

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Introduction**

In any organization, the employment relationship is of utmost importance. Several studies over the centuries have identified certain customs and practices which facilitate the seamless running of organizations. Human Resource practices that deal with the workforce of a company form an integral part of the employment relationship. Such practices are identified to reinforce the relationship of employees and employers with the organization as well as with each other. With the changing times, several theories and practices are being identified regularly wherein the primary goal is to establish a sound work culture. With rapid globalization and a competitive market, companies are compelled to introduce, practice, and learn new concepts and theories related to human resource, so as to attract new talent into their organizations. One such concept is 'Psychological Contract'. It is an interesting discovery because unlike conventional HR issues, it does not hold any set of explicit details as what to expect in an employment relationship. Psychological Contract is "the set of implicit mutual obligations and expectations an employee or employer might have with each other." Since the concept has been fairly new, organizations have had their fair share of implementing different policies and practices to understand the same. The theory is on its way to becoming a breakthrough in the field of management and therefore institutions and individuals need to recognize Psychological Contract and its importance in today's world.

## **1.2 Psychological Contract**

Psychological Contract (PC) is a reasonably new term in Human Resource Management. Unlike most of HR concepts, which date back to centuries, the conception of 'Psychological Contract' happened in the 1960s. The term 'Psychological Contract' was coined by Chris Argyris, an American organizational psychologist. Almost three decades later Denise Rousseau revived research on the concept, and defined "Psychological Contract" as "an individual's beliefs concerning the mutual obligations that exist between him/herself and the employer." (Rousseau D. M., 1989) In the following years, several authors have contributed to the theory of Psychological Contract. The term essentially means the implicit contract between employers and employees, focussing on mutual expectations and obligations.

In contemporary work, researchers have divided Psychological Contract (PC) into four divisions- “Transactional Psychological Contract, Transitional Psychological Contract, Relational Psychological Contract, and Hybrid Psychological Contract”.

*“Transactional Psychological Contract”* defines obligations from both employee and employer who are tied for limited and definite periods. Examples might include short-term projects with predefined performance goals and minimal training and development scope. This is mainly ‘economic’ in nature, such as remuneration, promotion, benefits, etc.

*“Transitional Psychological Contract”* is generally the casual passing stage of the employment relationship which has limited or no commitments for future employment.

*“Relational Psychological Contract”* determines the shared promises in an employment relationship basis the mutual socio-emotional attachment. This can include loyalty and stability from an employees’ perspective and economic securities and protection from the employers’ side.

A *“Hybrid or Balanced Psychological Contract”* is an agreement that coalesces both transactional and relational Psychological contracts and it can include a long-term commitment, flexibility, and adjustments from both parties. (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998) (Macneil, 1985) (Rousseau & Parks, 1993)

Over the years, Psychological Contract has been divided into many types based on their nature, dimensions, approaches, and different situations. One of the earliest divisions of Psychological Contract was the different approaches for the same- Unilateral and Bilateral approaches.

*“The unilateral approach”* refers to the individual belief, which is mainly the employees’ outlook on employee-organizational obligations and expectations and does not include the employers’ view. This limits the approach to an “intra-individual perception” (Rousseau D., 1990)

*“The bilateral approach”* considers both employer and employee perceptions on mutual obligations and expectations. (Levinson et. al., 1962); (Schein, 1965); (Herriot & Pemberton, 1995). This approach considers perspectives of both the parties as a whole.

There are conflicting preferences based on the unilateral and bilateral approaches. Bilateral approach is applauded for encompassing the employee and employer outlooks, and unilateral approach is preferred for measurement. This is because a psychological contract is individual in nature and therefore every individual view should be considered. (Freese & Schalk, 1996)

The next approach in conceptualizing Psychological Contract is measuring the feature, content, and evaluation. This approach was introduced by (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998) while reviewing different assessments of the Psychological Contract. The three forms of measurement are as follows-

*“Feature-oriented approach”* compares the contract to certain characteristic or measurement. Here employees perceive individual expectations and obligations, that cannot be explained

*“Content-oriented approach”* examines detailed terms and conditions of the contract. It refers to the exchange agreement, both explicit and implicit, which forms a part of the psychological contract.

