CHAPTER - III

THE WORKING OF TRADE UNION

Trade unions are organisations of workers which work for the maintenance and enhancement of their economic status by insisting on a rise in money wages and improvement in working conditions and other facilities and benefits. Besides this economic objective, there are other dimensions of trade unions which have gained importance in the context of the changing socio-political environment. The worker is not only a factor of production but an individual whose total life situation is a matter of concern for the trade unions. Gandhiji viewed trade unions as moral institutions aiming at making the workers better individuals and responsible citizens. Trade unions are considered to be institutions experimenting with industrial democracy which would strengthen democratic forces and help in the functioning of political democracy. Traditionally, trade unions have been resistance organisations defending the interests of workers and see to it that they are not exploited. They have also been viewed as instruments of change in the socio-political system so that workers may have their own government and prevent their exploitation.
The term trade union has been defined variously by different authors. Some view that there are only associations of employees or persons working in industry and wage earners engaged in one or more professions, undertaking or business while others view that these also include employers organisations and friendly societies.

According to G.D.H. Cole, a trade union means, “an association of workers in one or more professions — an association carried on mainly for the purpose of protecting and advancing the members’ economic interests in connection with their daily work.”\(^1\)

Dale Yoder defined a trade union as, “a continuing long term association of employees, formed and maintained for the specific purpose of advancing and protecting the interest of the members in their working relationship.”\(^2\)

According to S.D. Punekar, “a union is a continuous association of persons in industry-whether employer or independent workers — formed primarily for the purpose of the pursuit of the interests of its members of the trade they represent.”\(^3\)

---

Indian Trade Union Act, 1926 defined trade union as “any combination whether temporary of permanent formed primarily for the purpose of regulating the relations between workmen and employers or between workmen and workmen, between employers and employers or for imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business and include any federation of two or more trade unions.”

An analysis of the above definitions on trade unions reveal the following characteristics of trade unions:

(i) The trade union may be an association either of the employers or employees or of independent workers.

(ii) Trade union are relatively permanent combination of workers and are not temporary of casual.

(iii) Trade union is an association of workers who are engaged in securing economic benefits for their members.

(iv) The character of trade unions has been constantly changing.

(v) The origin and growth of trade unions has been influenced by a number of ideologies.

4. Indian Trade Union Act, 1926.
NEED OF TRADE UNIONS :

Why do workers organize themselves into a trade union? It is, however, a significant question. The worker joins a trade union for a variety of reasons, but he may be no more conscious of the motive or motives that prompt him to join a union.

The trade unions are the organizations formed by working men and women both to improve the conditions of labour and to further the workers’ desire for a better life.

(i) The individual worker all alone feels specially weak in a world of mass production and mass movement. An organization may give him an opportunity to join others for the achievement of those objectives that he considers as socially desirable.

(ii) The primary purpose of trade union is to safeguard the economic interests of its members. One of the problems in the life of the workers is how to provide sufficient food, clothing and a home for himself and for the members of his family. This is first and foremost a question of finding a job on a reasonable wage. To improve and maintain the wages at a reasonable standard is one the important reasons for which a worker joins a trade union.
(iii) A worker does not only require the bare necessaries of existence but he also wants to obtain the amenities of civilized life, e.g., a better home, more leisure, better conditions of work, etc. The workers also join the trade unions, to a very large extent, because they have interest such as these to promote or defend.

(iv) The need for trade unions arises due to this fact also that the workers require help in time of sickness or death, protection from suffering and want when they are out of a job and an income of some kind when they are too old to work any more.

(v) There is another reason for the existence of trade unions, viz., need for adequate machinery for settling the relations between the employers and employees. In modern industry the old personal relationship between the employers and the workers largely disappears. The worker may become dissatisfied with his working conditions or the treatment of his employers while the employer may feel that he has reason for complaint against the worker. With the growth of industry the number of such questions to be settled increases and it is much better to adjust these differences by agreement between the employers and employees
through negotiations. Thus, a trade union is the best and socially most desirable to conduct bargaining on behalf of the workers and the development of collective bargaining between the employers’ and workers’ organizations is an essential basis for the establishment of peace in industry.

