CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Individuals join formal organisations to fulfil their personal goals and objectives while contributing to the betterment of the organisation. The relationship of an individual with the employing system takes the form of an exchange relationship. Both the system and the individual look forward to a mutually beneficial exchange. The nature of their behaviour is shaped by the type and intensity of this exchange. Theorists and researchers in the field of organisational behaviour have been spending innumerable hours in analysing the dynamics of this relationship.

1.2. Employing systems in the past were founded on a concern of proprietary, which induces a self-assigned responsibility and a sense of belonging. In the absence of such a proprietary concern in modern day professional organisations, managements are exploring the ways to create and protect committed professionals to safeguard the interests of organisations.

1.3. The goals of an organisation and the objectives it sets for its employees (including professionals) are not the same as those of the profession, or as those of the person. There exists a discrepancy between these, and organisations try to reduce this by developing certain integrating mechanisms. Whatever be the nature of the
profession, an organisation requires the individual to commit himself to the organisation for the attainment of its objectives. When professionalism in one acts against the interests of the organisation, the organisational processes which integrate the professional goals and the organisational goals become very important. Organisational commitment, or the commitment of one to an organisation, is such an integrating mechanism.

1.4. Students of organisational behaviour and organisational researchers have been attempting on reliable linkages between employee attitudes and organisationally relevant behaviours. Organisational commitment (or one's commitment to an organisation) had been such a construct which attracted the attention of many researchers in the past. In the past two decades, organisational research had been dominated by the voluminous work done on the various dimensions of commitment. It is therefore difficult for any one to find any comprehensive work, that does not in some way or other refer to the construct of organisational commitment of employees or professionals.

1.5. Organisational commitment generally is defined as a partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of the organisation. It is conceived as capable of producing continued stay, better productivity and overall effectiveness to the organisation. Some organisational researchers treat commitment as a dimension of
organisational effectiveness (Schein, 1988), while others (Steers, 1977, Porter, 1976) treat it as a force that contributes to increased organisational effectiveness by improving the performance of workers and reducing their organisational turnover.

1.6. While reviewing the literature it is seen that organisational commitment had been conceptualised in a number of ways. All conceptualisations show a common link between commitment and turnover. More important than this similarity however, are the differences between various conceptualisations of commitment. There exists a lot of confusion surrounding the conceptual distinctions reflected in measuring it. The attention given to the development of measures of commitment that conform closely to the researcher's particular conceptualisation has been relatively less. Most of these differences in conceptualisation involve the psychological state reflected in commitment, the antecedent conditions leading to its development, or, the behaviours that are expected to result from commitment.

1.7. The issue of commitment, at the initial stages, was mainly discussed in the context of structuring the labour force. It explored the causes of lack of adjustment of labour force with the industrial way of life, especially in the third world countries. The earlier attempts in this regard focused on the causes and consequences of labour migration and concluded rather abruptly, though with the support of studies, that the pull of the traditional society prevents
the process of absorption of the industrial work force from the industrial way of life

1.8. Many have attempted to study the antecedents of 'commitment towards an organisation', the outcomes of it and the different types of commitment behaviour. Commitment in general and commitment towards an organisation in particular is important because of the possible outcomes that brings in. Even though, there have been studies on the commitment of various professionals (scientists, nurses, and teachers), commitment of managers has not been paid due attention. In the past, organisational commitment was discussed mostly (in the west) with respect to the causes and antecedents. Of late, the researchers started exploring the outcomes that commitment brings in and the processes by which it is being developed.

1.9. In India, research on organizational commitment (OC), like other areas of management research, is still in its infancy. In the Indian context, there are only a limited number of studies which contain 'organisational commitment' on its headlines. There are only a few studies in India which have dealt with the various organisational factors and processes by which organisational commitment of professionals is generated or moderated. Review of literature also points out that, despite the lesser number of studies, the researchers in India are also contributing
significantly to the improvement of theoretical perspectives in the domain of organisational commitment.

