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**CHAPTER : II**  
**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

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### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Trade Unions have become an integral and powerful factor in contemporary system of producing and distributing goods of farmers and services. Wherever modern industrialisation has touched, trade unions have followed. Trade Unions as an organisation tries to protect the interest of employees. It has also been regarded as providing opportunities for its members to satisfy a broad range of human wants and needs. The literature on various aspects of trade union is exhaustive. Here an attempt is made to review an intellectual climate by briefly reviewing studies pertinent to trade unions. There are several empirical studies relating to trade unionism. The topics that have attracted attention include; the factors that promote or hinder membership participation in Union affairs, the rank and file attitudes and characteristics, the problem of reconciling efficient action with the maintenance of democratic control, the implications and nature of trends which have led to increasing centralisation of powers in Unions, backgrounds and characteristics of union leaders, role and attitudes of trade union leaders, and so forth.

Due to limitation inherent in a research work as the present one, the task here is to give a brief account of some of the important works.

A pioneering effort was made by David Lockwood<sup>1</sup> who studied the class consciousness and unions among clerks in Britain, in the light of facts drawn from a wide range of sources. The prime aim of the investigation was to see how the class position of the black coated worker is related to his class consciousness, marking especially those factors associated with the varying extent and character of clerical trade unionism. He concludes that, 'The character of black-coated Unionism, no less than its extent, is an outcome of class situations of the clerk.'

Robert Reiner's<sup>2</sup> study of Unionism among British police to explore the nature and extent of unionism among policemen showed that unionism among police is not as strong as among others occupational groups.

Goldstein<sup>3</sup> studying unionism among American professionals, found it to be markedly different from traditional unionism and found that lack of commitment to unionism among professionals was due to their status consciousness as professionals.

Goldthrope and his associates<sup>4</sup> with a view to test the thesis of 'embourgeoisement' undertook a study at Luton and found no evidence of 'embourgeoisification process' - whereby the individualism of the class structure comes to replace the collective ethos of working class consciousness. They found that the style of trade unionism among affluent workers is very much an 'instrumental collectivism.'

Theodore Purcell<sup>5</sup> found that in spite of favourable attitude toward union, a high proportion of workers had favourable attitude toward the management.

The attitudes of the members toward various aspects of union are normally studied with a view to assess their implications for membership participation. The membership participation in union affairs is normally studied with a view to assess the nature of union structure and functioning.

Sayles & Strauss<sup>6</sup> in their study of local union found that the membership participation differs from one department to another in the same plant. Their findings show that members of those departments which have a better record of satisfied grievances are normally more active.

Lipset and Coleman<sup>7</sup> found that smaller plants which provide scope for greater interpersonal relations facilitate more widespread involvement in the decision making. Workers in those departments or shops that permit greater face to face contact among workers tend to be more active<sup>8</sup>, and those workers whose jobs isolate them from other workers tend to be less active.<sup>9</sup>

Joel Seidman<sup>10</sup> found that stability in work force is positively correlated with the membership participation. That is, lesser the turnover in the work force, more active will be the member in the union.

The most obvious and primary motivation for unionism seems to be the anxiety for economic security. Golden and Ruttenberg<sup>11</sup>

found that there are equally compelling psychological and social reasons for unionising. This finding has been supported by other subsequent researches in the West. Cross-sectional studies in both UK and USA by Kochen,<sup>12</sup> Guest & Dewe<sup>13</sup> have shown that in general individuals join unions more out of instrumental than ideological considerations.

In India majority of the studies e.g., Sinha and Paul<sup>14</sup>, Vaid<sup>15</sup>, Arya<sup>16</sup>, Ramaswamy<sup>17</sup>, Bhongoo<sup>18</sup>, Cheema<sup>19</sup>, Murthy<sup>20</sup>, Pandey and Vikram<sup>21</sup> have upheld the economic and security motives as the most important factors for unionisation.

Evidence from the developed as well as from developing economies has established that rank and file apathy in union activities is a universal feature. Goldstein<sup>22</sup>, Vall<sup>23</sup>, and other studies in USA highlight the general apathy of union members towards trade union participation. Schneider<sup>24</sup> also classified majority of workers as apathetic unionists who became active only during crisis. In a recent study by Dewe<sup>25</sup> in Britain, it was found that majority of the workers displayed allegiance to neither the trade union nor the employer. Sheth<sup>26</sup>, Fonesca<sup>27</sup>, Crouch<sup>28</sup>, Pandey and Vikram<sup>29</sup>, Das<sup>30</sup> Monga and Dayal and Sharma<sup>31</sup>, in their studies in India have investigated the disposition of the workers towards their unions and the fact that has stood out most prominently is lack of enthusiasm in union participation. The reasons discovered for 'lack of workers participation' in union activities include low identification, illiteracy, multiplicity of unions and sheer apathy. Ramaswamy<sup>32</sup>

has asserted workers' apathy towards the union to the diffusion of employers' hostility, bureaucratisation of the trade unions and failure of the unions to instil among their members an ideological orientation towards unionism.

