some of the scholars interested in the problems of industrialisation in the developing countries maintain that the developing countries can not easily achieve the stage of rapid industrial growth because of the incompatibility between the traditional culture and the modern industrial culture. They observe that the values and behaviour of the traditional society are different from those of modern industrial culture. They go on to say that because of this incompatibility between two different cultures, industrial workers in the developing countries find it difficult to adjust to the new industrial system. To say it in other way, because of their pre-commitment to the traditional social system industrial workers in the developing countries are supposed to be uncommitted to industry and hence affect the rapid industrial growth. The factory system not only introduces new methods of production but also
generates changes in the forms of social structure, value-orientation, motivation and norms of people. Hoselitz (1960: 224) thus, suggested that with the advent of the factory system, the allocation of new occupational roles may involve major cultural adjustments and one may expect to find situations "when people still highly value agriculture as a way of life and when many of the industrial workers still resist full absorption into industrial proletariat".

Similarly, Slotkin (1960) is also of the opinion that most of the industrial workers in developing economies are 'green hands' straight out from farming. He contends that because of this sharp break in their occupation it becomes more difficult for workers to adjust to the demands of modern organised industry. Moreover, in developing societies factory labour is devalued relative to white collar, administrative or managerial jobs within the industrial or commercial sector of the economy. Because of such low value placed on factory labour, people would prefer other occupations, causing shortage of labour in industry. In Slotkin's view, even if such shortage of labour does not exist, factories would face another problem as factory labour force would be dominated by economically and socially lower groups who find their traditional culture inadequate.

Myers sees the problem from a somewhat different angle. He does not see the problem of recruitment (implying shortage) of labour as so serious but observes that the strong village ties
of the new industrial workers would come in the way to their commitment. He (Myers 1958 : 36) says, "As an economically underdeveloped nation moves towards industrialization, some part of the rural labor force is either pushed or pulled toward the growing industrial cities. The ties with the village and land may remain strong. The development of a labor force which accepts the discipline of factory work and the conditions of urban living is much slower than the initial recruitment of enough workers to man the mills and factories."

Such observations by different scholars led them to the conclusion that workers in a developing society show less adjustment, possess a lower level of commitment than those in a developed society.

Thus, according to them, the problem of labour force commitment is one of the major obstacles to the industrialization in the developing countries.

Most of the early observers on Indian industrialization are of the view that lack of commitment of the industrial labour force is one of the serious problems in Indian industries. They found almost all the symptoms of lack of commitment (like shortage of labour, low productivity, absenteeism, indiscipline, high labour turnover, etc.) among industrial workers in Indian industries.

They have attributed this to workers' agricultural origin, village ties, traditionalistic outlook, and excessive loyalty to traditional social systems like castes, joint family, etc. They have also shown that low caste groups of all kinds constituted an overwhelming proportion of the industrial labour force. The Royal Commission
on Labour in India (1931) reported that the deep roots the workers had in village society manifested themselves in absenteeism, high labour-turnover, and even an absolute shortage of labour to the point of affecting the rate of industrial growth. The report also suggested that the low caste groups of all kinds constituted an overwhelming proportion of the industrial labour force. It was argued that untouchables saw in factory work an escape from the inequities of the caste system in the village. Buchanan (1935) reported that the bulk of the industrial workers were recruited from among the hopelessly underprivileged segments of the village economy and society. These findings led the scholars to conclude that Indian workers lack commitment. Ornati (1955) is of the opinion that Indian workers are not interested in factory work and they find their previous life on the land more satisfying than the life in factory. He (Ornati, 1955: 46) goes on to say “whatever their reasons for leaving the village, Indian workers are not interested in factory work; they resist adjustment to the type of life which goes with industrial employment”. He also observed that the surplus of jobs over workers persisted until 1935. Myers (1958) argues that factory workers in India are partially committed to factory work in the sense that they want to retain their factory jobs but at the same time do not wish to relinquish ties with the village. He (Myers, 1958: 45) says “these Indian workers want to have their cake and eat it too;
they are partially committed to factory jobs in that they regard them as more or less permanent jobs which can be interrupted (but not lost) by periodic visits to the village."

