CHAPTER I

Since the first dawn, man has to earn his daily bread. The meaning and variety of work in which he has engaged over the centuries and across various cultures have differed, depending upon the particular context. It is difficult to define work because the definitions regarding work are confined to economic and social factors. These definitions do not include the wide variety of behaviours involved. Work is partly an attitude of a person and one man's work may be another man's play. Hence work is of a paramount importance in the psychological life of the individual.

A man's working life spans from forty to fifty years. He has to give it a sufficient period of time. For the child the world of work is remote and without meaning. But gradually, as the child develops, he comes to grips with the meaning of work and faces the problem of choosing a particular occupation from amongst the bewildering myriad of vocations. The act of occupational choice becomes important. Preparation for the job and striving for some sort of success becomes his sole purpose.

Occupation may be defined as one's habitual employment, business, trade or calling or whatever an adult spends most of his time doing. It may be what does he do to earn a living or it may not. It may be some
sort of duty or duties. Being a housewife is an occupation so is
being a mother. Being a father is not an occupation because it does
not occupy the major part of man's time and it is not the main focus
of his activities.

In making the vocational choice an individual is faced with,
perhaps, the most important decision of his life. Entering into an
occupation which the individual finds suitable for himself and with
which he can make proper adjustments and feel satisfied, is the crucial
decision which conditions and colours his entire life. Lack of
adjustment and satisfaction in his vocation does not only make him an
occupational misfit but also vitiates his own home and other personal
relationships, making failure and frustration the hallmark of his
approach to every problem. Such a crucial decision should, therefore,
be made more wisely and without excessive emotional overtones. Scientific
studies of the occupational decision making process have revealed that
although physical and mental growth and development result from the
social and intellectual experiences of the individual in an average
socio-cultural setting, it does not necessarily render the individual
mature enough to make a vocational decision. The problem of vocational
choice has been studied for the last half a century or more in its
multivariate forms, starting with such extraneous factors as father's
occupation, family traditions and identification with key persons in the
environment, it has come to study the role of much more important and
dynamic factors such as the developmental processes, individual vocational
maturity and personality dynamics.
In its methodological aspects the study of vocational behaviour spreads through survey, the questionnaire, the interview, the interest inventory and the attitude scale and aptitude testing. It is only recently that the attention of investigators in the field of vocational behaviour has been diverted towards the experimental approach to study vocational choice in particular and other areas of vocational behaviour in general. It may, however, be said that no proper experimental study has been undertaken in the field of vocational choice as yet. More than any other type, the theoretical research has dominated vocational psychology since 1950. There are very many propositions in most of the theories which have not been experimentally evaluated. It is true that very few systematic and experimental studies have been conducted in vocational psychology but it does not mean that such research is impossible to design or carry out. John O'Crites latest research anthology entitled vocational psychology (1969) passionately pleads the case of experimental research in the field of vocational choice. Crites has quoted Goodstein (1965) who has suggested an experimental paradigm of research in the field of vocational choice. It may be pointed out that Goodstein's paradigm is only suggestive and he has not actually undertaken investigation on the suggested lines. We are for the first time taking up this paradigm to undertake an experimental investigation.

Goodstein's paradigm confines itself to the study of indecision and indecisiveness in vocational choice. In suggesting a programme of research on these lines Goodstein breaks new ground. An investigator
treading the path of experimental research in a new field feels to be on unsure ground, not only because one is not sure of the type of results that may emerge but also because of the uncertainty of manipulating variables which may present unforeseen difficulties of designing and control. Even if these problems are resolved with satisfaction, the new constructs developed on the basis of the findings of such experimental investigation remain unverified and therefore may lack respectability usually enjoyed by oft repeated experiments in other allied fields.

In view of the considerations enumerated above it is felt that in case the experimental investigation of vocational indecision and indecisiveness are related to relevant conventional concepts, this may prove rewarding and the findings may be established as experimentally verified and verifiable, without much hesitation. It is, therefore, planned to relate vocational indecision and indecisiveness with the dimension of conflict resolution.