The research also shows that workers' ethnic background is associated with union participation. In the United States, certain ethnic groups such as Negroes, Mexicans and Jews are found to be disproportionately contributing to the union activities.<sup>33</sup>

Many other studies show that workers' place of residence and place of origin are meaningfully associated with union participation. William Form and Dansereau<sup>34</sup> found that those who live in a town where their place of work is located are more likely to be active in the unions. Whyte's<sup>35</sup> study shows that urban prone to be more active than those having rural background. Especially, the very active and militant unionist is mostly a product of politically sophisticated metropolitan areas.

Certain personal experiences and orientations are found to be associated with union participation. Form and Dansereau<sup>36</sup>, Dean<sup>37</sup>, Seidman and Tagliacozza<sup>38</sup>, have found association between job satisfaction and union participation. But those who are oriented toward 'occupational advancement', particularly toward a supervisory or managerial position, are less likely to be active in the unions.<sup>39</sup>

The theory of union organisation is essentially a democratic theory. But in practice, democracy in unions is manifested in most varied degrees of all democratic organisations.

Robert Michels<sup>40</sup> states that goal of the organisation is to attain greater democracy for the membership, oligarchic structures develop to prevent the fullest expression of members interests and desires. He traces the causes of such oligarchic tendencies to the technical indispensability of leadership. According to Herzberg<sup>41</sup>, there seems to be a life cycle in the history of every union organisation: a high degree of participation by members in the initial stages, lively factional conflict, then consolidation of power by successful leader, followed by the growth of bureaucracy, and finally of a single machine with a monopoly of administrative power.

Lipset and associates<sup>42</sup> found that far from developing oligarchic tendencies, the Union under study was found to have developed and institutionalised a two party system, unique in the union world.

Shepard<sup>43</sup> found that organisational structure and ethnic composition of membership were the two factors affecting the functioning of the union. Edelstein and Ruppel<sup>44</sup> on the other hand found the frequency of conventions as a crucial factor in fostering democratic control in the unions. However, Coleman<sup>45</sup> concludes that democracy is frequently an unstable attribute of union government, and a drift, be it slow or fast, is toward more bureaucratic decision making and decision implementing.

Extensive research has also been conducted on trade union leadership focusing on social background, attitudes, roles and ideological orientations of the leaders.

One of the earlier studies was by Wright Mills<sup>46</sup> who studied union leaders representing a cross section of America's national, state and city union leaders. His study focused on the general trends, practices and ideologies with respect to the trade union leadership of America as a whole. Myson Fred<sup>47</sup> studied the influence of legal framework on trade union leadership in three large cities. The study suggested that the preoccupation of leaders with legal issues hardly leaves any time for them to attend the organisational activities.

Wilensky<sup>48</sup> studied the role of union officials in the decision making processes in the unions in particular and the overall functioning of the unions in general. He found that bureaucracies motivate gradual transformations of alienated intellectual into the political technician.

So far as studies on trade union leadership in India are concerned, one finds largely a general opinion or survey data without analytical interpretation. However, the study of trade union leadership by Punekar and Madhuri<sup>49</sup> merits attention due to the pioneering effort made by the authors to empirically investigate the phenomenon of trade union leadership. They studied a sample of 360 union leaders belonging to 178 unions in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Tamilnadu, and West Bengal. They



found that most of the prominent leaders in the trade were outsiders rather than the wage earning ranks.

Many studies have found that union participation is associated with the status of job. Lipset and Coleman<sup>50</sup> found that craft unions exhibit more participation than industrial unions. Sayles and Strauss<sup>51</sup> concludes that active members of the union are disproportionately drawn from relatively highly paid and higher job categories in a plant. Lipset and Coleman<sup>52</sup> in their study found that participation in union affairs is associated with the plant size. Small plants which provide scope for greater interpersonal relations facilitate more wide spread involvement in the decision making.

Seidman<sup>53</sup> found in his study that the stability in work force is positively correlated with membership participation, that is, lesser the turnover in the workforce, more active will be the member in the union.

About the multiple structure and internal union activities Tripathi<sup>54</sup> in his study of Silk Mazdoor Sangh Strike at Kanpur found that due to internal rivalries not only damage the cause of workers but the institutions themselves.

Pandey<sup>55</sup> in his study of rival unionism in Kanpur found that multiple union structure has been potent a cause of industrial conflict.

## **SUMMARY:**

Trade Union movement in India is one of the most maligned in the world. The role of the worker is important in the life of his trade union, in the same way the role of the trade union is very important in the life of its worker. The extent of worker's participation in his union determines the success of his union.

Though many studies have been conducted from different dimensions, the present study intends to find out the extent of workers participation in the union activities. The union in the present study is related to a cooperative management functioning in a rural area in Karad, Maharashtra. Hence, both the workers participation in union activities, and the role of the union in safeguarding the workers' interests in such vast cooperative rural management may be considered as significant aspects.

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