Chapter V

Literature Review

The literature on 'Trade Unions' is exhaustive. A number of studies have been conducted on various aspects of "Trade Unions", like leadership, Union management relations, union problems, union membership etc.

A brief review of literature is presented here below.

1. Karl Marx:

   The name of “Karl Marx” strikes us, very significant when we are dealing with the organization of labor. As a factor of production, labor, according to Marx, has a subordinate role under capitalistic economy as those who are only in a position to sell their labor. The labor under the capitalist system is designated by Marx as the "Proletariat" in order to emphasize the thoroughly exploited condition of industrial working class. Marx believes that in order to
overcome the exploitation of the proletariat by the capitalist class the workers would make spontaneous efforts to unite themselves into what we call protest organizations.1

The essence of Marx's argument is that a strong organization of labor is a necessary ingredient for the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist system itself. Thus according Marx, the labor organization is not an instrument of negotiation with the capitalists either for security of employment or for enhancement of wages. On the other hand such an organization has to be imbued with a revolutionary ideology for a violent overthrow of the capitalist system. Thus, he believes, the unions achieve through the "conquest of Political Power, 2 It is significant to note that Marx considers the organization of labor as something spontaneous, hence voluntary, in so far as the workers realize their common condition of being exploited. The organization of labor, in other words, is something which is aimed at counteracting the purposes of the owners of the means of production.

2. **Frank Tannenbaum**

In the words of Frank Tannenbaum the trade union is following "It is against this background that the role of the trade union must be examined. In terms of the individual, the union returns to the worker his 'society'. It gives him a fellowship, a part in the drama that he' can understand, and life takes on meaning once again because he shares a value system common to others".1

Tannenbaum seems to feel that the trade union is not a mechanism that is deliberately created by the working class as a result of their commitment to any particular ideology. But, on the other hand, he seems to feel that trade union Is the product of a community of interest Which spontaneously develops among the workers. In this connection Tannenbaum states: "Trade Unions” is counter revolutionary because it, contrives to build, these Values into' our industrial society by working at them specially and in detail, without any Commitment to a general theory or an ideology, and even without a sence of direction.2

The view points regarding the trade unions expressed to Clark and others3 Do not seem to accept

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1. Hiremath, S.L., *op.cit.*, p.18,
2. *Ibid*
the Marxian stand-point that the trade unions grow out of the inner contradictions of capitalistic society. On the other hand, they believe that the forces leading to the emergence of trade unions in the modern society are the forces of industrialization. They state "Industrialization creates organizations of workers but they differ widely in their functions, structure, leadership and ideology".1

3. Webbs:

The Webbs view the emergence of trade unions as a result of the differentiation between the capitalist and the workmen. They seem to support the Marxian view that the workman is one who is not the owner of the means of production and that the workers are not independent producers but are wage earners. But the Webbs do not accept the Marxian view that the trade unions are a means of organized protest against the exploitation by the capitalist. The Webbs argue that the trade union is an organization meant for improving the working conditions of industrial labor. In this connection they state: A trade union, as we understand the term, is a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose

1. Ibid., p.216.
of maintaining or improving the conditions of this working lives.1

4. **Perlman**: Some different view is held by Perlman regarding the functions of trade unions. Perlman argues that a consciousness of job scarcity inevitably leads to the development of trade unions. However, this is not the only factor operating in the emergence of trade unions. According to Perlman there are three factors, including the consciousness of job scarcity, which contribute to the growth of trade unions. Among the other factors which Perlman identifies in the development of unions mention may be made of the factor of "dominance over the labor movement, by the 'intellectual's mentality', which regularly underestimates the resistance power of capitalism and over-estimates of labor's will to radical change".2

Perlman considers the consciousness of the scarcity of opportunity as a major factor responsible for the emergence of trade unions.

As such, different theoretical traditions are in vogue so far as the emergence of trade unions in the modern society is concerned.