Thus, most of the early observers found Indian workers lacking commitment to industry. But recent scholars have questioned the validity of such observations of earlier scholars. They contend that while there is some truth in these claims, they also contain a large element of exaggeration. They have demonstrated that Indian workers are fairly committed to industrial work.

Let us now discuss as to how the recent observers on Indian workers came to such conclusions. Early observers were of the view that factory work was manned by only those who migrated from villages and were from socially and economically deprived classes who had nothing or less to lose by leaving the village. Recent scholars like Lambert (1963), Sheth (1968), Vaid (1968), Sharma (1974), Holmstrom (1976) have shown that Indian workers now come from all sections of the society. They also suggest that factory labour is not dominated by green hands as asserted by Slotkin. Sheth (1981 : xii) says "for most people covered in my study, entry into factory jobs marked only a continuation of a movement from institutions and values of the traditional pre-industrial culture to a complex commercial - industrial culture." Though by this he emphasised on the question of compatibility between the pre-industrial culture and modern industrial culture it also
implies that his sample workers were not those who moved suddenly into the strange industrial world. He (Sheth, 1971: M 36) also says that in spite of the rural-agricultural nexus of Indian society, the country, for centuries, has had an urban sector with a socially heterogeneous population practising a variety of crafts and services. Focusing on the earlier notion that only lower caste people take to factory employment to avoid the evils of untouchability, Sheth has argued that upper caste people kept out of factory employment in the early stages not so much because it was considered unfit for them, but because it offered poor rewards.

It was earlier reported that there was an acute shortage of labour in Indian industries. Not only was skilled labour in short supply, so also was unskilled labour. In those years people came to the city in search of jobs during slack seasons in agriculture, usually without their wives and children, and again returned home during harvest season. They could not develop into a stable work force because after a brief period of work in factory they again returned to their villages to fulfil their obligations to their families and land. It was also argued that labour was immobile. They would not migrate over long distances in search of employment as they feared it would cause a sharp break in their social network. But these observations have been proved wrong by recent researchers. After careful study of the historical evidence Morris (1960) observes that at no point of time there was a shortage of
labour in industry. Desperate poverty in the countryside made available supply of labour who were interested in securing factory jobs. They also moved to far off places wherever there appeared any opportunity. For instability of labour force in industry Morris faults management's policy rather than workers' ties with the village. At that time, mill owners were not interested in maintaining a stable labour force because of their economic interests. They did not provide adequate housing facilities and other amenities for workers. Even Myers who feels Indian workers as partially committed, observes that a stable labour force is growing in those centres when adequate housing and other amenities are made available by employers and where group solidarities develop to take the place of social security system represented by the joint family in the village social structure. Recent scholars like Sheth (1968), Holmstrom (1976), Uma Ramaswamy (1979) have demonstrated that caste system does not pose any serious problem in the process of workers' commitment to industry. Sheth also demonstrated that the joint family system facilitated rather than obstructed workers' commitment to industry.

I shall now summarize some relevant literature in greater detail. One of the earliest observers who claim that Indian industrial workers are fairly committed to industrial work is Morris. After careful examination of recruitment and commitment in Bombay and
Jamsheedpur factories, Morris (1960 : 199) argues, "Historical evidence indicates that the transformation of a rural, traditionally organised population into a committed industrial labour force has not been socially difficult in India. The desperate poverty in the countryside made available a large labor supply that was eager to move into industry as opportunity appeared. Once employed in the factories, the workers on the whole rather readily adjusted to the disciplinary requirements of mechanized industry." His major findings are as follows:

1. At any point of time there was no such shortage of labour in factories. Some of the labour supply was, of course, seasonal but so was the demand for labour in factories. Moreover, mills also laid workers off in large numbers and imposed closures when there was a depression in business conditions.

2. Workers readily migrated over long distances when employment opportunities appeared.

3. Neither multiplicity of languages nor the institution of castes seriously affected employers' ability to obtain a labour force committed to factory system.

4. The industrial labour force has not been particularly unstable. The quality of labour and the degree of its commitment have
been more a result of managerial policies and market forces than the psychology of the workers or their involvement in the traditional social structures of caste, kinship and village.

