Of late, the incidence of industrial protests has been showing an upward trend. In this, socio-political climate of post-Independence era has played no meagre part. The changed political ideology has to a great extent made common man, including industrial worker aware, a little too much aware, of his importance. At the same time, freedom of association guaranteed by the Constitution has further encouraged this trend. Besides, there has been the process of 'politisation'. The right of franchise, periodical elections and the like have made the workers, both individually and collectively, assertive. As a result, an average worker has increasingly been clamouring for better service conditions, a place
in management and a share in profits. The labour force has no longer remained a discrete body of workers - unity of interests has bound them together into a group capable of making its weight felt. They have emerged as a group capable of influencing the political processes. This apart, underlying the upward trend in the incidence of industrial protests there have been several economic factors, as well. Spiralling inflation and 'exhibition effect' have not only kept the wage-pattern perpetually unsatisfactory but also have made the workers crave for better emoluments, and better standard of living. These political and economic factors together with certain other factors have been responsible for the growing industrial discontentment.

An industrial undertaking comes through the fusion of capital and manpower resources. The labour force is an inseparable half of an industrial undertaking. The workers have a positive stake in the management and a right to better working conditions. Similarly, representing workers, the trade unions have a definite role to play.

Given these constraints, industrial protests have come to represent a contemporary way of social life. They take the form of presentation of a charter of demands or hunger strikes; they may culminate into a rally, demonstration or procession; or, lead to striking down the work. As a matter of fact, present-day industrial strikes come in a variety of forms - tool-down strike, pen-down strike, sit-in strike, or indefinite total strike. Then the pressurising techniques like gherao have also been there. In spite of the fact that the industrial protests bring in their wake
inconvenience to the public and a strain to the economy, they also have a positive side to themselves. They give vent to the hostile feelings of the workers towards the management, make possible the articulation and presentation of their point of view, and enable them secure better service conditions. In this respect, industrial protests are not all that nihilistic as they sound to be. However, reportedly many of the protests are found to be counter-productive; and some of them also turn violent resulting in the destruction of property and occasionally of life.

It may be noted that: a) representing dissent, industrial protests are a form of democratic process; b) trade unions made for an important democratic infrastructure; c) trade union activities including industrial protests are inherent and perhaps desirable for healthy industrial relations; d) trade union activities become bothersome and a threat to law and order only when they transgress democratic limits; and e) almost all industrial disputes would be resolved amicably and peacefully if the concerned parties abide by the rules of the game.

Who are the other parties involved in the game? In an industrial protest apart from trade unions and the management who are directly concerned, there are others as well - government (the Police and Labour Department), politicians and the like. The government directly intervenes in industrial protests through Labour Department and often through Police Department. Representing people in the government, politicians have not only a say directly or indirectly in the government and a sway on its organs but also
considerable interests in the main parties in the industrial protests. Under given circumstances, it is possible for the government organs to enforce the statutes in spirit and letter, but for certain intrinsic weaknesses or extrinsic influences, they wittingly or unwittingly miss the nuances of the game. Doubtless, this kind of omission has far-reaching implications.

Keeping the above scenario in view the present work has proceeded to analyse the role of the main parties involved in industrial protests. Particularly, it has attempted to look into the functioning of the trade unions as well as trade union leaders, and, into the efficacy of different ways and means adopted to resolve disputes. Towards this, the labour situation obtaining in Dhanbad district has been studied. Among other things, the views of management executives, trade union leaders, workers, labour officials and police in Dhanbad have been ascertained. The management executives, trade union leaders and workers belonging to coal-mining industry, electrical engineering industry and fire-bricks industries, labour officials from Central and State departments and all police officers of the rank of Sub-Inspector have been contacted.

Dhanbad is known for its varied industrial activities, prominent among them being the coal mining. Without subscribing to social ecology, it may be stated that the environment has a degree of influence upon the individuals. For instance, it has been found that the southern part of the Dhanbad on which the present study has been focussed is undulating, scary and smoky.
This topography could hardly be considered stimulating as compared with northern hilly and picturesque part of the district. Further, the climate generally is dry and is given to extremes. The district with its massive labour force, has to make do with infertile land, small rainfall, limited irrigation facilities and hence a single crop. Resultantly, agriculture is hardly able to sustain the teeming millions.

