CHAPTER VIII
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The researcher, in this last chapter, proposes to summarise findings and conclude the study.

In an attempt to study the state of industrial relations in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd., Shillong, the researcher studied the effects of different factors which have a direct or an indirect bearing on the same. These factors include:

(a) the characteristics of the work-force,
(b) salaries, service and service conditions,
(c) the wages and remuneration, 
(d) working and living conditions,
(e) the management relations, and lastly,
(f) trade unionism and industrial disputes. The impact of these factors has been analysed in the respective chapters of this thesis. The same are being summarised as follows.

One of the remarkable features of the work-force of North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. is its regional character. From the sample taken, it was found that only 20.5% were from Assam, the North Eastern states. And of the balance 79.5%, 54% were from Assam. This 79.5% belong to different castes, communities and ethnic groups of the north eastern states. As a result of account of the common cultural background of the work-force, social values and practices influence the work cultures and social interaction among the workers and employees. 

This resulted in a situation where the workers and employees are cooperative and of helping nature and have mutual respect for
regard for one another. This has resulted in a common value process and behaviour pattern.

On account of the free communications among the workers, employees, and in spite of the fact that the work-force comprised of persons from different religions and castes, there was a feeling of mistrust, doubt and animosity among them. It has presented the qualities and characteristics of an immaculate culture free from such petty considerations and prejudices.

Such factors have contributed significantly in the formation of a compact and cohesive work-force in the Corporation which in turn contributed towards maintaining a peaceful, harmonious industrial relations in the Corporation, thus negating the hypothesis that the homogenous and regional character of the work-force of North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. is one of the factors due to which the management has been able to preserve a good state of industrial relations.

The analysis of the factor "Security of Service and Working Conditions" revealed that the situation in this regard is quite satisfactory in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. Though several factors concerning it were found to be causing no dissatisfaction or a low degree of dissatisfaction. The factors which caused either no dissatisfaction or very low degree of dissatisfaction were holidays, leave and rest. While factors like hours of work and breaks caused moderate dissatisfaction, mainly at the project sites. The policies of security and recruitment, on the other hand, did not cause any
appreciable degree of dissatisfaction. Similarly, the degree of dissatisfaction on account of policies of promotion and transfer was also not very high. The factors which caused the highest degree of dissatisfaction among the workers and the union leaders were the procedures related to discharge and dismissal, and implementation of labour laws. Thus, while summarising, it can be said that while workers and union leaders were, on the whole, partly satisfied with regard to security of service and service conditions, the state of industrial relations were not adversely affected on account of these factors. Here our hypothesis that the state of security of service and service conditions is satisfactory in the Corporation Ltd. and, therefore, it has affected the state of industrial relations positively is proved to be partly correct.

The analysis of the factor "Wages and Other Emoluments" revealed that the situation in this regard was almost satisfactory. Though some of the allowances like house rent allowance did cause some degree of dissatisfaction, its effect on the state of industrial relations was not adverse. As far as wages were concerned, initially there was some degree of dissatisfaction, but the position improved with the implementation of the recommendations of the High Power Pay Committee Report. On the whole, it can be said that since the wage issue had not caused much dissatisfaction, the issues related to payment of other emoluments and allowances, etc. bore little weight in comparison to the former, as they caused no considerable degree of dissatisfaction and, therefore, were almost ineffective in its
impact on the state of industrial relations. Thus it proves that our hypothesis that the emoluments paid to the employees of North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. are satisfactory enough and, its bearing on the state of industrial relations has been good, is proved to be correct.

The analysis of the factor "Working and Living Conditions" revealed that the situation with regard to working conditions was not very encouraging and had, therefore, the potentiality to adversely affect the state of industrial relations in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. The degree of dissatisfaction was more pronounced in the case of union leaders and workers as compared to the executives. Even in the case of executives, the degree of dissatisfaction was more at the lower levels than at the higher levels. This may be ascribed to the fact that it is the workers who have to work in more arduous conditions at the project sites, whereas the executives, on account of the nature of their job, had some advantage in their having good office accommodation and comparatively better working conditions.

