CHAPTER II
THE CONTEMPORARY TRADE UNION SITUATION
IN BARODA

Baroda, which is now known as Vadodara, is a flourishing industrial city of Gujarat, located at a strategic bifurcation of Bombay-Delhi and Bombay-Ahmedabad railway lines and has a big marshalling yard and a railway workshop. It has an E.M.E. military cantonment, an airforce station and a civil aerodrome. The city, sprawling over 108.22 kilometers, has textile, chemical, pharmaceutical and engineering as the main industries (Jasol 1985). Besides, there is a large oil refinery, a giant petro-chemical complex, a heavy water plant and India’s largest fertilizer company at the outskirts of the city.

Baroda city was the capital of the erstwhile princely state of Baroda, before the merger of the state into the Indian Union in 1949. Traditionally it employed a large number of people in commerce and administration. Although, the industrialization of Baroda began in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century the city was industrialized on a large scale only after 1960 (Jasol 1985).

Thus, Baroda is suddenly expanded by the recent boom in the petroleum, petrochemical, fertilizer, pharmaceutical and engineering industries with the resultant enhancement in commerce, transport and construction work.

The population of Baroda urban agglomeration, according to the 1981 Census is 744,881. According to the 1971 Census, the total population of the city was 467,487 of whom sixty-three per cent were
literate and educated. In terms of religion, eighty-four per cent were Hindus, and about twelve per cent were Muslims. Linguistically, about sixty-eight per cent were Gujaratis, thirteen per cent Mahara­shtrians, about twelve per cent Urdu and Hindi speaking, four per cent Sindhis and others constituting the rest (Government of India: 1971). In 1971 35.5 per cent of the total population of Baroda was engaged in industry, 17.5 per cent in commerce, 9.7 per cent in transport, 2.7 per cent in agriculture and 34.6 per cent in miscellaneous economic activities (Jasol:1985).

Recent Trends of Industrial Relations in Baroda

The Gujarat Gazette, which has been published every month from the inception of the Gujarat state, shows that, from 1961 to 1981, 2406 disputes have been reported in the whole of Gujarat. Out of these disputes, 2302 (95.7 per cent) were strikes and only 92 (3.8 per cent) were lockouts. For 12 (0.5 per cent) disputes no information about their nature was available. Similarly in Baroda during this period 285 disputes have been reported, out of which 270 (94.7 per cent) were strikes and only 14 (4.9 per cent) were lockouts. About one (0.4 per cent) dispute, no information was available. Although strike remains to be the dominant form of industrial dispute, both in Baroda and in the rest of Gujarat, the incidence of lockouts has increased of late.

If we examine the growth of the disputes in Baroda vis-a-vis the rest of Gujarat in terms of five yearly period between 1961 to 1980 (Table 2.1) we find that the growth of industrial disputes in Baroda is relatively much faster. Thus, it can be concluded that Baroda, of late, has become relatively more militant as compared to
the rest of Gujarat.

### Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Disputes</th>
<th>Baroda</th>
<th>Rest of Gujarat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-65</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-70</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-75</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-80</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.2 reveals that in Baroda, the duration of industrial disputes is relatively longer, and the disputes involving larger number of workers are more.

Thus, industrial relations in Baroda are characterised by increasing conflicts which are not only prolonged but also quite widespread. Obviously, one of the contributing factors can be the trade unions and their efforts to organize workers and to articulate their demands.

**The Contemporary Trade Union Scene**

The trade unions existing in Baroda can be classified into two broad categories: (i) those affiliated with one or the other national federations, and (ii) those which are unaffiliated or independent and led by some individuals, mostly the "insiders". The affiliated unions
generally share the human and material resources of national federations, whereas the independent ones have to depend solely upon their own individual resources. The main difference between

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTION OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN TERMS OF DURATION AND NUMBER OF WORKERS INVOLVED IN BARODA AS COMPARED TO THE REST OF GUJARAT (1961-81).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of Dispute</strong></td>
<td><strong>Baroda</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of Disputes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short (5 days or less)</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long (6 days more)</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Workers Directly Involved</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small (50 or less)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large (51 or more)</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total number of disputes recorded during 1961-81 is 2406. But information about the duration of forty eight disputes was not available.

the affiliated and the unaffiliated or independent trade unions is that the former have allegiance to some explicitly stated political ideology of their respective federations. Since the purpose of this study is to examine the political context of the trade union movement in Baroda our focus would be mainly on the affiliated unions.

The trade union movement of Baroda has been dominated by the local affiliates of the national federations ever since the inception of the movement, linking thereby the local trade union movement with the mainstream of the national movement. At present the following six national federations of trade unions have their local affiliates in the city of Baroda: All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) and National Labour Organization (NLO, which is popularly known in Gujarat as Majoor Mahajan).

**INTUC and NLO**

The Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad (TLA), which is known as Majoor Mahajan Mandal, extended its influence to Baroda in the late 1920s. It was closely associated with Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. Yet it avoided being formally affiliated with the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), even though the latter was working in alliance with Congress for a long time. Since the Majoor Mahajan (TLA) wanted to maintain its unique identity as the experimental laboratory of Gandhian philosophy in labour field, it also started a training school, Hindustan Majoor Seva Sangh (HMS), to educate workers and their leaders in this ideology (Karnik 1978:167-168). Nevertheless when the Congress Party decided
to form its own national federation of trade unions namely, INTUC in 1947 it was the Majoor Mahajan (TLA) and HMSS of Ahmedabad who provided initial leadership and strength to this new federation (Karnik 1978:168-169, 241).