*“Evaluation-oriented approach”* assesses the level of fulfilment, change, or breach in the contract. It refers to the degree of perceiving the promises kept, by both employee and employer.

### **1.2.1 History of Psychological Contract:**

The theory of “Psychological Contract” emerged in the 1960s when Chris Argyris coined “Psychological Contract” in his book “Understanding Organisational Behaviour”. He discussed that “employee will maintain high production, low grievances, etc., if the foreman guarantee and respect the norms of the employee informal culture.” (Argyris C., 1960). Although Argyris laid the idea of an informal agreement between employee and employer, he did not propose a structured definition for the same.

A couple of years later, in 1962, Levinson analyzed around 850 participants in an institution and defined “Psychological Contract” as “an unwritten contract between employer and employees” (Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, & Solley, 1962). Years later Kotter also added that Psychological Contract is “a hidden contract among

organizations and individuals including their dues and what they deserved.” (Kotter, 1973) It was found that hidden expectations were essential in the establishment of a relationship between the two parties. Leveraging on the idea, Schein defined PC as “a set of mutual unwritten expectations among organization members.” After two decades of conceiving the idea, the theory of Psychological Contract was divided into two levels by Schein – individual and organization (Schein E. H., 1990). It is seen that all theories relating to PC were mutual expectations of institutions and individuals. Scholars who theorized this view were known as the ‘Classical School’.

Around 40 years after Argyris laid the foundation of the PC concept, D.M. Rousseau, an American scholar, redefined Psychological Contract as “an understanding or faith about mutual responsibility between employee and employer.” The most accepted and popular definition given by Rousseau in the year 1989 was, “Psychological contracts are individual beliefs in a reciprocal obligation between the individual and the organization.” (Rousseau D. M., 1989)

In 1990, D. Rousseau studied the concept of Psychological Contract on 129 fresh MBA graduates. Analyses showed the employer has seven responsibilities - Promotion, High Rewards, Long-term Job Security, Performance Rewards, Training, Career Development, and HR support. Similarly, the responsibilities of employees are- Working overtime, Voluntary engagement beyond job duties, Loyalty, Advance notification with regards to quitting, Internal Work Adjustment acceptance, Not helping rivals, Not disclosing secrets, and staying for at least two years in the organization. (Rousseau D. , 1990)

In 1994, Rousseau and Robinson updated the PC theory and added that “the kind of faith that exists in the employment relationship is the promise, understanding, and perception on an exchange relationship between an employee’s contribution and an employer’s incentives” (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

In 1997, Herriot and Manning updated Rousseau’s list by analyzing 184 managers and 184 employees of different age groups and experiences. According to this list, there are 12 responsibilities of employers contributing to the Psychological Contract of employees, which are- Training, Care, Kindness, Pay, Understanding, Negotiation, Fairness, Safety, Perseverance, Welfare, Trust and Stable jobs. The responsibilities of

employees in this regard are- Punctuality, Honesty, Hard Work, Loyalty, Protection of Company assets, Mutual assistance. (Herriot, Manning, & Kidd, 1997) Over the years, several variables were identified for shaping employees' psychological contracts, such as career motivation, Previous work experience, Job alternatives, etc. (Larwood, Wright, Desrochers, & Dahir, 1998) (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999) (Turnley & Feldman, 1999)

In 1998, a simple definition was put forward as “the implicit and explicit promises two parties make to one another” (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998) Later Morrison added that “PC is a set of faiths held by employees about mutual responsibilities based on making sense of promises not known by the organization.” (Morrison & Robinson, 1997) Scholars who held this particular one-way expectations view were known as ‘Rousseau School’.