Workers also participated in organised protest activities (like strike). This revealed that workers could easily form informal group relationships which implies their identification with own group people which, in turn, is an evidence of their commitment to industrial system.

In his study of five different factories in Poona, Lambert saw that workers were generally recruited through informal selection procedures like kinship, friendship etc, but workers were highly committed to their industrial occupation. Lambert (1963: 84) says, "If we view commitment as the intention to try to remain in factory employment, more than three-fourths of the workers are committed. If we take Moors and Feldman's notion of occupational commitment as over commitment almost half the workers show this degree of commitment." Like Morris he also faults management more than workers for any lack of commitment, for the management kept about 20 per cent of the workforce in temporary status. He observes, the same group of workers which was committed to industrial
employment also retained its link with village. He notes that workers were highly committed occupationally but had not made the shift from a village-based to city-based network of relationships. He shows while young workers were more committed than old workers, skill, length of industrial experience, income, education and family size of workers had no clear influence on workers’ commitment.

In his study in an engineering factory in Gujarat, Sheth (1968) shows a fair amount of compatibility between the traditional social system and the modern industrial system. These systems, far from being in conflict, accommodate each other and reinforce workers’ role in the factory as well as in the community. The significance of his study rests in its emphasis on the point that if the factory and social networks are located in the same place worker can better perform his role as a worker as well as a member of his family and community. Sheth studied workers’ commitment on the basis of migratory status of the workers. He classified workers into four categories: permanent residents of the city where the factory was located, semi-permanent migrants, temporary migrants and village-based workers. For the permanent residents the social network and the job were located in the same place. Factory employment helped them to better fulfil their social
obligations. They were so committed to the particular factory and the place of residence that they did not want to move to other places (for jobs) even for better opportunities, because it would cause a break in their close social network. The semi-permanent migrants had social links with the village but these were less obligatory in nature. The attention of temporary migrants was divided between the factory and the village. They had an interest in their village lands and the village social networks, but these interests were taken care of by the joint family. If a worker had his father or brother in the village, these relatives took care of his social obligations and also of whatever land he possessed. In fact, the joint family was interested in the money earned by the worker, as it supplemented the income of the whole family. Thus, the joint family system facilitated rather than obstructed his commitment to the factory. The village based workers were also in several respects in the same position as permanent residents. The close proximity of their village social network helped them perform better in the factory.

Vaid's study (1968) also concluded that most of the workers at Kota (Rajasthan) were committed (adjusted) to factory work. Vaid found superior technology, bigger size (employment capacity) of the plant and higher job status were positively
related to superior adjustment. Nature of ownership (whether public or private) of the plant failed to have any impact on workers' adjustment to the factory system. With respect to personal factors, higher income, higher education and higher skill of the workers induced superior adjustment. Again, irrespective of job status, immigrants (from outside the state) showed superior adjustment than the local workers. However, age, caste, rural-urban origin, work experience and dependency load of the workers had no significant relation with their adjustment to the factory system. Vaid's study shows that commitment is more significantly related to factors intrinsic to work than to the social background of the workers.

In his study in an automobile plant in Bombay, Sharma (1974) observed that the factory was socially selective in recruiting workers. Factory workers differed from the surrounding population with respect to their socio-personal background. The factory appeared to prefer the educated workers over the non-educated, urban-born over the rural-born, and those with industrial or urban work experience over the ones having no experience or with a background in non-industrial occupations. Sharma found little association between caste status and occupational status (within the factory) of the workers. Using a seven-item index of commitment, Sharma found that more than three fifths of the workers in his study were either highly or moderately committed to factory
work. He found work technology as the only factor influencing workers' commitment irrespective of socio-cultural background of the workers. Sharma (1974: 46) says, "traditional Indian culture appears to present no serious obstacles to the workers in either accepting factory employment or in becoming committed to industrial work. Moreover, the commitment of workers seems to be influenced not by their traditional backgrounds but by work technology within the factory."

