
CHAPTER : I INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION.

Worker plays an important role in every society. Ever since the prehistoric time to the most recent modernity worker has shown his positive contribution, a dynamic image which requires proper understanding about him. Historical background displays all such changing, revolving and dynamic changes of the working hand. There is a struggle an everlasting struggle that persists between the employer and the employee, which requires study of the working class from time to time and place to place.

DEFINITION OF TRADE UNION.

Trade Union has been defined differently by different authors and thinkers. There are various opinions which attempt to specify the idea of trade union. The significance of them have been taken for consideration and discussion. They are as follows:

Webbs defines Trade Union as "A continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives."

According to Cunniso, a Trade Union is "A monopolistic combination of wage earners who stand to the employers in a relation of dependence for the sale of their labour and even for its production and that the general purpose of the association is in view of that dependence to strengthen their powers to bargain with the employers."

Lester defined Trade Union as "An association of employees designed primarily to maintain and improve conditions of employment of its members."

OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF TRADE UNIONS.

Samuel Gompers, the founder President of the American Federation of labour quotes, "Trade Unions were born of the necessity of workers to protect and defend themselves from encroachment, injustice and wrong... To protect the workers in their inalienable right to higher and better life; to protect them, not only as equals before law, but also in their rights to the product of their labour; to protect their lives, their limbs, their health, their homes, their firesides, their liberties as men, as workers, as citizens, to overcome and conquer prejudice and antagonism, to secure them the right to life, and the opportunity to maintain that life, the right to be full sharers in the abundance which is the result of their brain and brawn, and the civilization of which they are the founders and the mainstay."

Galbraith says, "Unions will have a drastically reduced functions in the industrial system and will therefore retreat more or less permanently into the shadows." Marxism thinkers put it as: Trade Unions can in no way be treated as political parties or their substitutes even though they can work as organs of political parties, which is the trend in India now-a-days.¹

Regarding the objectives and functions of the Trade Unions we can briefly cite them as follows:

- i. To protect the rights of workers.
- i.) To improve the socio-economic status of the workers.
- i.i) To look for better welfare conditions of the workers.
- iv) is a source of collective bargaining.
- v. To keep solely better healthy industrial relations.

For the attainment of the objectives Trade Unions perform two types of functions - Militant and Ministrant. Militant functions are strikes, boycotts and gheraos. Ministrant functions are to give financial support to members during strikes and lockouts and to provide other benefits to them. The trade union is a militant organisation designed to fight for the cause of the workers. One of the main aims of the organisation of workers into trade unions is to secure better conditions of work and employment. The trade unions try to fulfil the aim by the method of collective bargaining and negotiations and if they do not succeed in securing their purpose in this manner, they put up a fight with the employers for achieving their ends in the form of strikes and boycotts. More recently, the trade unions have started making efforts to secure some share in the profits and also control of the industry. Then the trade union is also a fraternal association, a benefit organisation, providing sickness and accident benefits to the members and supporting them during strikes and lockouts and during the period when they are

temporarily out of work. The functions of Trade Union may also be classified in the following heads:

- (a) 'Intra-mural Activities' Consisting of those functions of the unions which lead to the betterment of the employment conditions of the workers such as insuring adequate wages, etc, for which the methods adopted may be collective bargaining, negotiations, strikes, etc.
- (b) 'Extra-mural Activities' which consist of those activities which help the workers to maintain and improve their efficiency such as measures intended to foster a spirit of co-operation, promote friendly relations and diffuse education and culture, among the members, as well as various other types of welfare measures.
- (c) Political Activities related with the formation of a labour party with a view to capturing the government of the country concerned.

Reviewing the position of Trade Unions in the different countries, Ashok Mehta², concluded that 'Trade Unions progressive element in society to be consulted in the shaping of public policy.

TRADE UNION METHODS.

The methods employed by Trade Unions refer to the means and ways devised to attain or fulfil their desired goals or objectives. Since the goals differ, the methods also differ. Some

Unions resort to social insurance and social welfare, others encourage collective bargaining, on its failure, resort to strike, while a few follow parliamentary method of bringing pressure upon the government through public support to pass favourable legislation. According to Webbs, (Industrial Democracy) there are three methods used by Trade Unions.

1. The method of mutual insurance which refers to provision compensation against risks to which a worker is exposed and thereby is deprived of his livelihood by causes over which neither he nor his union has any control. The method provides a means to raise the funds of the Union and also helps in the maintenance of discipline.
2. The method of collective bargaining which has two elements - collective action and representative negotiation. collective bargaining can, however, derive reality only from the organised strength of workers and a genuine desire on the part of the employer to co-operate with their representatives in exploring every possibility of reaching a settlement. As method of trade unionism, collective bargaining may be carried on over various areas as determined by the Union, Management or by both.
3. The methods of legal enactment which is political. An act of legislature usually forms one of the means by

which trade unions seek to attain their ends. The methods referred to above are inter-dependant.

