CHAPTER III

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

'No organisation is sounder than its Men'. The statement emphasises that the success of an organisation depends upon the efficiency of its employees and their willingness to work. These in turn are determined by the level of commitment of its employees. The concept of commitment is instrumental in explaining the performance and participative decision of the individuals. A committed work-force with intrinsic value is an absolute necessity, not only for the development and growth of an organisation but also for the permanent gains of an industrial development. Intrinsic values arouse the genuine commitment, because one with such values of commitment does his best irrespective of the environmental conditions of the organisation. Such a work-force is considered to be an asset to the organisation.

The commitment of human beings in an organisation, has been discussed by different authorities in different manners. All these studies on the determinants of Organisational Commitment can be broadly classified into three approaches such as Exchange approach, Psychological approach and Blended approach.1
COMMITMENT AND EXCHANGE APPROACH

Under the exchange approach, given by Becker (1960) a bargaining relationship exists between the organisation and the individual, regarding working conditions, remuneration and other fringe benefits. The organisation offers to the individual such of those incentives presumed to be related to his personal goals and values. These will make the employees to be more committed towards the organisation. In turn the individual contributes his time and energy to achieve the organisational goals, values and objectives. Thus commitment under this approach depends upon the give and take policy between the employees and the organisation.

This approach emphasises that commitment is mainly based on duration of service in the organisation. An employee with less years of service may not think about bargaining as he feels that he is not competent to do so, and as such his level of commitment will also be less. On the contrary, employees with more years of service, may indulge in bargaining with the organisation and as such their Organisational Commitment will be more. At the same time, it also depends upon the individual values, culture etc. Sometimes, because of longer years of experience and competency, employees may see bright opportunities in other organisations. Unless the existing organisation accepts the demands of an individual his level of commitment may likely to be less. New employees in order to impress the top
executives, may show more commitment. This may be due to bleak opportunities to them in other organisations and also due to their low bargaining capacity with the present organisation.

Thus the exchange approach, otherwise called as calculative commitment may act in either way, depending upon the culture and values, of the employees and the organisation.

COMMITMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

The psychological approach given by Porter and Smith (1971) holds the view that commitment of an individual depends upon the "attitude" and feeling of "oneness" or emotional attachment with the organisation. It is also called as moral commitment, where greater satisfaction of the employee is the basis for his Organisational Commitment. On the contrary the sociologists are of the view that behaviour of an employee such as compliance with norms and values, continuing membership, exertion for the achievement and objectives of the organisation are the factors responsible for the Organisational Commitment of an individual. Thus the different meanings given by the authorities of the exchange approach and the psychological approach for Organisational Commitment created confusion in the minds of the readers. To avert the same a mixed approach called Blended approach of Organisational Commitment was presented by Steers (1977).
COMMITMENT AND BLENDED APPROACH

Blended approach of commitment has argued that an organisation which fulfils its employees' psychological and financial needs will have a committed workforce. Such committed employees are not only less likely to abstain themselves from work but also evince other manifestations in their level of commitment.

To have a more clear meaning of the word Organisational Commitment it may be appropriate at this point to analyse some of the definitions given by many Sociological and Psychological authorities.\(^2\)

1. "An attitude or an orientation toward the organisation which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organisation" (Sheldon, 1971, P.143).

2. "The willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems, the attachment of personality systems to social relations which are seen as self-expressive" (Kanter, 1968, P.499).

3. "A structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual-organisational transactions and alternations in side-bets or investments over time" (Hrebinia and Alutio, 1972, P.556).
4. "A state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions and through these actions to beliefs that sustain the activities and his own involvement" (Salancik, 1977, P.62).

5. "The process by which the goals of the organisation and those of the individual becomes increasingly integrated or congruent" (Hall, Schneider, and Nygren, 1970, P.176).

6. "The nature of the relationship of the member to the system as a whole" (Grusky, 1966, P.489).

7. "(a)It includes something of the notion of membership, (b) It reflects the current position of the individual, (c) It has a special predictive potential, providing predictions concerning certain aspects of performance, motivation to work, spontaneous contribution, and other related outcomes; and (d) It suggests the deferential relevance of motivational factors" (Brown, 1969, P.347).

8. "Commitments come into being when a person, by making a side-bet, links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity" (Becker, 1960, P.32).
9. "Commitment behaviours are socially accepted behaviours that exceed formal and for normative expectations relevant to the object of commitment" (Weiner and Gechman, 1977, P.48).

