

CHAPTER - V

- 1) The Role of 'Outsider' in Trade Unions
- 2) Union Rivalry
- 3) Right to strike and Lockout
- 4) Prohibition of strikes and Lockouts
- 5) Difficulties and Principal Drawbacks of the Movement in India
- 6) Measures to strengthen Trade Union Movement in India

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THE ROLE OF 'OUTSIDER' IN TRADE UNIONS:

Two important features of trade unionism in India have been -- outside leadership and political affiliation. Since, the very inception of trade unions in our country these have been inseparable mixed with the political awakening. Instead of it being developed through the evolutionary process, entire union growth has been engineered by outsiders, mostly politicians who have maintained a close and continuous association with the trade union movement. Today each bigger political party has its own labour wing. Such association of outsiders with trade unionism has not been an unmixed evil for workers and even for the trade union movement.

Under the Trade Unions Act, 1926, any person not actually engaged or employed in the industry concerned is deemed to be an outsider, Section 22 of the Act requires that ordinarily not less than half the officers of a registered union shall be actively engaged or employed in an industry to which the union relates. "Officers" include the members of the executive.

The controversy about outsiders in a union in India is as old as the enactment of the Trade Unions Act or perhaps older. Upto 1920, the Government, while permitting unions or associations of their own employees, did not allow outsiders to be connected with them. The Royal Commission on Labour emphasized the need for training insiders for accepting greater responsibilities in managing union affairs. The evil effects of outside leadership as analysed by the National Commission are:

1) It has undermined the purposes of the unions and has weakened their authority as more weight is usually attached to political considerations rather than to economic and social objectives, and often even personal benefits and prejudices may be more important than the cause of labour itself. "Participation by those not belonging to the working class opens the door not only for the genuine sympathiser and for the political organiser, but also for the exploiter who has no purpose to serve but his own advantage.

2) It has been responsible for the slow growth of inside or internal leadership and has thus prevented the trade union movement in the country from being self-reliant and truly democratic.

3) As most of the leaders of trade unions are not from the rank and file and lack of industrial background and technical knowledge, they have failed to put forth the labour view-point effectively and protect its interests properly.

4) It is contended that an 'outsider' is more prone to cause disturbance of industrial peace or harmony. The argument of the union organisers is that anyone who has devoted his life to union work and has been a full-time union worker, whether he had ever worked as an employee in an industry or not, should not be treated as an 'outsider'. Experience reveals that in many cases unions with inside leadership have not shown only special concern for industrial harmony. For an employer, in many cases, the objection to an 'outsider' is in essence an objection to partial individuals, eg., dismissed employees or politicians. While a dismissed employee working as a union leader is alleged to create difficulties in the relations between the union and the employer, the presence of

'outsiders' who have close links with one political party or the other, it is argued, imports extraneous considerations into the trade union movement as a whole. Multiple unions are mainly the result of political outsiders wanting to establish unions of their own, with a view to increase their political influence.

5) More recently, splinter groups within political parties have resulted in extra-union rivalries and these, more than inter-union differences, seem to establish links between trade unions and political parties.

For a proper understanding of the role of outsiders in trade unions, it is important to recognise the other side of the picture as

1) The present state of unionism, consciousness amongst workers and much improvement in their conditions are largely due to outside leadership.

2) The outsiders being beyond the jurisdiction of employers, add, to the strength and bargaining power of trade unions. They act as free agents of labour and are not afraid of any action being used against them for their union activities.

3) Quite often the so-called outsiders have proved to be immensely helpful in consolidating and unifying the unconscious and ignorant mass of labour either by the weight of their personality or by providing it true guidance and useful services.

4) The political affiliation of outsiders has often served as a platform to ventilate workers' grievances and sometimes mobilise public opinion towards labour's cause.

5) Indian workers being the complicated nature of industry makes the unions require the services of educated or technical personnel, not necessarily connected with the plant as helpers or well-wishers. Industrial negotiations have become more complex owing to the legal framework and procedures under which they are to be conducted. Unions must have wholetime office-bearers and their own expertise. More affluent unions can afford to pay for them, but others have to depend upon outsiders.

