"TRADE UNIONS IN GOA – A COMPARATIVE STUDY"

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Labour movement has been an inevitable reaction to the industrialisation process that caused labour problems. Problems like employment of women and children even for heavy manual work, long hours of work, low wages, lack of elementary facilities, bad working and living conditions, heavy workload and inhuman treatment of workers formed the aftermath of industrialisation. Most of these problems were caused due to the desire of employers to gain maximum profits, transformation of industry from domestic to large-scale production, migration of labour from rural to urban areas and political reasons as well. Hence there was a need for establishing an organisation that will protect the labour from the evils of industrialisation.

Fumis, E (1925) highlighted that the labour movement is however not only a reaction to the evil influences of a life in industry but also an attempt to mobilize the competitive forces of our society to the betterment of the conditions of workers at large. The wage-earners when confronted with the hazards of life in an industry, spontaneously resort to collective action to protect their interests and accordingly the union movement takes different forms at different times. Thus emerges trade unionism with the birth of trade unions in the country.
A trade union is an association of workers in any trade or allied trades for protection and furtherance of their interests regarding wages, conditions of labour and provision of pecuniary assistance to its members during strikes, unemployment, sickness, old age etc. The basic task for unions was recruitment of members, improve economic status of their members, pursue members' cases to the labour courts and tribunals and to associate with the political elements to bring about changes through legal enactments.

Union behaviour thus covered a multitude of activities like organization of members, formulation of bargaining demands, ratification of new agreements, striking and picketing, grievance presentation and settlement, convention resolutions and decisions, political activities, educational and publicity programs, labour solidarity actions, union disciplinary measures and administration of benefit plans.

Trade union movement evolved in Great Britain as a consequence of the industrial revolution towards the end of the 18th Century in the form of craft unions. These unions were motivated by a desire to elevate both the economic and political status of workers in industry. The birth of Trade-Union Congress in 1868 was a landmark in trade union history and a takeoff for new unionism in Britain.
With regard to United States, trade unionism followed the rise of industrialisation as a challenge to deal with the state of actual or threatened economic deterioration. The birth of AFL (American Federation of Labour) added new dimension and gave it a definite shape and direction. In 1938 the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) was formed which latter merged with AFL.

Regarding India, trade unionism seemed to be basically dominated by loose and complex structure and did not conform to any single pattern. During the last quarter of the 19th Century, some forms of organisations were established after the factories were set up in India. N. M. Lokhande founded the organized labour movement. Later World War I, mass movement by political leaders, International Labour Organisation and the Russian Revolution promoted the growth of the movement.

The first union to be set up in India was the Madras Textile Labour Union which was formed in 1918 and the first Central Organisation (A. I. T. U. C) was formed in 1920. By 1924, there were 8 Federations of labour in India and that a number of legislative measures were introduced such as the Indian Factories Act (1923), Indian Mines Act (1923) and the Trade Disputes Act (1929). In 1933, the National Trade Union Federation (N. T. U. F) was formed. Later, several Central Organisations came into existence namely I. N. T. U. C (1946)
H. M. S (1948), U. T. U. C (1949) etc. Indian trade unions have achieved a remarkable status. The unions have created for them a platform to air their views, policies and ideologies both at state level and national level in the Standing Labour Committee and the Indian Labour Conference.

Regarding the trade union movement in Goa, it was characterized by struggles, encounters and conflicts. Research findings by Desai, Khristanand (1993) showed that trade unionism in the State of Goa dates back to the last years of Portuguese rule in the form of spontaneous and sporadic assertions but unions in a definite form evolved only after the liberation of Goa. According to the Statistical Hand Book of Goa (2000), during the year 1995, 184 unions were registered with a membership of 73084 members at the end of the year, while, in 1997, 206 registered unions existed in Goa but its total membership declined to 39411 only.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

(i) To study the evolution and growth of Trade Unions in Goa.

(ii) To examine the impact of trade unions on industrial relations.

(iii) To study the socio-economic impact of trade unions on workers.

(iv) To make recommendations regarding the future prospects of the trade Unions in Goa.
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The modern industrialisation process has created labour problems like employment of women and children, enormous exploitation especially of the semi-skilled and manual labour with longer work durations, low wages, being kept on temporary pay-rolls and excluded from pension, bonus, provident fund and gratuity benefits. Industrialisation no doubt has brought along prosperity but only to a few. Although many industries have been earning high profits as a result of increase in productivity, yet employees' conditions continue to be poor. In such circumstances, workers can project their resentment only through their collective efforts by forming their own organisations to fight against these evils. The Trade union is thus the reaction to the industrialisation process that is characterized by exploitative practices and victimization of labour. Industrialisation has created workers organisations which differ widely in their functioning, structure, leadership and ideology and we find the same with respect to the trade union scenario with respect to Goa. The Liberation of Goa catalysed such a movement in Goa. Continuous efforts on the part of the Central Trade Unions in uniting the vast industrial workers finally led to the emergence of trade unions in Goa. This study explores and compares the evolution, growth and functioning of trade unions at the four units under study. Some also argue that unions have become outdated while the others are of the opinion that unions are more relevant now as workers' rights and welfare benefits are increasingly threatened. This study helps in understanding whether the unions are
active or have become redundant in its functioning. It highlights the role of unions in industrial relations, the socio-economic impact, problems and the future of the respective trade unions under study.