10. "A partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of an organisation to one's role in relation to goals and values, and to the organisation for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth" (Buchanan, 1974, P. 533).

The above definitions reveal the following three important factors which characterise Organisational Commitment.

Loyalty : A strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation.

Identification : Strong belief, faith and acceptance of the values and goals of an organisation.

Involvement : A willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation.
During the initial period of employment, the employee will be more loyal towards the organisation. A loyal employee will not even have the inclination to leave the organisation, particularly during the beginning period of his recruitment. This is otherwise called as 'entry mechanism'. The same individual in course of time starts accepting the organisational goals, values etc and thus he identifies himself, with the organisation. This is called as 'social mechanism'. The third stage of his employment is called as 'control mechanism' where the employee will have spontaneous and active participation in the organisational activities with the intention of making achievements and taking pride in them. This brings to wake a psychological satisfaction to the employee.  

Thus it may be concluded that during the initial stage, entry mechanism will operate in the minds of an employee and it will force him to be loyal towards the organisation. After some time the influence of social mechanism makes him to identify himself, that is to have strong belief faith and acceptance of the values and goals of his organisation. It is only the control mechanism, which creates a real urge in the mind of an employee to have real participation and interest in achieving the goals of an organisation. Thus loyalty, identification, and involvement are otherwise (equated) called as 'entry', 'social' and 'control mechanisms' respectively.
By way of caution it may be added here that an employee will be loyal provided the organisation is able to create a sense of belongingness in his mind. This could be achieved by keeping the employees well informed about the organisational goals and objectives, besides developing a sense of involvement in them. Further sharing the success of an organisation will also be very much helpful in creating a sense of belonging in the minds of the employees, a significant ingredients of commitment.

At higher level, needs such as pride, trust and accountability for results, are also attributed as other factors responsible for Organisational Commitment. A person in need of pride (known as employee growth need strength) may be increasingly willing to accept responsibility which in turn reimposes his personal pride and feeling of trustworthiness. Thus, it is an inevitable circle, creating motivation for positive effect on commitment.⁴

Inspite of the sense of belongingness and the excitement of the workforce the Organisational Commitment could not be effective, unless the employees do have respect and confidence in the Management and Leadership, of the organisation. An employee who has confidence in the leadership will be more committed towards the goals of the organisation than the one who has no such confidence. This is more or less a psychological aspect. Thus, it is generally believed
and accepted that employees' confidence in the management is one of the important factors influencing them to be more committed. The phrase "giving all of yourself while at work", explains what is commitment. Included in the capsule of commitment are the following elements.  

- using all of one's time constructively.
- not neglecting details
- making that extra effort
- getting it right first time
- accepting change
- willingness to try something new
- making suggestions
- co-operating with others
- developing one's talents/abilities
- not abusing trust
- being proud of one's abilities
- seeking constant improvement
- enjoying one's job and
- giving loyal support where needed
These symptoms among the employees could be considered as positive attitude among them for Organisational Commitment. Committed employees will have the psychological upper level need of self actualisation which will induce them to realise the purpose in life. The individual will tend to internalise the goals of the organisation and make use of his discretionary behaviour voluntarily in achieving the desired result of the organisation. Further committed employees may be tempted to play an extra-role voluntarily, rather than just responding to role prescriptions and reward system incentives introduced by the management, which is costlier to the organisation. But it should be remembered here that excessive devotion of the employee, (of more committed to the organisation) may irritate the other employees within and outside the organisation and thereby cause problems to the organisation and to the individuals.

Further Organisational Commitment helps in predicting labour turnover besides reducing the rate of absenteeism. A highly committed employee’s performance is comparatively better than the less committed one. Further Organisational Commitment is an indicator to identify the effectiveness of the work-force and thereby the efficiency of the organisation. Finally a high degree of Organisational Commitment among the work-force will definitely help in boosting up the level of productivity and in improving the quality of products and services
offered to the society. Now the Researcher attempts to list out the different types of commitments and to discuss the meaning of some of them which are considered to be significant.

TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Continuance, cohesion, and control are the three types of commitment, identified by Kanter. He has given, the supporting conditions and the outcome of the Organisational Commitment. The same is given below in a chart.

KANTER’S TOPOLOGY OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kanter’s Type</th>
<th>Corresponding Meaning</th>
<th>Objects of Commitment</th>
<th>Supporting Antecedent Condition</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuance</td>
<td>Permanence</td>
<td>Social Role</td>
<td>Cognitions of Costs and benefits of Leaving</td>
<td>Continued Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Group Relationship</td>
<td>Emotionalities with group members</td>
<td>Group Solidarity Lack of Infighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Norms, Authority</td>
<td>Evaluation of norms and authority from a value framework</td>
<td>Obedience to norms and authority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuance commitment which has the other meaning of permanence is to be decided by evaluating the social role to be played by the individual and by the conditions of costs and benefits of leaving the organisation.

