In this chapter we shall briefly analyse the situation of trade unions and politics in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The situation will be discussed in terms of the various trade unions, their activities, their demands, and the success or failure characterising their activities. It is obvious that the trade unions in Andhra Pradesh are state level bodies of the all India bodies or federations belonging to various political parties. The INTUC, the AITUC, the HMS and so on have operated at the all India level and they have their state level unions. The work of these figures in this chapter.

Since several of their other organisational and operational features have been discussed in other chapters, they are not repeated here.

The Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress represents over 1½ lakh workers. The followers and supporters of the union have fraternal relations with all the State Government Employees' organisations, Central Government Employees' unions and associations, Life Insurance Corporation and Bank Employees' unions and Federations, Hind Mazdoor Sabha and Hind Mazdoor Panchayet and their affiliated unions.
The Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress has a unique position in the state. It extends its support to the demands and struggles of all working people. Its representatives are in various boards and committees and in tripartite conferences.

The Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress admits that the Indian National Trade Union Congress is mainly concentrated in the Birla industries — in Allwyn and Asbestos at Hyderabad, Sirpur Paper Mills and Sirsilk Mills at Kaganagar, and Cement industries at Ramagundam and Mancherial. In the Central Government Undertakings such as Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Indian Drugs Pharmaceutical Limited, Hindustan Machine Tools, the Indian Trade Union Congress unions have been recognised, although among the workers they do not have much support. It is said that the real officials of the Indian Trade Union Congress are the top officials of the management and Welfare Officers. With the government compliance and connivance, the employers are flagrantly violating the agreed tripartite conventions, statutes and laws.

The Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress has the affiliation of 231 unions with a membership of over a lakh and half. There are a number of independent unions that subscribe to the ideology of the Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress.
The Congress has extended its sphere of activities to almost all industries in the state: Cotton textiles, engineering industries, jute textiles, road transport, private road transport, leaf tobacco industry, coal mines (Singareni Collieries), Government departmental undertakings like Indo-Nippon Ball Bearings Precision Company Limited, Republic Forge, Public Works Department, workshops, roads and buildings, irrigation projects and so on. It has established its hold in cement industry, Andhra Paper Mills, Caltex, Andhra Scientific Company, Andhra Steel Corporation, etc. It has organised unions in Central Government undertakings like Synthetic Drugs, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Railways and port and dock establishments etc.

The Industrial Relations Commission Bill introduced by the then labour, Minister Mr. G. Sanjeeva Reddy, in the legislature in 1970 was opposed by Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress which stated that Mr. Reddy had disdained the very idea of collective bargaining, abhorred all strikes, took it into his head to discourage militant trade unionism in our state and to curb all strikes. It further maintained that this bill was meant only to curb the communists in the trade unions. Compulsory adjudication was its hallmark. The employers could refer for adjudication any of the demands of unions when they
were in no mood to settle them across the table. Unions were to be derecognised on flimsy pretexts and union leaders were to be convicted for the so called "unfair practices." The working class launched a powerful campaign against the bill, with due coordination of other organisations excepting the Indian National Trade Union Congress. As a result of this agitation, the bill was kept in cold storage.

Statistics show that in 1971-72, 48 strikes involving 20,000 workers lost over 1½ lakh mandays. 205 disputes were referred to adjudication and 759 disputes were taken up by the Industrial Relations Machinery for conciliation. Statistics for 1972 indicate that there were 52 work stoppages, involving 25,000 workers resulting in a loss of over 1,84,000 mandays.

The Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress has carried on a number of struggles for the realisation of the demands of the working class. Some of the demands are enumerated below:

a. Revision of wages, particularly in the organised sector.

b. Rapid industrial development and mobilisation of all available resources for a balanced development of the state to provide employment and to overcome regional imbalances.
o. State takeover of food grain trade and supply of grains at fair prices from the fair price shops.

After 1946 the Indian Trade Union Congress extended its activities in the state. Within a short time, it was recognised as a force in the state.

The Indian Trade Union Congress controls the majority of the employees in industries such as cement, sugar, paper, textiles, jute, engineering, pharmaceuticals, construction (projects and other units) and Public Works Department, local bodies (municipalities), electricity department, etc. There are other miscellaneous units where the Congress is having control over the majority of the employees, industrywise and unitwise. In these industries, the Congress is able to get the Wage Board recommendations implemented. Recently the textile workers have achieved a good increase in their wages and they are able to get a minimum wage of Rs.300/- per month through the Textile Committee appointed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The Congress is active in a number of major industries established recently in the Central public sector such as Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Hindustan Machine Tools, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Synthetic Drugs, Hindustan Cables, Electronics Corporation of India Limited, defence production organisations in and around Hyderabad; Hindustan
Shipyard, Bharat Heavy Vessels and Plates, Zinc Melting Plant, etc. in and around Visakhapatnam.