1. Ibid., p.1.
There are several empirical studies relating to trade unions. The topics which have attracted the attention include the factors that promote or hinder membership participation in union affairs; the rank and file attitudes and characteristics; the problem of reconciling efficient action with the maintenance of democratic control; the implications and the nature of trends which have led to increasing centralization of power in unions; backgrounds and characteristics of union leaders; roles and attitudes of trade union leaders and so forth.

However, a number of studies are available for references, the task here is not to review the exhaustive literature in detail, but to give a brief account of some of the important works and relate to the pertinent studies to one another. Thus, we cannot escape from the limitations of this research work as the present one too have these?

The earlier theories of labor movement were aimed at delineating the emergence of trade unions with no specific type of labor force in view. However, it can be said that 'labor' in these theories is broadly taken to mean the industrial workers, or more specifically, the blue-collar workers. But the modern labor force presents a mixture of varied occupational, categories, and unions has permeated into almost all kinds of occupations.
As such many studies were undertaken with a view to explain the nature of unions among different occupational categories.1

It is generally believed that the white-collar workers, more particularly clerks, in spite of negligible differences, in terms of their income compared to that of blue-collar workers identify themselves with the middle class and obtain from unions which they consider as distinctly working class phenomenon. However, no attempt was made till mid-twentieth century to study this phenomenon empirically. 2

5. **David Lockwood**: 

David Lockwood3 who made a pioneering effort, studied the class consciousness and unions among clerks in Britain, in the light of facts drawn from a wide range of sources. The prime aim of the investigation according to Lockwood was “..... to see how the class position of the black-coated workers is related to his class consciousness, marking especially those factors associated with the varying extent and character of clerical trade unions”.4

2. Ibid., p.22.
4. Abad.,p.16
His findings with regard to unions among clerks reveal that, though clerks do not identify themselves with the working class fully, they adopt working class means to better their economic conditions. Writing about the status and relationship of clerical unions in the labor movement, he states "All have declared themselves to be 'bonafide' trade unions with the express purpose of bettering the economic position of their members. All have relied heavily on negotiating and arbitration machinery for the settlement of disputes, and have tended to eschew the strike weapon as a normal instrument of collective bargaining. All have placed great emphasis upon the value of publicity and political representation".1

In order to relate black-coated unions with the labor movement as a whole, he distinguishes three types of interests, that is 'immediate', 'instrumental', and 'ideological', and states that the 'instrumental' interests have been shared by both clerical and blue-collar unions. But in the case of 'immediate', 'interests'. he says, the clerical unions lag behind.2

1. Ibid., p. 195.

2. Ibid., pp. 195-196.
In conclusion, Lockwood states that "the character of black-coated unions, no less than its extent, is an outcome of class situation of the clerk, and the variations in the former are to of variations in the latter.1

6. **Robert Reiner**: 

Robert Reiner2 conducted another pioneering be understood in terms study on "Unions among British Police". This study is an attempt to explore the nature and extent of unions among policemen. However, the stress is not on class-consciousness or the sense of identification with the working class movement as in the case of black coated workers but "to explore the extent to which policemen feel the need and wish to have trade union representation to protect and advance their interests".3 The study is based on detailed interviews with policemen. In regard to satisfaction with the federation, Reiner found that it decreased with increase in the rank held by the respondent.4 In regard to satisfaction with the federation. Reiner found that it varied from one branch of police force to another. Particularly, he found that the respondents belonging to the

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1. Ibid., p. 198.
3. Ibid., p.9
4. Ibid., p.59.
C.I.D. branch felt them alienated from the federation. This was attributed by the union officials to the superior status of the C.I.D. branch enjoyed as compared to other branches and due to which the C.I.D. regarded the federation as "the working class union, and beneath their dignity". However, Reiner seems to sum up the investigation with the finding that unions among police is not as strong as among other occupational groups.