If an individual perceives more benefits in the organisation in which he is at present working, he may decide to continue membership in the same organisation. This will be the outcome of his supporting antecedent condition which is otherwise called continuance Organisational Commitment.

Cohesion commitment is one where the individual employee identifies his values and beliefs with that of the other employees or group in the organisation. This identity may develop in him some emotional ties with the other members in this group. The outcome of such Organisational Commitment is the development of group solidarity besides absence of infighting among them. Such a kind of cohesiveness among the group is otherwise called cohesive commitment by Kanter.

Kanter has also identified a third type of Organisational Commitment viz. control commitment, which is otherwise determined on the basis of performance. Here an individuals' commitment will be the rules, norms and authority of the organisation. An employee will start evaluating the norms and authority on the basis of the work, assigned values, culture etc. If he is convinced, obedience to the norms and authority would be the outcome. This is called by Kanter control commitment.
Like Kanter many psychologists, sociologists and managers have identified different types of commitment. The division of commitment into attitudinal or affective (used in this study) and behavioural or continuance types are most widely used. The attitudinal commitment may be grouped into three components viz.:

* The affective component refers to employees’ emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation.

* The continuance component refers to commitment based on the costs that employees’ associate with leaving the organisation.

* The normative component refers to employees’ feeling of obligation to remain in the organisation.

In contrast, the behavioural approach to commitment is largely concerned with the process by which individuals come to develop a sense of commitment not to an organisation, but to their own actions.

Alienative involvement, negative orientation typical to inmates in prisons, enlisted men in training, or prisoners of war, calculative involvement, is similar to that of a business relationship for example, merchants with business contacts. Moral involvement, a positive orientation of high intensity and can be either pure (Identification with goals and norms of the organisation) or social (sensitivity to pressures of primary groups and their members).
On the basis of the identity, of the meaning of the various types of commitment, they are grouped as follows.

1. Obligation - Attitudinal - Moral - Affective - Emotional

2. Calculative - Conditional - Unconditional - Control


So far the discussion centered around the different types of Organisational Commitment. Now an attempt is made here to discuss the different factors influencing Organisational Commitment. All these factors have been grouped into four categories as follows:

- Personal characteristics
- Role - related characteristics
- Work experience
- Structural characteristics.

Personal factors such as age, educational level, gender, race etc., found to be positively related to Organisational Commitment. Feeling of personal importance to the organisation is related to Organisational Commitment.
Role related factors such as task, people relationship, group cohesive, etc. may have positive influence on Organisational Commitment as long as the employee is clear about his assignments. On the other hand if there is an ambiguity with regard to the role to be played by an employee it may result in conflict, stress and ultimately adverse Organisational Commitment. Role conflict and role ambiguity were the two important characteristics which will have inverse relationship with Organisational Commitment.

Work experience is one more important factor which will influence the Organisational Commitment of the employees. The workers may have already gained knowledge about the different processes through which the work is to be done efficiently by virtue of their long experience and special skill. Such employees will be more committed to the organisation.

Structural characteristics, such as size of an organisation, span of control, and centralization of authority will have some influence on the Organisational Commitment. It is accepted that size, positive organisational policies, cordial management, subordinate relationships, vested financial interest, decentralization of authority, increased participation in decision making, do have influence on the Organisational Commitment of the employees.
THE CONSEQUENCES AND BENEFITS OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANISATION ARE DISCUSSED BELOW

If the commitment of workers is high in an organisation will it contribute for better performance was a question to be tested. It was finally concluded that the level of relationship between Organisational Commitment and position is not very much significant. Most of the psychologists agree with the view that the longer the service the higher will be the level of commitment.

Another consequence of Organisational Commitment is that low will be the rate of absenteeism if the level of commitment is high and vice versa. Tardiness and alertness in the performance of a job by a worker may be due to the level of commitment. Though education exhibited a small negative correlation with commitment it was significantly stronger for attitudinal as compared with calculative commitment. "This inverse relationship may result from the fact that more educated individuals have higher expectations that the organisation may be unable to meet". Besides they may have more role options and less likely to become committed in any one position or company.
Marital Status may be more related to calculative commitment because married employees are in general likely to have greater financial burdens. So they may relate the benefits derived from the organisation with the financial rewards.