With regard to the living conditions, the factors examined were housing, and other facilities like medical facilities, education facilities, recreational facilities, transport facilities and co-operatives.

In respect of housing facilities, the views expressed by the sample workers, union leaders and the executives were that the housing facilities extended by the management were inadequate.
Surprisingly, three-fourth of the workers and the union leaders cited inadequate housing as one of the major cause of labour indiscipline. This was mainly on account of the fact that the workers at the project site could not be provided adequate and proper housing facilities, so many of them were living together in small houses or were given temporary accommodation. Moreover, on account of the nature of the activities of the Corporation, which took place in remote forest areas, the actual place of work was far from the place of residence, and the workers had to travel long distances. This caused great inconvenience and dissatisfaction among the workers and employees. In respect of workers and employees who were provided with residential accommodation in the Corporation's own residential colonies, majority of them were of the view that the position of lighting, drainage, sanitation, sweeping and cleanliness and other amenities were not satisfactory, and on many occasions the workers had to approach the unions to take up such problems with the management. The Corporation, it seemed, was mainly concerned with the number of houses provided to its workers and employees. It had failed to appreciate the fact that the housing facilities affect the family life of its workers and employees. A satisfied worker with a good family life might contribute towards better industrial relations. Thus, it may be concluded that inadequate housing facilities were adversely affecting the state of industrial relations and if this state of affairs were allowed to continue, it may worsen the state of industrial relations in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd.
In respect of medical facilities, the position was satisfactory. The Corporation has opened up hospitals and medical clinics at its project sites. The hospitals have the necessary facilities and sophisticated healthcare equipments for the treatment of nearly all types of diseases. For more serious cases, there is provision for referring these to highly specialised medical institutions at Corporation’s expenses. Moreover, the management was not simply concerned at providing medical-care facilities to its employees and workers, it also undertook preventive measures by taking anti-epidemic measures and precautions such as inoculations and vaccinations, provision of family planning advice and services. On the whole, it may be concluded that the Corporation was taking keen interest in the various aspects of healthcare and medical facilities provided to its workers and employees and the state of industrial relations are not affected adversely by it.

Though expensive, the Corporation has been taking adequate interest in providing educational facilities to the children of its workers and employees. The Corporation has formulated a comprehensive policy and plan for imparting primary and high school education to the children of its workers and employees and has set up a primary school, with provision to upgrade it to high school level. Help has also been taken from the Commissioner, Central Schools for the purposes of affiliations. The Corporation also bears the cost of education of the children of its workers and employees who were living away from their parents in hostels. Apart from the above some adult education programmes have also
been taken up at its project sites. On the whole, it may be said that the employees and workers were satisfied and contended with the management's initiatives in respect of provision of education facilities.

As far as recreational facilities are concerned, the Corporation has been taking keen interest in the activities and achievements of its workers and employees. The Corporation has been encouraging its workers and employees in organising various games, sports, tournaments as well as fine arts, dance and drama. A notable feature is the setting up of a Ladies Club which organises imparting of training to its members in weaving, knitting, stitching of cloth and other handicraft items. Such activities are prevalent in all the major project sites and corporate offices. The management has also entered into an agreement with a private party to screen cinema shows on a regular basis at its project sites, and in projects where television programmes are not clearly seen, it has installed dish antenna system to facilitate proper viewing of the television programmes. Inspite of all the above activities of the Corporation, the workers, employees and the executives were not satisfied with these facilities. This means that the facilities provided by the Corporation were below the level expected by the employees and workers. This may affect the state of industrial relations adversely.

The Corporation has provided transport facility at the project sites to its employees and workers in different project sites to attend different administrative works and various nearby market
places for purchase of household goods and other necessities. But inspite of this, the employees and workers were not satisfied. The management has not provided these facilities to its employees in the corporate offices at Shillong. The conveyance loan scheme was also not comprehensive and adequate enough. As such, the workers and employees of the Corporation, both at the project sites and at the corporate offices at Shillong, were not satisfied with the transport facilities provided by the Corporation and this may adversely affect the state of industrial relations in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd.