7. **Goldstein**: 

Goldstein found that unlike among policemen, the lack of commitment to unions among professionals was found to be due to their status consciousness as professionals. He says that unions among American professionals, found it to be markedly different from traditional unions. The central hypothesis which Goldstein attempted to test is "salaried professionals because of their educational background, their occupational culture, and their position in the firm, have produced a form of unions that differs significantly from traditional trade unions". Basing his study on the functioning of the professional association,

1. Ibid., p.134.
3. Ibid., p. 200.
"Engineers and Scientists of America" states that the E&SA is markedly different in its goals and strategies from blue-collar unions. In negotiations, he says "the emphasis is on 'acting like gentlemen' instead of 'pounding the table' in placing the plain facts before management, rather than relying on "emotion". 1

As such, the studies on trade unions among different professional groups reveal that different attitudes strategies and expectations are operative in different types of unions.

A number of studies are conducted touching every aspect of rank and file attitudes, towards union and their participation. Most of them pertain to the membership attitude toward union, union leadership, union policies and union accomplishments and the participation of members in union affairs in the light of their attitudes. Very few of these studies could be taken as having specific theoretical implications. However, an important contribution was made by Goldthorpe and others in their study of "The Affluent Worker".2

1. Ibid., p. 204.
The main aim of the study is to test empirically the widely accepted thesis of 'embourgeoisement'. The theory of 'embourgeoisement' holds that during the mid twentieth century, the upper layers of the working class experienced a rapid rise in their income and living standards. The argument runs "... as manual workers and their families achieve relatively high incomes and living standards, they assume a way of life which is more characteristically middle class and become in fact, progressively assimilated into middle class society". 1 The 'embourgeoisement' was taken to have a weakening effect on workers working class consciousness, and turn them rightist in their political attitudes and behavior.

8. Goldthorpe:

With a view to test the thesis of 'embourgeoisement' Goldthorpe and his associates undertook a study at Luton, a booming town near London known for its affluent labor force. The researchers carefully studied 229 prospering workers from Vauxhall Motors, Skefko Ball Bearings and Laporte Chemicals.

Goldthorpe and his associates found no evidence of 'embourgeoisification process' -- whereby the individualism of the middle class culture comes to replace the

1. Ibid., "Political Attitudes and Behaviour", p.1.
collective ethos of working class consciousness. However, they found that the style of trade unions among 'affluent workers' is very much an "instrumental collectivism".1 For them, the trade union is almost exclusively a means of improving their standard of living in the context of their jobs, that neither provides intrinsic rewards, nor offer 'chances of individual advancement'. The study seems to support the view that affluence, in fact will sharpen the worker's interest in his pay packet. Hence, the union gains in usefulness and solidarity as it is viewed by the workers as an instrument of maximizing their earnings "rather than agency for transforming the social structure, or even as a way to greater worker participation in the affairs of the enterprise".2

Even with respect to the political behavior, the researchers state that "n......no evidence of embourgeoisement is evident among the sample of affluent manual workers".3

Goldthorpe and his associates studied the implications of the changing economic conditions or of

1. Ibid., p.28

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.73.
the general state of economy for the unions and union behavior. But there are many studies that take into account the various implant situations as affecting membership attitudes and participation.

So far as the workers' attitudes toward union are concerned, the studies reveal that such attitudes are determined by many factors such as workers' allegiance to the management, union policies, and programs, union leadership and so forth.

9. **Theodore Purcell**: Theodore Purcell (1) studied 790 workers in three different plants of Swift and Company, U.S.A. and found that, the dual allegiance toward union and management. Through his study it is disclosed that the dual allegiance is as high as 99, 76 and 73 per cent in three plants respectively. In his earlier study at Chicago (2) also, Purcell had found that nearly 75 per cent of the workers interviewed possessed dual allegiance. One interesting fact in his findings was that "for most of those, who fail to have dual allegiance, allegiance fails in the union half of the Plant".3

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3. Ibid., p. 264.
10. Rosen and Rosen:

Rosen and Rosen\(^1\) on the other hand, found in their study that the membership attitude toward union is influenced by the union policies, programs. Though it is covered in a district organization of machinists have favourable attitudes toward the union policies pertaining to collective bargaining, grievance handling, they did not agree with the union's involvement in politics and the type of political activities that the union was engaged in. About the members' attitudes toward the union, the authors found that about half were satisfied with the union, one-quarter were dissatisfied, and the other quarter was undecided.