4. To get along with their fellow workers in a better way and to gain respect in the eyes of their peers.
5. To communicate their views, ideas, feelings and frustrations to the management that is, they want to have an effective voice in discussion which affect their welfare.

TYPES AND STRUCTURE OF TRADE UNIONS

Trade union types and structures vary from country to country. Trade unions may be classified according to:

- (a) The purpose for which they are formed, and
- (b) The variations in the composition of their membership.

A. UNIONS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO PURPOSE

These unions are those which aim at the preservation of the capitalist society and the maintenance of usual employer-employee relationship and of competitive production. They seek no comprehensive change. They do not wish to destroy the existing social, economic or political structures. They desire only to modify these in accordance with what their members consider to be current modes in society. For example, they may wish to increase labour's share in the increased production or they may aim at improving working conditions by enforcing safety measures. They may try to generate increased purchasing power by providing for

workers various co-operative ventures, insurance associations and educational programmes. They generally seek to dignify labour by forcing upon the public and its leaders a recognition of the importance of labour in modern society. All these objectives, they believe, can be attained without any extensive change in the present economic, social and political institutions. In the USA, unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labour and the C.I.O. (Congress for Industrial Organisation) are predominantly of this type.

The reformist unions have been sub-divided by Prof. Hoxie according to the objectives, into Business Unionism and Uplift Unionism which have been discussed earlier.

(a) **Business Unionism** is that form of labour co-operation in which employees enter about successful business relationships with employers. In other words, business unions are those that are maintained primarily to represent workers in collective bargaining with their employers. They have generally been craft-conscious rather than class-conscious. They are distinctly reformist which try to bring economic advantages to their members, including increased wages and improved working conditions. They use peaceful means to attain these ends and depend primarily upon collective bargaining for this purpose. Such unions favour voluntary arbitration, deprecate strikes and avoid political action, but when they serve their interests

they may use the weapon of strike and resort to political action also.

(t) Friendly or Uplift Unionism is idealistic in nature and aspires to elevate the moral, intellectual and social life of workers and advocates idealistic plans for social regeneration. It emphasises such other considerations as education, health, insurance and benefits. It is not craft-conscious but interest conscious of the workers. It is conservative and law-abiding and employs the method of collective bargaining, but emphasises the need of mutual insurance and "drifts easily into political action, advocacy of co-operative enterprises, profit sharing and other idealistic plans."

REVOLUTIONARY UNIONS

These unions aim at destroying the present structure completely and replacing it with new and different institutions according to the ideals that are regarded as preferable. The revolutionary labour unionism generally seeks to destroy capitalistic industry, to abolish the wage system and private property, to put an end to a society based primarily upon competition and individual rights, and to substitute some other system, generally socialist and communistic. It is extremely class-conscious rather than trade-conscious. In the USA, the most common example of this type of unionism is the Industrial Workers of the World. (I.W.W.).

Revolutionary unionism is also of two types, namely, political and anarchist.

Political Unions are those which gain power through political action, the enactment of laws eliminating the power of capital and capitalists, redistributing wealth and giving effective power to workers.

Anarchist Unions are those unions which try to destroy the existing economic system by revolutionary means.

Prof. Hoxie also enumerates a third type of union, namely, the predatory union, which he further sub-divides into the hold-up union and the guerrilla union. Both these he had referred to as labour racketeering.

Predatory unionism does not subscribe to any ideology. It can adopt any method which will deliver the goods and it sticks at nothing. Its distinguishing characteristic is the ruthless pursuit of the matter in hand by whatever means seem most appropriate at the time, regardless of ethical and legal codes or the affect upon those outside its own membership.

It is dominated by gangsters and is "a tool for the enrichment of its leaders." It may employ business, friendly or revolutionary methods for the achievement of its goals.

A hold-up union represents a combination of unscrupulous employers to thrust exorbitant prices upon customers. When a craft is sufficiently organised so as virtually to control the

local market, the bosses in an agreement with employers set excessive prices for the services they render to the public. The workers generally receive only a small part of the increases in charges, for their bosses and employers retain the larger portion.

A guerrilla union does not believe in co-operation with employers. It aims at exploiting whatever and whatsoever it can: It is generally not democratic but boss-ridden. Its leaders are unscrupulous, ruthless and irresponsible, and they frequently make use of all sorts of violence in their programmes of exploitation. This type of unionism mostly resorts to terrorism in its efforts to enforce its demands.

