

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of our society since the turn of the century has been breathtaking. Twentieth century has witnessed revolutionary changes in the life-goals and aspirations of mankind. For the first time in human history, man has begun to feel that he can, if he tries hard enough, free himself from bondage to both nature as well as to other men. At the international plane, this process started with the Marxist Revolution, followed by decolonisation, and is now manifested in the movement for human rights. At the organizational plane, however, we have a long way to go to accept and institutionalize the said global trends. Meanwhile, many employers, while pursuing their organizational objectives, seem to be guided by the philosophy of Liberal Capitalism that was prevalent towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Because of the revolution of rising expectations, wherein people have more and yet want to have still more, work today has acquired a much broader meaning and significance for the worker than it did for the slave of yesterday. Punitive discipline only make the worker more alienated. Attempts have been made by the social scientists to highlight the need for greater humanization of the work place and for professionalization of the systems of man-management. McGregor (1966) advocates this through his 'Theory-Y'. Likert (1967) recommends the same through adoption of a style of management called 'System-4'. Herzberg and his associates (1959) propose that the emphasis should not be on the "hygiene" factors to the neglect of the "motivators", but that both the categories of need have to be attended to in order to make workers satisfied with their careers. Maslow (1954, 1965) suggests a hierarchical structure of human needs for motivation. Seeman (1959) has proposed the concept of alienation, which can be viewed as the opposite to positive motivation or commitment. According to Seeman, alienation is not a unitary

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experience but can be analysed along the following five dimensions : social isolation, normlessness, powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement. Using this classification, Blauner (1964) has analysed the experience of the modern industrial worker. He concludes that work which permits autonomy, responsibility, social connection and self-actualization furthers the dignity of the worker, whereas work that is lacking in these attributes limits the development of the individual's potential and leads to the feeling of alienation.

The feeling of alienation gives rise to most critical problems in the area of man-management.

Therefore, the process of organizing modern life into complex organizations will increasingly emphasize the importance of the relationship between the individual and the organization. This type of relationship may be viewed in terms of organizational commitment.

Commitment to the organization is an important behavioural dimension which can be utilised to evaluate employees' strength of attachment. Keeping employees highly committed is very important for the organization and hence the management of today is greatly concerned with identifying those variables that are related to organizational commitment in order that they may design organizational strategies to maximise commitment levels. Lack of commitment by employees is behind much of the behaviour blamed for high costs and poor service (Sherwin, 1972). Students of the management science, therefore, have devoted themselves to understanding the cause of commitment/alienation among employees. Their insights have resulted in persuasive new approaches aimed at gaining commitment and changing behaviour. Participative management, 'Theory-Y' styles of supervision, management by objectives, sensitivity training, job enrichment, leadership and human relations training are some of the products of this creative effort.

Business executives are anxious to see employee attitudes improved. Appreciating that the results they get from existing behaviour, and that better results, require different behaviour, they try out new ideas for altering attitudes

and behaviour. But the results are often disappointing. Notwithstanding the training imparted as the employee returns to his job, managers usually find in dismay the employee backsliding to his old habits, attitudes and behaviours. The end result is feeling of disillusionment and lack of conviction towards training programme and other techniques designed to change personality and attitudes or behaviours.

What is the explanation? The behavioural scientists in search of the cause for this have come across inter alia with the problem of commitment. It lies in the most basic assumptions of the organization. Commitment far from being something that has to be created in employees, is a natural psychological phenomenon of every person. But the leaders in the organization, frustrate it at the source by assumptions and practices that they apply in the organizing process. Because these assumptions are intrinsic to organizing and are made prior to any functioning of the organization, their influence is always present and maintains a kind of irreducible level or core of employee alienation. So when the employee returns to his job after training, he comes again under the influence and eventually resumes the behaviour observed before the training.

According to contemporary thought, organization is a strategy for achieving goals. Based on this criterion, the strategy of the business executives has to be judged incomplete, unless the organization has permitted its members to satisfy their psychological and social needs and thus win employees' commitment.

Definition and conceptualization of organizational commitment:

Organizational commitment refers to the nature of the relationship of the members to the system as a whole. Two general factors which influence the strength of a person's attachment to an organization are the rewards he has received from the organization and the experiences he has had to undergo to receive them. People become members of the formal organizations because they can attain objectives that they desire through their membership. If the person discovers that he cannot obtain the rewards he originally desired,

he either leaves the organization and joins another, or if this is not feasible, he accepts those rewards which he can obtain and at the same time remain less committed to that organization. On the other hand, obtaining the rewards sought, operates to further his felt obligation to the organization, and his commitment is strengthened. The expectation of reward operates in a like manner. Strength of commitment to an organization should be positively related to the strength of conviction that one will be rewarded by the organization. Vroom's (1964) most consistently positive findings, concerning the relationship between individual and organizational goals, involve the expectancy that performance will result in extrinsic rewards and that intrinsic satisfaction will result from the work itself. The nature of one's commitment to an organization may undergo radical change depending on the relationship between belief and reality. Convergence of belief and reality would tend to strengthen commitment, while divergence would cause a decrease in commitment to the organization (Grusky, 1966).