6) It is now generally believed that politics and trade union movement cannot work in mutually exclusive compartments. Political action for bettering its own position cannot be denied to labour just as labour support is necessary for any political party. Besides there can be no certainty that even a total ban outsiders will necessarily insulate an union from political influences. The employee office-bearers cannot be prevented from being interested in and connected with political parties or from being interested in and connected with political parties or from seeking the assistance of one political group or the other whenever such assistance is needed.

7) Trade Union legislation in India deals with outsiders in a somewhat different manner than in many other countries, legislation in many countries contains no provision concerning grounds for disqualification from holding office in a trade union or employer's organisation. The ILO Convention (No.87) relating to Freedom of

Association and protection of the Rights to organize provides that workers' and employers' organisations shall have to right to draw up their constitutions and rules and to elect their representatives in full freedom through the member countries are left free to provide in their legislation for such formalities as are deemed appropriate to ensure the normal functioning of trade unions or industrial organisations. Consistent with this convention, the laws in several countries provide for disqualification of persons to hold union office on grounds depending on the circumstances obtaining in each country, the composition of the structure of the unions, the historical background, the constitution of the country, etc. In the U.K., the office-bearers of a union or of the British Trade Union Congress may be ex-workers, but in accordance with the legal provisions standing in India, they will be considered outsiders. In case a worker resigns his jobs with a view to shoulder the responsibilities of unions as selfless and devoted worker and identifies himself with unions contributing immensely to their growth and stability, it may not be appropriate to call them outsiders. The cases of some of the dismissed or discharged employees who were punished apparently for misconduct, but in actuality for their union activities fall in a similar category. It is only fair that such persons should not be treated as outsiders.

The National Commission's general view in the context of the presence of outsiders in trade unions was that they should be practically made redundant by forces from within rather than by a legal ban. Simultaneously, legal provision to protect internal leadership should be strengthened. Along with this the following measures were recommended by the commission to strengthen the

forces for building up internal leadership:

- a) Intensification of workers' education;
- b) penalties for victimization and similar unfair labour practices,
- c) Intensification of effort by trade union organisers to train workers in union organisation;
- d) Limiting the proportion of outsiders in the union executives as follows --
 - i) below 1,000 the number of outsiders should not be more than 10%;
 - ii) between 1,000 to 10,000 20%
 - iii) above 10,000 30% and
 - iv) the permissible limit for industry-wise unions should be 30%.
- e) Treating all ex-employees as insiders, and
- f) Establishing a convention that no union office-bearer will concurrently hold office in a political party.

In fact, the issue of outsiders in trade unions in India may well be expected to solve itself gradually as workers become more educated and conscious. With the spread of workers' education and a greater emphasis on training of trade union workers, internal leadership is likely to develop of its own. Adequate protection against unfair labour practices compulsory recognition of majority unions to represent workers and negotiate on their behalf, simplification of legal procedures and rationalisation of industrial relations, practices, etc., will also go a long way to vest union officials with greater responsibilities and give them the needed confidence to build up competent internal leadership. Moreover, the compulsions of developments taking place in the sphere of industrial relations will be themselves provide a check to outside influence. Meanwhile, reduction of the permissible limit of outsiders in the executives of unions will hasten the process of building of internal leadership of trade unions in the country.