A third type of union has also been added by the followers of Prof. Hoxie, namely, the dependent union. The existence of this type of union is dependent wholly or partly on the other unions or the employees.

B. UNION CLASSIFIED ON THE BASIS OF MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE.

Unions have also been classified according to variations in the composition of their members. On this basis, four types of unions have been recognised, namely, labour unions, craft unions, industrial unions, and general unions.

(i) **LABOUR UNION:** The term labour union is popularly used to refer to both craft and industrial unions. It is an organisation, or rather many forms of organisations, based upon the sense of a common status and a common

need for natural help. It implies, in some degree, a community of outlook and presupposes some solidarity between workers in different trades or industries. A labour union draws its membership from amongst workers regardless of their skill, occupation or industry. It works at a local, regional, national or even international level, and is capable of political action.

(-i) **CRAFT UNION:** It is an organisation of workers employed in a particular craft or trade or in a single or two or three related trades/ crafts/ occupations. Such organisations link together those workers who have similar skills, craft training and specialisation. "Historically speaking, it were the craft unions that lent stability to the trade union movement because of their relative stability in employment and higher earnings." The craft unions are mostly found amongst non-manual employees and professional workers. Ahmedabad Weavers' Union, the Kanpur Suti Mill Mazdoor Sabha, the International Wood Curvers' Association and the Indian Pilots Guild are the outstanding examples of such unions. Others are the trade unions of employees in the commercial and banking industry, government establishments, and of the journalists, teachers, engineers, actors, barbers, doctors, mechanics, etc.

Their members are generally craft-conscious rather than class-conscious. They derive their strength from the strategic position of their workers. Such unions are horizontal in character, for they enrol workers engaged in one or a single group of processes, such as spinning, weaving, warping, watch and, ward; or carpenters, joiners, frame-makers.

These unions aim at safeguarding the interests of the members against the onslaughts of employers. They may try to exploit the workers. Such unions provide only the "barest minimum of associative integration."

- (iii) **INDUSTRIAL UNION:** It is an organisation of workers which links all craftsmen and skilled workers in any one industry (such as coal, engineering, plantation, textiles) regardless of the differences in craft, skill, grade, position, or sex. The common bond here is the industry in which the workers are employed. It is organised upon an industry-wise rather than craft-wise basis. The membership is large; and it makes workers class-conscious and increases the feeling of solidarity among them.

The Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad, the Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh, Bombay, the Engineering Mazdoor Sabha, Bombay, the Labour Mines Mazdoor Sangh, Udaipur, are important examples.

Such organisations are vertical in character because they enrol all types of workers who are engaged in preparing raw materials for consumption.

(iv) **GENERAL UNION:** It is that organisation which covers various industries and labourers having different types of skills. The objectives of these unions are all-embracing in character. They have numerical superiority, for they are open to all classes of workers, and this is the source of their strength. From the point of view of solidarity, this type is ideal. The Jamshedpur Labour Union, Jamshedpur, the National Union of Municipal and General Workers, the Transport and General Workers' Union in the UK are examples of this type of unions.

THE INDIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

After the First World War, there were some conditions which favoured Trade Union Movement in India. There were many national and international events, which furthered the cause of the Indian Trade Union Movement.

Some factors were:

- (1) The psyche of the people after the First World War.
- (2) The International Labour Organisations.
- (3) The Indian Trade Union Federations.
- (4) The Swaraj Movement.

The First World War ended in 1918, and there was demand for political independence by the Indians. The Indian Leaders were bent upon to achieve independence. In the Industrial sphere, some wealthy Indians had already started Indian industries and employed labour. In the meantime, the Indian soldiers who had fought war on foreign soil, returned back to their motherland i.e, India. When they came back they were with new ideas as regards the conditions of foreign labour. They compared and spread the ideas of the better placed foreign labour and thus the Indians too were motivated as regards the trade union movement. Due to the war the prices were sky high, whereas the wages were lagging behind. This led to an atmosphere of industrial unrest. At some patches in India, the workers even got some returns e.g., workers in Bombay and Ahmedabad received war bonus. There were spurts of strikes in the country by some workers who wanted to ventilate their grievances, however most of the strikes were however leaderless and yielded fruit, as the employers thought it more wise to concede to the demands of workers it motivated the workers and infused in them an enthusiasm as regards the Trade Union movements. Thus, the atmosphere of hostility and adversity proved as a boon for the trade union activities.

The Russian Revolution (1917) whispered an idea in Indian ears that, the exploitation of labour could be stopped through political means. Some of the Trade Unions in India were influenced by the Communist ideas in Russia and the Communist Part of India put an ultimate control over the All India Trade Union Congress. At the international scene, there was a major

development. The formation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) through the Peace Treaty of Versailles, for the welfare of the wage earners. The Indian delegates represented India at the International Labour Organisation Conference, held at Washington.

