CHAPTER V

TRADE UNIONS IN O.S.E.B.
Orissa has made great strides in the last few years in the realm of power development in the state started in the early part of the century with the earliest formed state of Deogarh installing a small hydro generating units. After that Orissa saw a few relatively small sized diesel generating stations here and there to electrify important headquarters towns. In Cuttack, Octoves Engineering Company, Calcutta was supplying power by installing thermal stations prior to 1961. In the year 1958, Cuttack Electricity Supply Workers Union was formed. This is the first trade union registered among the different supply agencies in the State. In the year 1960, Puri-Electrical Supply worker union was formed Sri Ram Chandra Ram and Sri Bimal Mishra were the president of the above two unions respectively.

In the year 1962 all the power houses under the control of the State Government. The Government had an agreement with the companies not to alter the terms and conditions of service of the employees worked under the companies and the employees would be paid bonus equivalent with their two months basic pay free electricity of 15 consumption units and were remain in the service until they are medically disqualified. There would be no transfer and retrenchment of the employees. In the year 1962 the control and superison of electric supply of the
State came to the Board effected from in the month of June.

In the month of September, 1962, Cuttack Electricity Supply Workers Union had raised dispute on the terms and conditions of service before the Board and as the management refused to accept their demands, this dispute was referred to the Hon'ble High Court. The Board had appealed the dispute to the supreme Court, as the decision of the High Court favoured the union. Finally Supreme Court gave judgement in the favour of the union, and the company workers working in the present Cuttack City Distribution division became liable to get all the facilities provided with them as before.

In the year 1964 an attempt had been made to organise the temporary work-charged employees of the Board to come under a united labour movement. In that year workcharge employees union under the presidening of Sri Udhab Chandra Tripathy was formed. Cuttack city distribution workers union was registered in the year 1966. O.S.E.B. Bijuli Karmachari Sangha was formed in the year 1966 which had included only the fourth grade employees working under the Board under its purview. In the subsequent year O.S.E.B. Ministerial Employees Union and the O.S.E.B. Non-Gazetted Employees Union were formed in the year 1970 and 1972 respectively. Work charge Employees union and O.S.E.B, Bijuli Karmachari Sangh were the two main organisations which had
included the majority of the work force of the Board through out Orissa. After the work charged employees union was recognised by the Board. Sub-Assistant Engineers Association was formed in the year 1971 and included at the Sub-Assistant Engineers directly recruited by Board. It was recognised in the year 1973.

A coordination committee was formed in the year 1970 to settle the disputes of the Unions unitedly and to make the trade union movement more strong and extensive.

In the year 1977 the active workers of the above described unions left the original unions and gathered of Kasturaba Nari Mahal of Bhubaneswar and determined to make the earlier co-ordination committee more extensive and to strengthen the movement. This co-ordination committee by removing the sense of difference from the workers mind started a unfinances movement on fitment. The annual conference of the committee was held of Salepur of Cuttack District on 09.07.1972. The representatives of 12 unions as well 3000 workers from different parts of Orissa took seat in the conference. In this conference the Electricity workers of Orissa by combining different unions for co-ordinating their unions and accelerating the movement formed the legal representative federation.

Though there was majority membership in this federation yet some unions kept themselves away from it.

The working committee of the federation on 9.9.72 called upon 20000 Electricity workers of the State to join
in the general strike from midnight and submitted their demand before the Board. The demands were

