CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The entire discussion on the theoretical perspective of alienation points that the concept functions as a general term characterising a wide range of conditions leading to separation of individuals or groups from a variety of social circumstances. It includes both the Marxist and an emperico-analytical usage of the term. The concept is thought of by a number of theorists to represent one of the most prominent and crucial conditions of modern society pervading every sphere of human activity.

Alienation at work continues to be an important research area in sociology and al behaviour. This is because it takes a heavy toll on employees' lives and al productivity.

Work is one activity which provides the most important and vital means for man to fulfill his basic needs, his individuality and his humanity. It is an essential part of man's life since it gives him status and binds him to society. Surveys of work date back as far as those of Karl Marx who in 1880 conducted a survey of factory workers covering aspects like size of the plant, working conditions, wages, hours of work, unions and strikes. What he concluded is that alienation of labour could have as its subjective consequence the estrangement of the labour from the factory system.
lack of control and status as an appendage of the machine would result in feelings of dissatisfaction. He discerned that positive or negative feelings regarding the job influence the tendencies of worker towards alienation or attachment. After Marx, most of the time studies of work focused either on technological, al and environmental factors or on the struggle between workers and managers for control of the work process. Hudson (1966).

Alienation has traditionally been studied with respect to the blue collar worker. Research on alienation among the non manual worker is limited, although some research attention has been devoted to alienation among professionals in the late 70s and 80s (Allen & Lafollette, 1977; Korman, Wittig-Berman, & Lang, 1981; Lang, 1985; Organ & Greene, 1981; Podsakoff, Williams & Todor, 1986). Even though the new economy comprises predominantly of non manual workers (Davenport et al., 2002; Yigitcanlar et al., 2007), there are no significant empirical studies on alienation among them.

Despite serious consequences such as turnover, lower productivity, workplace aggression, stress and burnout (Abraham, 2000; Dean, 1961; Jackson, Schwab & Schuler, 1986; Jermier, 1988; Seeman, 1967), alienation as a concept has not received much attention in al studies (Kohn, 1976). In one of the more recent textbooks on behavior, Bratton, Callinan, Forshaw, and Sawchuk, (2007) mention that much of research appears
indifferent and ignorant of the concept of alienation. This research undertakes to clarify the meaning of alienation and examine the extent of its occurrence and the factors that contribute to alienation among industrial workers.

Even though alienation came into prominence in the early writings of Marx (1844/1932), the concept of alienation finds reference across a broad range of subjects such as theology, philosophy, sociology, psychology and psychiatry. Johnson (1973) reviewed usage of the term across various disciplines. Fromm (1955) discussed alienation as the mode of experience in which a person experiences him/herself as an alien and becomes estranged from the self. Horowitz (1966) suggests that alienation implies an intense separation first from objects of the world, second from people, and third from ideas about the world held by other people. The core meaning of the concept of alienation has also been identified with a dissociative state or a sense of separation in relation to some other element in his or her environment (Kanungo, 1979; Schacht, 1970).

Marx conceptualized alienation as the separation of the worker from ownership. In his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Marx distinguishes three forms of alienation – alienation from the product of work, alienation in the process of production, and alienation from society. Weber’s treatment of the concept of alienation (Gerth & Mills, 1946) has
been similar to that of Marx who viewed alienation as emerging from perceived lack of freedom and control at work. Durkheim (1947, trans.) saw alienation as a consequence of the condition of anomie, which refers to the breakdown of norms in society leading to experienced normlessness.

Seeman (1959) seminal work postulates five alternate meanings of alienation as powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self estrangement, an improvement on the earlier uni-dimensional definitions of alienation. Seeman’s (1959) classification of alienation has been the basis of several empirical studies (Blauner1964; Dean1961; Seeman1967; Shepard, 1977). However, some authors have questioned the adequacy of the dimensions to explain alienation fully (Kanungo1979; Mottaz1981; Overend, 1975), arguing that dimensions such as powerlessness and meaninglessness can be viewed as antecedents or even consequences of alienation.

Alienation as a concept has lent itself to various definitions and attendant considerable confusion over its meanings, usage and measurement. The complexity of the concept of alienation and the variety of meanings attached to it makes it difficult to abstract from them one basic meaning of alienation. One of the earliest definitions of alienation by Seeman (1959) refers to it as an estrangement from self. Similarly, most definitions explain it as the sense of separation (Fromm 1955; Horowitz, 1966; Kanungo, 1979)
or dissociative state (Schacht, 1970) or disengagement from work (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000). Further, this separation has been discussed in relation to work (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000; Kanungo, 1979), people (Horowitz, 1966; Miller, 1975), other element in the environment or objects of the world (Horowitz, 1966; Schacht, 1970), and from the self itself (Fromm, 1955). Since, the most basic understanding of alienation involves a separation or estrangement and given the varying targets of this separation, work alienation is defined here as estrangement or disconnect from work, the context or the self.