(vi) Trade unionism developed on proper lines lessens violent class conflicts and, thus, is beneficial to employers, the employees, the state and the public. It is, thus, clear that no agency formed or promoted to look after the interests of the workers can be a real substitute for trade unions. The organization of workers is, therefore, not only necessary but also inevitable.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TRADE UNIONS

The trade union movement in India started rather late, though the industrialisation of the country began about 1850. The first trade union was founded by Mr. N.K. Lokhande in 1890, and was known as the Bombay Mill Hands Association. This was followed by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in India, 1897, the Printers’ Union of Calcutta, 1905, the Madras and Calcutta Postal Union, 1907 and the Kamgar Hitwardhak Sabha 1910. All these trade unions aimed at promoting welfare
activities for workers, spreading literacy among them and redressing their grievances by constitutional methods. They were, however, not trade unions in the true sense of the phrase but rather social unions, and they were completely free from even the most rudimentary touch of radicalism. The movement was for the workers rather than by the workers, and was generally confined to the somewhat educated class of workers. As a result, it did not make much headway among those employed in the textile, mining and plantation industries. The leadership in this movement was provided mostly by social reformers, careerists and politicians-cum-nationalists.

The movement developed somewhat during the First World War, although it began to take roots in the country only after the end of this catastrophic conflict. Spiralling prices, the Swaraj Movement, the Russian Revolution and the setting group of the International Labour Organisation (the ILO)— all these affected the ideas of the workers, and intensified the sense of class-consciousness among them. By 1920, there was a fairly large class of industrial employees, many of whom joined the various unions — the Indian Seamen’s union, the Madras Textile Labourers Union, the Jamshedpur Labour Association, the G.I.P. Workers’ Union, and the Colliery Employees Association of Jharia. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association came into
being following the initiative taken for the purpose by Mahatma Gandhi, which was the forerunner of the Indian National Trade Union Congress set up in 1947. National leaders provided the political climate in which the trade union movement thrived. At the same time, the manner in which it was conducted generated a mounting sense of bitterness among the employers, for trade unions were generally somewhat loosely formed organisations which came into being primarily for the purpose of getting higher wages for workers.

In 1928, when the Communists gained influence in the trade union movement, one of the longest and costliest trials of strength ensued between the communists and others, which continued for about four and a half years. On the questions of the boycott of the Whitley Commission, the affiliation of the All-India Trade Union Congress with the League against Imperialism (The Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, a camouflaged Communist Organisation) and the sending of a delegation to the ILO Conference, the moderates, headed by N.M. Joshi, broke away from the AITUC and formed another organisation, the All-India Trade Union Federation. In 1931, following fundamental differences between the Communists and left-wing unionists, there was another rift in the AITUC, and the Communists, led by B.T. Ranadive and others, formed the Red
Trade Union Congress. Two years later, the National Federation of Labour was formed, which attempted to facilitate the unity of all the left-wing organisations of labour. The AITUF and NFL joined together to form the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF). The AITUC and the RTUC, however, remained aloof in 1935, the RTUC merged into the AITUC.

During the Second World War, the Indian National Congress was in power in seven provinces. There were big strikes, which made it possible for labour to organise a larger number of trade unions. After nine years of split, the NTUF was dissolved and the organisation merged into the AITUC (in 1940), which became the sole representative of organised labour. In the following year, however, there was another split, when the radicals in the organisation broke away form the parent body to form the Indian Federation of Labour, which was recognised by the government as a representative organisation of Indian labour. By the end of the war, the Communists dominated the AITUC, while the Royists controlled the IFL. As a result of these developments, a qualitative change came about in the trade union movement, which made it possible for labour to participate in negotiations with employers and in tripartite deliberations.
When attempts to restructure the AITUC failed, those who favoured the ideals of socialism and shared the views of the Indian National Congress separated from the labour organisation, and set up the Indian National Trade Union Congress in 1947. When, in the following year, the Socialists broke away from the Indian National Congress, they formed the Praja Socialist Party, whose supporters in the labour movement established what came to known as the Hindustan Mazdoor Panchayat (HMP). Later, this organisation and IFL merged to form the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. In 1949. A group of left wing Socialists, who were dissatisfied with the policies and attitude of the Socialist Party, established the United Trade Union Congress. These moves and counter moves in favour of a split or unity continued to dominate the labour scene for a number of years.

