CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
Investigation of commitment as a social phenomenon has been a forte of sociologists and till recently, the psychologists concerned themselves with only one kind of commitment, i.e., confinement of individuals to institutions. It was in the domain of organizational behaviour that systematic studies of employee commitment to organization were first undertaken. A plausible reason for the paucity of studies of commitment to organizations could be that the presence or creation of organizations as formal institutionalized structures gained ground only subsequent to the industrial revolution. Prior to this, it was only the army which could be considered as exemplifying the formal and institutionalized set up. Informal structures like family have loyalty and identification more or less as an inbuilt mechanism. Hence, in this framework, commitment may be considered a rule rather than an exception. It is only with the advent of industrialization that formal, goal oriented organizations came into being. Consequently, there arose the problem or challenge of stringing together a host of those heterogeneous people, who apparently had only one common element running through them and that was their organizational identity. The identification of these people with their institutions had to be carefully directed towards the achievement of mutually profitable ends.

Organizational commitment thus emerged as an explanation of behaviour and/or attitudes which revealed identification with the organization. Not surprisingly, most often, the view encountered with regard to commitment to organiza-
tions is the one having to do with an individual's psychological bond to the organization (Staw and Salanick, 1977). Commitment may be understood as one way in which the employee links himself to his employing organization. Agreeing with Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982), it may be adequate to explain commitment in terms of an extended membership linkage, which is qualitatively more enriched than mere accredited membership.

Theoretically, the approaches identified to explain commitment fall in terms of either an organizational behavioural approach or a social psychological or an integrative approach. Commitment has been referred to as either an attitudinal or behavioural construct. However, these lines of demarcation, which are in reality quite amorphous and arbitrary, have been integrated by Mowday et al. (1982) who opined that the arrow pointing from attitudinal to behavioural commitment should be bidirectional, revealing the true reciprocal nature of these influences. The development of commitment would involve a subtle interplay between attitudes and behaviours over a period of time.

As mentioned earlier, the systematic investigation of employee commitment to organizations does not have a long history. But this is compensated, in a way, by the volume of research carried out with regard to commitment and related phenomena. Investigations have spanned the entire gamut of theoretical systems and frameworks, and psychometric researches. The search for possible predictors, antecedents,
and correlates is still on. These would be helpful in clarifying the nature of the concept and subsequently aid the process of shaping the commitment of an employee to the organization.

The search for predictors has led to the emergence of various models which have attempted to depict possible relationships of representative variables as antecedents which may allow for generalizations to other sets of variables as predictors in the future. These models, however, serve as guidelines at best and should not be considered completely inflexible. Certain models which have attempted an integration of various predictors are as follows:

1) DeCotiis and Summers (1987)
3) Steers (1977)
4) Stevens, Beyer, and Trice (1978)

At present, commitment related research is at a juncture where replications are quite desirable. For instance, certain relationships which have been affirmed need to be replicated across different cultures or populations.

Commitment to organizations, apart from possessing an intuitive appeal, has instrumental worth. This is especially true in developing economies where attempts are constantly on to maximize employee contributions which may counter the resource cringe faced. There is also a need to arrest the degeneration of those values which link employees to their organization. Commitment is also important because it ensures that state of being for individual respondents whereby
FIGURE I
Model of the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment

FIGURE II
Major determinants of initial commitments to the organization

- Personal characteristics
  - Values
  - Beliefs
  - Personality

- Expectations about job

- Characteristics of job choice
  - Volition
  - Irrevocability
  - Sacrifice
  - Insufficient
  - Justification

- Level of initial commitment to organization

Hypothesized antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment.

Outcomes
- Desire to remain
- Intent to remain
- Attendance
- Employee retention
- Job performance

Organizational Commitment

Personal Characteristics (need for achievement, age, education)

Job Characteristics (task identity, optional interaction, feedback)

Work experiences (group attitudes, organizational dependability, personal import)

SOURCE: Steers 1977, P. 47
FIGURE IV
Role taking model of commitment process

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Propensity to Stay
With or Leave
Organization or
Federal Service

Personal Attributes
Role Related Factors
Organizational Factors

they would not shy away from investing more than mere routine input in the organization. Commitment is also beneficial to the individual employee himself. As Romzek (1989) suggested, commitment affords the employee a chance to develop a sense of belongingness and to fulfill the human need for meaningful work. By identifying with the organization's goals and values, the respondents derive personal meaning from their work experiences. She conclusively stated that psychological attachment to work yields personal benefits to the individual as well as the organization.

As a unified concept guiding measurement, the conceptualization of commitment in the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) is a rewarding step. Theoretically and operationally, it draws heavily upon earlier research. However, not only does this conceptualization make research more meaningful, coherent and easy to interpret but also envelopes in its fold the research that may have been sifted out.