(Freese & Schalk, 2008) have analyzed several ways to measure Psychological contracts. Six criteria were discussed for measurement-

- “A psychological contract measurement has to be theory-based or inductively developed;
- A psychological contract measurement should assess mutual obligations/promises;
- The psychometric properties of the psychological contract measurement and the appropriateness for the sample have to be assessed;
- The evaluation of the psychological contract has to be assessed for separate items.
- In the evaluation of the psychological contract, it should be assessed whether a certain item is important. In addition, the evaluation should be direct;
- Violation of the psychological contract has to be distinguished from fulfillment, and contract breach.”

In the recent past, Laura Dean defined Psychological contract as “Reasonable expectations an employee has of the ways in which their employing organization and its representatives will behave towards them which do not form part of the formal contract of employment at the level of analysis of the employee's choosing.” (Dean, 2017)

In conclusion, the definitions for Psychological Contracts can be divided into the broad definition and narrow definitions. “The broad definition is the understanding about mutual responsibilities in exchange relationship among employer and employees

subjectively in accordance of all kinds of promises whether written, spoken or under the regulations of organization”. “The narrow definition is a set of faiths were generated under the understanding of organization policy, practice and culture or the encouragement by agents’ promises, sometimes the agents might not be conscious.” (Li & Dai, 2015)

### **1.2.2 Psychological Contract and its divisions:**

Over the years, Psychological contracts are seen to have had a significant impact on employers and employees. This has led researchers to divide the theory of PC into different divisions based on varying conditions. The concept was studied, not as a generalized theory, but by breaking it down to specific scenarios, to understand better.

The foremost division in this regard was studied by Rousseau in 2001, where she analyzed around 130 MBA graduates and found that there exist two dimensions of Psychological Contract- “two dimensional structure and three-dimensional structure”. The study laid the foundation of two of the most important divisions in relation to PC. One of the variables showed that employees were provided with rewards, training, and career development in exchange for overtime work and work beyond duty hours. Such a contract that is based on transactions was introduced as a ‘transactional contract’. Another variable confirmed long-term job security in exchange for loyalty, internal work adjustments, and long-term working. Such contracts were based on emotional transactions and hence was named “relational contract”. (Rousseau D. M., 2001) (Li & Dai, 2015) (Rousseau & Parks, 1993) (Shore & Tetrick, 1994) In Transactional contracts, employers and employees try to maximize their individual gains, whereas, in Relational contracts, they aim for maximizing mutual gains in the present and for the future (Chaubey, Thapliyal, & Bisht, 2015)

The same year, Kickul and Lester identified two factors: extrinsic factor and intrinsic factor from the “two-dimensional structure” of Rousseau’s study. The extrinsic contract involved employers’ promises - flexible work hours, salary, safe work environment, bonus, etc. for employees’ finished work. The intrinsic contract involved employers’ promises such as work autonomy, support, decision-making participation, development, etc. for employees’ nature of work (Kickul & Lester, 2001)

Another study on the two-dimensional structure of PC found two factors- “realistic obligation/real responsibility and developmental obligation/development responsibility”. (Chen, Ling, & Fang, 2003)

The three-dimensional structure has also been analyzed and divided into certain divisions. In 1996, Rousseau and Tijoriwala found that three dimensions constitute the three-dimensions structure. They are- transaction dimension (economic benefits from the organization to employees); the relative dimension (stable and bilateral employment relationship for mutual development) and the team members dimension (employment relationship focused upon social support and human relations). (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1996) This concept was seconded by Lee and Tinsley (Li & Dai, 2015)

In context with Chinese employees’ psychological contract, Li Yuan discovered three dimensions- Normative responsibility (economic benefits from the organization to employees in exchange for completion of work and abiding rules); Interpersonal responsibility (social environment and human concern from the organization to employees in exchange for maintaining proper social environment); Developing responsibility (development to employees from the organization in exchange for willing to work) (Li & Dai, 2015)

The works of Chaubey, Thapliyal, and Bisht in 2015, identified five factors concerning a good work environment and strong Psychological Contract in an employment relationship, and they are- Relational Contract, Employee Obligations, Employer Obligations, Transactional Relationship, and Internal Advancement (Chaubey, Thapliyal, & Bisht, 2015)