Research until the late 80s, focused on conditions that lead to alienation. Broadly the factors can be divided as structural or individual.

The structural determinants of alienation have received much attention since the time of Marx. In his classic study of industrial workers (blue collar) in different industrial situations, Blauner(1964) who studied work alienation across four American industries, printing, textile, automobile and the chemical process industry, was able to isolate the socio-technical characteristics that contribute to alienation, namely technology and the division of labor. He found alienation in its most extreme form in the assembly line production of automobile industry owing to standardized, routine, repetitive and highly fragmented work. Automation in the process chemical industry was seen as contributing less to alienation where skill was
replaced by responsibility. Alienation was found to be lowest among craft workers, highest among assembly line and to some extent decreasing in the continuous process plant.

A study by Dennis & Phillip (1982) presents new evidence on the effect of technology on alienation from work that is pertinent to Blauner's inverted U-curve hypothesis. One data set permits comparative analysis at the al level and addresses a gap in the literature on worker alienation because most research uses individual level data grouped by industrial categories. This al level approach is applied to individual level data on retrained union printers to analyze the impact of automation on the work of skilled craftsmen. Humanization of work in postindustrial society is examined. The relationship between technological advance and alienation is more negatively linear than curvilinear.

A few researchers have examined the structural properties of centralization and formalization and its effect on alienation. Allen and Lafollette (1977) found alienation to be directly related to both centralization and formalization. Aiken and Hague (1966) studied the relationship between alienation and two structural properties of s (formalization and centralization) in a comparative study of 16 welfare s. Alienation was found to be more prominent in highly formalized and highly centralized s. However, for professionals the literature yields mixed results. Greene (1978)
found formalization to increase alienation for professionals, while some (Organ & Greene, 1981; Podsakoff, Williams & Todor, 1986) have found formalization to reduce alienation through its effect on reduced role ambiguity. Sarros et al. (2002) examined the extent to which leader behavior (transactional or transformational style) and aspects of the al structure (centralization, formalization) relate to work alienation, in a study of a bureaucratic fire department. Results showed that transformational leadership was associated with lower work alienation and structure was negatively associated with transformational leadership, thus having an indirect impact on work alienation.

Characteristics of the job or the work context have also been examined in relation to alienation by many authors. In his study of blue collar workers, Blauner (1964) found that repetitive routine tasks that grant less autonomy and decision making to the worker, lead to greater alienation. Chisholm and Cummings (1979) on the other hand found no relationships between job characteristics (variety, control, social interaction and purpose), and alienation from work in his study of a manufacturing firm. However, Simpson (1999) studying the work context in the electronic era found elements of the work context such as contractual work and manning of computerized systems granting limited contact with other coworkers, contributing to alienation. Kohn (1976)
identified two possible sources of alienation as the loss of control over the product of one's labor and the loss of control over the work process. Similarly, Mottaz (1981) found lack of control over tasks and lack of meaningful work as predictors of alienation.

Compared to the structural variables, research on individual level determinants of work alienation is relatively sparse. The effect of locus of control on alienation has been studied by a few researchers. It has been suggested that individuals who have an external locus of control tend to be more alienated from the work setting (Banai, Reisel & Probst, 2004; Korman et al., 1981). A model of alienation among professionals and managers was tested by Korman et al. (1981) where expectancy disconfirmation and loss of affiliative satisfactions were found to be factors affecting alienation. Lang (1985) found that people from high socio economic status background are more likely to experience alienation when encountering lack of fulfillment. Rosner and Putterman (1991) also suggest that education increases the individual’s ability to derive satisfaction from work and raises his/her level of dissatisfaction if forced to do routine and unchallenging work.

Unmet expectations from work or expectancy disconfirmation is considered also as a cause of work alienation. Unmet needs or aspirations sought from work have been related to alienation as
suggested by some. (Blauner 1964; Finifter 1972; Kanungo 1979). Expectancy disconfirmation was found to be positively related to alienation by Korman et al. (1981). However, Lang (1985) found that disconfirmed expectations did not contribute significantly to the prediction of alienation. It is proposed here, that unmet expectations will lead to work alienation, so that other things remaining constant, an individual who experiences disconfirmation of expectancies is more likely to experience work alienation than one whose expectations from work are met.