Closely related, confused, and incorrectly considered to be synonymous with organizational commitment is the concept of job involvement. Earlier researchers, like Buchanan (1974), in identifying the structure of organizational commitment conceived of involvement as comprising and explaining a portion of organizational commitment. Years later, Brooke, Russell, and Price (1988), refuting criticisms by Morrow (1983), established that in spite of a certain overlap, the two concepts are independent. Although job
much involvement was conceptualized and operationalized much earlier than organizational commitment, it has not been possible to shrug off the haziness which has surrounded the concept. Most often, the conflict in this regard has been caused by job involvement being treated as synonymous with organizational commitment.

The quest for antecedents and predictors of organizational commitment and job involvement is still on. It would not be wrong to state that, for these two variables, this search has additional relevance. Apart from clarifying the nature of the variables, it would provide another method of describing the distinctiveness of these concepts. Normally, variables representative of personal characteristics, situational aspects, and work outcomes have formed the raw material basket from which predictors have been drawn. The discovery of various predictors, though important, is not singularly sufficient to provide a clear and complete picture of the concept to the researchers.

Job involvement has been variously conceived of as either a personality variable, i.e., an individual difference measure, or a situational variable, or even as a person-situation interaction variable.

Involvement in the job reflects the process of ego involvement in work. This has been a concern for both psychologists, such as Allport (1943) and McGregor (1960), and sociologists like Dubin (1956, 1968) and Hughes (1958). The concept was crystallized for investigation in terms of the operationalization offered by Lodahl and Kejner (1965). As
conceived by them, job involvement is clearly a value laden concept which addresses itself to the degree of self esteem which a person draws from performance at job, and the degree to which work, operationalized as job, forms a central part of his/her life. Job involvement hence may have a basis in the process of socialization of the individual.

Job involvement is a sort of "micro" concept, i.e., it is "job specific" in the sense of being primarily related to the job. The job however, does not exist in isolation. It is one of the processes by which an employee links himself to his work and role in the organization. In associating themselves with organizations, apart from holding direct attitudinal as well as behavioural relationships, respondents link themselves to their specific jobs by virtue of their job attitudes. The conceptualization of job involvement as a value orientation to work finds a great appeal as it is able to provide a certain direction to the approach towards evaluating work in general, which may be specified as the job, in an organizational framework.

Job involvement also gains importance from the perspective of organizational behaviour theorists, empirical researchers, as well as human resource management practitioners, because it refers to the ego involvement and consequential self evaluation in terms of self esteem attained from the job. It would be worthwhile for any organization to diagnose the extent of involvement its employees have in their jobs and proceed with that diagnosis to augment this
involvement for ensuring not only efficiency but harmonious efficiency. For the organization, specifically, job involvement is important because it plays the role of being a feedback variable and of ensuring further involvement. Finally, for the society at large, it has great relevance as it helps immensely by creating a conglomeration of highly job involved respondents in various places.

The need of the hour is to discern various conditions and predictors which explain and predict both, involvement in job as well as commitment to the organization. Apart from other predictors, various personal and social demographic variables like age, education, marital status, number of dependants etc. also need investigation. Some organizationally relevant information like the number of promotions received and suggestions given and accepted also need to be studied. Furthering this, it would be logical to expect to identify those strategies which would effectively create, nurture, and sustain both involvement and commitment. Along with identifying the predictors it would be equally necessary to dispel doubts regarding the nature of these constructs.

One concept which has often been considered similar to and has a certain conceptual overlap with job involvement is that of Protestant Work Ethic. The moorings of this concept can be traced to Weber (1905). Weber mentioned it in terms of "goodness of work" and "work for its own sake." The psychologists extended the scope of this concept and attempted to relate it to the behaviour of individuals in
organizations by either operationalizing it as a value orientation (Blood, 1969) or as a personality variable (Mirels and Garrett, 1971). It may be relevant to mention here that the present measures of Protestant Work Ethic have very little in common with Protestant Work Ethic as conceptualized by Weber (1905) apart from nomenclature. One of the reasons for this is that the present conceptualizations aim at tapping the manner in which respondents address themselves in relation to work or jobs which are performed for their instrumental worth. The conceptualization and operationalization by Blood (1969) is closer to a set of conservative belief systems which links the individual to the job, the work roles, and through these to the organization in which he is employed.

Protestant Work Ethic develops partly as an outcome of the socialization process, i.e., the manner in which work values are internalized. It is reasonable to assume that the centrality of work as brought forth in the developmental phases has temporally extended influences upon the endorsement or non-endorsement of the work ethic in adulthood.

The contextual milieu serving as a framework for the inference and emergence of various job related attitudes is the climate of the organization. All other variables may be perceived to be embedded in the climate of the organization. Historically, the climate in which employees function has been of interest to many theoreticians as well as behavioural scientists. However, the climate of any organization,
like the geographical climate of any place is a complex variable, dependent upon many factors. Hence, assessing it is far from simple.