In his study of commitment and motivation of blue-collar workers, Mathuchidambaram (1972) found that only one-third of the respondents had the experience of living in villages and the majority had never lived in villages and majority entered the industry because of its inherent attractiveness (mainly because of financial incentives). He found that majority of his sample workers closely reflected the features of committed worker (not even those of semi-committed or uncommitted workers). He saw financial incentives provided by the company in the forms of higher pay, financial security, permanency of job and good fringe benefits as the main reason to induce workers' commitment.

In his study in a large factory located in a new industrial centre in West Bengal, Sengupta (1975) found a substantial majority of the workers were permanently committed to remain in the industrial
labour market. His study does not confirm the proposition that permanent urban residence leads to greater commitment. His study shows that rural based workers were as committed to factory occupation as permanent residents of the town. Not only permanent urban workers but even the rural workers had a continuous need for money which explained their permanence in the labour market. But the same group of workers did not fully accept the industrial discipline. Management's policy and high fragmentation of the labour movement along political lines resulting in intense inter-union rivalry were found to be the reasons for indiscipline among the workers.

Another significant study on Indian workers was made by Holmstrom (1976) in Bangalore. He studied (using mainly participant-observation method) workers' attitude to work and their concept of a career in industry as well as life in urban community in relation to forces of traditional institutions. He demonstrated that Bangalore workers had a rationalistic outlook about their career and job. They behaved and thought in the same way as most of their counterparts in western industrial societies do. To them, factory was a citadel of security and relative prosperity. They saw factory work as a career and industrialism as a good way of life. The caste system had little effect to them. Holmstrom saw
very little difference between Bangalore workers and British affluent workers studied by Goldthorpe and his associates (1968) in their orientation to work. Like their British counterparts Bangalore workers were instrumentally oriented to their work. They were production conscious, and wanted jobs which were interesting and varied. At the same time they also wanted jobs which gave more monetary rewards and offered better security. Bangalore workers were not different from the other Indian people in terms of social customs and religious practices.

In a study of industrial workers in Coimbatore, Uma Ramaswamy (1979) observed that for each worker there was an endeavour to improve his own economic position. Most of the workers were friendly and cooperative with others. This intimacy was extended from the work place to the outside life. They were politically conscious and this political consciousness seems to have neutralised the caste differences. Few upper caste workers would discriminate with Harijans on the basis that they are untouchables. Uma Ramaswamy's study supports the view of Srinivas (1962) that the establishment of a single factory might do more to ease inter-caste relations than an equivalent money spent on propaganda in favour of inter-caste dining and marriage. Uma Ramaswamy's study shows that workers have emerged as a stratum with a distinctive industrial way of life.
From the above studies it is clear that there is no inevitable incompatibility between the traditional social system and the modern industrial system. The study of a Guatemalan community by Nash (1958) points out several aspects of traditional community life and values which facilitated workers' commitment to industry. In a study of Puerto Rican workers, Gregory (1960) also showed that the organisation of factory production does not represent radical change from pre-industrial pattern. Puerto Rican rural proletariat had readily adapted to the industrial order because it did not feel a prior commitment to any other order. The example of Japanese type life-time commitment is a well known fact. In a comparative study of British factory and Japanese factory, Dore (1973) found that the traditional kinship system and hierarchical order were not disrupted by industry. The success of Japanese industries is also attributed to the emphasis of hard work in Japanese culture. Thus it is clear that the traditional social system does not obstruct, and may even facilitate, the process of workers' commitment to industry.

While one can find a good number of researches on industrial workers in countries like India, such studies are rather few in the context of workers in Bangladesh. Moreover, of the few of such studies, most were undertaken cursorily. Weatherford Jr. in Galenson (ed., 1963 : 22) writes, "The only thorough survey
of the source of the industrial labourers in Pakistan (which then included Bangladesh) was made for Bengal at the University of Dacca in 1954. In that study it was found that only 4 per cent of the workers considered themselves residents of the town where they were employed. While 84 per cent came from other parts of the same province, and 12 per cent had migrated from other provinces, some 55 per cent of the workers owned land in their home villages. The previous job of 28 per cent of these workers was farming.