1.4 CONCEPTS USED:

Workman: means any person (including an apprentice) employed in any industry to do any manual, unskilled, skilled, technical, operational, clerical or supervisory work for hire or reward, whether the terms of employment be expressed or implied for the purposes of any proceeding under this Act in relation to an industrial dispute, includes any such person who has been dismissed, discharged or retrenched in connection with, or as a consequence of, that dispute, or whose dismissal, discharge or retrenchment has led to that dispute, but does not include any such person ---

i) who is subject to the Air Force Act or the Army Act or the Navy Act; or

ii) who is employed in the police service or as an officer or other employee of a person; or

iii) who is employed mainly in a managerial or administrative capacity; or

iv) who, being employed in a supervisory capacity draws wages exceeding one thousand six hundred rupees, per mensem or exercises, either by
nature of the duties attached to the office or by reason of the powers vested in him, functions mainly of a managerial nature.

**Permanent Workmen:** is one who is appointed for unlimited period, up to his retirement period. He enjoys all the benefits under the different Acts.

**Go Slow:** is a tactic employed by workmen to coerce the employer to come to an agreement. It is a form of strike, where there is loss of production.

**Industrial Dispute:** It means any dispute or difference between employee or employers and workmen or between workmen and workmen, which is connected with employment or non-employment or terms of employment or with conditions of labour, of any person.

**Strike:** The Industrial Disputes Act 1947, defines it as cessation of work by a body of persons employed in any industry acting in combination, or a concerted refusal, or a refusal under common understanding, of any number of persons who are or have been so employed to continue to work or to accept employment.

**Lockout:** Under the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, lockout is defined as temporary closing of a place of employment or suspension of work, or the refusal by employer to continue to employ any number of persons employed by him.

**Informal Grievance Handling:** It is a unique HRD initiative under which, in addition to the formal grievance redressal machinery, personnel executives make an attempt to identify the various grievances of the employees and take personal
initiatives to sort them out even before they become major problems of industrial relations disputes.

**Check off System:** Money due to the union is deducted by the management from the employees' salary and paid to the union.

**Absenteeism:** It refers to the worker's absence from his regular work when he is normally scheduled to work.

**Wages:** means all remuneration capable of being expressed in terms of money, which would if the terms of employment, expressed or implied, were fulfilled, be payable to a workman in respect of his employment, or of work done in such employment, and includes

i) such allowances (including dearness allowance) as the workman is for the time being entitled to;

ii) the value of any house accommodation, or of supply of light, water, medical attendance or other amenity of any service or of any concessional supply of foodgrains or other articles;

iii) any traveling concessions;

iv) any commission payable on the promotion of sales or business or both.

But does not include --------

a) any bonus
b) any contribution paid or payable by the employer to any pension fund or provident fund or for the benefit of the workman under any law for the time being in force;

c) any gratuity payable on the termination of his service.

**Minimum Wage:** A wage which is independent of the kind of industry and applies all alike. It sets the lower limit below which wages cannot be allowed to sink.

**Fair Wage:** It is a wage related to earning capacity and work load. It is sufficient to provide a standard family with food, shelter, clothing, medical care and education of the children appropriate to the workman but not at exceeding his wage earning capacity in the class of establishment to which he belongs.

**Living Wage:** It is a wage sufficient to provide not only the essentials but a fair measure of frugal comfort with an ability to provide for old age and evil days.

**Allowances:** They are part of remuneration capable of being expressed in terms of money, which would if the terms of employment expressed or implied, were fulfilled, payable to workmen for the work done in employment.

**Employee Relations:** It covers the development related to the coverage of the non-unionised workers along with the unionised, non-manufacturing workers, unionised manufacturing and white collar workers, unionised manufacturing blue collar workers.
1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

In Goa, there are unions that are local as well as those affiliated to the Central Organisations like All India Trade Union Congress (A.I.T.U.C.), Indian National Trade Union Congress (I.N.T.U.C.), etc. The study covers the viable unions at Mormugao Port Trust, Goa Shipyard Limited, Colfax Private Limited and Ciba Specialty Chemicals (India) Limited.

1.6 RELEVANCE / SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The study will provide gainful information on the administration, forums for workers' participation in management, social security measures, wage policy and its implementation, problems and prospects of trade unions. Since such a study is carried out for the first time, it will be a valuable source of data for subsequent researchers on the topic related to unionism in Goa. The evaluation of the functioning of the unions will give an insight into its limitations and provide scope for serious thinking regarding the future course of action. The reader of this thesis will have an idea about the impact of an organisation like a trade union on the Goan society as a whole.
1.7 METHODOLOGY:

The study takes into account only the industrial trade unions in Goa. At present there are 114 industrial trade unions in Goa. For the purpose of this study, a sample of 5% of industrial unions have been selected through stratified sampling method. This 5% of trade unions selected i.e six unions, are spread at the four units namely Mormugao Port Trust (MPT), Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), Colfax Private Limited and Ciba Specialty Chemicals (India) Limited. The study covers the post liberalisation period (1991-2005).

The distribution of these six unions are as follows: at MPT two unions namely Mormugao Port and Railway Workers Union (MPRWU) and Goa Port and Dock Employees Union (GPDEU); at GSL two unions namely, Goa Shipyard Kamgar Sangh (GSKS) and Goa Shipyard Kamgar Ekvott (GSKE); at Colfax Private Limited one union namely Gomantak Mazdoor Sangh (GMS) and at Ciba Specialty Chemicals (India) Limited one union namely Kamgarancho Ekvott (KE) have been studied. For the purpose of this study only recognized and viable unions in these units have been selected.

The study is based on the analysis of primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected with the help of Questionnaires for workers, union leaders and employers / management; Interview Schedules for interviewing Government Officials and prominent trade union leaders in Goa.

The Secondary data is collected from Registers of the respective trade unions, Office of the Labour Commissioner, Research Assistant section of Labour
The study made use of quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis based on which conclusions have been drawn.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The study is of recognized and viable trade unions at present at these four units. Only industrial unions have been studied. The conclusions drawn are based on the responses given by the respondents. In the case of GSL, approximate figures and not true figures were provided by the management as it is a defense unit.