### **1.3 Psychological Contract Breach**

The lack of fulfilment of expectations gives rise to the Psychological Contract Breach, which can affect the employee-employer relationship. It is to be noted here that “Breach of Psychological Contract” is different from “Violation of Psychological Contract”. According to (Suazo & Stone-Romero, 2011), “A breach in the Psychological Contract occurs when an employee perceives that they have received less than what they were promised. The depressing emotional state that follows a breach is known as the violation of Psychological Contract.” Because of differences in individual expectations,



psychological contract breaches exist at the individual level leading to the possibility of Psychological Contract violations in an individual manner. Different individuals have different expectations and therefore breaches can occur at an individual level. Owing to the individual behavior, studies have not been able to concretely determine the general reasons for Psychological Contract Breach, although a few factors such as long working hours, unsatisfactory remuneration, improper work culture have been mentioned. A psychological contract breach can impact the employment relationship of an organization, which can ultimately affect the work culture and productivity of the same.

#### **1.4 Education**

“Cambridge Dictionary defines Higher Education as education at a college or university where subjects are studied at an advanced level”. (Dictionary) Similarly, few other definitions of “higher education” are – “education at university, especially to degree level”, given by the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary and “education beyond the secondary level, especially one provided by a college or university”, given by Merriam-Webster dictionary (Dictionary M.-W. )

Education is the basis for Human Resource Development and proper education determines developed human resources. Universities are termed as "the highest seats of learning" and represent the population of the students obtaining the highest education (Centre, 2016). In international scenarios, bodies such as UNICEF, UNDP, etc have been working to promote and facilitate education across the world. In the “United Nations Summit” of September 2015, the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” came into force, wherein 17 Development Goals are identified. These goals are identified to help end poverty, fight inequalities and bring an end to other social evils. Among the 17 Development Goals, the fourth is ‘Quality Education’ (Nations) Countries all over the world are participating to achieve this goal, India being no exception. For years, education has been looked at as a sign of development and prosperity in nations worldwide. The decision to prioritize education and set it as one of the Development Goals has been welcomed globally. It is essential to note that the education industry involves different stakeholders such as students, teachers, institutions, departments, etc. The overall development of the industry considers the individual development of all the stakeholders.

### 1.4.1 Higher Education sector in India

The department of Higher Education in India has different regulatory Bodies: “University Grant Commission (UGC) All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Council of Architecture (COA)”. It also consists of five Research Councils: “Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) National Council of Rural Institute (NCRI) Project of History of Indian Science Philosophy and Culture (PHISPC)”. (Centre, 2016)

According to the “All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21” (Development, 2020), a few of the important statistics are mentioned below-

- “ Total Universities = 1043; Total Colleges = 42343; Total Stand Alone Institutions = 11779
- 307 affiliating universities; 396 privately managed universities; 420 universities located in the rural area; 17 women exclusive universities; 1 Central Open University, 14 State Open Universities, 1 State Private Open University, 110 Dual-mode Universities (offering distance mode education as well).
- Categories: 522 General Universities, 177 Technical Universities, 63 Agriculture & Allied Universities, 66 Medical Universities, 23 Law Universities, 12 Sanskrit Universities, 11 Language Universities; 145 Universities of other categories.
- Top 50 districts have about 32% of colleges.
- College density, i.e. the number of colleges per lakh eligible population (population in the age-group 18-23 years) varies from 7 in Bihar to 59 in Karnataka as compared to All India average of 30.
- 60.56% of Colleges are located in Rural Area and 10.75% of Colleges are exclusively for females.
- 2.7% of Colleges run a Ph.D. program and 35.04% of Colleges run Post Graduate Level programs.
- 78.6% Colleges are privately managed; 65.2% Private-unaided and 13.4% Private-aided.
- 16.6% of the colleges have enrolment less than 100 and only 4% of Colleges have enrolment more than 3000.