The employees and the trade unions in the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. had taken the initiative to set-up co-operative stores in different project sites. The management had responded positively by providing accommodation at nominal rent and meeting a major portion of the establishment costs for the first five years.

As such, in the light of the above discussion, it may be concluded that there was not much dissatisfaction among the workers, union leaders and executives in respect of working conditions, but the situation regarding living conditions was not satisfactory. Thus, this partly proves our hypothesis that the working and living conditions is satisfactory in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. and, therefore, it has affected the state of industrial relations positively.

The investigations relating to the emergence of trade unionism in the Corporation, and also the relations between the unions
themselves, between the workers and the unions and between the management and the unions, have revealed that the trade unions of the Corporation have evolved a unique style of functioning. If the trade unions have split, still there is no apparent reflection of animosity or ill will towards each other. It could be because the splits were more on line with the functional requirements of a section of the employees rather than ideological grounds. Moreover, the leadership of the unions evolved from amongst the workers themselves. All over the country, in most of the trade unions, we find that they are affiliated to some central trade union. But in the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. this not so. The trade unions or associations in the Corporation are organised to seek redress of the grievances of a particular category of employees. It could be one of the reasons why the number of industrial disputes in the Corporation have been very less, or rather sporadic in nature. It has been found that a large number of grievances are sorted out through negotiations and these mainly relate to wages and salaries, recruitment and transfer policies and certain regularisation of employees, seniority cases, and employee-welfare schemes etc.

The analysis of the relations between workers and the management revealed that the situation in this regard was quite satisfactory. The factors which led to the satisfaction of the majority of workers were a fair treatment to the workers. It would be appropriate to mention here that trade unionism in the Corporation apparently started from an incident of maltreatment...
of a Grade-IV employee by the then Chairman-cum-Managing Director of the Corporation.

The analysis of the relations between the workers and the unions revealed that the situation in this regard also was satisfactory. It was found that the leadership of the unions had evolved from amongst the workers themselves, without any undue outside interference. Moreover, despite of the splits in the unions and associations, the relations between the members of these different unions and their leaders was cordial. This was so because the splits occurred on account of the fact that a particular category of workers, who were less in numbers, felt that their grievances can be redressed in a better manner if they form a separate union. The splits were not on ideological grounds.

There have been no major industrial disputes in the Corporation. Except for the cessation of work in 1977 for one week, there have been no cessation of work, except for a few hours in some incidents of gherao, demonstration, tool down & pen down, and fasting. Thus, our hypothesis that the state of relations between the workers and the unions, unions and the management and workers and the management is good and that the number of industrial disputes have been less is proved to be fully correct.

The management should take adequate measures to ensure the provision of better living conditions to its workers and employees so as to ensure a congenial state of industrial relations in the Corporation. It has been seen that normally the
industrial disputes occur mainly on account of differences in perception relating to issues regarding wages and service conditions, but subsequently working and living conditions become additional causes and contribute significantly to the deteriorating state of industrial relations.

Perhaps the greatest contributor to labour-management conflict is the different set of goals held by each party. While the trade unions try to get more and more for its members, they at the same time make the workers feel that these are somethings to be received from the management. Management, on the other hand, seeks to protect what they have. These different objectives come into conflict in several areas. One issue that seems always to be a source of conflict is the controversy surrounding management prerogatives or management rights. This is basically a question of what can be bargained for and what is an inalienable right of management in terms of making decisions. While some unions have made some inroads into what were once thought to be management prerogatives (such as recruitment decisions), others have chosen to direct their attention towards gains in the area of wages and benefits.

Inadequacies of communication seem to exaggerate the differences in goals of the workers and the management. While there does exist a formal grievance handling procedure, there is some slackness on the part of the management in monitoring this procedure frequently to ensure a free flow of communications without disruptions. The failure in communication can cause otherwise minor problems to become major ones.
In this respect, in the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. the situation is neither satisfactory nor dissatisfactory. Some factors led to the satisfaction of the workers and some to the dissatisfaction. Factors which led to the satisfaction of the workers were fair treatment of the workers and management's efforts to make the workers feel that they were a part of the organisation.

With this brief summarisation the researcher concludes his investigation and study.