The attitudes of the members toward various aspects of union are normally studied with a view to assess their implications for membership. Further, the membership participation in union affairs is normally studied with a view to assess the nature of union structure and functioning, particularly with a view to assess the extent of democracy or oligarchy in the administration of the unions.

The membership apathy has been one of the most widely discussed aspects of trade unions.

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General discussions and speculations have been replaced by the empirical case studies. As such, there are numerous studies which focus upon the problem of membership participation. These studies attempt to investigate the membership participation in relation to many variables. However, for the purpose of presentation, such variables can be divided into broad categories as objective conditions and subjective orientations and associations. Owing to the voluminous nature of literature dealing with the membership participation some of them are reviewed here under.

11. Sayles and Strauss: Sayles and Strauss1 in their study of local "union found the membership participation differs from one department to another in the same plant. Their findings show that members of those departments which have a better record of satisfied grievances are normally more active. They point out that even in the case of smaller Unions, the attendance at Union meetings tends to be low. Thus the common belief that the smaller unions are able to foster "opposition" much more readily does not seem to be supported by the available evidence.2


2. Ibid., Chapter 16.
12. **Robert Michaels**: Robert Michels\(^1\) said that oligarchies structures develop to prevent the fullest expression of members’ interests and desires. He states that oligarchial tendencies are inherent in all human organizations. In all organizations, he says, we find oligarchy in democratic form or democracy with an oligarchic content.\(^2\)

13. **Lipset**: Lipset and his associates\(^3\) found an outstanding exception to Michels Iron Law of Oligarchy. Far from developing Oligarchic tendencies, the union under study was found to have developed and institutionalized a two party system, unique in the union world. Lipset and others studied it precisely because it was a deviant case. Lipset and his associates state that democracy in the International Typographical Union was the result of many factors, like the decentralization in the industry which had facilitated decentralization of power in the union also. In addition to "this, the workers are highly skilled, well-paid, and form a homogeneous group. The printers have to work long hours in the night which

enhances better social relations at work. And they depend on one another to an unusual degree for help and recreation. All this according to Lipset, has fostered a network of occupation centered informal organizations. Added to all, this is a belief shared by the leaders and the members of the union in the legitimacy of political opposition and norms to protect it.

However, Lipset and his associates conclude functional requirements for democracy cannot be most of the times in most unions.

14. Wright Mills:

Wright Mills 2 studied 500 union leaders representing a cross section of America’s national, state, and city union leaders. The object of the study according to mills is to present “a collective portrait of these labor leaders set in their American time and Society”.3 through the contribution of Wright Mills is a pioneering effort be neglected the aspect of trade unions but it helps to the general understanding of trade union leadership.

1. Ibid., p.403.
3. Ibid., p.9.
15. Harold Wilensky:

A detailed study of trade union leadership particularly in the context of unions was carried out by Harold Wilensky (1). The problem of the study was the role of union officials in the decision-making process in the unions in particular and the over-all functioning of the unions in general. The study is based on the data pertaining to a sample of 298 union officials drawn from the headquarters of 28 International Unions with a membership of 50,000 or more.2

On the basis of his study he finds four categories of officials. They are: Missionary types who are oriented toward some abstract concept of labor movement; professional service experts whose primary orientation is to an outside professional group; Careerists who are primarily oriented toward Career Within the union hierarchy; and the union politics whose primary orientation is toward the political process of union organization. He intensively studied these types and finds support for the hypothesis that bureaucracies motivate gradual transformations of alienated intellectual into the political technician.3

2. Hiremath. S.L., op.cit., p.34.
3. Ibid., p.35.
Owing to its careful analysis of organizational processes and the organizational roles of officials in such processes, Wilensky’s work is considered as a significant contribution to the theory of large-scale organizations.

Studies on trade unions aspects are numerous in India. Few of them are reviewed here under:

16. **Ramanujam**: Ramanujam studied the labor movement in India from its origin to the present. He says that the country’s trade union movement in order to play its role effectively needs to reshape its thinking and activities. Deepak Malik’s effort is to evolve the general theories of trade unions and class formation in India.