While 52 per cent of them had fathers or grandfathers who were farmers and thus belonged to an agricultural tradition. Nearly a seventh of the industrial workers returned to their villages during sowing and harvest seasons. The study concludes that "... there is often a far more intimate connection of the industrial worker with agriculture than the Report of the Royal Commission would suggest (Quoted by Weatherford, 1963: 22-23).

From a survey in East Pakistan, Hussain, (1956: 310-311) concludes that a majority of the workers are more or less maladjusted to factory life. In some cases the degree of maladjustment is so considerable that they are anxious to quit at the earliest opportunity. He finds the most important sources of maladjustment as matters of working conditions, food, housing, sanitation, contact with one's family and treatment by supervisors.

One can hardly expect a committed labour force from such
maladjusted workers. Hussain finds factory workers, on the whole being satisfied with their wages which were less than the income of subsistence farmer owning his own land, but much higher than the wages of landless agricultural workers.

In a study of the problems of social integration of industrial workers in an industrial centre in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) Husain and Farouk (1963) found the majority of the workers were below the age of 25 years and mostly were literates. The majority of the workers came from villages and were brought up in rural environment before joining the factory and the largest proportion of the workers belonged to families pursuing rural occupation. Most workers expressed desire to work in factory till retirement and only 20 per cent of the workers indicated their preference in favour of occupations connected with land in the village. However, many workers found factory discipline as disagreeable. Most of the workers were dissatisfied with wages, job security and the management but interestingly they were highly satisfied with their coworkers and supervisors. Workers were divided into different regional groups and there was always an intergroup conflict among the workers. Hussain and Farouk's study concludes that workers were maladjusted with the urban living (because of insufficient housing facilities and other urban amenities) and their social integration (among different
groups and also among workers and the local people) was very low. Their study suggests that such lack of integration can be reduced by promoting common living, common recreations and other common activities such as trade-union and cultural activities (which will bring different social groups together).

The Bangladesh Context

So far I have discussed the existing literature on the problem of labour commitment in some developing countries including Bangladesh. In order to get a clearer view of the problem of workers' commitment in this study it seems necessary to discuss, in brief, some of the socio-cultural aspects prevailing in the country. Bangladesh was a part of British India until the 14th of August 1947 (East Bengal) and part of Pakistan until the 25th of March 1971. Though for decades there have been crafts of special skill in some urban centres but large scale industries were practically non-existent. Industrialization is relatively new in the country. During the British period, there were no large scale industries except some cotton textile and sugar factories. After partition, the then Government of Pakistan undertook steps to establish some large scale industries. But the rate of industrial growth has been rather slow. This, in turn,
affected the growth of industrial labour force. Industrial workers were in small numbers and relatively inexperience.

On the eve of liberation of Bangladesh (1971) the labour force employed in industry was estimated at around 976,000 (Sobhan and Ahmed, 1980:77). Within this, the labour force in organized industry was even smaller. However, since the liberation of Bangladesh, the industrial labour force has grown rather rapidly. With the growing rate of poverty in village (because of rapid population growth resulting in fragmentation and uneconomic holdings) a large number of people started moving towards towns for an earning and in this process some of them could manage to get factory employment. However, the industrial labour force still constitutes only a small proportion of the total labour force in the country.

The country contains a relatively homogeneous population in terms of religion and ethnic status. More than 85 per cent of the country's population is constituted by Muslims. But it does not mean that the country is having an absolutely Islamic culture. Through long association with Hindus, Muslims have developed a distinct culture containing attributes of both Hinduism and Islam. People have real faith in Allah, they offer regular prayers in mosques but do not chop the hands of a thief as ordained by the Islamic scriptures. They accept Islam as a good way of life but
are not fundamentalists. The liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistan itself is a clear example that the nation is not primarily based on religion. It is Bengalee nationalism which separated them from Pakistan. The caste system is not followed as rigidly as among the Hindus. Islam emphasizes the equality of men, all pray together and social mixing is fairly free. However, there are readily identifiable caste-like groups which carry the connotation of particular occupations. Like the Hindus, Bangladesh Muslims also live in joint families. However, the influence of religion is still predominant among the people. On so many occasions one hears people say Allahi dile (Allah wills it) implying that everything depends on the will of Allah. This good faith in Allah, while makes them keep away from all misdeeds, but at the same time restricts their efforts to a limited extent. All efforts are bound to fail unless Allah wishes it.