In 1920, over a lakh of workers assembled in Bombay under the Chairmanship of Lala Rajpat Rai to establish a Central Trade Federation. On the other hand, Gandhiji's Civil Disobedience Movement infiltrated political ideas into Trade Unionism.

The later Trade Union movement, saw the growth of the Trade Unions from infancy to federations, where the workers were certainly more stronger and more united in comparison to their divided past.

THE COMMUNIST AGE (1922 - 34) OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONISM.

By 1920, there were many established Unions in India. The first Trade Union of India was the Madras Labour Union, established on April 27, 1918.

The Communists in Russia were proving dominant in the political sphere in Russia and thus the Indian Communists were more organised in comparison with others in India. The Communists in India made their presence felt, by bringing about violent strikes in various parts of the country. They captured and twice i.e., in 1929 and 1931 split the All India Trade Union Congress and the Government had to prosecute Communist Trade Unionists twice i.e., at Kanpur and Meerut.

The year 1926, would be remembered in Indian Labour history for it was in this year that the Indian Trade Union Act 1926 was enacted. This piece of Labour enactment gave a boost to the Trade Union movement in India.

THE DIVISIONS: A FOUNDATION OF DISINTEGRATION:

However, the Indian Trade Union movement which was travelling on a crest, proceeded towards a trough in 1930 to 1934. Since 1930 the World Economic Crisis caused by depression added to the misery of the working class. The Trade unions too suffered an internal setback, as they divided themselves on political grounds. In 1929, Shri N.M.Joshi moved out of the All India Trade Union Congress, and formed in 1930 their own Indian Trade Union Federation. In 1931, the All India Trade Union Congress had another split when the Communists too drifted away to start their Red Trade Union Congress.

The period of 1930-34, saw the Trade Union Movement at its ebb. This created an apathy between the workers and the Trade union atmosphere became dull. Thus, on the eve of 1934 there were four groups dominating the Trade union field:

- 1) The Communists with the background of two splits.
- 2) The Trade Union based on Gandhian principles.
- 3) The split group of Communists.
- 4) The liberals.

The revival of the splits was brought about in 1934, as the economic depression was ending and the employers reduced the

wages. In order to retaliate attempts were made to unite and thus in 1935, the Red Trade Union Congress merged with the AITUC and in 1940, the National Trade Union Front merged with the AITUC.

In the Second World War, the Communists earlier supported Germany but later on withdrew their support when Germany invaded Russia. All these events had an impact on the Trade Union movement. The Trade Union strength also increased in the period. The year also saw the formation of Indian Federation of Labour and its recognition by the Government, that it bears a representative character of the Indian workers, even geographically the Trade Union movement spread to remote areas in India.

THE SCENE AFTER INDEPENDENCE - FROM UNITY TO SPLITS.

There has been a tremendous growth in Trade Union activities after independence and there has been a proliferation of Unions.

The reasons are many, but to name a few would include, the rapid industrialisation, the five year plans, establishment of political economy, government labour policies, enactment of various labour legislations with stress on adjudication and increase in number of central organisations. The first National Federation of Trade Unions, being the AITUC came under the influence of Communists, though the Federation helped many Unions to form. After the Second World War, the Trade Union leaders were in abundance following different schools of thought. The Royists i.e., followers of Shri. M.N.Roy walked out of the AITUC to form

the Indian Federation of Labour, which was granted recognition by Govt. Of India, but later the recognition was revoked and given back to the AITUC. Thus, on the eve of Indian Independence, only two central organisations of Indian workers i.e., The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and the Indian Federation of Labour dominated the Trade Union movement. The scene was however a very chaotic one as people with diverse mentalities were trying flock together.

The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) which was the first trade union federation, was also formed in 1920. Its first president was Shree Lala Lajpat Rai who was then also the President of the Congress party. Political differences in the labour movement began almost immediately after the formation of the AITUC.

Even in the earliest days, there were three different groups in the AITUC - Nationalists led by Shri M.K.Gandhi and Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, communists led by Shri Dange and M.N.Roy and in the middle the moderate Socialists led by Shri Giri and N.M.Joshi. Gradually, these divisions resulted in the formation of rival unions. The first major divisions took place in 1929 when the socialists separated to form the National Trade Union Federation. Within the next two years, the Communists also left to form the Red Trade Union Congress. Although both groups returned to the AITUC after some years, unity was difficult to achieve, because of the basic political differences the process of splitting began once again. The formation of the Indian

National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) in 1947, and of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) and United Trade Union Congress (UTUC) soon after, made the division of the labour movement a permanent fact. In the years that followed, a few more federations came into existence. Some were linked to national political parties, some to regional parties, and yet others were without any link.

