The ILO and Social Security
No lasting peace without social justice,
No social justice without Social Security

-Leo Kilbman
CHAPTER 6

THE ILO AND SOCIAL SECURITY

INTRODUCTION

The ravages of first world war led the life of the labour class with painful cries and hopeless situation to survive with basic minimum requirements of a family which includes adequate food, shelter and clothing. This war played an important role for the establishment of ILO which had recognised labour as a subject of justice by initiating the development of the corresponding subject of justice through its Conventions and Recommendations to improve working and living conditions of the labour classes all over the world. For instance, if this war had not occurred, it is very doubtful whether there would be opportune here to found ILO with a view to wipe out the tears of millions of working class for their improvement and removal of atrocities. With the advent of ILO, an awareness for building up efforts in the direction of co-ordinated International Action for regulating the conditions of labour under the laws of their respective countries were gradually generated all over the world.

ILO is a specialised agency of tripartite arrangement i.e., it is composed of representatives of the governments, the workers and the employers. It is also a non-political permanent International Organisation subjected to the problems of industrial workers and the conditions under which ordinary men throughout the world work and live\textsuperscript{465}.

The International Labour Conference is a World Parliament for labour and social questions which is also the policy making body of the organisation and has the principle function to establish International Labour Standards in the shape of Conventions and Recommendations which are collectively known as the International Labour Code. A matter of special significance was the address of president V.V.Giri to the 54th session of the conference in June 1970 in which he emphasised that “the basic and fundamental problem which mankind had to face today was that of closing the gap between the rich and the poor both among and within nations. He further pointed out that economic development, though necessary, was not an end in itself, but should have social justice built into it since universal peace could be achieved only through the contentment of the masses: a principle incorporated in the preamble of ILO constitution  

During the early stages of its existence the ILO’s main activity was the formulation and adoption of International Labour Standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations which had been instrumental in the development in many countries’ system to remove injustice, hardship, unemployment, privation and to improve the living and working conditions of the labourers with a view to establish universal and lasting peace based on social justice. It used to send specialists to advice Member Governments on technical matters within its competence. But during world war II, it placed

increasing emphasis in giving technical assistance to less or under developed nations. Technical assistance had in fact been given by ILO immediately during the post-war period. For instance, the office of ILO sent officials on technical assistance missions to czechoslovakia (Social Insurance) Egypt (Social Insurance), Greece (Revision of Labour Legislation), India (Social Insurance) and Iran (Labour Legislation and Co-operative organisation)\(^{467}\).

6.1 FUNCTIONS OF ILO

The functions of ILO may be classified into 3 parts viz., i) Legislative ii) Operational iii) Educational which are discussed as follows:

THE LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS:

The ILO consists of various Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conferences, held under it, as well as those decisions which have been taken by its various Industrial Committees and Regional Conferences. The International Labour Conference formulates the International Labour Problem Standards in the shape of conventions and recommendations,\(^ {468}\) because it is the supreme deliberative body of the ILO and acts as the legislative wing of the organisation. It is also the main international forum for discussion of labour problems in setting International Standards in labour matters. Besides, the conference also adopts resolutions


\(^{468}\) Article 19(1) of ILO Constitution
relating to the current and future work of I.L.O. And later on these resolutions will take shape of Conventions and Recommendations. As a two-third majority of the conference is required for their adoption, they represent generally agreement of informed world opinion 469.

A Convention is binding in the member-state which ratifies it. But a Recommendation is intended as a guide-line for the nation.

The main functions of the conference are:

i) Determination of the budget of the organisation year to year.

ii) Inclusion and exclusion of law item to the Agenda.

iii) Consideration of the Director General’s Report on ratified conventions

iv) Power to make necessary amendments to the constitution.

Besides from the above regular items, the agenda of the conference includes technical items which are referred to it by the Governing body. Legislative functions of the conference lies in discussing technical items for the adoption of international regulations in the form of Conventions and Recommendations 470.

THE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Apart from formulation of Conventions and Recommendations, the ILO consists mainly of technical assistance to programmes and technical


co-operation activity to member countries in carrying out their programmes of labour legislation and man-power organisation including National Training and Labour-Management Relations. Thus through this operational activity ILO has given technical assistance and provided Experts advice in various fields which helped the member nations to formulate programmes and schemes for increasing welfare and raising the standard of living ⁴⁷¹. It provides technical co-operation and technical assistance to its developing member nations in the following ways:

i) It provides technical experts to the member countries

ii) It organises regional seminar and courses

iii) It awards fellowships and study grants.

iv) It provides equipments and materials for organising vocational training of workers. Thus I.L.O. through its operational activities enters the member countries to solve labour problems and provides direct assistance to Governments of its member nations to promote economic and social progress in their countries.

THE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

From its inception, the ILO has been concerned with educational activities for workers and since 1956 it has developed and implemented to own worker's education programme throughout the world. The role of trade unionists become broader by acquiring new rights and responsibilities in which their

organisations and the services they provide become more complex. To face this new situations and variety of problems, it is imperative to have professional and technical knowledge and skills. Today worker’s representatives in many countries are being called upon to participate in the running of their industries and undertaking as well as in the development and implementation of national policies. So to cope successfully with all these issues, the objective of Worker’s Education Programme is designed to assist in strengthening and development of workers organisations. The Educational Activities include not only training of labour but also makes provisions for the promotion of research in labour problems, publication of periodicals and manuals on problems of co-operation, social security, collective bargaining and trade union administration etc. To achieve the said objectives, the International Institute for Labour Studies was established in 1960 as a centre for advanced studies in the social and labour fields in order to educate and research for developing ideas on labour policy for leadership in the labour and industrial relation.

By undertaking research, information on specific problems of trade union development, methods, techniques and developments in the field of workers education is disseminated which enables workers to understand better their positions as workers and as unionist and the problems facing them, their organisation, their industry and their country in resolving a number of issues throughout the world.

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6.2 THE ROLE OF THE ILO IN SOCIAL SECURITY

The social security, adequate protections of life and health of the workers, safe and healthy working conditions are some of the specific objectives of fruitful activity by the I.L.O. According to Johnston, in no other sphere (social security) has the record of ILO shown such consistent and conscious success 473.

The basic items of social security programme of ILO is the ‘Berne Trade Union conferences (1917)’ which demanded that every country should have compulsory insurance scheme for all workers including migrants. Today most countries have a scheme of some kind but the workers needs in this field are not yet fully met. Million of workers are still not adequately protected against work accidents and industrial diseases, let alone entitled to all the benefits of modern social security schemes 474.

STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The objective of the ILO action in the field of social security is the gradual extension of coverage and protection should be uniform for each section of the community is simple social justice. The elaboration of many National Programmes of Social Security and the confirmed demands placed upon them by society for extensions and adaptations and new assurances of automatic and