Although approaches to the definition of organizational commitment may vary considerably (Becker, 1960; Brown, 1969; Buchnan, 1974; Grusky, 1966; Hall, Schneider & Nygren, 1970; Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Kanter, 1968; Salancik, 1977; Sheldon, 1971; Weiner & Gechman, 1977) certain implicit trends are evident. In particular many of these definitions focus on commitment related behaviours as those that represent sunk costs in the organization where individuals forego alternative course of action and choose to link themselves to the organization.

A second trend that emerges from the available theory is to define commitment in terms of an attitude. That is, attitudinal commitment exists when the "identity of the person (is linked) to the organization" (Sheldon, 1971) or when the "goals of the organization and those of the individual become increasingly integrated or congruent" (Hall, 1979). Attitudinal commitment thus represents a state in which an individual identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in order to faci-

litate these goals. As noted by March and Simon (1958), such commitment often encompasses an exchange relationship in which individuals attach themselves to the organization in return for certain rewards or payments from the organization. Buchanan (1974) suggests that commitment is an additive function of three things: organizational identification, job involvement and organizational loyalty. Similarly, Porter and his associates define commitment as an additive function of a person's desire to remain a member of the organization; his willingness to exert high effort for the organization, and his belief in the values and goals of the organization (Porter and Smith, 1970; Porter, Crampon and Smith, 1976; Dubin, Champoux and Porter, 1975). These psychological views are compatible with most managerial conceptions of organizational loyalty and commitment (Lee, 1971; Sigband, 1974).

Commitment as a "Value"

Sociologists who have examined various issues of commitment come out from a slightly different perspective. At the sociological level, commitment has been perceived as an integral aspect of broader social sanctions and controls; it is an internalised value which ensures the observance of rules and norms of the organization. As Avery (1968) indicates, integrating an individual into any organization necessitates some internalization of commitment or loyalty and other ideals via processes of training or organizational socialisation. Denhardt (1968) too, stresses the crucial significance of the internalization of and commitment to central organizational values. Quite consistent, but in addition, is the view of Havinghurst and Neugarten (1967) who stress that immediate "full membership" status in a group without a rigorous indoctrination to instil its norms and values of necessity will result in less commitment or loyalty. They further suggest that involvement in one organization is partly a function of involvements to other organizations. Despite this, the views of sociologists on commitment are quite similar to those of psychologists and concern the person's willingness to leave or stay with the organization (Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972) or his orientation to the rewards of his various affiliations (Sheldon, 1971).

Commitment and exchange: Rewards costs and "Side-Bets"

Perhaps the best known and most impactful studies of commitment have dealt with that concept as part of a broader paradigm based on "exchange" relationship (Hrebiniak 1972). Simply stated, the more one has "at stake" in a given occupation or organization or similarly, the more one can lose by leaving that occupation or organization, the more one will be committed to the occupation or organization. To Becker (1960), an individual over time makes and becomes cognizant of his "side-bets", things of value which have been stated by him and which can cause him to remain immersed in or committed to his role. Examples of "side-bets" would include vested interests in pension plans, seniority within a particular system and even the existence of "familiar ways" of doing things which would make the learning of new methods and relationships "costly", hence undesirable. One would naturally expect of course, that "side-bets" would increase somewhat proportionately with the amount of time and effort expended in any particular system. To Becker, then commitment was basically a structural phenomenon which occurred and changed as a result of exchanges, "transactions", or reward-cost ratios. Grusky (1966) found, in his samples of 1649 managers, quite predictably in line with exchange or side-bets notions, that organizational commitment increased with years spent in the system and that there indeed was a monotonic relationship between the rewards received from the organization and the degree of commitment to it, Hagburg (1966) found that by far the most active members were those who perceived their organization as a source of "rewards" and satisfactions.

In brief, hosts of data have apparently exhibited the crucial correlation of exchange concepts with commitment orientations. Generally speaking, the greater the time, money, social and similar "investments" made in any system, or the more a system or task is perceived as the locus of rewards, the greater is the commitment to the system or task, Becker & Carper, 1956; Ginzberg, 1951.

Continuance commitment

The exchange model is again at the root of another concept on commitment - the continuance commitment.