Another important aspect of Bangladesh Muslim culture is the concern for maintenance and improvement of one's izzat which implies prestige and honour, but often includes status and power too. In the contemporary Bangladesh society, more money or more wealth means more izzat. Money can improve one's standard of living as well as power. A person's position in the society (generally) is determined not by what he does or who he is but by what he earns and how much of material wealth he possesses. Eating in luxurious
hotels and spending on luxury items like a car, television, refrigerators, etc. are now gaining importance in determining one's *izzat* in the society. The industrial workers also may be influenced by such attitudes.

Objectives of the Study

My main objective in this study is to contribute to the understanding of commitment to industry among the industrial workers in Bangladesh. Here commitment to industry means commitment to industrial occupation. In dealing with the concept of commitment, I shall mainly use the proposition of Myers that a committed labour force has developed when workers no longer look upon their industrial employment as temporary, when they understand and accept the requirement of working as part of a group in a factory or other industrial enterprise, and when they find in the industrial environment a more adequate fulfilment of personal satisfactions than they enjoy in the village or rural society. Thus, according to our working definition, a committed worker is the one who prefers and accepts his industrial occupation on a permanent basis (does not like to shift to other occupations), accepts the general factory discipline, lives mainly on his enterprise earning, nurses a high degree of occupational aspiration for himself as well as for his
children, and has at best marginal connections with the village. According to the above definition my main measure of workers' commitment will consist of workers' preference for and acceptance of industrial occupation as the principal (if not the only) source of livelihood vis-a-vis other sectors of employment. However, to have a clearer view of the nature of workers' commitment I would also like to examine the information on commitment in relation to workers' socio-economic background, their union involvement and community life outside the factory, the recruitment practices followed by employers, and the aspects of work conditions existing in the industry. Towards this end, my major questions for the purpose of this study are:

a) Who are the industrial workers in Bangladesh?
   What is their socio-personal background?

b) How are they recruited in industry? How and to what extent are they committed to industry? What social factors influence their commitment?

c) How do they view their own job (task), supervision, workgroup, management, etc.? What do they want most from their job? To what extent are they satisfied with the various aspects of their job?

d) To what extent do they show their interest in trade unions? How far are they involved in union activities?
a) How far do they identify themselves with the urban industrial community? To what extent do they participate in urban community activities?

Method of the Study

This is a sociological study of industrial workers in two different factories in Bangladesh. The study is based mainly on the information collected through personal interviews and discussion with 285 blue collar workers from two factories so mentioned. The interviews were conducted with the help of an open-ended interview schedule. Apart from this, I also observed the activities of some workers during the period of my fieldwork over six months between November 1980 and May 1981. I chose the open-ended interview schedule to be able to collect more realistic attitudinal data. Moreover, in order to have a deeper understanding of workers' attitudes and behaviour I collected some qualitative information pertaining to the subject of my study by discussing with some management personnel, worker leaders and people around the factories.