- Total enrolment in higher education is 38.5 million with 19.6 million male and 18.9 million female. Females constitute 49% of the total enrolment.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is 27.1%, which is calculated for the 18-23 years of age group. GER is 26.9% (male population), 27.3% (female population), 23.4% (Scheduled Castes) and 18% (Scheduled Tribes). National GER is 27.1%
- Distance enrolment constitutes about 11.1% of the total enrolment in higher education, of which 44.5% are female students.
- About 79.5% of the students are enrolled in an undergraduate-level program. 2,02,550 students are enrolled in Ph.D. which is about 0.5% of the total student enrolment.
- Maximum numbers of Students are enrolled in B.A. program followed by B.Sc. and B.Com. programs.
- At the Undergraduate level, the highest number (32.7%) of students are enrolled in Arts/ Humanities/Social Sciences courses followed by Science (16%), Engineering and Technology (12.6%), and Commerce (14.9%). At the Post-Graduate level, maximum students are enrolled in the Social Science stream and Science comes at number two. At the Ph.D. level, the maximum number of students is enrolled in Engineering and Technology and followed by the Science stream.
- The total number of foreign students enrolled in higher education is 49,348. The foreign students come from 168 different countries across the globe. The top 10 countries constitute 63.9% of the total foreign students enrolled. The highest share of foreign students comes from Nepal which is 28.1% of the total, followed by, Afghanistan (9.1%), Bangladesh (4.6%), Bhutan (3.8%), and Sudan (3.6%).
- More than 78.6% of colleges are running in the Private sector; aided and unaided taken together, but it caters to only 66.3% of the total enrolment.
- The total number of teachers is 15,03,156 out of which about 57.5% are male teachers and 42.5% are female teachers.
- Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Universities and Colleges is 28 if regular mode enrolment is considered whereas PTR for Universities and its Constituent Units is 18 for regular mode.

- 38,986 students were awarded Ph.D. level degrees during 2019 with 21,577 males and 17,409 females. B.A. (20.3 Lakh) degree has been awarded to the maximum number of students. B.Sc. (10.6 Lakh) is the second-highest followed by B.Com. (9.3 Lakh). At the Post-Graduate level M.A., pass number of students is maximum followed by M.Sc. and M.B.A. The highest number of students (20.7 Lakh) have graduated in Arts courses.”

Indian Higher Education sector has evolved tremendously since independence and with the rise in higher education institutions; more children have the opportunity to pursue higher studies. With a population of about 500 million in the age bracket of 5-24yrs, India as a country is expected to provide adequately for the education of the young minds.

With the growing demand for various higher education courses, there is an increasing necessity for universities and with it comes the requirement of academicians who are experts in various fields. Institutions are comprised of teaching and non-teaching. According to AISHE 2011 (manual, 2011), “Teacher is defined as a faculty/staff assigned the professional activities of instructing pupils, providing knowledge and giving guidance in the subject area of studies in self-contained classes or courses or classroom situations. Generally, the designation of teaching staff are Vice-Chancellor, Director, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Principal, Professor & Equivalent, Associate Professor, Reader, Lecturer (Selection Grade), Assistant Professor, Lecturer (Senior Scale), Lecturer, Tutor, Demonstrator, Part-Time Teacher, Ad hoc Teacher, Temporary Teacher, Contract Teacher, Visiting Teacher’ and ‘Non-teaching staff are staff other than Teaching staff engaged in Administrative, Secretarial, Laboratory, Library work, etc. of the University/ Institution/ College in different level Groups i.e. Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D as defined by Department of Personnel & Training.”

#### **1.4.2 Higher Education sector of Assam**

The study explores the higher education sector of Assam, a north-eastern state of India. As such, it is essential to understand the framework of the specific sector and prior studies pertaining to the same.

The Higher Education sector of Assam is governed by “The Directorate of Higher Education, Government. of Assam”. The department is responsible for policy formulation, guidelines for implementing education facilities, promoting/developing human resources, modernizing the existing Higher & Technical Educational institutes, and introducing new and relevant courses. Over the years the department has formulated certain objectives to implement proper education facilities in the state, which are- Creation of infrastructural facilities, provide better education in the society, improve access to Higher and Technical Education, reorientation of course curriculum, introduce new courses and faculty development.