It is defined as the willingness or desire on the part of participants to maintain membership with an organization. Specifying continuance commitment in such a manner is consonant with Becker's (1960) use of the term to denote consistent or persistent lines of activities. It is considered important for understanding individual motivation as well as system maintenance and control (Katz and Kahn, 1978).

Theories of social exchange provide a useful framework and starting point for examining continuance commitment, its antecedents and consequences for the individual and for the organization.

In a study of priests, regarding their attachment to their profession, Schoenherr and Greeley (1974) assert that continuance commitment is dependent upon the "net balance of rewards over costs" of involvement. A similar explanation is offered by Kanter (1968), who describes commitment to continued participation as primarily involving an instrumental orientations: "When profits and costs are considered, participants find the cost of leaving the system would be greater than the costs of remaining, profit in a net psychic sense compels continued participation". Becker (1960), too, ultimately defines commitment as the actor assessing the balance of costs over rewards accrued from a series of seemingly unrelated investments or "side-bets". He, however, concludes that the "classic simplicity of this economic example shows us the skeleton" of the commitment process.

March and Simon (1958), in their treatises on organizations, explain the decision to continue with organizational employment in terms of an inducement - contribution equilibrium model and this is supported by others as well (Barnard, 1938; Simon, Smithburg and Thompson, 1950). The basic supposition of this model is that members exchange their contributions and involvement for certain rewards or inducements which they desire from participating in the organisation. Inducements include not only extrinsic rewards such as salary

and pension benefits but also untangible outcomes such as social status and a sense of accomplishment.

Measures of continuance commitment are combined with indications of personal identification, motivational predispositions, job involvement, and feelings of affection to form an overall index of employee commitment (Sheldon 1971; Buchanan, 1974; Porter and Smith, 1970).

Moral and Calculative Commitment

From the various definitions and concepts of commitment stated in earlier paragraphs, it is evident that commitment to the organisation is typically defined in two ways: (1) the identification of the individual with the values and objectives of the organization, and (2) the willingness or unwillingness of the individual to leave the organization.

The first is based, mainly, on the writings of Argyris (1964), Likert (1961) and McGregor (1960). This approach relates organizational commitment to the existence of intrinsically satisfying jobs and the opportunities available in the organization for the satisfaction of higher order needs. In particular, efforts were made to provide for these needs by enriching jobs.

The second definition based on Simon and March (1958), Simon (1957) and Becker (1960), sees commitment as related to the investments which the individual has in the organization. These investments are in the form of pay, years in the organization, position and the availability of alternative employment opportunities elsewhere.

In addition to the conceptual difference between the two, the definitions reflect to a certain degree two problem areas that are currently of greater interest to the organizations. These include the alienation of the employees from the so-called "bureaucratic", "inhumane" organization (Blauner, 1964) and the relatively high dissatisfaction with the job and the organization resulting in lower productivity and industrial strife.

Two measures of commitment are used to reflect the respective theoretical definitions outlined above. The two types of commitment, moral and calculative (Etzioni, 1961), are linked to measures of job characteristics (Hackman and Lawler, 1971) and satisfaction. Moral commitment is conceptualized as identification with the organization's goals and calculative commitment is conceptualized as willingness or unwillingness to leave the organization. Calculative commitment is similar to that of a business relationship, attitudes towards customers and relationship among entrepreneurs, (Kidron, 1976). Moral commitment designates a positive orientation of high intensity and can be either pure (identification with goals and norms of the organization) or social (sensitivity to pressures of primary groups and their members). Thus, moral commitment in its pure form "is based on the internalization of norms and identification with authority". Calculative commitment is based on attitudes that are similar to a business contract. Indeed, definitions of commitment, derived from the line of thought clearly reflect this view:

- a) Commitment is viewed as a partisan, effective attachment to the goals and values of an organization as one's role in relation to goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth (Buchnan, 1974).
- b) Identification can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence because he wants to maintain a satisfying self defining relationship to another person or group (Brown, 1969).
- c) When an individual genuinely identifies himself with a group leader or cause, he is in effect saying that the goals and values associated with that cause have become his own. He then self-consciously directs his efforts towards those goals and gains intrinsic satisfaction through their achievement (McGregor, 1967).
- d) An important way of seeing oneself as integrated into an organization is to incorporate the values and goals of his organization into one's identity. A positive relationship can be expected between organizational identification and individual commitment to organizational goals

(Hall, Schneider and Nygren 1970).