After 1952, a number of efforts were made for bringing about unity in the movement such as in 1953, and 1958. In 1959, a few unions led by the members of the socialist party seceded from the H.M.S. and formed Hind Mazdoor Panchayat (H.M.P.). It became the organ of Samyukta Socialist Party and was launched in 1962. In 1962, a new organisation called Confederation of Free Trade Unions (CFTU) was formed as a result of the active interest taken in its formation by the
International Confederation of Christian Trade Union and the support of the Swatantra Party.

There was again a rift in the AITUC in 1970, when the Communists divided themselves into the CPI and CPM. the AITUC came under the control of the CPI and the CPM started a new organisation — the Centre of Indian Trade Union (CITU).

The split in the Indian National Congress in two separate groups in 1972 also resulted in a change in INTUC. The ruling Congress party retained its control on the INTUC and the (Organisation Congress) severed itself from the INTUC and formed a new union — National Labour Organisation (NLO).

In September 1972, a new development took place. With the formation of National Council of Central Trade Unions (NCCTU), providing a common platform for trade union activities of the AITUC, INTUC and HMS, CITU was isolated. It, therefore, formed a United Council of Trade Unions (UCTU) as rival body of NCCTU. Since then, both these bodies have ceased to exist.

After the declaration of the emergency, again the INTUC, AITUC and HMS combined and joined with employers’ representatives on what was called National Apex Body. With the lifting of emergency and the installation of the Janata Government at the Centre, this body ceased to exist.
There were 28,924 registered trade unions of which 8,177 were submitting returns and these had a membership of 54.47 lakhs in 1977, as against 14,370 registered unions, 7,086 submitting returns with a membership of 43.69 lakhs in 1966.

PRESENT POSITION :

At present, there are five major central trade union organisations, namely, INTUC, BMS, HMS, AITUC and CITU.

The INTUC This labour organisation has 3,135 affiliated trade unions with a total membership of 30,70,795 workers. It has strong roots in West Bengal, Assam, Gujarat, Bihar and Maharashtra. The largest number of its members are drawn from the textile industry in Bombay and Ahmedabad, from the hosiery industry, the tea plantations in Assam and West Bengal, the jute industry in West Bengal, and the transport and mining cum-metallic industries. The INTUC was the labour wing of the Congress Party.

The Basic Objectives of INTUC are:

(i) To place industry under national ownership and control in a suitable form;

(ii) To secure increasing association of workers in the
administration of industry and their full participation in that control;

(iii) To organise society in such a manner as to ensure full employment and the best utilization of its manpower and other resources;

(iv) To promote social, civil and political interest of the working class;

(v) To establish just industrial relations;

(vi) To secure redressal of grievances, without stoppage of work, by means of negotiation, conciliation, and failing these, arbitration and adjudication;

(vii) To take other legislative methods, including strikes or any suitable form of satyagraha, where adjudication is not applied and settlement of disputes within reasonable time by arbitration is not available for the redress of grievances;

(viii) To make necessary arrangements for the efficient conduct and satisfactory and speedy conclusion of authorised strikes of satyagraha;

(ix) To foster the spirit of solidarity, service, brotherhood, cooperation and mutual help among the workers;
(x) To develop in the workers a sense of responsibility towards industry and the community; and

(xi) To raise the worker’s standard of efficiency and discipline.

The AITUC was the second largest federation of trade unions, which are 2,879 in number, claiming membership of 26,41,301 workers. It is very strong in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Delhi. Its members are drawn mostly from the engineering, petroleum and building and construction industries. The AITUC if affiliated to the Communist Party of India.

The Basic Objectives of the AITUC are:

(i) To establish a socialist State in India;

(ii) To socialist and nationalise means of production, distribution and exchange;

(iii) To ameliorate the economic and social conditions of the working class;

(iv) To watch, promote and further the interests, rights, and privileges of the workers in all matters relating to their employment;

(v) To secure and maintain for the workers the freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of association,
freedom of assembly, the right to strike, and the right to work and maintenance;

(vi) To coordinate the activities of the labour unions affiliated to the AITUC;

(vii) To abolish political or economic advantage based on caste, creed, community, race or religion; and

(viii) To secure and maintain for the worker, the right to strike.