UNION RIVALRY:

Trade unions in India to-day are an integral part of the present industrial system and economic and social life of the country. They have established themselves in the modern society in such a way ~~in~~ that industrial relations to-day are regarded as relations between managements and trade unions and also the relations amongst the workers. This achievement has to a large extent, been due to the fact that in the beginning of trade unionism, leaders like Gandhiji, Shri V.V.Giri, etc., had before them the example of leadership who were convinced that there was a genuine need for organising labour. The inspiration was mainly humanitarian but many of them felt that the working class, when organised, could play a vital role in the freedom movement. It was this feeling that initially brought them together and then held them together. However, even then one could hear different voices in the working class movement merged into the broader objective of securing independence. Gradually conditions changed and splits appeared in the trade union movement in the twenties when a section of the A.I.T.U.C. mainly on ideological grounds broke away and formed a separate organisation. After Independence, union rivalries based on political considerations and personal and fractional differences amongst leaders have become much sharper. The splitting of unions and formation of new unions having sympathies with political parties or groups have, permeated unions operating at different levels. In several important industrial units, unions, whether affiliated to central organisations or not, operate independently, each claiming to speak on behalf of all workers.

Instances are in evidence when attempts are made by each of the many or more than one union in the same industry or unit to undermine the influence of the others and questioning the bonafides of rival leaders is not unknown. In this situation one could visualise some employers taking advantage of these inter-union rivalries and playing one union against the other. Basically, inter-union conflict feeds itself on differences in the concept of what one group or the other considers to be the workers' interests as also about the means to be adopted for advancing them.

Although the aims and objectives of the unions with rival political affiliations, as given in their constitutions, are not significantly different from each other, being largely based on a 'model' provided by the Registrar of Trade Unions, the inter-union relations are characterised by hostility and mutual distrust. Obviously, therefore, the unions have neither the opportunity nor energy to build up the strength and solidarity of workers and they utilise their energy and resources in fighting out their mutual conflicts, their antagonism often leading to a state of tug-of-war between individual leaders and groups. Added to inter-union rivalries, instances of intra-union rivalry have also increased in frequency during recent years. While healthy rivalry and opposition is necessary for the strength of any democratic institution, it may have pernicious effects when motivated by personal considerations. Inter-union and Intra-union rivalries have, thus, been a potent cause of frequent industrial strifes in the country. They have prevented the evolution of an industrial relations system based on collective bargaining. They have generally aided the spread of trade union movement quantitatively in terms

of the number of unions and their membership but have undoubtedly weakened it qualitatively in terms of widespread organisational and structural deficiencies. The phenomenon of inter-union as well as intra-union rivalry has been aided and sustained by many factors such as,

1) The pattern of past events which has created an environment of splits and intense inter and intra-union rivalries,

ii) the desire of the political parties to have their bases among the industrial workers and to lead the labour movement in the direction as deemed to be right by them.

iii) personal cum-factional politics of the local union leaders whose low level of tolerance causes frequent conflicts among them,

iv) domination of the union by outside leaders who are primarily interested in accumulating more power and influence both within and outside the labour movement,

v) attitude of the managements who are often non-willing to grant recognition to a representative union as defined in the code of Discipline and who have often encouraged the formation of rival unions,

vi) the legal frame-work which offers no incentives for the development of a strong and united trade union organisation.

vii) the nature of the labour force whose low level of participation in union activities and frustration and discontent offer a favourable climate for the self-centred outsider leaders to indulge in militant rival unionism.

These factors are, however, not independent of each other and in combination their relative importance may vary from industry to industry and from centre to centre.

Recently efforts have been made to lay down certain basic principles to curb rival unionism in industry. In May 1958, the representatives of four central organisations viz., INTUC, ATPUC, HMS and UTUC voluntarily agreed to abide by a common Inter-union Code of conduct for maintaining harmonious inter-union relations. The code laid down:

1) Every employee in an industry or unit shall have the freedom and right to join union of his choice. No coercion shall be exercised in this matter;

2) There shall be no dual membership of unions;

3) There shall be unreserved acceptance of and respect for democratic functioning of trade unions;

4) There shall be regular and democratic elections of executive bodies and office-bearers of trade unions;

5) Ignorance and/or backwardness of workers shall not be exploited by any organisation. No organisation shall make excessive or extravagant demands;

6) Casteism, communalism and provincialism shall be eschewed by all unions;

7) There shall be no violence, coercion, intimidation or personal vilification in inter-union dealings; and

8) ~~all~~

8) All central labour organisations shall combat the formation or continuance of company unions.