At the same time definitions of commitment based on calculative framework are different. Becker uses Abramson's (1958) definition of commitment in this regard: "Thus, whenever we propose commitment as an explanation of consistency in behaviour, we must have independent observations of the major components in such a preposition:

1. prior actions of the person staking some originally extraneous interest on his following is consistent line of activity
2. a recognition by him of the involvement of this organizationally extraneous interest in his present activity and
3. the resulting consistent line of activity."

Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) base their definition on calculative commitment on the notion of exchange and rewards-cost balance; "Here, the emphasis is on the bargaining or exchange relationships between the individual and the organization. The more favourable the exchange from the participant's viewpoint, the greater his commitment to the system". Calculative commitment thus seems to be related to the exchange model. This type of commitment is based on the investments in the organization or inducements, and subsequently reflects a dependency relationship with the organization. As a result there is an unwillingness to leave the organization or state of calculative commitment.

Moral commitment based on the human relations approach is a result of the higher order need satisfaction. Thus, if that satisfaction exists, the inducement of the individual to remain in the organization will be higher, namely his calculative commitment will be stronger (Kidron & Fry, 1976). On the other hand, identification with goals as indicated by empirical research (Hall, Schneider and Nygren, 1970; Hall and Schneider, 1972) is related to position and length of service. Thus it seems equally plausible that moral commitment results from the decision to remain in the organization which in turn, is based on calculative commitment. Despite this minor conceptual differences between moral and calculative commitment, the theories can be merged into one coherent framework and it will be useful to combine the two measures of commitment into an overall measure

of commitment (Kidron & Fry, 1976). Indeed, finding by Jamal (1974) and Porter (1968) support this notion. The combination of the concepts is parsimonious and seems to be useful to tap a wide range of attitudes towards the organization.

Thus a review of recent organization behaviour literature reveals over thirty different studies which either use organizational commitment as a primary outcome variable or as a key independent variable. The investigations so far cover a broad spectrum of industries and occupations, ranging from traditional areas of research and development activities such as Scientists (Lee, 1971; Miller and Wager, 1969; Sheldon, 1971; Steers, 1977) and managers (Ritzer and Trice, 1969; Buchanan, 1974; Stevens, Beyer and Trice, 1978) to less common ones such as cocktail waitresses (Hearn and Stoll, 1975) and priests (Hall and Schneider, 1972; Schoenherr and Greeley 1974). There is a general agreement in these studies that organizational commitment refers to the nature of the bond between the members and the employing organizations in all its facets.

The majority of opinions, however, tend to consider organizational commitment as an independent personality variable. In the present study, as will be shown in the next chapter, we should also like to consider it an independent personality variable.

With this background in mind, the present study on commitment derives primarily from the definition of organizational commitment as given by Porter et al (1970). Organizational commitment as stated earlier, is defined by them as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation. It can be characterized by atleast three related factors:

1. a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values;
2. a willingness to exert considerable efforts on behalf of the organization;
and
3. a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

When defined in this fashion, commitment represents something beyond mere passive loyalty to an organization. It involves an active relationship with the organization such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to the organization's well-being. Hence, to an observer, commitment could be inferred not only from the expressions of an individual's beliefs and opinions but also from his or her actions. It is important to note here that this definition does not preclude the possibility that individuals will also be committed to other aspect of their environments such as one's family or union or political party. It simply asserts that regardless of these other possible commitments, the organizationally committed individuals will tend to exhibit the three type of behaviours identified in the above definition.

Hence the research interest in commitment is considered justified on account of the general decay of employee interest in working, rising dissatisfaction and other withdrawal behaviours. Add to that union militancy, unsponsored wildcat and other kinds of strikes, and labours' growing political and economic power, one can see the advantage of making employees feel a bit more concerned and dedicated.

The research evidence concerning the relationship between various demographic and situational antecedent variables and organizational commitment, in Indian situation, is extremely limited, with most of the studies considering only isolated fragments of the concept of commitment. The objective of this research is to identify, in Indian context, the demographic and the situational antecedents of commitment to organization or the desire to maintain organizational membership, and to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction as the behavioural outcome.

Further, the proposed study will seek to identify those correlates of organizational commitment crucial for the three samples, (i.e. Blue collar workers, white collar workers and managers), and will also delineate central differences between the three samples, if any indeed exist.

Major emphasis is given in the study to investigating the personality variables and the organizational characteristics and processes which contribute to commitment and the persistence of organizational involvement. It is assumed that the findings should have important implications for organizational theory and practice, particularly for identifying those variables that are closely related to organizational commitment. If social and political commitments may guide human behaviour in specific areas, why not organizational commitment act the same way in understanding behaviours within the organization. The present study aims at delineating the personality and motivational dynamics of organizational commitment in order that the leaders may design organizational strategies to maximise commitment levels of the participating members.