Thickly populated as it is (3830 Sq.Km.), the urban areas account for about one-fourth of the total population. However, out of every ten persons three are out-siders. Likewise, about one-third of the total population belongs either to scheduled Castes or scheduled tribes. The male-female ratio is 51:41. Education-wise, the district tops the list in the State. The main occupation is agriculture which, being fraught with uncertainties, has made for considerable unemployment in the district. In fact, per capita (0.21 acres) and per family (2.51 acres) land holding in this district is the lowest in the State. The climate, the topography, the high rate of migration, the smoky atmosphere and the hazards of industrial life, given other things being equal, appear to make for a tenuous social situation. Additionally, the district resounds with trade union activities of followers of extreme leftists to rightists. Although the history of trade unionism could be traced to the year 1919 when a trade union was organised under the banner of the AITUC, today, most of the unions are controlled by INTUC and HMS. As might be the case elsewhere, in the trade union history of Dhanbad, there have been leaders dedicated to the cause of the workers as well as leaders with
unabashed vested interests. And the district has had its resources controlled both by benevolent and malevolent employers. With this backdrop, the game, the rules, and the participants in industrial protests have been looked into.

Doubtless, there have been numerically more protests in the coal-mining industry than in electrical engineering and fire-bricks (see Table 3.7). The reasons for these protests range from wage to disciplinary action. However, the reasons for the protests as stated by the management and trade union leaders in coal-mining industry do not tally (see Tables 3.8 & 3.8A). The nexus between protests and discontentment/dissatisfaction has already been delineated (see Chapter 3). The dissatisfaction expressed by the workers over various facilities made available to them varies significantly over the type of industrial activity. It has also been found that there are significant differences in the 'subculture' of the three types of industries including their activities, sway of the trade unions on the management, and the like. Also, there are in evidence significant differences in the dissatisfaction. About the salary/wages of the upper level workers, the unfavourable opinion of the respondents varies from firebricks to coalmining - the latter reporting them to be inadequate in larger proportions (C = 0.281). Towards the salaries of middle level workers the dissatisfaction is more in electrical engineering industry followed by firebricks and coalmining (C = 0.403). Towards their own salary/wages, the dissatisfaction among lower level workers, varies from electrical engineering to firebricks to coalmining (C = 0.432). In the case of welfare
facilities more and more workers from coalmining feel dissatisfied followed by firebricks and electrical engineering ($C=0.242$). Same is the case with medical facilities except for the fact that the electrical engineering industry takes the middle position. However, there are significant differences in the case of leave facilities, it is highest in coal-mining and lowest in firebricks. Further, the dissatisfaction expressed by the workers towards various facilities made available to them shows significant differences in terms of the type of management. There are found no significant differences in the opinion of managerial executives and trade union leaders in so far as the salaries/wages received by the upper level workers is concerned. However, more worker-respondents from the public sector are unfavourably disposed towards salaries/wages drawn by the executives than those in the private sectors. The opinion of the respondents belonging to three sources show significant differences over the type of management on the salaries/wages of the middle level workers. That middle level workers are not drawing adequate salaries/wages, is, more or less, brought out ($C = 0.560; 0.241; 0.402$) concurrently from the three sets of respondents, namely management, trade union leaders and workers. Same trend holds true in the case of salaries/wages of the lower level workers, also ($p < 0.001$). The executives, trade union leaders, and workers in greater proportion feel that the lower level workers are receiving inadequate salaries/wages in private sector than those in public sector ($C = 0.553; 0.334; 0.420$). In connection with the Wage-Board recommendations, the opinion of the management executives and
trade union leaders seems to vary. More and more executives and the leaders from private sector perceive the awards as being inadequate than those in public sector. Concerning bonus, the leaders are unanimous in stating that the payment of bonus according to the directives of the government does not affect the company's financial viability. On the contrary, executives especially those from public sector, feel that payment of bonus affects the financial viability of the company (C = 0.284). Again, if management executives feel that the Workmen's Compensation Act is in the interest of workers, many trade union leaders feel the opposite. The leaders' opinion is found to be vary significantly over the type of management - more and more leaders from private sector feel that the Act is in the favour of management. The reasons stated by them are: insufficiency of the compensation, cumbersome legal proceedings, medical certification of the damage, no assurance for further employment and the like (see Table 3.15). In the case of the implementation of welfare laws, while the responses of the executives do not show any significant difference, those of trade union leaders show differences (p 0.001). More leaders from public sector feel dissatisfied with the implementation of the welfare laws than in private sector. Although insignificant the responses of the workers mildly differ from the feelings of the trade union leaders. Towards medical facilities the dissatisfaction of both the leaders and workers show significant differences over the type of management (p 0.001). If more leaders from private sector feel that the existing medical facilities are inadequate, still more is the number of workers from public sector who feel so. However, regarding the leave
facilities in both the sectors the dissatisfaction seems to be uniform. Taken together, the analyses substantiate what Khurana (1972) and Janardhan (1975) hold—that there is much dissatisfaction amongst the workers in the public sector.