Organisational tenure may be more related to commitment than position tenure, although the effects of both of them are small. Position tenure may be significantly related to attitudinal commitment, whereas organisational tenure may be more positively related to calculative commitment. Years spent in a particular position in an organisation are likely to yield greater side-bets, such as a pension plan etc. which may develop greater calculative commitment. Those personnel managers who had a sponsor would be more committed to the organisation.

Individuals in a society having more meaningful occupations like doctors, lawyers, are much more likely to be committed to their occupations. This high commitment appears to be a result of the meaningful task which constitutes the occupation. It is difficult, for example, to conceive of an inducement which would cause a doctor to leave his occupation.

People must share a common vision of what the organisation is, and what it might be. If that vision offers the promise of benefits for the individual, commitment may grow out of the realisation of a common fate; creating a shared destiny
between the employee and the organisation. The existence of cordial relationship between the people and the organisation may result in the organisational loyalty and thereby more commitment on the part of the workers.

LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

Depending upon the influences of the different factors of Organisational Commitment, the levels of Organisational Commitment may vary from individual to individual. Thus the levels of commitment may be classified into low level, moderate and high commitment.¹³

LOW LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

Employees with low level of commitment, out of indirect fears that they would be sent out of employment, may exert themselves to the extent possible in order to contribute more towards the organisation by indulging in creativity and achievement. They would at the same time try to seek better alternative jobs. If one succeeds in his attempt, the individual would be satisfied in leaving the present organisation this would be to the advantage of the organisation as departure of the less committed will pave way for the recruitment of new employees, with skill and efficiency. Further the under committed employees are likely to reveal the secrets of the organisation to the outsiders. Thus it may be construed as an indication of limited organisational loyalty.
Low levels of commitment of employees may result in some negative consequence to the organisation, such as high labour turnover, absenteeism, tardiness, low quantum of work, involvement in crime against the organisation, besides affecting the reputation of the organisation and causing loss of revenue to the organisation. Finally the attitude and performance of the organisation will be damaged if the managers and executives have low level of commitment.

MODERATE LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

Employees with moderate levels of commitment may have the feelings of belonging, security and efficacy. They may feel greater loyalty and duty to the organisation. These people are ready to accept some values and would try to meet the requirements of an organisation. This level of commitment helps in creating individualism, where the individual will accept values and norms which are considered to be important and reject the non-essential and harmful.

To the organisation the benefits of this level of commitment are less labour turnover and greater role satisfaction. Negative consequence of this level of commitment to the organisation is the absence of playing extra role among the employees of moderate level of Organisational Commitment.
HIGH LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

"Be loyal to the company and the company will be loyal to you". As per this statement, highly committed employees will be more loyal to the organisation and thereby they would try to advance individual careers and compensation. Highly committed employees will provide the organisation with a secure and stable workforce. This level of commitment may lead to stress in family life, as the work and family roles are interdependent.

Exit from the firm may be an option if individual values are in strong disagreement with organisation policy. More typically, rebellious employees are either expelled from the organisation or they turn their energies toward defecting organisational goals.

The organisation benefits directly from the feelings of loyalty and duty expressed by its employees. Positive consequences for employees and for the organisation could include longer tenure, limited intention to quit, limited turnover, and greater job satisfaction.

Young executives who are blindly devoted to their employer might waste their talents and energies in jobs they did not enjoy, and that would be unprofitable for company and society alike. Thus, the firm may attract individuals who are strongly tied to the organisation, but not suited to organisation needs.
Too much commitment also can reduce flexibility of an organisation. It can result in too much trust in past policies and procedures and an enrichment of traditional practices. Individuals who are totally committed to the organisation may not carry out alternative line of action.

Highly committed employees may be more willing to commit even for illegal or unethical behaviour on behalf of the organisation. Often if there is a conflict, highly committed individuals put corporate dictates above their own personal ethics or societal dictates.

Incidentally it may be referred that at the time of the Water Gate break-in the climate within which the White House aides worked was one of total loyalty to the man at the top and willingness to do anything to serve him. Charles Colson, a Senior White House Staffer, announced that "he would walk over his grandmother to re-elect Richard Nixon". The Watergate defendants felt that any activity which advanced the cause of the President was justified.

However, the potential consequences of highly committed employees may result in tarnishing corporate image, loss of present or future customers, stock holders and employees. In brief, individual and organisational needs appear to be in balance with Moderate levels of commitment.
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