The twentieth session of the Indian Labour Conference in 1962 also prescribed the rights of recognised unions to put an end to rivalry on the question of jurisdiction of trade unions. A recognised union under the Code of Discipline would enjoy the following rights.

i) To raise issues and enter into collective agreements with employers on general questions concerning the terms of employment and conditions of service of workers in an establishment or in the case of representative union, in an industry in a local area;

ii) To collect membership fees/subscriptions payable by members to the union within the premises of the undertaking;

iii) To put up or cause to put up a notice board on the premises of the undertaking in which its members are employed and affix or cause to be affixed thereon notice relating to meeting, statements of accounts and expenditure and other announcements which are not abusive, indecent or of its income inflammatory or subversive of discipline or otherwise contrary to the code;

iv) For the purpose of prevention or settlement of an industrial dispute;

a) to hold discussions with the employees who are the members of the union at a suitable place or places within the premises of office/factory/establishment as mutually agreed upon,

b) to meet and discuss with a employer or any person appointed by him for the purpose, the grievances of its members employed in the undertaking.

c) to inspect, by prior arrangement, in an undertaking any place where any member of the union is employed.

v) To nominate its representatives on the Grievance Committee constituted under the Grievance Procedure in an establishment;

vi) To nominate its representatives on Joint Management Councils, and

vii) To nominate its representatives on non-statutory bipartite committees, eg., production committees, welfare committees, canteen committees, house allotment committees, etc., set up by managements.

The above measures, though well-intentioned, have failed to achieve the desired results owing to their inherent weaknesses. The inter-union code of conduct could not secure the unreserved response from the unions and their leaders because.

i) the provisions of the code leave much scope for exploitation of union for achieving personal and political ends or for undermining the existence and following of rival unions,

ii) the code has failed to explore the possibilities of close co-operation between the rival unions.

iii) though adopted by the central organisations, the code is yet to be adopted by a large number of unions at the lower levels,

iv) the independent and unaffiliated unions/federations are outside the jurisdiction of the code.

v) the code does not provide any sanction for its non-observance by unions or their office bearers,

vi) in the absence of a proper authority to supervise the observance of the code, its provisions have been easily and frequently flouted, and

vii) the rank and file of the members are largely ignorant of the provisions of the code and their utility. Similarly, the rights of recognized unions are far from being comprehensive.

It is obvious that the process of uniting the working class in India into an organisation committed exclusively to the trade union movement should be strengthened and its case should be hastened by evolving and pursuing an active policy in this regard. The National Commission on Labour recommended action to deal with this issue along the following lines (Report, P.292)

a) elimination of party politics and outsiders through building up of internal leadership.

b) promotion of collective bargaining through recognition of sole bargaining agents

c) improvement of the system of union recognition

d) encouragement to union disputes if they are not settled with the organisation

RIGHT TO STRIKE AND LOCKOUT:

Strikes and lockouts are the potent weapons which labour and employers respectively employ to protect their interests but these are not an isolated aspect of society; a strike or lockout affects the whole social order. A strike is a tug-of-war between the employees and their employers, the former trying to secure a redress of their grievances or to effect a change through it. Similarly, a lockout is a trial of strength between the management and its employees, the former trying to secure an advantage by imposing its proprietary rights over the latter. The workers' claim to their right to strike is undoubtedly very important. The workers, specially in less developed countries, where the organisation of trade unions is not sound or strong as is the case in India, are weaker than the employers, who are few and organised and possess resources sufficient enough for the exploitation of the labourers. To get just and equitable terms from the employers the workers have, often, no other weapon but the method of direct action or the strike. A strike may be a passive measure; mere withholding of labour, a folding of arms to demonstrate, if possible, to the employers that they cannot get along without the services of the striking workers and that they had best concede their demands. But, when too active measures are taken to prevent them (the employers) from securing other help or when social and economic pressure is exacted upon persons who are only indirectly concerned in the struggle, then the strike does seem like war or at any rate a blockade.