1. The fitment of all the workers and employees are to be done as per the decision of the federation.

2. All the employees are to be given variable D.A and the rate of 25 paisa for the increase in every point.

3. Puja Bonus is to be given of the rate of 8.33 %.

4. The agreement of 03.10.1970 is to be implemented and the local problems are to be solved immediately.

5. The terms and the conditions of the service are to be finalised.

On 25.09.72, there was a great agitation of 4000 workers before the Board. The Board on the mediation of the labour commissioner was bound to sign an agreement with the federation in the night of 10.10.72. According to the agreement it was decided (1) The fitment of the employees of the electricity Board as per the decision of the federation is to be decided with in 15.12.72 and in case there is difference of opinion regarding an acceptable fitment for both the parties is to be done and declared through mutual negotiation. (i.e) The wage of the efficient helpers is to be raised
to Rs. 70/- and if there is any difference of opinion in this regard, the wage rate shall be decided according to the above rules. Employees whose salary are from Rs. 110/- to Rs. 250/- shall get variable D.A. (3) for 1972, Bonus of the rate of 8.33% is to be given and on the arrear pay of 1972, Bonus of the rate of 8.33% is to be given even though the workers are not incumbent to get it. (4) The terms and the conditions of the service is to be finalised within December, 30 (5) The local problems and other conflicting problems shall be finalised within 30.11.1972.

Some of the main provisions of the agreement were (1) The Board by forming a fitment committee shall decide full pay scale within 30.11.1972. The amount of variable D.A. and the principles there of are to be soon decided by the Board on it wishes if to be what ever it may be, all the employees were very much benefitted by the facilities assured by the federation.

After words many workers of the union were transferred many were suspended many were threatened and yet too many worker suffered from a wage act. The tripartite agreement of 10.10.1972 was violated. The Board did not do the fitment. The terms of service were not fixed. The superintending Engineer and Executive - Engineers desired to solve the local problems. The Engineers challenged the undue of the chairman of the
Board and its administrative department.

In lieu of the violation of the agreement of the Board, monopoly of the authority, opposition to the labour and anti trade union role, the federation called upon the workers to launch a strike on 23.01.73. At this call there was surprising unity among the Electricity workers all over Orissa. The workers joined in the 24 workers strike peacefully without affecting the electricity supply. Again at the beginning of the presidential rule in the state there was mass hunger strike before the head office of the Board and there was a mass demonstration before the board on 08.03.73. A group of representatives on 09.05.1973 met Mr. B.D.Jatti the Governor of Orissa and submitted a memorandum stating the problem of the workers and its immediate solution. The grant was led by Ram Chandra Ram, Chairman of the coordination committee. The Governor assured to fulfill the demands. But days passed by and the demands remained unfulfilled, so a special convention was arranged on 15.07.1973 by the federation of Burla. It was attended by various unions and an action committee was formed to lead the strike to be organised after the mid-night of 7th August, 1973. The president of the committee was Sri Ram Chandra Ram and Shri Dwarika Mohan Mishra, and Sri Prasanna Kumar Panda were the secretary and General Secretary respectively. All the General Secretaries of the parti-
cipant unions were the members of the action committee.

The federation of the Electricity workers as per the decision of the Burla conference called upon to launch a strike for an unlimited period from August 7 midnight. The charter of demands submitted by the committee were such.

1. Proper fitment shall be given to all the workers according to the consent of the central pay scale Board in line with the tripartite agreement of the federation.

2. Dearness allowances given at the rate of paisa is to be raised to the rate of Rs. 1.30 per every point increase in price level.

3. For 1972-73 every employee shall be given Bonus at the rate of 20%.

4. Every employee shall be given medical allowances to the extent of the 20% of his pay scale.

5. Due to raise in prices of necessaries, the lowest wage of N.M.R Rs. should be fixed at Rs. 7.00 instead of Rs. 3.50.

6. All the workers and employees shall be allowed to use electricity free of cost.

7. All employees who are not provided with quarters their house allowances shall be
increased and is to be included with their salary and the rule for submitting the receipt of the house rent is to be abolished.

8. Like the central and the state Government employees all the employees of the Board shall be provided with house building loans.

9. All employees shall be given advanced for purchasing Motor cycles and Scooters.

10. The amount of the labour welfare fund shall be increased to one lakh and the workers in trouble are to be helped.

11. The tripartite agreement of 10.10.1972 the memorandum submitted to the Governor and Secretary of the department Electricity as well as the charter of demands shall be soon implemented.

12. The terms and conditions of the service for all the workers is to be determined.

13. As per the consent of the central pay scale Board the rules regarding giving gratuities to the workers shall soon be declared.

14. The annual increment as well as the wage of the workers put on dates 23.01.1973, 06.03.73, 08.03.73 put up due to the demonstration shall soon be given.