I must confess that the selection of the two factories for my study was not based on a pre-determined objective. Initially, I thought of covering factories of divergent nature (in terms of size, technology, location, type of products, nature of ownership, etc.) for my study. Accordingly I started sending letters to
different factories for their approval in conducting my study. I also personally approached the management of different factories to extend their cooperation in conducting my research. But all efforts were in vain. Even the letters of recommendation from my guide as well as the Chairman of the Department of Management, Dhaka University, were of little use in getting approval. Despite of distinctively stated purpose and an assurance of absolutely academic nature of my study, I failed to secure the cooperation of any management. While some thought my study as useless for their purpose, others apprehended disruption of normal work and dissatisfaction among workers. Some managements even mistook me as secret agent in the guise of a researcher. Some just thought I might expose their misdeeds (?) to the outside world. With such experience behind me, I started looking for other alternatives. I thought it would be better to come in contact with the factory management through informal channels. In the process I came in contact with a friend who had good relations with the Managing Director of one factory. With the help of the friend I came in contact with the Managing Director. After a brief talk about the subject of my study and after having a glance at my interview schedule, he agreed to allow me to conduct my study but with two conditions: (i) that I should not try to use any official record of the company and (ii) that during the course of the interviews
with workers I should not raise issues which might arouse any kind of militancy among workers. I thought it was better to accept such conditions than to go without any information. While my study in that factory was in progress I received a note from one of my friends working in another factory as a junior executive. He had managed to get approval from the management to conduct my study there. This approval was also subject to the conditions similar to those mentioned above. These conditions laid heavy constraint on my ability to collect the necessary information. For instance, I could not use indices like absenteeism, turnover, action taken against indiscipline of the workers, etc. for studying workers' commitment. I therefore concentrated on getting accurate views of the workers on different aspects by freely mixing and talking with them and by collecting information from other people. Here I must acknowledge that inspite of the above conditions I received full cooperation from some management personnel in both the factories. The case of the Technical Manager in one of the factories is worth mentioning here. He not only extended full cooperation in conducting my research in his department but also requested all other heads to extend full cooperation to me. In the course of my interviews, whenever I faced any problem I used to go to him for help and received it promptly. Similarly, in the other factory, some management personnel (Administrative Officer, Labour Officer, to cite in particular) helped me in
conducting my research in different ways. Through them I came in contact with the union president and secretary who, in turn, were of much help in arranging my interviews with workers.

From the workers' front also initially I did not receive a good welcome for my study. It took me some days to gain their confidence in me and about the purpose of my study. In one instance, the Technical Manager called some workers to his room, explained the purpose of my study and asked them to help me with the interviews. Initially, they gave quick answers on matters of their personal background like, age, marital status, children, experience, native place etc. But when I started asking their views about job, supervision, management, etc. they felt hesitation in giving answers. Later, when I developed their confidence they told me that they had mistaken me as the company's agent who might expose the bad elements in the factory. However, throughout the course of my interviews, workers' cooperation was quite encouraging. Yet, there were some workers who did not want me to talk even with others. I just either tried to avoid them or agreed whatever they said. Some thought of me as a university student (undergraduate) who was asked to submit a report on workers for his course (degree). Some just wondered seeing me moving from this place to that place, some times talking with workers and sometimes
sitting and talking with the officers.

As I could not make use of official records, the selection of workers for interview purpose was mainly based on the management's convenience and workers' cooperation. Later, with the growing confidence of workers, management's convenience became less crucial. But I took as much care as possible to include workers representing diverse skills and social characteristics.

Initially I started talking with workers on the shop floor. Both the factories arranged place for me for my interview purpose. When I could develop intimacy with workers the place of my interview also was extended from the shop floor to canteen, workers houses, market places, play grounds, etc. I used to make appointments with workers to visit their houses, quarters, etc. Workers also, in turn, used to invite me to their houses, for a cup of tea, for special occasions, or for just a visit or talk. Sometimes I used to play with them out-door games in the field, carrom in the market place or cards in their rooms. Some times my talks with workers proceeded beyond the subject matter. Such talks ranged from matters of personal life to subjects like company situation, political or community affairs, over all law and order situation of the country, etc. Though a little lingering and time consuming, such an approach helped me get into depth of the workers attitude on the subject.
In Chapter II, the two factories under study are described to acquaint the reader with their various aspects relevant to the present study. In Chapter III, I shall discuss, the workers' socio-personal characteristics from the viewpoint of recruitment of the industrial workforce in the Bangladesh context.

Chapter IV deals with the main theme of the thesis. It examines workers' commitment to industrial occupation, using some behavioural but mostly attitudinal information on commitment. The influence of some socio-personal factors on workers' commitment to industrial occupation is also discussed in this Chapter. Chapter V discusses workers' attitudes and views about various aspects of work situation such as job, workgroup, supervision and management as well as about conditions of employment like wages, promotional opportunities, job security, and other facilities. Chapter VI examines workers' interest and involvement in union activities.

Chapter VII discusses workers' extra-factory life, their interest in community affairs and their involvement in community activities. The last Chapter includes a brief overview of the main observations and conclusions presented in this thesis.