Faced with a strike-situation how does the management react? The trade union leaders, workers and police officials feel that the management executives often adopt a threatening posture (see Table 3.21). Not only this, a relatively large number of management executives (40%) reported that threat is the language the workers understand most (Table 3.22). This kind of threat includes victimisation, lockout, physical harm, dismissals, arrests, charge sheeting and shifting of the industry to a distant region—according to the trade union leaders, workers and police. Almost similar measures have been mentioned by the management (see Tables 3.23 & 3.24). The reasons given by the respondents to deal with strike situation are not wholly in conformity with the accepted rules. In so far as formal methods to end a strike/protest are concerned, as reported by the respondents are: negotiation, government intervention, lockout and disciplinary action (see Table 3.24). On the other hand, buying trade union leaders, exploiting trade union rivalries, use of police, bringing fresh workers, use of musclemen, lockout, dividing workers, official action and the like are reportedly the informal methods of putting down a strike. These methods can hardly be considered to be legal. It may be noted that the use of Lathialis in the region for controlling or putting down industrial protests is rather conspicuous. As such, both the management and trade
union leaders often employ these musclemen or goons. They may be regular employees, temporary workers, or might be hired to do a specific job (Table 3.26). At the time of strike or otherwise, the workers as well as management executives state that they are used. In the opinion of the labour officials, most of the management executives use lathials (see Table 3.25). Management executives consider Lathials relatively efficient because they are readily available, strike breaking is their business and the Lathials are both trouble makers and trouble shooters. The discreet but frequent use of money and muscle hardly makes for the accepted means of strike control. Although an obsolete method now, providing of evidence of strike activity during the pendency of a case would have negative influence on the case of trade unions. However, in this direction the respondents mention that a few executives indulge in these practices, yet, there are those who mention 'most' of them (executives) are given to this. Even the executives are not in a position to totally deny this (Table 3.28). Understandably, violent activities of unions whether by design or chance, is not approved by all concerned. Interestingly, to weaken the case of a trade union or to tarnish its image, leaders and police feel that some management executives have provoked or implanted violence (see Table 3.29).

At this stage it is appropriate to take a closer look at the worker. Indeed a model worker in Dhanbad is a 'son of the soil' that is he belongs to the state of Bihar, his age is 30 years, he is an unskilled worker, he has been on the job for 13 years, he has three dependents and his monthly income is less
than Rs.250/-. Besides, the dissatisfaction expressed towards various facilities made available to the workers varies - 90% of them are dissatisfied with wages, 78% with welfare facilities, 86% with leave rules and 74% with medical facilities. When this dissatisfaction is run against their demographic factors, it is found that dissatisfaction amongst the workers positively differs in terms of their demographic factors (see Chapter 4). With this in view it would be justifiable to assume that the average worker in Dhanbad is far from being satisfied with his lot and he may be greatly amenable to participate in activities violating rules of the game.

What type of leaders the workers have? A typical trade union leader in the district is from Bihar, he is 42 years of age, chances are that he would be either Kshatriya or a Brahmin, he would have an experience in the trade unionism of about 15 years and done schooling upto the 8th Standard; and he would have about better acquaintance with the field. The leaders who are educated and belong to higher castes are mostly in coal-mining industry. Affiliate mostly to INTUC and HMS and they are a way up in the union hierarchy (see Table 5.1). Apart from education and public service record what equips a trade union leader better to serve the workers is training. Training-wise, trade union leaders in the area have not seen much of it. However, relatively a large number of leaders belonging to INTUC have attended seminars, symposia and the like. Considering length of service in trade unionism as an indicator of public service record, it is found that age, union of affiliation, office held and conferences
attended show significant association. Thus it may be remarked that education and, to some extent, training and public service record have a place in the career of a trade union leader (see Table 5.2). Given this background, how have the leaders been serving the workers? A relatively larger proportions of the respondents feels that none of the leader is actually working in the interest of the workers. However, the labour officials state that some of them do work (see Table 5.5). A dedicated leader can hardly see his interest in isolation from that of his union. If the union's interests run into jeopardy, the leader also goes down. However, a larger proportion of the respondents feels that none of the leaders would purse the interests of the union should his personal interests run into danger (Table 5.5) Apparently, the behaviour of the leaders is motivated more by his vested self interest in the trade unionism than anything else. Many of the respondents from management and labour department disagree with the statement that "trade union leaders have the welfare of the workers in the upper most of their mind" (Table 5.7). As it is, majority of the respondents from management, workers, labour officials and police, that trade union leaders use the workers or exploit them for their personal gains (Table 5.8). Stated briefly, majority of the respondents express their opinion that the problems of the workers are of marginal interest, personal considerations overshadow them, and leaders have other priorities. The behaviour of the trade union leaders vis-a-vis management does not also seem to be exemplary. To realise their ends the leaders bother little about the means used. At times they have colluded with the management, have been
open to graft, used musclemen to score a point over management or an adversary, instigated labour trouble, defected from affiliations and so forth (see Case studies). These practices are far from being above board.