15. Workers employed in generation plant and construction works shall be given operation maintenance and construction allowances.
16. The orders of transfer, suspension and police case in the name of workers shall soon be withdrawn.

17. The N.M.R working continuously for 90 days in construction works shall not be retrenched.

18. The accident allowance and compensation to the workers injured during the working hour shall be given within 30 days.

19. Facilities to the electricity workers regarding the employment of their relatives after their retirement, death and inability shall be given.

20. All other unions in the state along with the workers federation shall be given consent.

21. All the employees and their family members shall be given travelling allowance to the extent 1000 K.M. per annum.

To avoid the strike a midterm tripartite agreement was reached and the management agreed to finalise in fitment of the workers, within a short period to give operation and maintenance allowance to the workers working in the power houses at Burla and Chiplima. But a sudden strike came into existence from the midnight of 7th August, 1973 for three days which
was organised by some of the unions of Cuttack City. As a result a bipartite settlement was reached between the management and the individual unions which hampered the previous agreement of the Board with the federation. In the past, strike calls were frequent and presently it has reduced too much.

At present the O.S.E.B. employees federation, O.S.E.B. employees Mahasangha exists in O.S.E.B and includes most of the unions functioning in O.S.E.B through out the Board. Now there are 27 unions are functioning about which 12 unions are affiliated to the O.S.E.B. employees Federation and 10 unions are affiliated to the O.S.E.B employees Mahasangha O.S.E.B employees federation is affiliated to the Central Organisation (AITUC) and the O.S.E.B employees Mahasangha is affiliated to I.N.T.U.C. At the head quarter level there are 3 (three) unions namely the O.S.E.B Bijuli Karmachari Sangha, O.S.E.B Ministerial Employees Union and Sub-Assistant Engineers Association are functioning. Though they are the state level organisations, they represent the workers working in the head quarter organisation O.S.E.B Ministerial Employees union.

UNION ORGANISATION:

The shape of trade union organisations and structures, come to occupy the key position in achieving the organisational set objectives. It is therefore, needed that the trade unions should have strong organi-
sations and suitable structures in tune with the changing pattern of industrial life. As environment changes there occurs equal changes in the union organisations and structures. Technology, the nature of employment in diverse industries, the structure of industrial ownership, the composition of the labour force, the stage of growth, the policies of management, Government and host of other factors are contributing much to the growth and development of organisation patterns and structural framework of unions. It is therefore, one should keep in view, all these new and changing pattern of industrial life while framing such union structure and organisations.

After having a clear out diagnosis of the above factors, it is now obvious that, in order to suit the present day industrial set up, the trade union should strengthened with a stable and contributing members with sound financial base, feeling of unity, class consciousness etc. The union should also maintain regular office with set working hours and having efficient office-staff in adequate number.

SUB-ASSISTANT ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION, O.S.E.B.

Prior to the formation of this Association, the Sub-Assistant Engineers recruited by the Orissa State Electricity Board were the members of Orissa -
Licenciate Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Association and Orissa Subordinate Engineers Association. Due to some technical difficulties the management could not give recognition to the above two Associations and also did not pay any scope for hearing the grievances put forth by the above two Associations. On the other hand, the Orissa State Electricity Board has advised to form a separate Association vide letter No. AWE/VIIIIB-7/70/-1218 dated 27.01.71. Because of the above reasons, the Sub-Assistant Engineers appointed by the O.S.E.B became inspired and formed a separate Association on 28th January, 1971 and got its registration under India Trade Union Act, 1926 on the 7th June 1971.

Only the Sub-Assistant Engineers recruited by O.S.E.B. in all branches such as Electrical, Mechanical, Civil and Telecommunication posted all over the state are the members of this Association.

AIM OF THE ASSOCIATION:

1. To develop brotherhood among the members and workmen spirit to save the nation, to eliminate all sorts of darkness in the service career and to solve all sorts of sorrows and prejudice unitedly.

2. To put forth the grievances and practical difficulties before the management.
To conduct various cultural activities, such as technical paper meetings, seminars etc.
To give full protection to the members to get their legitimate claims and privileges during the service career.