1.10. In the early 80's, social scientists who were interested in the study of industrial development in India concerned themselves more with the concept of labourer's commitment to the industrial way of life and have arrived at empirical generalisations about the nature of commitment of the Indian workers. Since then, attempts have been made in India also to provide process models on commitment, though not very extensive. However, studies on the commitment of professionals with high level of professional freedom and autonomy have not been carried out that extensively in India. The various organisational processes by which commitment is inculcated among professionals, however, have not been analysed extensively in the Indian context.

1.11. Whatever is the nature of the profession, or the intensity of professional autonomy, an organisation requires the individual to commit himself to the goals and objectives of the organisation. When professionalism in one acts against the interests of the organisation, the organisational processes by which a commitment orientation is inculcated become very important. As a developing nation with a widely developing industrial economy and increasing number of professionally trained manpower in the world, India will gain a lot by identifying the processes by which organisational commitment can be encultured in the professionals.
1.12. A study on the commitment of the professionals to utilitarian and research organisations is relevant in modern society because such organisations have economic and strategic importance. At one stage in a professional's career, one may experience the pressure of both organisational and professional commitments. It is that stage which is crucial for him in his career as he is forced to make a choice between these, quite often.

1.13. According to expectancy theory, strength of commitment to an organisation (in terms of continued stay) should be positively related to the strength of conviction that one will be rewarded by the organisation. Consequent to the nature of this conviction, one's commitment to the organisation may also take different intensities. This intensity is moderated by the convergence of one's belief (expectation) and the reality. Convergence of belief and reality tend to strengthen commitment, while divergence should cause a decrease in commitment.

1.14. Organisational commitment as an adhesive is capable of binding one to the organisation where as professionalism - which is the deep focused commitment for professional advancement - makes one rather centred towards his personal growth in the profession. If organisational commitment succeeds, one will continue with the organisation. Vice versa, if professionalism increases, one may leave the organisation to ascribe better heights in the profession. The organisation will be at a loss if its experienced and trained
professional leaves the organisation. Hence, it may not always be prepared to lose its professionals. This becomes an interesting phenomenon, interestingly enough, as the tendency to go and stay oscillates across the different personal, structural and occupational specialisations.

1.15. Little attention has been placed on the empirical determination of variables, or conditions, other than perceptions of authority, which can lead to a deterioration in organisational commitment among professionals. A study on the commitment of professionals in utilitarian and research organisations is relevant in modern society because such organisations are important and ubiquitous. This is evident from the literature which also shows a paucity of data on the development, processes and correlates of organisational commitment among professionals after their entrance into the employing systems.

1.16. Studies of professionals in organisations have focused on the reactions of professionals to perceptions of organisational encroachments upon their authority rather than on the development of their organisational commitment. This underlines the need for understanding the process of commitment. Besides this, the quest on the organisational experiences that can shape up the commitment of scientists, managers, and consultants who work in different professional settings is all the more interesting, both theoretically and practically.
1.17 The present research, therefore, has threefold intentions.

1. To understand the level and dynamics of the commitment of professionals - Managers, Consultants, and Scientists - to their respective organisations.

2. To see the various organisational experiences relevant to the commitment (commitment mechanisms) of professionals across different types of professions, across different age groups, positions and different levels of experiences.

3. To help one to re-define commitment in general and to help a researcher reach at a proper definition of commitment and to propose a model based on some integrating mechanisms of commitment.

1.18 If one can distinguish the various levels of commitment as moderated by different organisational and personal variables, and if one succeeds in pairing professionals and their commitment with respect to a set of organisational experiences, then probably in future, one will be able to tackle the problem of less commitment to an organisation in a far more effective way. Of course, being a social science exploration, this may be proved wrong because of the inherent limitations of the social science research as well as by future researches. But as far as research on organisational commitment is concerned, it is hoped that, this will provide one with a framework to realise commitment in professional settings.
References