The Congress has organised about 80,000 to 1,00,000 workers. The total working class in organised industries is about 2 lakh (agriculture labour excluded). The breakup is roughly as under:

Table 37: Workers organised industrywise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industries</th>
<th>Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jute industry</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles industry</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar industry</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal mines</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ports and docks</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice and oil mills</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report of Indian National Trade Union Congress, 1949
Out of those those who are brought into unions are about 60 to 70 per cent. The unionised labour force will be 1\frac{1}{2} lakh. If we take the all India figure of the industrial workers which was about 50 lakh out of a total labour force of 2 crore, the percentage of unionisation in Andhra Pradesh is in line with the all India average, though it may be less than that of West Bengal and Maharashtra.

There has been a change in the attitude of labour. The workers are changing over from a trial of strength to a constitutional approach. The appointment of various Wage Boards is the direct result of this. The Indian National Trade Union Congress states that some unions believe that the Government harps on a particular trade union and has taken a partial view. As a result, adventurism has been on the increase in the recent past in some parts of Andhra Pradesh. This has tended to disintegrate some of the unions and a few omnibus unions have broken up into craft unions.

Hind Mazdoor Sabha was a force to be reckoned with in the Hyderabad industrial area. Its influence is fast dwindling due to lack of proper leadership at various levels. The politicians who controlled this organisation have either changed the party or have left the field. Stalwarts like Mr. B.S. Mahadev Singh, S.B. Giri and N. Raghavendra Rao are not
so active due to their old age etc. Their sphere of influence is still the Bodhan Sugar Factory, railways, and some units in the Sanathnagar industrial complex. Under the influence of late Mr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Mr. Bedri Vishal Pitti who is one of the richest men and a philanthrophict of the city, has organised the Hind Mazdoor Panchayat drawing some active workers from the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. Their sphere of influence is confined to the city. They have also entered the Road Transport Corporation. Though they maintain wholtime workers, they are not able to make much headway because they do not have much political influence. They are influential only with the municipal labour.

In Andhra Pradesh, Bharateeya Mazdoor Sangh representatives have been chosen as members of some consultative committees. They have organised some Gumasta Sanghas. Recently they have organised the mica labour at Gudur under the leadership of Mr. Venkata Subbaiah. In 1964 they established themselves in the railways. They are influential among hotel workers. Mr. T.S. Rama Rao, President, Bharateeya Mazdoor Sangh, Andhra Pradesh, leads the movement. He fought for higher wages for the hotel workers and got a substantial increase in their pay. He claims that they have units in banks and insurance. As per the statement of the President, the Sangh has a following of 35,000. Mr. Jppudi Yagna Narayana, MLC, and Mr. V. Rama Rao, MLC,
have been instrumental in organising workers in the jute industry at Guntur and the railways, respectively. It is said that the Bharateeya Mazdoor Sangh is a rising star giving a different direction to the trade union movement.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions has conducted two conferences, first at Rajahmundry (1971) and the second at Nellore (1973). As per their constitution, they have to conduct these conferences once in two years. The notable personalities connected with this organisation are: Mr. N. Prasada Rao, General Secretary, Mr. Paresta Satyanarayana, President, State Unit of Centre of Indian Trade Union, Mr. N.V. Bhaskara Rao, Secretary, State Committee, and Mr. Balsej Das, Mr. P. Laxmidas, Hyderabad, Mr. Ita Ramulu, Vijayawada, and Mr. B.R. Bhadraiah, Warangal.

The Indian National Trade Union Congress is one of the most faction ridden bodies in the state. There are two distinctly organised groups in the Congress, under the direct influence of certain ministers and Congress leaders. Abusing each other, organising rowdies against each other and setting up rival unions against each other have become the agreed internal "code of conduct" for these people.

The Hind Mazdoor Sabha enjoys the support and respect of the Nizam Sugar Factory workers of Bodhan; workers of
Electricity; Public Works Department; and Water Works in the city and a few other small unions in the state. Their verified membership is about 5,600 and their overall following is about 38,000. The Hind Mazdoor Sabha - affiliated Electricity, Water Works and Public Works Department workers in the city have militant traditions and a record of heroic strikes. They are generally allied with the Andhra Pradesh Trade Union Congress unions of Road Transport Corporation, press, medical, agriculture, municipal and highways workers for certain common demands.

The Hind Mazdoor Panchayat's activities are confined to the Secunderabad areas where they have a militant municipal workers' union. This union has often organised solidarity action and strikes in support of the Central and State government employees' demands and actions.

One basic feature of the trade unions and politics in Andhra Pradesh is the absence of relatively well organised unions or associations for the farmers. The absence of associations of farmers is a general defect or limitation of trade unionism in the various states of the country. In this respect Andhra Pradesh, like any other state in India, suffers. In some parts of the country farmers have become aware of their problems and hence in recent months we hear of various kinds of riots and disturbances created by the
farmers. Such disturbances have taken place in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. The shape of trade unionism can be radically changed when the class of farmers becomes well organized. At present trade unionism in Andhra Pradesh is primarily the unionism of the urban workers, working in the various factories and mills or commercial or office establishments of the government or private business or undertakings.