The constitution of the Association is framed and dully registered as per the Trade Union Act, 1926. If at any time it is required the provisions of the constitution can be amended with the approval of the working committee.

This Association has full cooperation and understanding with the Association formed by the Sub-Assistant Engineers of the Government namely as "The Orissa Sub-Ordinate Engineers' Association", because of the fact that the nature of demands and day to day problems are almost identical excepting a few items.

This Association is a constituent member of the All India Federation of Diploma Engineers and also a member of the All India Electricity Boards which raises genuine demands of the Diploma Engineers of the Country.

The Union also maintains on union office with adequate office staff and regular working hours from 7.00 PM to 10.00 PM for systematic and smooth running of the union business. The executive members also held their discussions in this office.
O.S.E.B MAINISTERIAL EMPLOYEES UNION:

This union got registration on 19th July, 1971 and till today it has remained independently. It is a state level Association including employees of all cadres working in different electrical Divisions, Head Office, Circles, Power Stations and Hydro generating Units.

The object of the union is:-

a) To foster the spirit of solidarity, service, brotherhood and co-operation among the members.

b) To raise the status and improve the conditions of life of the members.

c) To secure effective and complete organisation of the employees.

d) To direct and co-ordinate the activities of the various associations that may be affiliated to it.

e) To obtain and maintain a fair and adequate scale of wages reasonable hours of work and generally to ameliorate in a very way the position of members and in pursuance of those objects to provide such benefits as funds and conditions may permit.
To secure for the members freedom of speech, freedom of association, free primary education and adult suffrage.

There are 21 Executive body members one from each affiliated zonal unions. These members elect the members of the executive committee.

There is no permanent staff of the union. The executive body members themself do the office work of the union. Regularly the union office opens from 7.00 P.M.

O.S.E.B BIJULI KARMACHARI SANGHA:

This union is the oldest union formed in the year 1965 and had got its registration on dated 28.12.1965. At that time its name was Orissa Rajya Bidyut Karmachari Sangha. In the year 1967 it changed its name to Orissa Rajya Bidyut Board Chaturthra Shreni Karmachari Sangha. In this year its registration was cancelled according to the provisions of the Indian Trade Union Act. 1926 and again on 20th September 1969 it was newly got its registration. It is a state level organisation.

There are 10 executive members of the union. All the executive committee members of the ten divisional unions elect the executive committee of the (Head Quarter) union in the Annual meeting of
the unions. The union office is situated in the colony of O.S.E.B. at Bhubaneswar all other two unions mentioned earlier. There are no permanent staffs of the union and the executive committee members themselves do the office work of the union. The union office opens daily at 7.00 P.M to 9.30 P.M.

3. O.S.E.B. WORKCHARGED EMPLOYEES UNION:

This is the very first union of the O.S.E.B registered in the year 1962 i.e. the very next year the Board was formed. After the Board was formed it undertook a lot of work to accelerate the construction of transmission and distribution lines throughout the State and obviously this was the main field work of O.S.E.B having majority of its workers working here. These workers were unique of their kind. They were called the "Workcharged Employees" i.e. their salary or wage was charged or booked to their work. They were not regular employees of the Board but their work was regular in nature since the Board had a lot of work to do.

It was in 1962 that these workers got united and formed a union called the O.S.E.B. Workcharged Employees Union. It got registered the same year and was recognised latter on the basis of membership strength. Gradually, the regular employees of the Board also became the member of this union and it still persists to be the largest, oldest and strongest union in OSEB.
and of course next to the "Federation of Unions" in the strength at least.

4. O.S.E.B. NON-GAZETTED EMPLOYEES UNION:

Following a split in the ministerial employees union this union was formed. It got registered in 1973. But it has not progressed a lot. It rarely bargains or negotiates with the management.

5. O.S.E.B. EMPLOYEES FEDERATION:

By 1972, the O.S.E.B. has nearly 14 unions. The management was making negotiations with every such unions who were giving strike notice due to any dispute or with those unions who were presenting their charter or demand. In 1972, this O.S.E.B. Employees Federation was constituted. It was affiliated to A.I.T.U. in the central level. It got support of many unions. So, the management preferred to negotiate with this federation. It got the privilege of sending representatives to the Joint Management Committee. It is still existing but its registration has been cancelled since 17.06.77 due to non-payment of annual return.

