The outlook of the employers and the employees can not be identical as the former wants to derive as much profit as possible curtailing the cost of production to the minimum and the latter wants to ensure reasonable justice in the matter of their legitimate wage and other facilities from the employer. The economic injustice, insecurity of employment and low wages made the workers feel the necessity of protection. It is very difficult for an individual worker to realise his legitimate dues from the hand of an unsympathetic employer. Hence arises the question of concerted action of the employees and industrial workers.

The existence of craftsmen working in different trades finds mention as distinct social classes as early as in the Vedic period particularly in the later Vedic texts which reflect growing complexities in social life from the days of the Rgveda. But there is hardly any indication of the development of their union in order to secure their interests. In the Jatakas there are numerous references to the organisation of the guild of industrial workers and craftsmen which grew out of necessity of a concerted stand...
of the workers. We have tried to analyse the factors and circumstances contributing to the emergence of guild in an earlier chapter. Guild organisation included self-employed labour. Craftsmen were mostly hereditary in character. Not only individual but families are frequently referred to in terms of their traditional callings.¹ The Arthasastra refers to different types of organised industries, viz., textile industry.² The Superintendent of yarns should cause trade to be carried out in yarns, armours, cloth and ropes through men expert in the work (Sūtrādhyaśaka sūtra varga vāstra rajju vyavāharam tajjatapurushaí karayet).³ Metal industry,⁴ and wood industry/whether under the private sector or the Government sector. According to the Kautilya theory private industrialists were sometimes allowed to operate some of the industries under lease/from the state (bhēgane prakrayana). Obviously various grades of labour were employed in them. They might have felt the need of organising them in order to protect themselves from the caprices of the employer. In the Arthasastra we come across a term 'Samsha-bhrita,'⁶ which is very significant. It may mean an employee (bhrita) attached to a craft guild...
or collectively it may mean an association of workmen. It appears therefore that in addition to industrialists employing labour, who may organise themselves in union, the private sector included guilds (Samghas) who operated with the help of their workmen (Samgha-bhrtas). Dr. B.C. Sen is of opinion that Samgha-bhrtas stand for an association of workmen working under companies. He bases his view on the textual evidence of imposition of fines on guilds unauthorisedly withdrawing worker/workers from any project. This implies authority of the Samgha on its bhrtas. Samgha was thus an element in the industrial structure of the age, distinct from the private employer. It was evidently a collective body of craftsmen, now to be cowed down by the unscrupulous industrialists.

We have already seen in the previous chapter that rules and regulations as enumerated in the Smrti texts indicate the importance of an active corporate body in the socio-economic structure of this time. Of course we do not claim its was replica of the modern trade union but that the idea of concerted action by the working men gradually crystallised and patternised into Samgha and like institutions for the protection of their common
Corporate bodies of labour was no doubt a source of strength to them, but still it was not considered sufficiently strong against the rich industrial employers. The state, it is well known, was virtually interested in providing security to the labour against the caprices of financially organised employers in order that economy of the state is not unduly jeopardised. The intervention of state in labour-capital relations may be traced from the days of the *Jātakas*. In the *Arthasastra* the picture is a little clearer. Kautilya prescribes that the state should set up a standing committee consisting of three *Pradeshtris* of the rank of *amātyas* entrusted *inter alia* with the task of solving labour problems. It may be presumed that the board *Pradeshtasas*, while dealing with industrial disputes or problems was almost transformed into a modern industrial tribunal. The purpose behind the state setting up a high power body to look into and settle industrial disputes was to safeguard the interests of the labour and the employers as well, and at the same time to ensure smooth functioning of the production apparatus. As otherwise the economy of
the whole country may be seriously affected. In a welfare state strict watch and supervisions by the state over those engaged in production were considered absolutely essential. This view of Kautilya appears to have been reiterated by Manu. It can thus be presumed that the benign policy of the state was continued after the age of Arthasastra. The ruler of a welfare state can not overlook their pitiable plight in his own interest. Rev. R. Pound, a jurist of the Harvard School of Law, viewed the problem sociologically and classified 'social interests' under six heads, including *inter alia* that the individual right to live comfortably according to his status in the society, to get living wages and congenial conditions of work and to enjoy equal social and cultural opportunities. Those social security measures have been collectively expressed under the term 'social insurance' by V.V. Giri. These measures include the following benefits, *viz.* sickness, maintenance allowance.

Let us see to what extent these benefits are available to the employees in ancient India.

1. **Sickness**: If the worker is incapable to do the work due to his illness, will get his wages. "He should
grant them money and do honour on occasions of death. A somewhat similar picture is also reflected in *Manu Samhita*. If the servant finishes the work, left the work incomplete due to illness, after recovery, he will get the full wages. It is noted that full wage is paid to the employees only under the condition that he would complete the job assigned to him (*aftastu kuryat svasthah san yathābhasita-madita sa dirghasyāpi kālasya tallabhetaiva vetanam*). Thus it is clear that some tolerance to the employees is given because of his illness.

(ii) **Maintenance Allowance:** It is mentioned in the *Arthasastra* that some economic help was provided for the family members of those workers who died while engaged in work (*karmaśu mṛtānām*). In addition to this there is provision for some economic assistance payable to the family members of the deceased workers for the performance of his funeral (*karmaśu mṛtānām bhāvyatāḥ ... anugrahyaḥ*). *"Their minor children, old and sick persons should be helped"* (*karmaśu mṛtānām bhāvyatāḥ ... anugrahyaḥ*).

But the provision for payment of maintenance allowance in *Arthasastras* relates to the employees. It does not
appear to have been general rule applicable to all sections of private workers and enforceable to all types of employees. However this shows the sympathetic outlook of the state about the welfare of the working class.
NOTES

4. Ibid., 2. 12. 1.
5. Ibid., 2. 20. 1.
6. Ibid., 11. 1. 1.
7. B.C. Sen, Economics in Kautilya, p. 11.
12. Manusmrti, VIII. 216.
15. R.P. Kangle, op. cit., p. 304, 5. 3. 29.