Next, the police have been there to maintain law and order. Obviously, it is the management which has been calling them to maintain order and to protect property and life. But the promptitude with which the police make their moves seem to leave much room to be desired. Respondents in larger proportions feel that the police are not prompt (Table 6.17). However, couched are certain other demands as well in the call given to the police by the management. Police officers state that at times the management requests to keep the production going on, protect loyal workers and certain extra-legal services also including arrest of leaders, use of excessive force and the like (Table 6.16). Indeed, the respondents from management and labour department feel that it is the financial inducement that prompts police action (Table 6.18). Towards systematic understanding the police organisation and working have been examined. The police organisation in Dhanbad as elsewhere is hierarchical. For the numerical strength they often draw it from BMP, CRP, CISF and the like. The importance of the intelligence in tackling, preventing and ensuring peace with little force, in a protest situation can hardly be over-emphasised. Nevertheless, there seems to be little by-way intelligence that is made available to the executive branch. Quite a few officers feel that intelligence department is almost defunct (see Table 6.1, 6.2, 6.3). Whatever information is
provided is not much suitable or timely. As a matter of fact, the preparations of the police to control strikes, centre around the mobilisation of force and a little bit of tapping of the sources of information (Table 6.4). It is hardly surprising that many of the officers do not feel the present preparations as adequate (Table 6.5). The preventive measures on the eve of an impending strike are of utmost importance. The officers in Dhanbad usually clamp Sec 144, depute more force, try to secure information from striking workers, persuasion and preventive arrests (see Table 6.6). The miscreants like goondas in a strike situation may be identified mostly by experience and understanding, through the intelligence sources, from the peculiar behaviour of the persons and through the personal sources of the officer in-charge. Surprisingly, the registers like 'goonda registers' which are hung in the police stations are seldom consulted. Indeed, if one inspects them the chances are that one would see few names scribbled. By arresting the goondas under proper legal sections, or after warning, persuading them to get lost and separating them physically are the methods followed by the officers to keep off miscreants (see Table 6.8). In view of the hierarchical nature of the police organisation certain information bits often stuck up with higher ranks. These may come out as ministruction, do and de'nts to the officer in-charge dealing with a protest (Table 6.9). Most officers follow the instructions in toto, some modify their line of action and a few with initiative exercise their own discretion. (Table 6.10). Much has been talked about the mobilisation of force as a preventive and a dependable offensive measure. However, no yard-stick as to the strength of
of the force to be deputed to deal with striking workers has been evolved. This is not an easy task, because, many an experienced and knowledgeable officer feels that "it is better to err by taking more force". In the present context, the number and ideology of the workers, and general attitude have been the factors determining the numerical strength of the police in a protest situation (Table 6.11). Attention has also been paid on the means of transport. A variety of old and new vehicles has been in use. But almost every police officer except those in the top echelon feel that the present transport facilities are inadequate (Table 6.13). Towards increasing the efficiency of the police, the officers suggest: efficient transport system, more police force, specially trained police, increased cooperation from management and trade unions and efficient intelligence system. Incidentally, this also shows the fact that the police in the area is little exposed even to routine methods of crowd control. It is no surprise that the police in this area has often resorted to the use of force. Regarding legal powers, the officers seem to be contented with. Nevertheless, they feel that magisterial powers may be given to police. About political interference in the working of the police 62% of them report it to be high (Table 6.21). Relating to the posture taken by the police in protests, many workers state that police act partially many more observe silence and some state it as impartial (Table 6.20). The police arrival on the scene of labour trouble generates interesting reactions: a sizable majority of the workers instead of getting subdued, gets further provoked. In view of the promptitude, belief in the use of force, limited
training, bottlenecks in transport and the like it is difficult to conclude that police organisation and the working are exemplary.