FEDERATIONS.

These are combinations of various unions for the purpose of gaining strength and solidarity. They can resort to concerted action, when the need for such action arises, without losing their individuality. Such federations may be local, regional, state, national and international.

There are a few organisations which are local in character, such as the Bhartiya Kamgar Sena, the labour Progressive Federation, Madras, the National Front of Indian Trade Unions and the Co-ordinating Committee of Free Trade Unions.

Many unions are affiliated to one or the other of the following central organisations of workers:

- 1) The Indian National Trade Union Congress;
- 2) The All-India Trade Union Congress;
- 3) The Hind Mazdoor Sabha;
- 4) The United Trades Union Congress;
- 5) The Centre of Indian Trade Unions;
- 6) Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh;
- 7) The National Labour Organisation;

- 8) The United Trade Union Congress (LS);
- 9) The National Front of Indian Trade Unions; and
- 10) The Trade Union Co-ordinate Centre.

Besides the affiliated unions and their federations, there are a large number of associations and federations which have not joined any one of the central workers' organisations. Some of these are:

- 1) The All-India Bank Employees' Association;
- 2) The All-India Bank Employees' Federation;
- 3) The All-India Insurance Employees' Association;
- 4) The All-India Defence Employees' federation;
- 5) The All-India Railwaymen's Federation;
- 6) The National Federation of Posts and Telegraphs Employees; and
- 7) The Federation of Indian Railwaymen.

At the international level, the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) and the International confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.) are two important organisations.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF TRADE UNIONS IN INDIA.

In India, the organisational structure consists of three levels: plant/shop or local, the state and the centre. It is generally from the central level that the ideology of the important central federations of labour in India percolates down to the state and local levels. Every national or central federation of labour in India has state branches, state

committees or state councils, form where its organisation works down to the local level.

There are two types of organisations to which trade unions in India are affiliated:

- (i) National Federations, and
- (ii) The Federations of Unions.

The national federations have all the trade unions in a given industry as their affiliated members. Every trade union, irrespective of the industry to which it belongs, can join a general national federation. Such federations are the apex of trade union structure. They are necessary to bring about co-ordination in the activities of trade unions and to give trade union policies a national character. The central union organisations are national federations of labour based on different political ideologies.

Because of their political leanings, the affiliated trade unions in the field of labour relations follow either a militant policy or a policy of co-operation with the employers and the government, or a policy of continuous strife and litigation.

The trade union leadership for these national organisations is provided by the educated middle class. One leader is found to have been leading a dozen or more unions in a particular state; these unions may be in the petroleum industry, the transport industry, electricity supply undertaking or craft unions, such as the rickshaw pullers' union or taxi drivers' union. Some of the

trade union leaders are MPs and MLAs, olderman of city corporations and members of important committees dealing with the labour policy of the country.

The national/central federations are empowered to decide the question of jurisdiction of the various local and national unions.

A majority of these federations allow their affiliates to bargain independently with their respective employers. The federations only act as co-ordinating authorities for different unions under their control. They also select delegates to represent workmen in international conferences organised by the International Labour Organisation or the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

The all-India federation of trade unions has a regular structure. For example:

The INTUC consists of the central organisations, the affiliated unions, the industrial federation, regional branches, and councils functioning under the direct control or supervision of the central organisation, the assembly of delegates, the general council and the working committees.

The AITUC functions through its affiliated unions, delegates, assembly, General Council (including office-bearers), the Working Committees of the General Council and the Pradesh bodies.

The UTUC consists of the General Body (i.e., delegates' assembly) General Council, and the Working Committee of the General Council.

The HMS works through the General Council, the Working Committee and affiliated organisation.

FEDERATION OF UNIONS.

These have as their objectives the establishment of new unions, uniting and strengthening the existing ones, creating harmonious relations between capital and labour and improving the status of trade unions and workers.

ROLE OF TRADE UNION:

Trade Union should not be content with protecting and improving the wages and conditions of work of their members but should also be concerned much about all such matters by which the latter are likely to be affected whether as producer or consumer or as units of industrial manpower or as citizens.

In other words they should look after the wide interests of workers both when they are on the job and off it and try to solve the problems by which their members are most vitally affected. their emotional disturbances and difficulties their marital conflicts and their personal adjustments problems. They should more over assist in progressively raising the standard of living of the workers and in developing their personality by arranging educational programmes for them, literacy classes for adults and

educational programmes for their children as well as those who are interested in acquiring an education.