The HMS was the third largest federation with 635 trade unions and a membership of 11,44,164 workers. Its members are mostly drawn from the railways, cotton textiles, coal mining and engineering industries, and from among those who are employed in the posts and telegraphs department of the government. The HMS’s political inspiration is drawn from the Praja Socialist Party.

The Basic Objectives of Hind Mazdoor Sabha are:

(i) To organise and promote the establishment of a democratic socialist society in India and to further the economic, political, social and cultural interests of the Indian working class;

(ii) To provide full opportunities for the development of mental and physical personality of the workers;
(iii) To strive for getting a living wage to all workers;

(iv) To guarantee work to every worker;

(v) To get full social security measures and comprehensive medical care introduced by the industry for workers;

(vi) To get adequate leisure for the workers in the form of reasonable hours of work and holidays with pay;

(vii) To arrange for adequate housing facilities;

(viii) To arrange for the introduction of free and compulsory education and facilities for vocational guidance;

(ix) To get effective recognition of the right of collective bargaining;

(x) To cooperate with other organisations in the country and outside having similar aims and objects; and

(xi) To secure and maintain for workers freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of press, right to strike.

The main Objectives of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh are;

(i) “To establish the Bharatiya order of classless society in which there shall be secured full employment; replacement of profit motive by service and establishment of economic
democracy; development of autonomous industrial communities ..... with each one of them consisting of all the individuals connected with the industry as partner”;

(ii) To assist workers in organising themselves in trade unions as a medium of service to the motherland irrespective of faiths and political affinities;

(iii) The right to strike; and

(iv) To inculcate in the minds of the workers the spirit of service, cooperation and dutifulness and develop in them a sense of responsibility towards the nation in general and the industry in particular.

FUNCTIONS OF TRADE UNIONS

The functions of trade unions can be divided into five categories, viz.,

(a) Militant or protective or intra-mural functions,

(b) Fraternal or extra-mural,

(c) Social functions, and

(d) Political functions

(e) Ancillary functions.

(a) Militant or Intra-mural Functions: These functions include protecting the workers’ interests, i.e. hike in wages, providing
more benefits, job security etc., through collective bargaining and direct action such as strikes gheraos etc.

(b) Fraternal or Extra-mural Functions: These functions include providing financial and non-financial assistance to workers during the periods of strikes and lockouts, extension of medical facilities during sickness and casualties, provision of education, recreation, recreational and housing facilities, provision of social and religious benefits etc.

(c) Social Functions: These functions include carrying out social service activities, discharging social responsibilities through various sections of the society like educating the customers.

(d) Political Functions: These functions include affiliating a union to a political party, helping the political party in enrolling members, collecting donations, canvassing during election period, seeking the help of political parties during the strikes and lockouts.

(e) Ancillary Functions: Ancillary functions of trade unions include:

(i) Communication: Trade unions communicate its activities, programmes, decisions, achievements etc., to its
members through publication of news letters or magazines.

(ii) **Welfare Activities**: Trade Unions undertake welfare activities like acquiring of house sites, construction of houses, establishment of cooperative housing societies, cooperative credit societies, organising training activities etc.

(iii) **Education**: Trade Union provide educational facilities to its members and their family members.

(iv) **Research**: Trade Unions arrange to conduct research programmes. They systematically collect and analyse data and information for collective bargaining, preparing of notes for union officials, for court cases etc. They also arrange to analyse macro data about the economy, industry and different sectors etc.

**Characteristics of Successful Union**

Trade union, to be successful in their functioning and in discharging responsibilities should possess the following characteristics.

(1) It must be strong enough in terms of membership, and finances in order to protect the members’ economic
interest. Trade union must prove itself as an effective weapon against management militancy.

(2) The trade union must be responsible to its members in solving their problems, protecting their interest. Trade union should select an appropriate method for representing and solving workers’ problems.

(3) The trade union must be internally democratic so as to respect the workers’ right of self-government. The criteria to judge the union democracy include:

(a) Regular participation of all its members in policy-making.

(b) Direct and Indirect control by all its members over vital decisions of the union on special occasions.

(c) Reliance on officials to run day-to-day administration with adequate membership checks.

(d) Trade Union Leadership should respond to the members demands. Leaders should respond to the members demands both formally and informally.