The role of the politicians in the industrial protests has been looked into. The data reveal that there has been much political interference in the working of the management, labour department and the police. The political and social and economic climate in the state has been somewhat peculiar (see Chapter VII). Besides, political leaders appear to favour workers and trade unions, although this is not how exactly trade union leaders feel (Table 7.2). However, what is more plausible is that the politicians keep an eye on the pelf of the management and the vote banks the workers and trade unions have. 'Personal favours', 'funds', government of capitalists', 'government is employer' have been the attractions for the politicians, in the opinion of the respondents, for siding with the managements. 'Socialist principles', 'their labour wings', 'for votes', 'for welfare of the workers' have been the reasons offered by the respondents for the tilt of politicians towards trade unions (Table 7.3). A turn in the responses is observed when it comes to industrial harmony. The executives, although aware of the importance of winning over politicians prefer trade union leaders to be wooed for the purposes of maintaining industrial peace. This is in conformity with the observation of Reddy (1976). Also, it is very difficult to think of a trade union leader without having a shade of a politics. As is well known, more and more trade union leaders drift into politics, contest elections and get elected to
legislature. In any case to secure political patronage, the management executives offer 'donations', 'appoint persons recommended by politicians', 'award contracts to their men' and 'get votes'. This is also supported from other sub-samples (see Table 7.5). Thus, it may be inferred that there is considerable interest and involvement of the politicians in industrial relations. The role of the politicians in the industrial relations does not glitter.

It may be reiterated that the role of the dispute settlement machinery is crucial for stable and peaceful industrial relations. In Dhanbad both State and Central Labour organisations have been there. Their jurisdictions have been demarcated. Relatively more number of disputes have been handled by the Central labour machinery in comparison with state organ. This has to be so. The central labour organisation is headed by a Regional Labour Commissioner and that of State organisation by an Assistant Labour Commissioner. The state labour department looks after enforcement of labour laws as well as certain other laws. In both the organisations the officials are well off in respect of educational qualifications; 59% of them are post-graduates and some of them have a degree in law, too. They are also well experienced. Indeed, the education and experience vary with rank. However, in respect of training many of them have seen little of it. Looking to their working in respect of the implementation of various laws, many management executives are favourably disposed towards them. But the trade union leaders take an opposite stand. Concerning the efficiency of the labour department in resolving industrial disputes more than half of the
executives held a favourable view whereas the leaders tend to view differently. It goes without saying that the interest of the labour officials is in the industrial peace. However, this aspect has been viewed differently by management, trade union leaders and the police. On the whole, only a small proportion of labour officials is seen as having a genuine interest in industrial peace (see Table 8.5). Towards maintaining industrial peace the process of conciliation is highlighted by many. However, the process has been hamstrung with certain inadequacies. Management executives describe the main reasons as inadequate powers and working of the labour officers, lack of interest and lack of confidence of the parties in conciliation, corrupt officers and trade union leaders' penchant for direct action. The leaders feel that it is the adament attitude of the management, inadequate staff, and lacunae in the laws which are affecting conciliation. Not only this, the agreements arrived at the conciliation are not enforced owing to lack of supervision, no binding powers, and an understanding between the labour officials and management. The leaders also say that the management by delaying and entering into legal battles manages non-enforcement. These tendencies relating to the labour department hint at the want of proper perspective and understanding and dedication to duty.

It may finally be remarked that a number of issues relating to industrial protests are wittingly or unwittingly overlooked by different parties. The phenomenon of industrial protest has been becoming multiplex owing to a hiatus in noble professions and the ignoble practices. The dividing line between an accepted democratic
practise, namely, industrial protest and objectionable deviation and mass violence, is rather thin. There is an insufficient role-identification by different actors. The trade union leaders, managerial personnel, police functionaries, labour officials and political leaders show an inadequate understanding and responsibility with regard to their respective roles. In view of this, industrial protests tend, on the one hand, to become endemic, and, on the other, few parties care to abide by the rules of the game. Manoeuvre, money and/or muscle and political influence are used—often unbridled—to uphold and strengthen the stance of the parties concerned. Lastly, the nature and magnitude of industrial protests are such that the principal parties, namely, management and trade unions get deeply involved. The intensity of the involvement often leads to a situation where ends dominate means. Notwithstanding the fact that quite a few ends pursued themselves are dubious, the parties concerned press to achieve given ends often paying little attention to the nature of the means and thus their role acquires dimensions which are objectionable and at times anti-legal.

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