Trade union should always abide by the decisions of tripartite bodies and make contributions to the maintenance of industrial peace to better industrial relation and to higher productivity. They should encourage their members to participate in economic, political life of the country to take a decisive role in the formulation of development plans and act as pace-settler for the community to give up drinking and gambling and finally Trade Union should be pluralist in character and pragmatic in methods.

WORKERS JOIN TRADE UNION:

Because they are constrained by circumstances to do so because they want:

1. to get economic security, that is they want steady employment with an adequate income.
2. to restrain the management from taking any action which is irrational, illogical, discriminatory or prejudicial to the interest of labour workers desire that the assignment of jobs, transfer promotion the maintenance of discipline lay-offs retirement rewards and punishment should be on the basis of what is fair and just.

3. to secure protection from economic hazard beyond their control e.g. illness, accident, death, disability, old age, unemployment etc.
4. to get a job through the good officer of a trade union.

Trade Unions have to play a noble role in the life of their nation. Their work should create a culture of itself at the nation-wide level. According to Laski, "Trade Unions, today, are persistent in character and pragmatic in method if they are not, they are unlikely to survive the demands made upon them by so swiftly changing an environment."

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CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

The Indian Trade Unions field on the eve of Indian Independence, was dominated by leaders of diverse schools of thought. Over 50 years of Indian Independence there is very little which the Indian workers, could achieve. Besides the above, there are many features that would distinctly segregate the Indian Trade Unions from their counter parts in other countries. Some of the characteristics of Indian trade Unions are:

POLITICAL UNIONSISM:

The Indian Trade Union history, has been as episode of splits and re-splits when it should have been otherwise. The Trade Union leaders, are more occupied with political motivations and have safely neglected the legitimate objects of Trade Unions

which follow an ideology of a political party rather than an ideology of their own. What should be done by Trade Union is decided by its parent political party. There are many such instances in Indian Trade Union history.

During the Second World War, the Communists were more loyal to Russian ideologies than the objects of Trade Unions itself. The Communists group, first supported Germany when it invaded Great Britain but later opposed it when it invaded U.S.S.R. The Congress leaders opposed the British with the Quit India Movement and flocked jail, when the Communists supported the British. Thus, the stand whether Pro-Germany or anti-Germany depended upon attitude towards the British and Russian, rather than the prime objectives of the Trade Unions and its propagation in future. The Trade Union Unity in India has always suffered infant mortality because of ideological differences amongst the Trade Union leaders time and again. During and after emergency of 1974 it was experienced once again.

Any shuffle in the political field has a reflection in the Trade Union field. The Trade Union policies cease to have an identity of their own and are more interested in exhibiting loyalties towards political parties, even at the cost of hampering the Trade Union objects.

MULTI-UNIONISM OR MULTIPLICITY:

The ideal 'One Industry one union' has been a Utopian idea to achieve. Multi-unionism, means many craft unions in one

concern or many unions in a group competing for membership. Workers practising different crafts e.g. carpenter, weavers etc form a union which are called a Craft Unions. As all the members of this Union which are stronger, whereas, if there are more Unions in one industry, the same may be described as multiplicity of Unions which has germs of fragmentation within and thus hampers the very foundations of the principle 'Unity is Strength.'

INTER UNION RIVALRY:

The multiplicity of Unions creates a sense of animosity, with the other, Unions in the same industry. Both the Unions become each others rivals especially when recognition is to be achieved. Thus, the Inter-Union rivalry comes to surface. The consequences of such rivalry are disastrous both to the worker and the industry. Violence of Trade Unions, is now an inevitable hazard with some of the militant Trade Unions.

There are however, some Unions where 'Unity is Strength', can be seen and where the workers have foiled all efforts of divide and rule. The famous Madras labour Union is an example of this. In the seventy years, since this union was born, many attempts have been made to start rival unions. These minority unions have faded out because workers have refused to support them. Multiplicity, is of course the dominant fact of our labour movement. But in the midst, of this we have growing instances of unity and refusal to divide. The new industries in particular are witnessing this trend.

INTRA-UNION RIVALRY:

Many a times, even the concept of one Union, one industry is not above defects. There is a rivalry amongst the members or groups in the same Union, causing more harm from within than the harm from outside. The selfish and politically motivated ends of the leaders make the objects of the Union suffer serious casualties.

To cure the above, some federations in India even accepted to follow what they called as an 'Inter Union Code' but unfortunately it has proved to be dead letter and has failed to cure the disease.

LOW MEMBERSHIP:

The membership, of Indian Trade Unions is surprisingly low. It is evident from the Trade Unions Act 1926 that it requires minimum seven members to form a Union. However, it is still surprising to note that the average membership of Unions has hardly gone high in many industries. The Indian average membership is below 800, in comparison with 17000 approximately of UK and 9500 approximately of USA. It would be right to describe Indian Unions as microscopic in comparison with the then Russian (U.S.S.R.) counterparts.