The profiles of universities and colleges in the state of Assam, India is as follows:

- Total number of Central Universities – 2
- Total number of State Universities – 16
- Total number of Private Universities – 6
- Total number of Deemed University – 1
- Total number of Colleges – 539

Keeping with the national trend, educational institutions in Assam has also seen a substantial rise after independence. In a population of around 36 lakhs students in the age bracket of 18-23, the state houses a total of 12 universities and 305 colleges catering to the higher education sector. The total number of teachers employed at the same is 12 thousand and the Pupil-Teacher-Ratio (PTR) is 31. As compared to the national statistics, Assam is far behind in the number of educational institutions as well as employees in the same. The Government however has been trying to implement policies to improve the status of higher education in the state.

In line with the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, Assam has introduced ‘Vision 2030’, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (no. 4) ‘Quality Education’. According to the “Assam Vision 2030” for Higher Education, Government to “ensure quality higher education for all to enhance employability and life skills through affordable technical, vocational and tertiary education.” (Education, 2017)

The state of Assam in a developing country like India has its share of struggles when it comes to different aspects of the economy. Education, being one of the most important

sectors is no different. Few challenges faced by the higher education sector of the state are-

The problem of Access to higher education; Falling standard of research; The problem of Reservation in higher education; High cost of education; Shortage of qualified teachers; Neglect of Traditional fields of knowledge; Problem of infrastructure in State-run institutions and financial problems. (Saikia, 2013) Such challenges are a pressing need to improve the condition of Higher Education in Assam.

Economical background of the people in the state of Assam also hinders the facilities and opportunities of education in the region. Some of the concerned areas are- Insufficient expenditure on education; Inadequate number of teachers and classrooms; Negligence on computer education and co-curricular activities and state of students and teachers from an economically poor background. (Kro, 2017)

Studies done by Bala identified Assam as a backward state concerning higher education compared to the states from mainland India. As a result of the poor quality of education in the state, the migration of the majority of the students to cities like Bengaluru and Delhi has taken place over the years. (Bala, 2016) (Bala, 2016)

The aforementioned challenges are a pressing need to improve the condition of Higher Education in Assam. Though the “eleventh five-year plan” emphasized the education sector of North-East, in particular, Assam still has considerable ground to cover in this area. It is essential that the education industry is studied and measures are adopted for the betterment of the same.

## **SUMMARY**

The study is undertaken to explore the education sector in the state of Assam, with regard to an emerging concept of ‘Psychological Contract’. Before diving into the real-world scenario, it was essential to understand the history and importance of both the concept and the population. The chapter begins with the introduction of ‘Psychological Contact (PC)’, its definitions, types, approaches, measurements and pioneers in the field along with their contributions. It proceeds on to the history of PC, with reference to relevant work over the years. The concept which was introduced in the 1960s, have undergone several changes over the next decades, which led to several divisions of

Psychological Contract. Divisions were made with regards to intrinsic and extrinsic factors, different dimensions and different mindsets of people and situations. The chapter then introduces 'Psychological Contract Breach' which is one of the important factors of our work. Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) is the violation of the Psychological Contract in employees. To understand the concept and practice of Psychological Contract, it is imperative to understand both PC and PCB. Important literature, different terms and definitions pertaining to PCB are mentioned.

After diving into the concept of our work, the chapter proceeds to explain our chosen sector – the Education sector. With rising importance of education on a global scale, several literature is reviewed for importance development in the field of education. Important manuals and documents such as National Education Policy 2022, AISHE 20-21 and several others were referred to understand the current state of affairs of the education sector in our country. Since, our work is primarily in the higher education sector, introduction and relevant work of the same is explained. The chapter highlights the definitions and terms we would be using to identify our individual sample units (eg., Assistant Professor, Professor, Head, Dean etc.). The aim of our work is to explore the PC and PCB in the higher education sector of Assam. To get a comprehensive view of the same, universities across different sectors are selected.

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