The MOW (Meaning of Working) research, a cross national research carried out across 8 industrialized countries through 1978-1984 to investigate the meaning of work across cultures, conceptualized work centrality as 'the degree of general importance that working has in the life of an individual at any given point of time' (MOW International Research Team, 1987: 81). It has been discussed in the literature as central life interest (Dubin, 1956; Dubin, Champoux & Porter, 1975) or in terms of the protestant work ethic (Buchholz, 1978). Broadly speaking, work centrality refers to the importance of working in ones life. The relation between work centrality and work alienation has been explained by Watson (2003) when he points that people can only be alienated from work when there is an emphasis on the work ethic. In the absence of any empirical research on the
relation between work centrality and alienation, work centrality becomes a moderator of the relationship between the causal conditions and work alienation. (Holmbeck1997). Thus, it is expected that when work centrality is high the relation between the predictor variables and work alienation will be stronger than when work centrality is low, even when the rest of the work context remains the same.

**Sources of Alienation**

In a number of studies alienation has been found to be related with several demographic, personality, situational and socio-cultural factors. Minority and weaker sections are reported to have higher alienation. Family size has no significant influence on one’s level of alienation. Alienation and self-esteem are found to be partially correlated (Sharma1980).

A study of Indian society reported that denominational students had higher level of alienation than the students of non-denominational institutions. It was also observed that Muslim students of non-denominational institutions are more dogmatic, more alienated and more insecure and anxious in comparing to Muslim students of non-denominational institutions. These differences have been explained by Sharma’ (1980). Marital status of working women was not found to be related to job satisfaction. Whereas, salary seems to have distinct effects on the expectations of working women.
Attitudes towards work are also considered to be significant sources of alienation or attachment. Morse & Weiss (1955) who studied the function and meaning of work and the job have found that work or the job meant a lot to those whom they had interviewed as more than 80% of the respondents have replied that they would continue to work even if they had by chance inherited enough money to live comfortably without working. But it has been many years since Morse and Weiss had conducted the study. Many of the later theorists Bogus Law (1965) Kluckhon (1958), Reisman (1950), Whyte (1956) and others have argued that there is a steady decline in the value attached to work due to changes in different constituents (need for achievement, protestant, work ethic, etc.).

In a study by Robert Veechio in 1955 as a continuation to Morse & Weiss (1955) study was intended to reinforce the finding that workers will continue working if it was not necessary for self support and to compare the results with the finding of Morse & Weiss. What he found was alarming as the obtained proportions were significantly different from the expected proportions discussed in Morse & Weiss study. Many possibilities would have been responsible for the change, significant being the attachment over an approximate period of 20 years. Most theories of job satisfaction argue that over all job satisfaction is determined by some combination of all satisfaction feelings. This over all job states is determined by the difference
between all the thoughts a person feels he should receive from his job and all the things that he actually does receive. (Lawler 1973).

Some factors do make larger contributions to overall satisfaction than others. Supervisors may tend to rate some factors as more important than others. Thus there is a connection between how supervisors feel job factors are and how much job factors influence overall job satisfaction (Vroom 1964) What ever the levels of satisfaction with their work maybe, it is overshadowed by their work value, which they have internalized.

In a study on the effect of alienation and insecurity on job satisfaction of blue color workers in a Chemical and Fertilizer Industry by Singh and Singh (1979) found that highly satisfied employees were less alienated and feel less unhappy with the job. In a scale on alienation by Kenerlin & Datta (1976) found that highly satisfied employees were less alienated and feel less insecure. A big difference in job satisfaction score was observed between high alienation, low alienation and high insecurity, low insecurity groups.

The superiors role in the counseling effort consists of sensitivity to the needs of their subordinates and an approachability that encourages them to consult about their personal problems. By overlooking, superimposing or by oversight, they get away easily and will only undermine their superior position of authority in the eyes of their subordinates. The supervisor's role
of a counselor which is thought to be complex, difficult and time consuming is absolutely essential and useful for maintaining and improving job efficiency, as well as growth. Jha (1979)

In a study on Job tension in relation to job satisfaction among supervisors (Hargopal, 1979) revealed significant negative relation between job tension and satisfaction with work, superior, opportunities for promotion and also total job satisfaction. Sharma (1979) study of bank employees, showed that emoluments and supervisor failed to show significant relations with job satisfaction, while work technology and education were found to be important determinants.