(e) Trade Union Leadership control should be based on the desires of the members.
The importance of trade unions can never be over emphasized. History shows that in the days when trade unions had not taken place the poor workers were ruthlessly exploited at the hands of their employers on account of peculiarities of labour e.g. weak bargaining power etc. The bargaining power of workers vis-a-vis their employers is very weak due to perishability and less mobility of labour and illiteracy of workers. Hence, in the absence of trade unions, the workers were compelled to work at lowest wage and under unhealthy working conditions.

In modern times, the workers organise themselves into a trade union to ensure adequate wages, secure better working conditions, reduce working hours, get better treatment from employers. The trade union also have started trying to secure some share in the profits and in the management of the Mills.

Besides, trade unions also help their workers in times of need such as unemployment, sickness, disputes, strikes, lock outs etc. Trade Unions also undertake sometimes welfare activities for their workers such as library, reading room and even school for children’s education. The trade unions also provide facilities for indoor and out-door games and other means of recreation.
The trade unions have their importance not only from workers point of view. These have proved a boon for employers also. A strong trade union succeeds in securing better wages and conditions of work and employment, in fostering a spirit of co-operation and promote friendly relations and in diffusing culture and education in the workers. The contented, educated, efficient, well trained and friendly workers put their best efforts to increase production. The trade union can make the employee-employer relations cordial and the atmosphere in the mill calm and peaceful. The trade unions can mould the character of their workers in such a way that they handle the apparatus carefully and avoid waste of raw material etc. Thus trade unions have their importance both from workers’ as well as employer’s point of view.

A SURVEY REPORT OF UPPER DOAB SUGAR MILLS, SHAMILI :

One hundred workers selected on the basis of random sampling were questioned in connection with the working of trade union in this Mills and they were asked whether they were play active role in trade union’s activities. Their responses have been summarised in the following table:
TABLE 3.1

MEMBERS OF THE REGISTERED TRADE UNION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responses No. = 100</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that 24% workers have nothing to do with this union, 61% workers are its members while 15% workers did not answer the question regarding membership. It indicates that trade union movement in this Mills is very weak at the present. This may be so either because the workers are satisfied with the conditions of this Mills or because they are too frightened to join any trade union actively. The second of these presumptions appears to be more acceptable because 15% workers did not say anything about the trade union activities in this Mills and 24% workers categorically stated that there was no union worth the name and whatever existed in its name acted entirely in accordance with the wishes of the employers. This part of the information could be gathered from them when they were asked the question as to what kind of facilities they had been able to get through their union. How they responded
becomes clear from the following table:

**TABLE 3.2**

**WORKERS GETTING FACILITIES ON BEHALF OF UNION EFFORTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responses No. = 100</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Facilities available to</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Facilities not available to</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table evidences the fact that only 28% of the workers admitted that they were getting some facilities as a result of the efforts of the union. What they stated in reply to the question whether they were satisfied with the functioning of the union has been summarized in the following table:

**TABLE 3.3**

**WORKER’S RESPONSE REGARDING UNION’S ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responses No. = 100</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Positive answer</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Negative answer</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table indicates that only 29% answered the question in the affirmative, 44% of them stated that they were not satisfied while 27% did not give any response. Those who said they were not satisfied with the functioning of the union were asked what they expect from their Union. They mentioned the following demands:

**TABLE 3.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responses No. = 100</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>If the union cannot solve the problems of the workers, its office-bearers should not force them to become its members.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Workers should get pension</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Workers should be allowed to have some self-dignity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The interests of the workers should be safeguarded.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Temporary workers should also get bonus.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Workers should get adequate money from the Welfare Fund</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The Office-bearers should consult the workers and should try to remove their troubles.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. The union should not act as an accomplice to the employer

9. Quarter facilities should be extended to all workers

10. Favouritism should be avoided

It was found during the course of interview that the management is clever enough and acts tactfully with the labour by enticing their leaders. The union leaders were seen as puppets in the hand of management. The observation was substantiated by the fact, that, in general, supervisors did not respond to our enquiries and directed us for comments, on supervisor-union relationship, to the union office. Supervisors were found to be pleased with the working of the union.