The membership is a phenomena in which employers take great delight. They enjoy to play the game of 'divide and rule' to be sure that the membership does no increase. In India, more than

70% Unions are small sized i.e. with a membership of less than 300.

The Indian Trade Union has however failed to increase the membership to make its figures appear conspicuous.

If a comparison is made between the increase in Unions and the increase in membership, it would be seen that the membership number of Unions which have increased since 1952-1982 are from 4500 to 38000 i.e. a ten fold increase. However, the membership in 1952 of the Unions which filed returns was 19 lakhs which in 1982 was 54 lakhs, which is less than a three fold increase. It simply means that, the number of Unions have considerably increased giving rise to multiplicity.

Union Membership is high in the manufacturing sector like Engineering, chemicals etc. as well in the service sector like banks or railways, but it is very low in the construction industry or agriculture. There is an increase in the officers Unions, who have understood the might of being united but there is no substantial increase in the enlightenment of the workers.

The low membership areas are exploitation prone areas.

POOR FINANCES:

The finances are poor as the membership is low. If there are members there would be funds. No members, no funds. There are many workers who yet share the ideology that it is the Union which has to take a stand for their cause even if they do not pay

their monthly subscription of a very meagre amount say 25 paise per month.

The low membership invites poor patronage from the community as well as the employers. As the low membership Unions fail to collect donations, the poor financial structure never changes. When the finances itself are poor the Union loses all benefits consequential upon finances e.g. periodicals of the Union etc.

SLUGGISH ACTIVITIES:

The activities, if any, of the Union are caught up in the vicious circle of low membership and unsound finances. The Union cannot undertake any welfare activities which require personnel and funds. All welfare work in the areas of education, recreation, medicine or culture require a backbone of some funding. The Trade Unions have hardly achieved anything worthwhile on their own, in this field. The Trade Unions have been at the mercy of a wealthy sponsors so that their activities are run.

Indian Trade Unions, have a poor bargaining power and have taken recourse to litigation, bringing hostility in the process.

Some Trade Unions take pride in resorting to direct action. Unions have caused immense harm to themselves by resorting to strikes and violence. These methods contain element of pressure tactics and thus, a settlement, even if reached is tinged with an atmosphere of uncomfortableness. Many a times a worker who is basically poorly paid, becomes more poorer when he resorts to

direct action. Strike, no doubt is a weapon but it has to be used only as last resort. Many a times the Unions, themselves experience a paradoxical situation where they find that the strike fund is over subscribed by the same workers who have never paid their membership dues.

The activities for the labour by the labour are on its ebb since yester years, and the position is still the same.

OUTSIDERS IN TRADE UNIONS:

It were the national leaders, who first imparted momentum to the Trade Union movement in its initial stages. The early leaders of the labour movements were nationalist leaders with a background in law, medicine, social work and politics. The early leadership included national leaders like Shri Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Pandit Nehru, Shri S.A.Dange, Shri N.M.Joshi, Anusuya Sarabhai, Annie Besant and Shri V.V.Giri. These leaders were leaders and organising workers in industries, and had no personal experience of industrial employment and thus they were recognised as 'outsiders.' Under the Trade Union Act itself, the concept of outsiders is permissible. The outsiders can hold up to half of the positions on union executive committees.

The nationalist Leaders, were highly motivated for the cause of labour. Their motives were humanitarian, as well as political. They had zeal to fight wherever they saw exploitation of labour. Besides, they being involved in the nationalist movement for independence they did not think of trade unionism and the

independence struggle as different entities. In fact, organising of Trade Unions was uniting people who could also collectively fight with the British Raj.

Resort to direct action, like strikes or even litigations bring outsiders in Trade Unions, that the moment they gain control over the Trade Union they can treat them as 'supply banks' whenever their political interests or show of 'man-power' is concerned. The role of outsiders is not a new phenomena as they can be seen in the Swaraj movement (1920-22) when first time the Trade Unions were used for political purposes.

REASONS FOR OUTSIDE LEADERSHIP:

First and foremost is the fear of victimisation in industries, where the Trade Union unity is weak or the Trade Union strength is small. Next is the necessity of trained personnel for Trade Union work. There are hardly any amount of workers, who would understand the law and the concept of Trade Unionism. Many a times, it is difficult for the workers to talk with employers when both understand the difference in monetary strengths are subject to. It is embarrassing for the worker who earns Rs.800/- per month to talk with the employer who has 800 crores in his pocket.

In the early Trade Union movement, leaders were victimised or made subject to exceptional treatment. The victimisation at times made the very survival of the worker leaders impossible.