It has, therefore, often been argued that labour, which is only a section of the society, for its own causes has no right to harm the interest of the society by indulging in strikes. But, though labour is a section of the society, it is often a weak and exploited section in a society where capitalistic order prevails. If a state of the people, for the people and by the people sidetracks the interests of labour on such grounds, it has got no right to call itself a people's Government. It is unfair to ask the starving to close their mouth and not to protest against the injustice done to them. Simply because by doing that the comforts and conveniences of others, rich and better-off, will be affected. The patient who is suffering from acute agony cannot be silenced of his painful cries by asking him to stop because the sound sleep of others is disturbed. Means must be found to relieve the patient of his unbearable agony. "The way to industrial peace is to diagnose the cause of the agony of the working class and to remove it and not to suppress it into submission and silence." Thus, the fact that strike on the part of the workers puts the public to inconvenience is an argument, not for prohibiting strikes, but for altering the social system since "strikes happen because of inequality and injustice." Public inconveniences may be an indispensable weapon. When trade unions seek for what they regard as justice, one of the most powerful sources of strength is the awakening of the slow and inert public to a sense of position. Effectively to do this, in a real world, it must inconvenience the public, that awkward gaint has no sense of obligation until it is made uncomfortable." But, "the absolute right to lockout or to strike must go. It is unjust in that it is an appeal to force in a matter of disputed right; it is inhuman because of the misery it causes to the workers; it is wasteful

of the resources of capital and labour; it is wicked, because it stirs up hate; it is anti-social, in that it denies and disrupts the solidarity of the community." It is true that the strikes, however defensible they may be in the context of any particular industrial dispute, are, from the wider national standpoint, wasteful methods of securing changes. Still it is unwise to expect total abolition of strikes in the regime of private enterprise. The weapon of strike is an inalienable right of the workers and it could never be sacrifice as a right because quite often it is the only economic weapon that workers can use when their just claims are refused by employers. Nevertheless, this right should not be exercised capriciously or frequently either by officials of trade union organisations or by workers themselves. It should be used only as a last resort when all other methods or negotiations have failed. The trade unions should, of course, do their utmost to replace direct action by collective bargaining, retaining the right to strike as a last resort, that right being the condition of a union being able to bargain effectively. "Proper planning should make strikes and lockouts wholly unnecessary in industrial relations, if, in spite of best planning a fight becomes necessary, such a fight will not be the crude, violent and dilocating type as in the past, but a refined and intelligent fight which will not dislocate the industry, employment or production." Similarly, the right to lockout cannot be altogether denied to the employers. The denial of the right to lockout would subject employers to heavy pressure from labour unions. But like the workers' right to strike, the right to lockout should also be always used with caution and only after all possibilities of peaceful settlement have been explored.

However, under certain conditions the right to strike or to lockout is rightly curbed or curtailed by the state when it declares by legislation or an ordinance any or all strikes or lockouts illegal. During emergency conditions like that of a war or even during the period of implementation of any plan for economic development of an under-developed country, in case of public utility services and under circumstances when either of the parties or both adopt unreasonable attitude, it becomes the duty of the state to intervene and the right to strike of the workers may, thus, be curbed and strikes and lockouts may be made illegal. Sometimes many strikes are brought about on flimsy grounds. The demands of the workers are sometimes strange and more psychological rather than economic or political in origin. Besides, in countries like India, many strikes are also brought about by political parties for their own ends without any reference to the interests of the workers. The employers also sometimes manipulate prolongation of disputes in order to win sympathy for themselves and strike at the workers by their own weapons. The strike of the textile mill workers in Bombay in 1950 may be cited as an example. Under these circumstances also the workers' right to strike has to be curbed by the state. The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and some State Acts on the subject in India contain detailed provisions regarding regulation of strikes and lockouts.