Thomas Chacko’s (1983) analysis of job and life satisfactions among employees analysed four positive causal relations – (1) positive job satisfaction (JS+) where job satisfaction is a source of positive influence on life satisfaction or Alienation (2) Negative job satisfaction, where job satisfaction is a source of negative influence in life satisfaction or Alienation (3) Positive Life Satisfaction (LS+) where life satisfaction is the source of positive influence on job satisfaction and (4) Negative life satisfaction where life satisfaction is the source of negative influence on job satisfaction. The specific job characteristics used were ones frequently found in research involving individual reactions to job attributes.
Chowdhuri, (1979) who studied automobile workers in Bombay showed that they had low levels of commitment to work and high level of alienation. No necessary link was found between the way a worker behaves outside the plant and the way he behaves within the plant. Background variables as a whole failed to influence the level of the work within or outside the work situation. Pestonjee (1979) in his study on alienation, insecurity and job satisfaction observed high negative relation between alienation and job satisfaction among employees.

To sum up, alienation is usually defined as objectively experienced feelings of normlessness, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation in relation to society at large. (NeenaNaik1978) Work Alienation has been conceptualized as a lack of feeling of satisfaction and pride in one’s job. (RatnaMurdia1968)

Alienation is also considered as a lack of commitment to the work role, loss of the sense of belongingness, lack of normative integration, lack of effective control over the work process and self estrangement. Worker Alienation is a cognitive feeling of lack of belongingness with the work role, lack of involvement in al work, lack of normative integration with the programmes and policies of the and lack of effective control over the work process. Alienation from work reflects a feeling of disappointment with career and professional development as well as disappointment over the in
ability to full fill professional norms. Alienation is a feeling of powerlessness, lack of meaning, loneliness, disorientation and lack of attachment to job, work group or . (Keith1989).

Alienation from work reflects a feeling of disappointment with career and professional development as well as disappointment over the inability to full fill professional norms. Alienation or the lack of it constitutes one of the processes by which job satisfaction/ dissatisfaction can occur. Alienation as a lack of commitment to the work role, loss of the sense of belongingness, lack of normative integration, lack of effective control over the work process and self estrangement. Alienation is designed as subjectively experienced powerlessness to control one’s own work activities.

Operationalisation

One of the earliest operationalizations of alienation was a seven item index developed by Seeman(1967) derived from the Blauner (1964) survey. Blauner (1964) used the Roper Fortune Survey questionnaire that asked a range of questions that relate to the experience of the work for the respondent. The five item scale of alienation developed by Miller (1967) assesses sense of pride and accomplishment in work, however, their absence need not necessarily imply alienation. Seeman (1967) addressed the issue of self estrangement at work by asking whether workers experience variety, creativity, responsibility and autonomy on the job.
This operationalization of alienation has a high degree of overlap with work satisfaction (Robinson, Athanasiou, & Head, 1969; Seybolt & Gruenfeld, 1976). Aiken and Hague (1966) measured alienation in their study on the basis of six questions that essentially appear to address work satisfaction. It is interesting that almost all the questions start with 'How satisfied are you and then go on to assess various aspects of work. Seybolt and Gruenfeld (1976) call for a refinement of the operationalization of alienation owing to measurement overlap with the concept of satisfaction. Kohn (1976) used a Guttmann scale to measure alienation with subscales for each of the dimensions of powerlessness, self estrangement, normlessness and cultural estrangement. However, the specific questions appear to assess a broader sense of alienation that includes alienation from society or life in general, rather than specifically alienation from work. Similarly, the measures of Korman et al. (1981) and Lang (1985) address both personal and social alienation. Mottaz (1981) measured alienation using seven items each for the dimensions of powerlessness, meaningfulness and self estrangement. He however concluded that powerlessness and meaningfulness are in fact determinants of self estrangement. Kanungo (1982) although purports to measure work alienation confounds alienation with involvement. More recently Hirschfeld and Field (2000) employed a ten item measure of alienation that also contains items measuring meaningfulness.
Thus, it appears that there is much variability in the literature on how alienation is measured, both in terms of the used scales, as well as to its usage in a narrow or broad sense.

**Research Gap, and Proposed Study**

Based on a review of the literature on work alienation, two main research gaps appear (a) the neglect of research on alienation after a point of time (1980’s) in the management literature, and (b) the absence of research on alienation of the workers in general. Therefore, research on alienation in the context of Indian work is an identified gap in the literature specifically among supervisors. Every work faces a constant challenge of keeping their employees engaged, committed and involved in their work. In case, a worker does disengage or become alienated, the losses. An alienated worker would be no good for the.

To Marx work was not merely a part of life but life itself, it is only through work that man is able to realize his full potential and thus it becomes necessary for man to find satisfaction from his work. He further analysed the modern industrial worker and concluded that the industrial worker was alienated in different ways; from his own labour, from the product of his labour from other human beings and finally from himself. By alienation,
Marx meant that a relationship that should be natural and familiar aspect of life has become strange or departed from him as he has no control over it.