It can be concluded from the above that the present union in the opinion of about most of the workers was merely a puppet in the hands of management and was in existence to safeguard the interests of the employers rather than the workers. That is why, perhaps they did want to join it. It means that many workers had no faith and active interest in union. They wanted a conscious and active union to look after their interests.
The reason of indifference of workers’ attitude towards union can be traced in the fact that a major section of blue-collar work force (Permanent 497 temporary 76 and seasonal 795) was found to be seasonal. These seasonal workers were not members of the union on one hand and on the other they showed indifference to make any statement on account of fear. Moreover, these illiterate workers were found to be too much with the world (bread-earning) to talk of union.

In order to find out whether the management freely allowed trade union activities to go in this Mills, a question to this effect was included in the questionnaire. Only 26% of the workers stated that they were free to go on with their trade union activities. 18% of the workers stated that the management did obstruct their trade-union activities while 56% of them did not answer the question, perhaps, out of fear. This makes it evident that the management of this Mills does not allow its workers to indulge in free trade union activities.

The workers were asked whether the management obstructed the union activities and why. 56% of them did not answer the question. 18% of them said that the obstruction was definitely caused, while only 26% said that the obstruction was not caused. Explaining the reason why the obstruction was
caused, they stated the following three reasons:

1. In the absence of the union workers cannot raise their demands in a forceful manner.
2. It is the selfish motives of the management that require them not to allow the union activities to go on.
3. If the union is there, the management cannot remain dictatorial in its ways.

At present the situation is that workers cannot express their demands emphatically. No doubt they raise their demands but when the management does not pay any heed to them, they have no other alternative but to keep quiet.

The workers were asked at to how they would run the union if they were entrusted with the work. It was observed that they found themselves unable to run the union because they were not capable enough to do the task, mainly because of being illiterate of ill-equipped for the required duties and responsibilities. It shows that the working-class parties have not done much work among these workers and have not tried to make them conscious.

Good industrial relations are possible, as R.S. Davar points out, when the following conditions, among others, have been fulfilled:
(1) the employer recognises that the workers are a part of the team working for common objectives;

(2) an attitude on the part of the employees of giving their money’s worth;

(3) fair redressal of the employees’ grievances; and

(4) sufficient communication kept the employees informed about decisions which affect their interests.\(^5\)

The management of this Mills does not have a healthy and some attitude towards the union and its members. The unhappy incidents that took place during the strikes show that neither the management nor the unions adopted the desirable method. The management should recognise that a union is there to bargain collectively for the workers. The union should also understand that it is there to bargain for the workers actively rather than to lead them to a physical fight with the people. It would be blunder on the part of the union leaders that they instigate the workers to indulge in violence; or at least led them to a stage when they could not prevent themselves from indulging in these activities. Actually a strike is meant to compel

---

the employer to enter into negotiations rather than to start a
violent quarrel. As a matter of fact violents solve no problems;
ultimately it is through negotiations that every problem is solved.
Keith Davis observes that when the employer and the employees
fail to arrive at an agreement, they should try to have a mediator.
He says. “If an agreement cannot be reached, the union may call
a strike, or a mediator may be brought to the scene by one of the
parties or by government. The mediator’s role is that of an
outside specialist who is free of the emotionalism in which the
parties are involved. Mediators have wide experience and a fresh
viewpoint, which may enable them to suggest settlements not
previously considered. Mediators also help hold down
emotionalism and use direct persuasion to try to get the parties
to come to agreement. One comprehensive study reported that a
mediator’s two most important skills were intellectual ability and
“tough” human relations. From a human point of view an
important function is that of confidential intermediary carrying
messages and viewpoint from one party to the other”.6

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

The survey of the sampled Upper Doab Sugar Mills that
trade unions existed in almost all the units. It was found that in

6. Keith Davis, Human Behaviour at Work, Organizational Behaviour (New
each and every unit there existed more than one trade union. The various trade unions which were found relating in this Mills can be named as Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (B.M.S.) Hind Mazdoor Sabha (H.M.S), All India Trade Union Congress (A.I.T.U.C.) On the basis of personal talks to leaders of trade unions it was found that unions existed there and they are working well and performing various functions. But contrary to this the ordinary workers in the Mills were found unaware of any trade union in their Mills. They were also not aware of the aims and objects of a trade union. When talked about their suffering or exploitation at the hands of Mills owners, they said that their,” trade unions” were the persons through whom they had been recruited. For all sorts of complaints they resort to such middlemen or jobber and they follow them blindly.