PROHIBITION OF STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS:

The appropriate governments are authorised to prohibit the continuance of any strike or lockout if the dispute has been referred to a board or tribunal Section 22 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 declares strikes and lockouts in public utility services to be illegal if they are commenced or declared (a) without giving notice in a prescribed manner or (b) during the pendency of conciliation proceedings before a conciliation officer and 7 days after the conclusion of such proceedings. All strikes and lockouts in any industrial establishment are deemed to be illegal (Section 23) if commenced or declared during the pendency of (a) conciliation proceedings before a board and 7 days after the conclusion of such proceedings; (b) proceedings before a Labour Court, Industrial Tribunal or National Tribunal and two months after the conclusion of such proceedings; (bb) during the pendency of arbitration proceedings and two months after the conclusion of such proceedings; and (c) during any period in which a settlement or award is in operation, in respect of any of the matters covered by the settlement award. Continuance of strike or lockout is not illegal if it existed prior to the reference of the dispute to a board or tribunal provided that such a strike or lockout was not in a contravention of the provisions of the Act when it commenced or continuance was not prohibited by the Government concerned. A strike or a lockout declared in consequence of an illegal lockout or strike is also not deemed to be illegal. Financial aid in direct furtherance of an illegal strike or lockout is prohibited under the Act.

DIFFICULTIES AND PRINCIPAL DRAWBACKS OF THE MOVEMENT IN INDIA:

Trade union as a movement has made considerable progress in our country and the change in the political and economic situation has fundamentally affected the very outlook of the mass of the people. Yet the trade union movement in India has not grown up on sound lines and is today beset with many obstacles that considerably hamper its proper growth. In spite of the fact that our trade unionism is no longer in a state of infancy and has now sufficiently grown up, the movement is not as strong as it should be. Multiplicity of trade unions, political rivalries, lack of resources, disunity in the rank of worker, lack of education among the labour force, the emphasis on the external machinery for solving disputes, the limited sympathy of the employers, etc., are many of the diverse causes responsible for such stunted growth of trade unionism in this country. The various factors which have hampered the growth of genuine trade unionism in this country can broadly be placed under two important heads -- internal and external factors.

INTERNAL FACTORS:

1) The lack of enlightened labour force capable of manning and conducting the movement efficiently, purposefully and effectively has been a major internal deficiency sustained by the following main reasons.

i) There is a general lack of education which has prevented the workers from taking long views and, therefore, something which does not promise an immediate reward to them becomes unattractive. This attitude on the part of the workers, has been responsible, to large extent, for many trade unions serving merely as strike committees emerging during the periods of strain and stress and then fading away gradually;

ii) The workers are divided by race, religion, language and caste ----- a weakness among the workers which has often been exploited by the employers and has proved to be a great hindrance in building up labour solidarity in the country;

iii) The migratory nature and presently the lack of proper commitment of the industrial workers has acted as a great hindrance to the development of sound and stable trade unions in India. The majority of our workers have not yet become a self conscious, independent permanent class occupying a well-recognised status and enjoying distinct rights and privileges as well as well-developed sense of duty and obligation in modern industrial society. The workers who are frequently changing their employer are less inclined to maintain a keen and constant interest in any organisation as compared to more permanent workers.

2) The general poverty and low level of wages have been other obstacles in the work of the organisation of stable trade unions in India. The earnings of the workers have been low and, therefore, not being properly and adequately attracted towards their unions. They may contribute some amount during the period of a strike when they may expect some immediate gain but in normal

times they meet their necessary expenses first and often are not able to contribute the monthly subscription to their unions. The unions thus suffer from weak financial position and they cannot have sufficient funds without external help.

3) The trade unions in India have depended for their leaders mainly of social or political workers, lawyers and other professional and public men. The character of leadership affects the organisation of the labour movement vitally. It has now become a fashion amongst the politicians in the country to become the leaders of trade unions and in many cases person with little knowledge of the background of labour problems, fundamentals of trade unionism, the technique of industry and even with the little general education assume the charge of a trade union. Naturally, unions cannot be expected to function efficiently and on a sound basis under the guidance and leadership of such persons.