6. O.S.E.B. SHRAMIKA MAHASANGHA:

This is another federation of trade unions that got registered in 1975. The important thing about it is that it got the support of the O.S.E.B. Work-Charged Employees Union i.e. the recognised one in the Board. Since its formation it has become the
Chief bargainer on behalf of the workers. The Mahasangha has no political influence and it has the support of almost 20 unions.

Trade Unionism in the O.S.E.B. is really an interesting matter to be studied. The organisation have as much as 39 registered unions through out the state. This is also inclusive of one federation of trade unions named "O.S.E.B. SHRAMIKA MAHASANGHA". Besides it has 4 unregistered unions, among which one is also a federation of unions named "O.S.E.B. EMPLOYEES FEDERATION".

Unions in O.S.E.B. are state-wide as well as local in nature. There are as much as '9' State level registered unions and 30 registered local unions. Table 5.1 gives a detailed information regarding unions in O.S.E.B.

The Board has recognised two unions in accordance with code of discipline. The O.S.E.B. workcharged Employees union has been granted recognition as a state level union. The other recognise union i.e. the Talcher Thermal Station Employees Union is totally local to T.T.P.S.
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<th>SI. NO.</th>
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<th>HEAD QUARTERS</th>
<th>REGD.NO.</th>
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<td>Bhadrakh Electrical Employees Worker's Union.</td>
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<td>39.</td>
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**UNREGISTERED UNIONS:**

1. O.S.E.B Employees Federation (State wide) Bhubaneswar 879/72 Registration cancelled on 17.6.1977
2. O.S.E.B Mazdoor Sangha Bhubaneswar 729/71 -do-
3. Sangrami Hirkhanda Bidyut Karmachari Sangha (Local) Sambalpur 1264/80 Registration cancelled on 29.3.82
4. Cuttack City Electrical Employees Union (Local) Cuttack Non-Regd.
CENTRAL AFFILIATIONS:

The need for an affiliation for a central organisation of Trade Unions arises to develop, to direct to discuss and to coordinate the activities of the common policies and also for the furtherance of the common aims of labour under the banner of a strong central support.

Among the three unions functioning in the O.S.E.B. Head Quarter organisation, O.S.E.B. Bijuli Karmachari Sangha has been affiliated to O.S.E.B. Employees Federation which has its affiliation to all India Trade Union Congress. Sub-Assistant Engineers Association is a constituent member of the All India Federation of Diploma Engineers and also a member of the All India Electricity Boards Engineering federation, O.S.E.B. Ministerial Employees union has not been affiliated to any federation or to any central Trade Union organisations and remains independent in its activities.

ADMINISTRATION OF UNIONS:

The successful administration of the union largely depends upon the executions of certain major functions such as collecting funds from workers and donations from sympathizers, attending regular works of the union in the union office manifesting election propaganda, attending different departmental
committees and consultative committees visiting and supervising union offices organized by rank and file workers for consultation, advice and other works relating to their affairs for better communication, maintain accounts, and making oneself available for the supervision of accounts at the union office during specified hours, besides attending other administrative matters such as staff supervisions, preparation of briefs for union-lawers, processing complaints, interpreting programmes and policies of the management, clarifying doubts within the workers members of any union, calling meetings preparing literatures and reports, receiving visitors and doing all other work of miscellaneous nature.

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership is the backbone of the Trade unions. It ultimately affects the growth of the trade unions. It is very clear that, if the rank and file workers develop class consciousness, feeling of unity, democratic spirit and proper education besides contributory activities in making payments towards their membership subscriptions, donations for the common interest of the worker members, then it is quite possible that the trade unions will grow in its own way of progress failing which the trade unions will decrease to such an extent that it may as such to be proved quite
useless of organising the workers under a trade union. The membership is particularly drawn from the rank and file workers. The membership fees collected by the Sub-Assistant Engineers Association, O.S.E.B. is Rs. 2/- per member month. The admission fees is Rs.5/- per member. The subscription is collected regularly by the union officials.