In this Mills, there existed strong unions. They raise funds through annual or monthly subscriptions. The office bearers of the union constantly try to secure better amenities for their workers and help redress their grievances. They protect their workers from exploitation at the hands of mill owners. Union leaders take care for the disbursement of salary and bonus in time, depositing of provident fund contributions regularly etc. Payment for overtime work is also made due to sincere efforts of
the trade union. In case of undue suspension of a worker, the case is pleaded by the union and the worker is reinstated. Union takes pains in getting the payment of provident fund, gratuity etc. for the workers after their retirement and in case of accident the workers gets due compensation.

Various reasons were found responsible for the miserable and weak position of trade unions in the Mills. Firstly, the workers get lesser time and therefore they do not take keen and continuous interest in union activities. Secondly, illiteracy is the main feature of the workers in the Mills. Illiteracy and ignorance is also responsible for weaker trade unions in Upper Doab Sugar Mills. Thirdly, multiplicity of unions in the same unit also pushes the trade unions in deplorable position. The more than number of union in an unit, the lesser in number will be their members. Therefore, each of them would be a weak union. Fourthly, in many units, the attitude of the owners was reported hostile towards union activities, They treated the union as simply a “Trouble Maker” organisation and hence they did not hesitate to use fair or foul means for disrupting the union activities. The most common means brought to our notice were bribing the union workers or the victimisation of such workers. Multiplicity of trade unions is also due to encouragement of the owners for forming rival trade unions. Fifthly, the workers in sugar industry
lives in very deplorable living conditions and possesses a very low standard of living. Hence he has not enough energy to pursue the union activities. Sixthly, the reason put forward by many enlightened workers and many of the Mills owners, is, that leaders, mostly, come from more skilled strata of workers, who in turn come, generally, from rich and well to do families. Such leaders organise the union merely to carry on strikes etc. They have nothing to do with welfare activities for the workers. Lastly, workers were found to be divided according to their political affiliations. Various political parties leave no stone unturned to win over the workers for which they create bitter feelings among the workers of rival unions.

SUGGESTIONS:

We have pointed out in above lines, that the position of trade unions in the Upper Doab Sugar Mills is not satisfactory. Their working is not effective. Keeping in view the various reasons, as explained above, for such deplorable position, the following measures are suggested to improve the same:

(i) Union leaders should realise the significance of welfare activities for the workers. Union workers should take in hand effectively the activities like starting of reading rooms, libraries, schools for children etc. Night schools for
adults would prove of immense value. The main thing is that union workers have to remove the label from their faces that they are merely strike committees or trouble makers.

(ii) There is a great need for worker’s education in regard to the aims and objectives of trade union. The Government in collaboration with the employers can take a lead in this respect. They can extend their activities towards educating the union members by holding meeting and lectures. Workers should be encouraged to become members of a union.

(iii) Multiplicity of unions in the same unit should be discouraged. Mr. V.V. Giri pleaded for “one union in one industry”. We should try to achieve this goal as far as possible in Sugar Industry. Smaller Unions should be persuaded to merge into bigger ones.

(iv) For strengthening the unions, various efforts should be made e.g. inter-union rivalry should be condemned. For this political parties which were found as the root cause in creating bitter differences among the workers, should keep away from trade unions. Union workers themselves should remain cautious not to allow their union to become the
platform of any political party, rather they should confine their activities to the betterment of their fellow workers in the interest of the Mills.

(v) Outside political leadership has been developed due to the absence of internal leadership. Outside leadership is the main cause for the multiple problems of the Trade Unions. These problems can be eradicated through the development of leadership talents from within. Management should encourage internal workers to lead their own movement. Management and trade unions should provide educational and training facilities for the development of internal leadership.

(vi) The Trade Union Act, 1956 should be amended and the number of members required to form a trade union should be increased from 7 to 50% of the employees of an organisation. Similarly, the scope for the outside leadership should be reduced from 50% to 10%. The membership subscription should be enhanced from 25 paise to 1% of the monthly wages of the worker.

(vii) Employers should also realise the importance of a strong and healthy trade union in their Mills. They also need to encourage such union. They have to create the feeling
among the workers that unions on healthy lines would be welcomed. For this victimisation of the union workers in any form should be stopped.

(viii) Trade Unions should not unnecessarily interfere in the management decision where their interference reduces the organisational effectiveness.