The present study is aimed at finding out the reasons behind the various labour movements during 1918-34, their rise and growth, their character and how Gandhi was attracted towards these movements, including the specific ones in which he involved himself, particularly the Ahmedabad Labour Movement, which was a new experiment in the field of labour. The study tends to reveal how far Gandhi's attitude was responsible for a change in Congress attitude towards labour, what were the measures adopted by him for the welfare of labour, how he succeeded in conservation of his ideology after spread of Communist influence in 1920s and even continued to urge others to follow his ideology. The disputes between the labour class and the capitalists have been critically analysed specially with respect to Ahmedabad which was Gandhi's homeland and where he successfully led the first labour movement in 1918 after his return from South Africa and where he continued to mediate in labour disputes and conflicts in years to follow.

The period of the study starts from 1918 for this was the time when Gandhi after his return from South Africa had started to acquaint himself about the condition of masses of India and also this was the time when Ahmedabad Labour Dispute cropped-up and was led by him. This study period has been confined upto 1934 because after 1934 Congress was coming under the influence of Socialistic ideology more and more and Gandhi's thinking and his ideology were slowly undergoing a change.

Enough literature is available separately on Gandhi and on Labour Movements and also on Congress vis-a-vis Labour Movements but no critical analysis has been done linking Gandhi with Labour Movements.
in India. Wherever Gandhi is linked with Labour, the writers have either restricted themselves to his activities in Ahmedabad or have described his 'Trusteeship' and 'Arbitration' theories or have simply published his speeches and articles.

The present study is an endeavour to reveal the circumstances in which the various labour movements emerged during the period, the distinctive signs and character of labour unrest, the influence of different ideologies and their impact which they cast on India's Freedom Movement, Gandhi's activities among labourers; his attitude and technique towards labour movements and also the labour's specific response towards Gandhian technique.

The study has been divided into six parts. The First Chapter deals with Gandhi's inheritance, family atmosphere, the effects of his parents, wife, friends, education in England, religious literature and his contemporaries in shaping his thoughts due to which he developed a sort of affection for the poor and foundation of the principles of non-violence and Satyagraha were laid. The light is also thrown on his experiences and activities during South Africa tour which provided a suitable atmosphere for his thoughts to mature. He had a direct contact with labour there and he was inspired to fight for their cause as he himself said, "I spent the best part of my time in South Africa, cooking for them, I used to live with them and shared their joys and sorrows, you must, therefore, understand why I claim to speak for labour, I expect at least courtesy from you if nothing else, I invite you to come to me and discuss things with me as frankly as you can."

The Second Chapter contains the detailed description of the Ahmedabad Textile Mill strike of 1918. The mill-owners had stopped payment
of Plague Bonus to the workers who decided to start a campaign against this cut. Gandhi on the request of Anasuyabehn Sarabhai mill-owners and the local Collector consented to intervene. In this labour movement, he devised a different and a unique method of settlement for the first time in the history of labour movements. This was the arbitration method.

The Third Chapter throws light on the growth of industries during the First World War. The number of labourers had also increased. Though the wages of the workers were increased but the rate of increase was not enough to compensate the high cost of living. On the other hand, the workers had to bear the burden of the imperialist policy of the government. There grew a discontent and unrest among the workers due to the political conditions of India, Non-Cooperation Movement, emergence of Trade-Unions and the Russian Revolution. The atmosphere became more class conscious and there followed a huge wave of labour movements. Big strikes took place in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Jamshedpur, Punjab and Ahmedabad industrial centres. There were various strikes in Railways also. Special emphasis has been laid on main strikes of the period and their nature, government's role and attitude of Gandhi and Congress towards these strikes. The main features of this chapter are the discussions on the unprecedented enthusiasm of workers in Non-Cooperation Movement, inspiration provided by provincial Congress leaders to the workers, the establishment of the All India Trade Union Congress and Gandhi's role during this period. The resolutions have been highlighted which were passed by the Congress and influence of Gandhi over the Congress, particularly clear differences that emerged in methods adopted to settle the disputes between labour and capital in Ahmedabad on one hand and rest of the Labour Movements on the other hand.
In the **Fourth Chapter**, the General Strikes of 1928, 1929 and 1934 in Bombay, Bengal Jute Workers' Strike of 1928, Sholapur General Strike of 1931 and Strikes in Ahmedabad, Madras and Kanpur have been described in details. Besides, strikes in G.I.P. Railways, Southern Maratha Railways and East Indian Railways have been highlighted. The effects of growing influence of Communism, Civil Disobedience Movement, Workers' demonstration at Calcutta Congress Session and Bycott of Simon Commission by workers have been scrutinized. The influence of Communists on workers was on the increase in this period and so the government's attitude towards these strikes also changed with time. How the communists planned to convert every strike into a long-drawn one and tried to introduce an element of class conflict in these strikes have been described. The behaviour of the Congress leaders who followed Socialist ideology and their approach towards workers' problems and strikes under the influence of Gandhi have been probed into. Three types of strikes have been described here; those which were led by Communists, those led by Gandhi or Congress leaders and those which though were not directly led by Gandhi or Congress but they played a major role in the settlement of conflicts.

The **Fifth Chapter** 'Gandhi's Mind and Technique' deals with labour movements at different phases, how these movements became militant day by day and how Gandhi dealt with them. The description on one hand reveals the increasing influence of labour and on the other hand unfolds how Gandhi's economic thought found its shape with time. The development of his ideas into maturity have been traced in two separate phases:

1. From beginning of his campaign in India, upto 1919.
2. Between 1919 and 1934.
An attempt has been made to display the shift that occurred in Gandhi's ideology during these two phases; a fact which Gandhi had admitted that his thoughts went on changing according to demand or need of time and conditions. Along with this, a critical analysis has been done regarding his thoughts on Bread Labour, Trusteeship, Arbitration, Strikes, Trade Unions, Bonus and Workers' Right and Duties.

For arriving at the conclusion, a few hypotheses have been examined. Firstly, Gandhi was not in favour of class struggle. Instead, he wanted cordial relations between capitalists and workers. Secondly, Gandhi favoured capitalists to keep them in good humour and seek their support for the cause of national struggle. Thirdly, all the labour movements except that of Ahmedabad were independent of Gandhi's direct intervention. However, he did influence these movements without controlling them from the front. Fourthly, according to Gandhi, the workers, during the period of our study, were not politically conscious and hence were not fully prepared for the purpose.

Apart from all these chapters, the thesis contains bibliography, showing the source material consulted during my research work.

APRAJITA

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