The membership fees collected by the O.S.E.B. Ministerial Employees Union is 50 paise per member per month. The entrance fees is Rs.2/- per member. The subscription is collected regularly by the union officials.

The membership fees collected by the O.S.E.B. Bijuli Karmachari Sangha is Rs.1/- per member per month. The admission fee is Rs.1/- per member. The subscription is collected regularly by the union officials.

TRADE UNION FINANCE:

Trade unions require funds like all other institutions or undertakings. Unfortunately, the trade unions are generally unable to undertake many of the activities imperative for the general interest of the workers due to paucity of funds. This inadequate funds have stood in the way of easy growth and development of trade union movement in India.

The primary source of income of the union is the membership dues. Most of the income of the unions is derived from the subscriptions of their members whose rates are very low. The trade unions have also failed to
collect dues in time with the result that there are often vast amounts of unpaid subscription. Obviously the reasons for this state of affairs are the poverty, low wages and indebtedness of workers, lack of staff and efficient organisation of trade unions to collect funds in time and the indifferent attitude and lack of work interest of an average member in trade union affairs. Apart from regular monthly subscriptions, sale proceeds of periodicals and other literature, interest on investments and special collections. Available data shows that, with few exceptions, the financial position of unions is generally weak and many unions are not in a position to maintain a regular establishment to provide adequate service to their members.

The annual income of unions has hardly any improvement over the post 5 years after their inception. The composition of union income has not changed materially, the bulk of union funds being derived from membership due throughout period under review.

The average annual income of unions shows a slight improvement in the past 5 years. The composition of union expenditure has not charges by and large over all these years of the functioning of trade unions in Orissa State Electricity Board. The single largest item of expenditure of unions is annual conference
expenses. The travelling expenses, and purchase of stationeries is also two big items of expenditure. A small amount of income is spent on trade disputes including, legal expenses. Expenditure on social service benefits to workers has remained at a very low level.

The trade union Act prohibits the spending of general funds of a union for political purposes. It does not prevent trade unions from undertaking 'Political activities'. Unions undertaking 'Political activities' can establish and maintain a separate fund for the purpose. The fund can be spent only on political purposes specified in the Act. The members are, however not to be subjected to any direct or indirect pressure for subscribing to political funds. No union has got donations from any political parties and also they do not participate in active political campaigns.

FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF TRADE UNIONS IN ORISSA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD, BHUBANESWAR.:

According to G.D.H. Cole, the ultimate objective of trade unions should be the control of workers over industry, though the immediate objective may be the realisation of higher wages and better conditions of employment for the workers. He also recognises the inevitability of class struggle and according to him trade unions exist to carry on this class struggle.
He says, the class struggle is reached in our social institutions and it is only by means of the class struggle that we can escape from it."

However, the basic objective of trade union everywhere and at every time continues to be economic the safe guarding and furthering to economic interests of its members. But recently, the trade union activities are becoming increasingly more diversified and trade unionism has, therefore, sensed to be simply on economic phenomenon. It touches all the social services at some point.

"The trade union problem is a complex of economic, legal ethical and social problems, which can be understood and met only by knowing the facts and genesis of the view point of organised labour in all its diversity, contradictions and shifting character, and by considering this view point in relation to developing social conditions and social traditions".

The different activities performed by the unions in O.S.E.B Head Quarter and sites is not satisfactory due to paucity of funds, absence of their strike and benefit funds inadequate welfare provisions for the member workers and all most no financial assistance to the member workers and all most no financial assis-
tance to the member of the unions. Unions though in majority of disputes has been able to come mutual settlement of disputes still then they lack sufficient bargaining power with the management to implement the various agreements made by the Board. Union rivalry multiplicity of trade unions, lack of representation to all categories of workers of the Board are some of the weakness in their way of the achievements of the unions. Inadequate full time staff, chronic paucity of funds of the unions are some of the major evils on the way of their progress towards a healthy trade unionism in Orissa State - Electricity Board. Social objectives of the trade unions is still a Latin word to these union executives and members. Mainly, they are basing on the economism of the union.