SECTION 2

This section contains the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

The Present Study: Design & Methodology

CHAPTER V

Employment and characteristics of Labour
Employed & Recruitment Policy

CHAPTER VI

Genesis of Trade Union Movement in India

CHAPTER VII

The Trade Union Movement in Assam in general
and the Plywood Industry in particular.
CHAPTER IV

THE PRESENT STUDY: DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

At the time of independence there were practically no industries in the country and the few that existed, were owned by the British. Their main objective was to make high profits at the cost of the poor Indian worker and cheap Indian raw materials. In fact their main aim was to export raw materials and import finished products, so that India always remained dependent on them. Workers were exploited all over the country, be they from the textile mills of Bombay, the plantations of Assam or from the jute industries of Bengal.

However, as the country gradually came out of the shackles of colonialism and Indians took to putting up industries in various parts of the country, the plight of the poor workers improved, but only just. Inspite of various measures taken by the Government in this regard and formulation of various Acts with regard to the workers' employment, the industrial relations climate in the country remained sour. It is in this context that the present study is undertaken to understand the complex problems of labour management relationships in the plywood industry in Assam.

Assam is the largest producer of plywood in the country accounting for nearly 60% of the total production in the country. The plywood industry is the second largest industry in the private sector in the state and a vast majority of people are
provided employment in this labour intensive industry. It is but natural that with such a large number of people coming into contact with each other, there are bound to be frictions and tensions. With a view to finding a solution to these day-to-day problems, in worker management relationship, is the main aim of this study.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives of the present study are:

i) To study the general situation prevailing in the plywood industry in Assam with special reference to the labour management relations, as well as the contribution of the industry towards the state exchequer.

ii) To find out the nature and causes of disputes in the plywood industry in Assam and to suggest some remedial measures to prevent recurrence of the same in future.

iii) To ascertain the role played by various organisations both of the workers and the management namely the Trade Unions and the Assam Plywood Manufacturers Association.

iv) To find out the actual impact of the various labour laws applicable in the industry and to suggest measures for their proper implementation.

v) To study the future of the plywood industry in Assam, especially in the context of the timber crisis faced by the industry and its dependence on foreign imports for its raw materials requirements.
Methodology:

For the present study, data was collected from both primary as well as secondary sources:

**Primary sources**: The primary source from which data was collected was through two sets of questionnaire prepared for both the management and workers. It was also targeted at other groups like the Trade Union officials as well as Government officers. An important source of primary data was the personal interviews given by important Trade Union Officials as well as senior Government Officials of the Labour Commissioners Office, Guwahati and Tinsukia, Employment Officer, Tinsukia, Officers of the Workers Education Centre, Tinsukia etc.

Among the important Trade Union Officials from whom data could be obtained were Sri Gauri Shankar Bhattacharjee, Veteran Trade Union leader of Assam and Sri Kalyan Bhattacharjee, an important Trade Unionist in the Plywood Industry in Assam. Other well known members of various Trade Unions were also interviewed and their views taken into account for the purpose of this research work.

The Plywood factories to whom questionnaires were given were selected at random on the basis of information supplied by the Assam Plywood Manufacturers Association. Names of over 30 mills belonging to different categories (according to the production capacity of the mill) namely large, medium and
small, were supplied by them. Out of these mills, questionnaires were supplied to 16 of them. However at the end of almost three years only 9 of them could send the completed questionnaires, and that too after much coaxing and cajoling, thereby covering about 25% of the total number of APMA members.

**Secondary sources**: To support the primary data collected through questionnaires and interviews, secondary information has been collected from State Government Agencies like the Directorate of Employment & Craftsman Training, Department of Economics and Statistics, Department of Labour, Chief Conservator of Forests, Chief Inspector of Factories, Government of Assam, etc. Data was also collected from various libraries namely - Gauhati University Library, District Library, National Institute of Small Industries Extension & Training (all in Guwahati), North Eastern Council (Shillong), Indian Forest Research Institute (Dehra Dun), Federation of Indian Plywood & Panel Industries (New Delhi), etc. In addition to the above, information from textbooks and other published materials was also used extensively during the course of this study.

The data thus collected was tabulated into appropriate tables. All information was analysed in depth and statistical parameters worked out (percentages, averages, etc.) Where possible pictorial data was presented in the form of graphs, bar diagrams and maps.
Limitations:

Though all efforts have been made to make the study as exhaustive as possible, it still suffers from various limitations as mentioned hereunder:

1) It was not possible to cover the entire population of plywood units due to limitation of resources — technical and personnel as well as time at disposal.

2) Many sample units to whom questionnaires were addressed refused to send the requisite information in spite of repeated requests and reminders and for which substitutes were taken.

3) Correctness and accuracy of data in respect of various factors like Sales, Purchases, Employment, Disputes, etc., suffer from doubts as the owners/managers, officials are reluctant to disclose the actual records. However, all attempts have been made to extract the correct information by cross checking answers and also through informal discussions with them.

4) Over and above, one of the major determinant factor which hampered the progress of the work was the private ownership. Of all plywood units having their head offices outside the state of Assam.

Scheme of Presentation:

This study is presented in a total of Twelve Chapters sub-divided into four sections:
Chapter One deals exclusively with the forest wealth of India with special reference to the forest resources of the North-East especially Assam.

The Second chapter traces the growth and development of the plywood industry through the ages and its age old history in Assam.

In the Third chapter the contribution of plywood industry to the state exchequer is discussed.

The above mentioned chapters deal with the background information and form part of Section I.

The Second Section begins with the need for the present study as well as the design and methodology which also happens to be the Fourth chapter.

Chapter Five discusses the Recruitment policy, employment and characteristics of labour employed.

The history of Trade Union movement in India is dealt with in chapter six.

Chapter Seven traces the Trade Union movement in Assam in general and the Plywood Industry in particular.

All chapters in Section Three deal with labour management relations. Chapter Eight discusses the factors affecting Labour Management relations in the plywood industry.
Wages and collective bargaining in the industry with a few case studies form the subject matter of the Ninth Chapter.

Chapter Ten deals with the various labour welfare measures undertaken and its impact on labour relations and labour efficiency.

The final section (Section 4) contains two chapters — Chapter Eleven contains the summary and suggestions and chapter Twelve the final Conclusion.