This created an animosity with the management and at the same time a hatred for them.

Coupled with this, was a deterrence in other upcoming worker leaders that the same sort of a treatment would be meted out to them. In such circumstances, the workers started preferring outside leaders who were more influential than the internal ones. It was difficult for the management, to make the outside leaders a scape goat in the process of Trade Unionism, and thus outside leadership was preferred by some.

Another reason, for preference of outside leaders was the lack of trained personnel within industries. The workers lacked elementary knowledge about correspondence, maintenance of accounts, negotiations, litigations, making demands, enquiries, etc.

Besides the above, there is always some sort of a complex between the employer who always considers the employees inferior and the employees who always consider the employees inferior and the employees who always considers the employers superior. The worker leaders, do not have the same 'weight' while talking with the employers, whereas an outsider may do the same thing very effectively. The politicians do exercise control over Trade Unions and have proved to be more influential (especially, if they hold some influential post in office) than the leaders amongst the workers.

Today, however conditions have changed and the circumstances which needed outside leaders no longer exist. Trade Unions today, do have a say in matters, and its leaders are respected. Thus, the practice of victimisation has come to an almost end. Besides there are labour legislations to deal with victimisation. There is difference between yesterday's worker and today's worker. Today, the worker is educated and can understand the consequences of his dealings. In short, outsiders are not a necessity today. Outsiders tend to take actions based on egos, rather than realities, It is easy for the outsiders, to sit in air conditioned chambers and ask the workers to pose a dharana in the afternoon in the scorching sun.

The inside leader, however in having many advantages over the outside ones. The inside leader is from the same stock as other workers and thus he knows the problems better. Outsiders merely know the problem, but insiders can feel the problem. It is observed that, a inside leader is not irresponsible in giving calls for strikes, for the simple reason that he would be one of the sufferers, along with others. Hence, an insider at times has an edge over the outsiders. Many a times it is observed that, a selfish insider is bad choice, than a devoted outsider.

It is for the workers to think for themselves whether, they need an outside or inside leader. The policies of the Government are also important. The major strength of worker leaders is their understanding of the organisation and their ability to deal with the management. Their major weakness is lack of political contact

and inability to manipulate the government and its policies. The strength and weakness of outsiders are precisely the opposite. Which kind of leadership will succeed depends on how industrial disputes are resolved. Will they be resolved within the organisation through negotiations between labour and management?

Although the law applies in this to all and sundry equally, there are however differences between States, in its implementation. In some States there is a phenomena called recognition of Trade Unions, whereas in some the law permits settlements through mutual negotiation. The State of Maharashtra is a good example of such a practice. It is in State of Maharashtra, the Maharashtra Recognition of Trade Unions and Prevention of Unfair Labour Practices Act, 1971, is prevalent.

This Act, has gained popularity in Maharashtra over the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 as regards filing of direct complaints in concerned Courts.

Where conditions are favourable, internal leadership will gain control over the union. Where the policies of the employer or the government favour outsiders, a different pattern is emerging. Workers keep an outside leader but hold him under check. Real power is retained by a committee. These situations are usually marked by tension, since the committee want to have its way while the leader want to assert himself. The old days, when outsiders held complete control over the Unions are in any case coming to an end.

ESSENTIALS OF SUCCESSFUL TRADE UNION:

To be successful union :

1. Should be an enlightened one so that it may be able to guide and direct the trade union movement properly. This presupposes the existence of a correct leadership which is not prepared to sacrifice the interest of the workers to imported doctrines enthusiasm but desires to back high way for them to attain their stature as participants in the new order of things.
2. Should have a solid foundation so that it may be strong enough to achieve success in the realisation of its objectives.
3. Should have clearly enunciated objective and a coherent and well conceived policy and it should consider itself as a business organisation which requires careful planning and sound organisation methods for its success.
4. Should be run by the member for their members i.e., its leadership should come from the rank and file of its members and it should be subject to their support or rejection.
5. Should have honesty and integrity of purpose that is it should be honest not only financial matters, its integrity should be all inclusive and should extend to

its relationship with employers to the formulation of its policies and the evaluation of its performance and to what it says, to its own members.

6. Should look beyond its own horizon and recognise and fulfil its proper role in the life of the nation and of the community in the midst of which it lives and functions.

7. Should have a sense of responsibility; it is necessary that

a. it should be internally strong so that it may be effective in protecting interests of the workers.

b. it should be democratic so that the workers right of self government acquires a reality.

c. it should use its economic power in a careful and responsible way that it should be aware of the existing realities in terms of the opportunities, it has to bring about an improvement in the living conditions of its members.

In view of the above, it is imperative to know the prevailing situations of Trade Unions in different settings.