17. **Murthy**: Murthy devotes his time on the work is an outcome of state-level study of the phenomenon of trade Unions. It attempts to provide a systematic profile of trade, unions in Orissa. In pursuance of this objective a dispassionate enquiry has been made into the

1. **Ibid.**
origin and growth of trade unions in the State. It seeks to probe into the forces and
factors - historical and institutional - that might have influenced the development
of trade unions at the grass-root level. Further, it analyses the structure,
organization, leadership and politics of trade unions with a view to understand
their present position and character. The climate of industrial relations and the
role played by the unions have also been examined.

18. **H J Laski**: H.J. Laski in his study on "Trade Unions in the New Society"
covered economic, legal, ethical and social problems of trade union members and
leaders. Dange in his report on "Indian Trade Union Movement", emphasized the
need for training facilities to trade union leaders.

19. **Punekar**: Punekar conducted a survey on trade union leaders in
Bombay and studied the variations among leaders of various central trade unions
like INTUC, AITUC in terms of age, education, abilities etc.

2. Dange, S.A., "On the Indian -Trade Union Movement", Reports to a
   convention of Communist Party members working in the Trade Union
3. Punekar, S.D., "Outside Leadership of Trade Unions A Bombay Survey",
20. **Mathur and Mathur**: Mathur and Mathur emphasised internal and external leadership in their study of "Trade Union Movement in India".

Mathur conducted a similar study on trade union leadership in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. The conflict experienced by union leaders between their loyalties to trade unions and their obligations to kith and kin formed the subject matter of the enquiry made by Mohan Das.

21. **Thakur and Munson**: The study undertaken by Thakur and Munson analyzed the political character of the unions as well as the positive role of their leaders in making available their know-how to several union organizations.

22. **Dayal**: Dayal and Sharma in their study concentrated on the management of unions by internal leaders. They

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developed the profile of union members and leaders. They observe that besides the leader's influencing and negotiating abilities the union as an organization requires administrative leadership for its own stability and growth.

23. Singh:

Singh has examined the goal profile of union leaders at three response point’s viz., local union leaders, managers and workers. This study clearly brings out the fact that the goal profile of the union leaders as perceived by the managers and workers is in dissonance with the goal profile by the union leaders. The study of amaswamy primarily highlights worker attitude towards and participation in the unions.

24. Jaspal Singh:

Jaspal Singh has interviewed 300 leaders selected from eight towns in Punjab. The various aspects covered in his study include the process of recruitment and training of the leaders, their relationship with the followers, government, political parties etc:

25. **Acharji**: Acharji developed a leadership profile on the basis of the information collected through structural interview schedules administered to 70 union leaders at the plant level in Jamshedpur.

26. **Reindorp**: Reindorp's study is distinctive because of its case history approach. He made an intensive study of only twelve leaders and a detailed description of each case history formed a substantial portion of his work.

27. **Madhusudhana Rao**: Madhusudhana Rao in his study on "Labor Management Relations and Trade Union Leadership" has covered the behavioral aspects of labor of 104 trade unions in Visakhapatnam - an industrially developed city of Andhra Pradesh.

28. **Hiremath**: Hiremath's study is distinctively based on an exhaustive study of 242 "union leaders drawn from 52 unions of various types, sizes and affiliations with

4. Hiremath, S.L. *op.cit*.
a view to identify emerging patterns of trade union leadership in India.

29. **V V Giri**: V V Giri in his study on Industrial Relations in Indian Ports covered the problems of labor relations intimately in the Indian ports.

30. **Dhyani**: Dhyani study focusses the main features in industrial relations and government interference. The dependence of trade unions on the government and political parties who prop-up their own trade unions leading to multiplicity of trade unions, inter and intra-union rivalries, political leadership of trade unions, absence of democratic organization and administration in trade.

31. **Karnik**: Karnik's survey indicates the main trends on trade union movement since its chequered history. Conclusions are drawn exclusively on all published materials on the subject.