It may be pointed out that the critical consideration in differentiating indecision and indecisiveness is, "the assessment of the role of Anxiety in the etiology of the problem". (Goodstein, 1965). Inability to make a vocational choice may be linked with either one of the two quite different antecedent conditions. Indecision is related to limitation of experience in the vocational development of the individual, which has restricted his opportunities to acquire or
learn the responses necessary to make a vocational choice. As a result the individual fails in accomplishing the vocational development task of choosing of an occupation and experiences Anxiety. This Anxiety plays a rather minor role in the etiology of the problem. Primarily, it is the result of the individual not availing himself of the resources available for resolving a problem (conflict resolution). Once the individual is exposed to the appropriate experience he only will not feel anxious but will also be able to make a vocational choice (Resolve conflict).

In contrast indecisiveness is directly related to antecedent Anxiety. An individual who has sufficient opportunities in his previous vocational development to learn the responses which would facilitate to resolve the problem of vocational choice successfully but because of interfering anxiety aroused by the necessity of making a decision, he has either not acquired the responses or, if he has, he is unable to act appropriately. Thus, avoiding making a decision due to the fear of arousing anxiety, exhibits a general personality characteristic which is termed as indecisiveness. Competing response tendencies (to make a decision or not to make a decision) evoked by a conflict situation block and interfere with the decision making in the case of those who score high on a manifest Anxiety Scale. Kamano and Galesburg (1963) and many others have established that those high on Taylor manifest anxiety scale take longer time to resolve a conflict and those low on the scale resolve conflict
efficiently.

In the final phase of this investigation we propose to study the relationship between indecision and conflict resolution time, and indecisiveness and conflict resolution time. The assumption being that those exhibiting high Anxiety shall exhibit indecisiveness as also high conflict resolution time. Whereas those showing vocational indecision may take comparatively shorter time to resolve conflict.

Operational Definitions of Indecision and Indecisiveness

From the conceptual definitions of indecision and indecisiveness "E/C" or "S-R, E/C" (May 1951 and Underwood, 1957 respectively) can be formulated in order to define operationally this concept. This paradigm for this type of definition is the comparison of the effect upon behaviour of a Zero amount of treatment with that of some definite amount, "If there is a reliable difference in behaviour resulting from these two conditions, the procedures used to derive it define the phenomenon. The symbols, E/C, refer to Experimental and control conditions. The experimental condition is the one having a finite amount of a given stimulus condition, the control condition, Zero amount (Underwood, 1957, p. 69, John 'O' Crites - The study of vocational Behaviour and Development).

If under this design, the number of choices in the experimental
**FIG. 1**

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF INDECISION AND INDECISIVENESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Choice</td>
<td>) &quot;Undecided&quot;</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Choice (EC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory WCI1</td>
<td>)</td>
<td>&quot;Informational Experience&quot;</td>
<td>Indecision Subjects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>VCI2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No Choice (ENC)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Indecisive Subjects</td>
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<td>Choice (CC)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>VCI2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>No Choice (CNC)</td>
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</tbody>
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group is significantly greater upon retest than in the control group; and if within the experimental group there are some subjects who make a choice upon retest and some who are not able to make a choice even upon retest, it can definitely be said that the former exhibit vocational indecision and latter indecisiveness (Fig. 1).

In case there are no significant differences in the choice behaviour of the experimental and control groups, than the changes from no choice to choice between test and retest would have to be attributed to either the error variance in the choice inventory or some other factor than the effect of the experimental treatment.

In defining the indecision and indecisiveness, it has been assumed that the reason some subjects in the experimental group fail to make a vocational choice, despite treatment with the informational experience, is that Anxiety produces counteracting effects to nullify the informational treatment and therefore these subjects fail to make a choice. Here the question arises what we mean from anxiety and what role it plays in the vocational choice of an individual.