A controversy on whether climate is an objective characteristic of the organization or a subjective perception of its respondents, has been consistently reported in the literature related to organizational behaviour. Like certain constructs which refer to organizational realities but are inferred from the perceptions of employees who form a responding part of the organization, climate should be so understood and assessed. Organizational climate then is a summated perception of characteristics of the organization as perceived by its members. Normally, climates are classified in terms of dominantly assessed characteristics or dimensions explaining organizations. Hence, organizational climate may be perceived as being conducive to efficiency, or in terms of its being autocratic, democratic, and so on.

Climate perceptions become important because they act upon dominant individual predispositions and serve to significantly alter the attitudes and behaviours of the employee toward the organizations. In effect, they attempt to moderate the outcome behaviours and the manners in which employees negotiate the organizational realities as perceived by them. These perceptions have further bearings upon the employee-organizational linkages.

Another manner in which an employee explicitly links himself to his job, and through the job to the organization is by adapting his behaviour in consonance with the expecta-
tions him. Those normative expectations to which the individual is expected to adapt are referred to as organizational and job roles. Roles may not always be clear to an incumbent, thus causing him stress. This could happen as a result of incongruous or incompatible demands placed upon the individual. These conflicting demands manage to pose a role conflict for the individual and require a coping mechanism on his behalf as a part of being in the job or organization. Apart from the incompatibility of expectations there also may be a lack of clarity to the respondent in terms of expectations from him/her. The incumbent may thus face a situation of non-clarity, referred to as role ambiguity. These two phenomena, taken jointly, are referred to as role stress.

Role stress is detrimental to an adequate discharging of role related behaviours. It makes the adaption to normative behaviours more difficult. In any organizational framework, roles have to be clearly demarcated and communicated to the respondents to avoid ambiguity as well as conflict. Creating such organizational roles is indeed a challenging task for any human resource management practitioner, because the dividing line between regularising practices leading to reduced ambiguity and conflict and a rigid bureaucratic environment, is very thin.

The presence of role stress mediates employee-organization linkages. It would act by damaging the formation of effective attitudinal identification with the goals and
values of organization at large, and more specifically, involvement in the job itself. Role stress may also act to insulate a respondent by preventing him from relating affectively to his job and the organization. Hence, it is dysfunctional. Its presence is associated with harbouring a state which is counterproductive to the phenomena important for carrying out organizationally relevant actions and putting the best foot forward with respect to both the job as well as the organization. Although roles are inextricably conceived of as being linked with the job, they affect organizationally relevant attitudes and outcomes and outcomes like commitment and involvement.

The manner in which incumbents react and relate to social situations at large can become a significant predictor of the manner in which individuals may relate to situations in the context of organizational life. "Orientation" can be considered one valid index of such a relationship, for it is relevant to the manner in which a person organizes the realities of his environment. Bass (1962) identified three variables which effectively differentiate an individual's orientation in three areas, i.e., self, interaction with others, and task to be performed.

The orientation of individuals who are members of any organization, performing any job, is likely to have considerable influence upon all job attitudes held by them. As the word itself suggests, orientation is a "set", a manner of viewing and consequently interpreting existing structures and processes in the environment. The dominant
orientations (i.e., self, task, and interaction) held by individuals would mediate their perceptions and guide subsequent attitudinal as well as behavioural patterns in relating to a job and organization.

It has often been noticed that individuals, otherwise matched upon salient traits and abilities, relate differentially to dominant organization realities. Work and job fail to become a unifying reality for them and, at times, human resource management practitioners find respondents emphasising trivialities from the organization's point of view. Hence it is justified to assume that there are certain differences in orientation which are being projected in differential relationships with the job as well as the organization.

Keeping in mind the present needs of various institutions to maximize (1) the involvement of incumbents in the job they are assigned and (2) the commitment to organizations of which they are members, it is imperative that various theoretical and empirical steps should be taken to clearly understand not only the nature of these variables but also their interactions and associated conditions. The present investigation can be considered essential owing to the following reasons:

1) The present empirical and theoretical status of organizational commitment and job involvement constructs is such that research is needed to replicate as well as supplement earlier findings. This is more so for the
Indian industrial scenario where specific predictors need to be identified.

2) There is a certain degree of conceptual overlap between organizational commitment, job involvement, and Protestant Work Ethic. Research is needed to clarify the distinctive nature of these concepts.

3) In the present times, with growing decadence in worker attitudes, organizational commitment and job involvement have immense relevance to organizations in particular and society at large. Thus, it is desirable to discern conditions which would be associated with the existence of both commitment as well as involvement.

4) The available studies which have identified and reported correlates and antecedents of organizational commitment as well as job involvement have revealed contradictory results. The assertions regarding relationships about certain demographic variables are clear, but no definite conclusion has been arrived at about various job attitudes. Thus, rigorous research is needed to help in understanding the nature of these concepts and the manner in which they relate to specific job attitudes.

5) Finally, the two concepts - organizational commitment and job involvement have been used interchangeably. Composite studies utilizing other job attitudes in relation to both variables simultaneously are needed to enable the emergence of a clearer picture.