The second feature which is to be noted in this context is the sweeping changes that are taking place in the world of unionism on account of the extraordinary rise in prices of various commodities and services. These rising prices which make the cost of living higher and higher, are sought to be negatived by grant of allowances or concessions in respect of certain items or services included in the budget. But these are at best palliatives and they cannot be taken as serious measures or effective remedies. The problem of rising prices and costs is so serious that it not only affects the general public but also the various categories of workers. This means that the conflict and strife which the unions have already been facing on various accounts will become ever more acute and numerous. On the basis of the present economic and political reckoning of the situation, one cannot develop any estimate as to the settlement of this problem on a more or less a stable or durable basis. There are several factors
and circumstances responsible for this. Andhra Pradesh is after all a part of the country and the factors and forces which control or upset the economic and industrial life of the country control and upset the economic and industrial life of Andhra Pradesh also. The second consideration or element is that the rise in international prices creates correspondingly increased prices in this country. Rise in prices of strategic commodities or inputs like crude oil, petroleum can increase the prices in the various sectors of our economic and industrial life. The problems or corruption, black money, hoarding and black-marketing affect not only the various states but also Andhra Pradesh. Finally there is the element of political leadership. Over the recent years an understanding seems to have developed among the people that somehow only Indira Gandhi as the prime minister can solve these various problems facing the country. In recent months even this does not seem to satisfy the people as the magic of Indira rule is not found to be sufficiently effective or satisfactory. All these elements or considerations lead us to the unpleasant and unsatisfactory belief that perhaps there is no relief from this extraordinary situation. Some people may just throw their hands up in the air and may exclaim that god only knows the way out of the situation. These factors or elements certainly increase the number and complexity of the problems of trade unionism. The recent
strike and agitation conducted by the workers of the central undertakings in the various parts of the country, specially in Bangalore and Hyderabad are an index to the situation. Since inflation has not been controlled satisfactorily and since the prices continue to rise, making the lot of the workers difficult, the trade unions will have more and more difficult problems to handle in the years to come. At this stage one does not know how the trade unions in Hyderabad will cope up with enormous challenge. At this stage it remains at best a moot question. The work and problems of trade unionism in Andhra Pradesh will become all the more serious or aggravated with the increasing pace of industrialisation and location of more and more industries or undertakings in the private as well as public sector in Andhra Pradesh.

Another relevant consideration is the ability of the parties to tackle the situation of politics and economics so as to enable the trade unions and the employers to arrive at constructive and durable settlements of their problems. From this standpoint perhaps the entire range of democratic countries are a disadvantage inasmuch as their political parties are not well organised and do not have any cadres worth the name. Countrywide and massive cadres of well trained workers are possible and are usually commanded by the communist parties in the communist countries of Europe. To some extent this is also true in some Asian countries which have gone
communist. But the democratic countries, as we have said, are at a disadvantage, and this includes India and certainly its part, Andhra Pradesh. Since the parties are not well organised and cadre based, the business of policy making and implementation has to be done first by the ministers or legislators and secondly by the civil servants. For the enormous task of the modernisation and development this traditional approach is not adequate. At the same time there are no party cadres to help in between. This situation makes the task of settlement of trade union conflicts more and more difficult. This has been clearly seen in the context of Andhra Pradesh, as in other states. As in the other states, the Congress(I) party in Andhra Pradesh has been ruling the state and since it does not have any dependable body of well trained cadres, the work of the trade unions becomes more and more difficult and neither the ministers nor legislators nor civil servants are able to cope with the challenges of the ever increasing problems. As far as we can see at this stage, these kinds of inadequacies in various walks of life including trade unionism will continue to be faced for quite some time. It is true that there are some well organised parties like the communist and the former Jana Sangh. Since the Jana Sangh merged in the Janata party, we need not speak of it here any further. The communists have been in recent years divided and subdivided among themselves and this has created
corresponding disturbances in the trade unions affiliated with the various parties or wings. The communist parties again are disciplined organisations but of limited strength and viability. The experiments of the communist governments in Kerala and West Bengal have shown that the strength of the communist parties is fragile and limited. Further the communists are more or less urban based parties and they hardly have any sizable rural base as yet. Thus the various parties which matter at the time of elections and formation of governments are virtually non-cadre parties or parties which are ineffective in operation and this basic limitation or inefficiency affects the trade unions which may be affiliated to the respective parties. This situation is clearly reflected in the trade unionism in the Andhra Pradesh.

In a way the situation of trade unionism in Andhra Pradesh, as elsewhere is a trap or blind alley and one does not know how to get out of it. The organisational apathy and inefficiency, the unhelpful work attitudes of people and the progressively worsening price and economic situation have tended to impose intolerable burdens on the organisation and leadership of the various trade unions. At this stage, as we have said above, the task of the trade unions is unending and too stupendous and it is difficult to say how in the years to come they will be able to cope up with the task.
This brief survey and the analysis of the activities of the various unions in Andhra Pradesh shows that the state has had an active record of militant trade unions in the various industries and sectors. It is true that they have had a number of defects and shortcomings characterising their work. But they have also been making efforts to overcome these defects and shortcomings and serve better and better the basic interests of the workers, although (as we have said) the task becomes increasingly difficult.
Footnotes