At first sight, Anxiety and Fear seems to be the one and the same. There is certain amount of kinship between the two. They are emotional reactions to a danger, sometimes accompanied by physical sensation as trembling, perspiration and a violent heart beat. Fear is a reaction that is proportionate to the danger one has to face, whereas Anxiety is disproportionate reaction to a danger, or even a
reaction to an imaginary danger. When someone has to meet his boss for the first time, we call his reaction Anxiety. If someone has lost his way in a forest and it is raining heavily, we call his reaction a fear. In the case of fear the danger is transparent and objective whereas in the case of Anxiety it is hidden and subjective.

A widespread interest among researchers in the effects of Anxiety on performance in various tests and learning situations suggests the potential fruitfulness of a study designed to assess the effects of this variable on vocational decision making.

With the expansion of industry in the Indian society and acceleration of industrial development after independence, the old Feudal system with its basis on the division of labour prescribed by the caste system has come to a crumbling end. It may be emphasised that this happened almost overnight without any preparation to face the problems of adequate and scientific use of the tremendous human resources that we have. There is no doubt that a tinkering with the problem of man-power planning has begun and we are having some talk about vocational education and bringing about some harmony in between the needs of a developing industrial economy and our man-power resources.

Technicians, specialists and experts cannot be made to order in democratic society with any pretensions of the liberty of the
individual. We do not know if ever a totalitarian, regimental and autocratic set up can supply its technocrats to order. This, however, is sure that India being a constitutional democracy with all the professed liberties guaranteed to the individual, cannot and should not curb the freedom of the individual to prepare himself and follow the profession of his choice.

No doubt that the broader and collective aspects of man-power planning are the legitimate domain of the economist and the planning expert. We have no pretentions to touch upon man-power planning as a collective and a social discipline. As students of psychology we are to delimit the sphere of investigation to the choice behaviour of the individual. As has already been pointed out a few survey type and some field studies of the decision making process have been undertaken in our country. But an experimental investigation is still a far cry in this field of psychology. We have for the first time, on the basis of the paradigm proposed by Goodstein, have undertaken an experimental study of the decision making process. It may be pointed out that the experimental variable (Experience or information about the preferred occupation) of this study does provide an important clue to vacillation of our youth in the present day society. We are painfully aware of the fact that to claim broader implications of the findings, of a tightly improvised experimental study, to say the least, is amiss. Yet we are not hesitant in emphasising the importance of an experimental variable like that of
ours, particularly when it is being manipulated in the context of the sample population comprising the university youth of to-day.

Originating with the works of Luria (1932) and Lewin (1935), the study of conflict, its types and resolution have engaged the attention of the psychologists such as Miller and Murry (1952), Hoveland and Sears (1938), Murry and Berkun (1955), Andreas (1958) and Arkoff (1957).

Luria, Lewin, Hoveland and Sears, Andreas and Arokoff mainly worked with human subjects. Almost all investigators engaged in experimental work on conflict and its types, have defined conflict after the work of Lewin (1935). Lewin himself defined conflict as "a situation in which oppositely directed, simultaneously acting forces of approximately equal strength work upon the individual." (1935).

The present investigation is to study the effect of vocational choice situations upon decision making. Conflict in this study is therefore defined as the situation of choice in which two alternatives are reacted to/approximately equal in preference.

Almost all investigators have come to the conclusion that the avoidance-avoidance type of conflict takes a longer time to resolve than the approach-approach type of conflict. Further the interaction effect of different variables is found to be highly significant in the case of Avoidance-Avoidance type of conflict as compared to
that of the interaction effect of the Approach-Approach type of conflict.

It has also been established that the time taken to resolve a conflict is the function of antecedent Anxiety.

Concluding it can be commented that research concerning decision making has revealed a number of shortcomings. Most notable is the lack of experimentation and heavy reliance on descriptions of career behaviour based on observations of convenient samples. Meaningful research has also been seriously hampered by a lack of valid instruments of measurement. What is needed to bring about a balance is empirical and experimental studies. This study is an effort towards such a goal so that relationships between variables influencing the vocational decision making are validly established and research data is interpreted only in a parsimonious way without being subjected to the wide variety of interpretations which is usually the case at the present.