4) There is no united front of trade unions in our country and the movement is dominated by various political parties in the country. The political division of trade unionism leads to the unnecessary multiplicity of trade unions in the same industry and consequent rivalry amongst them which occasionally develops into such antagonism that makes the average worker in India confused and confounded and he fails to know whom to follow. With the present state of education the industrial worker in India cannot be expected to realize the implications and significance of various ideologies preached by the leaders of these different organisations. The trade union movement in this country, has, therefore, received a serious set-back owing to the lack of unity among the various leading organisations of labour.

5) Most of the trade unions in this country have failed to realize the importance of mutual help and welfare activities. Inadequacy of funds has been largely responsible for such apathy on the part of unions towards such activities. In fact, the greater the number of phases of the workers' life which the union serve, the more secure, presumably, will be its hold upon his allegiance and the more effective its control of the trade. Therefore, if the unions give proper attention to welfare activities not only their membership increases but also they are likely to become active and stable organizations.

6) The low standards of the life and fatigue of the work leave to the workers neither the energy nor sufficient time to pursue trade union activities and thus the workers have failed to promote health unionism in the country.

EXTERNAL FACTORS:

Some external factors have also hindered the development of healthy trade unionism in this country such as:

1) The attitude of employers in India as a whole which has generally been hostile to the trade unions. As put by N.M.Joshi, "They first try to scoff at it, then try to put it down and lastly, if the movement persists to exist they recognize it." The anti-union activities of an employer have taken variety of forms such as victimization, establishment of rival unions in order to create division among the workers, refusal to recognize the organization of workers, ejection of workers from mill premises, black-listing

stoppage of promotions or demotions or engaging their own men to join a trade union for misleading its members and inciting them to commit unlawful acts etc. Sometimes "goundas" have also been employed to beat, dishonour and even kill honest and devoted labour leaders. As noted by the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad and various Labour Enquiry Committees etc., from time to time, the fear of victimisation in some form or the other has been a powerful factor and a real obstacle to the growth of strong trade unions at various industrial centres in the country for a long time and still may exert a considerable influence on their stability and disrupt the loyalties of their members so necessary for the solidarity of the working class.

2) The jobbers and others intermediaries have also been deeply hostile to trade unionism in this country because they have been afraid that it would gradually destroy their power over the workers. Certain deficiencies in the legal provisions in regard to unions and industrial relations have also been an obstruction to the proper strength of the unions.

The difficulties that have confronted the Indian trade unionists in their endeavours to build up a strong labour movement in the country have thus been both internal and external. In fact, there is a vicious circle of trade unionism in the country today; outside or improper leadership of the movement leads to political unionism, which in turn, leads to multiplicity of unions leading to inter-union and intra-union rivalry which causes low membership of

individual unions, unsound finances and in turn lack of welfare and other constructive activities which may infuse strength into unions to conduct collective bargaining effectively which leads to more and more litigation with the result that the unions depend upon outside leadership, a necessary evil and so on.

MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN INDIA:

It is essential to recognize the vital importance of trade unions as an integral part of the industrial structure of India. They can make a valuable contribution to industrial development and its value will be increased by a policy of trust and co-operation with them. The Government and many enlightened employers have appreciated the importance of these considerations and their policy is one of encouragement and assistance to the movement. But the future of trade unionism in India depends mainly upon the efforts of the unionist themselves. The utmost encouragement and help from the employers and the Government cannot instil vigor or infuse life into unions which lack vitality. Real strength must come from within. The internal vitality of the unions may be developed by the measures given below.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF A UNITED FRONT OF LABOUR:

A united front of labour is an urgent necessity of the labour movement of our country. A state of chaos and confusion is prevailing in the affairs of trade unionism and the greatest need of the day is that trade unions must be free from politics and should confine their activities to the betterment of the working class. They should have one policy, one programme, one objective and one method for the labour movement of the country. The principle of 'One industry, one union' may be usefully followed to avoid unnecessary multiplicity of trade unions in the same industry. Any division in the rank and file of trade union movement is likely to lead to lack of confidence among the workers in their

organizations. With the increasing participation of Government in economic affairs, trade unions will find it more and more necessary to have a central body capable of presenting to Government their points of view and render effective assistance in formulating the industrial and labour policies of the Government. Though the present central organizations are doing this job yet one organization can do it much better. Therefore, an attempt should be made to effect trade union unity in India. All workers who believe in undiluted democratic and socialistic ideals in the running of the movement should join hands to form a single central organization to represent, in an authoritative manner, all their demands. In the words of V.V.Giri, "our goal should be one union in the industry and one central organization for workers." If this could be done it would be to the everlasting benefit of workers and employers and finally, ensure the maintenance of real industrial peace.

2. PROPER LEADERSHIP:

Another important step to strengthen the trade union movement in this country is the provision of union leaders from the ranks of the workers themselves. These leaders should be full-time paid officers of the unions. The qualities of such officials may be suggested to be literacy, capacity for organization and hard work, coolness of temper and patience. The present outside leaders of the movement should, in the interest of the cause they are serving, do their best to gradually find out suitable persons from among the workers to serve as trade union officials.

3. TRAINING OF ORGANIZERS:

If healthy trade unionism has to develop in our country, it is essential that properly trained organizers should assume the charge of the labour movement. Study circles and instructional clubs organised by the trade unions for their members wherein a course of lectures by competent persons may be given on different aspects of labour problems to the prospective trade union organizers may be highly useful in this direction. Professors of universities and university colleges can be of great help in this respect. It is gratifying that various labour organizations like the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad; the Hindustan Mazdoor Sewak Sangh and the INTUC have been doing some work in this direction. The workers' Education Programme sponsored by the Government of India under the charge of Central Board for Workers' Education is a commendable step in this direction.

4. ADEQUACY OF FUNDS:

The financial structure of Trade Unions in India is very weak and attempt should, therefore, be made to strengthen their financial solidarity. The income of the union from subscriptions may be increased by upraising the present rates which are much lower than what the workers with their present income can afford to pay. Therefore, these rates may be raised without causing any hardship to the subscribers, though the unions will have to get the workers interested in their organizations and prove to them that they want more because they deserve to have more. The income of the unions

may also be increased by collecting subscriptions from all members regularly and thus avoiding default in payments. The unions should also try to increase their membership with a view to increase their income. They may also tap new sources of income. As far as possible the same rate of subscription should be levied on all workers as the differential treatment to different classes of members may impair the unity of trade unions. Although the income of the unions is to be increased, their expenditure at the same time has also to be rationalized. The present small unions may be amalgamated to form big and powerful unions with a view to obtain considerable saving under overhead and establishment costs.

5. PROMOTION OF WELFARE ACTIVITIES:

Most of our unions attach much importance to the function of securing redress of the workers' grievances by putting up a fight with the employers and do not realize the significance of mutual help welfare activities. It is essential to expand the activities of unions so as to increase the benefits to members and to enable them to play a more active part in the work of the unions. Along with efforts to improve the financial status, the unions may effectively start activities such as the provision of day schools for children, night school for adults, reading rooms, libraries, co-operative stores, gymnasiums, etc.

6. FORMATION OF A LABOUR PARTY:

The organization of strong labour party may also go a long way in strengthening the labour movement in the country. Such a party of labour and for labour alone should be the political representative of Indian trade unionism. No trade union should be affiliated to any political party other than this labour party. Efforts to form a labour party in our country did not succeed owing to various obvious difficulties such as "illiteracy and ignorance of workers, instability of membership and high degree of labour turnover, weak trade unions with inadequate resources and lack of organizational capacity. An additional factor has been the insignificant numerical strength of organised labour amongst India's total population. Perhaps the most significant factor has been the domination of labour movement by political parties.