Majoor Mahajan of Baroda which was founded by the TLA leaders of Ahmedabad also affiliated itself to INTUC after the merger of Baroda State into the Indian union. The Congress Party did not exist in Baroda due to its All-India policy of avoiding direct confrontation with the native rulers. Instead, there was a Praja Mandal which was working under the guidance of Congress (Pantham 1976:21-22). The leaders of Majoor Mahajan in Baroda therefore were working in collaboration with Praja Mandal, especially in political and legal matters. Some of the persons like Manilal Desai, Rasulkhan Pathan and Chhotalal Sutaria who were active in Praja Mandal were also actively associated with Mahajan. In 1948 Praja Mandal decided to merge with Congress (Pantham 1976:22). Therefore, the Majoor Mahajan also decided to be affiliated to INTUC, the labour front of Congress.

However, after the split in Congress Party in 1969-70, the dominant faction of INTUC resolved at its Nagpur convention held in November 1971 to support the then Congress (R) led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi as against Congress(O) led by Morarji Desai and others. Therefore, the Majoor Mahajan of Gujarat, over which Congress(O) leaders had considerable influence, decided to leave INTUC and form its own federation of trade unions, namely, National Labour Organization (NLO) in 1972 (Karnik 1978:377-378). The Baroda unit of Majoor Mahajan under the leadership of Yasinkhan Pathan and Dahyabhai K. Patel also joined the newly formed NLO.
Since the entire leadership of INTUC joined NLO along with their followers the INTUC was wiped out from Baroda and Gujarat overnight. Efforts to revive it in Baroda were made by some individuals associated with the then Congress(R) in the early 1970s, but they were not successful. Only in 1975 the INTUC could acquire roots, as a result of the efforts of Ashok Vaghela, a Congress(R) supporter, who is the main leader of INTUC in Baroda.

Thus, initially Majoor Mahajan of Baroda was the part of TLA. Then it was affiliated to INTUC and now it is affiliated to NLO. Therefore in the following discussion we would refer to the affiliation of Majoor Mahajan in parentheses depending upon the time of reference.

**AITUC and CITU**

Some individuals who were influenced by the Communist ideology started organizing workers in Baroda in the early 1930s (Anadkat 1967:138). They were supported by the Communist leaders of Bombay. A small nucleus of the Communists was formed in Baroda around 1939. However, the Communist Party hardly functioned legally in Baroda state (Anadkat 1967:167). Their unions were also never registered by the Baroda State as legal bodies under the state's trade union act.

Yet, the influence of Communist unions in Baroda culminated in the late 1940s due to a series of struggles launched by them. The main conflicts were (i) the one month long strike of textile workers of the entire Baroda State in 1945, (ii) the postal workers' strike in 1946, (iii) the strike of the employees of the Baroda State's G.B.S. railways in 1947 and (iv) the strike of Dinesh Woollen Mills and New India Industries in 1948 (Rana:1950, Anadkat 1967:165-167).
But, soon it was followed by an anticlimax. The Communist Party of India was given a deadly blow by the Government of India, by arresting its leaders at the all-India level, immediately after the Party decided to follow the revolutionary path, as spelled out in the so-called "Randive Theis", adopted by the Party in its second congress held in 1948. As a sequel, most of the Communist leaders of Baroda went underground, but some of them could not avoid the arrest (Anadkat 1967:142).

This immobilization of the Communist leaders during 1948-49 eliminated them from the trade union field which was captured by the Majoor Mahajan and the newly formed Hind Majdoor Sabha (HMS) of the Socialists (Rana:1950).

In the meantime in 1956, Mahagujarat movement began to which the Communist Party was wholly committed. The movement was against the creation of the then bi-lingual Bombay State and was centred around the demand for the formation of a separate unilingual Gujarat State of Gujarati speaking people. The Communists and the Praja Socialists were in the forefront of the movement. They joined the Mahagujarat Janata Parishad formed under the leadership of the late Indulal Yagnik, for this purpose. Their demand was granted by the Central Government in 1960 when a separate Gujarat State was formed.

After the Gujarat State was formed in 1960, it was decided by the leaders of the Janata Parishad to continue it with new goals. One of the new goals set up by them was to organize industrial workers under the banner of Sangram Samitis all over Gujarat. Such Samitis were formed in the early 1960s in the major industrial centres of Gujarat, including Baroda. One of the main issues which
they took up was the demand for revision of dearness allowance (DA) by the State Government. This demand, gained immediate support from the working class. In Baroda also the workers expressed their support by long processions and stormy demonstrations, under the banner of Sangram Samiti of Janata Parishad having the Communists at the hegemony. After this agitation of workers all over Gujarat, their demand was ultimately accepted by the Government. As a result, workers got a substantive rise in their dearness allowance. This enhanced the status of Sangram Samitis and their leaders. Thus the Communist influence was once again spreading in the city. They formed unions in some big units such as Precision Bearing of India, Tensile Steel Ltd., and Sussan Textile amongst others.

But, before they could consolidate their strength they had to face another crisis which was a result of the Chinese War in 1962. Most of their important leaders in Baroda were arrested and put behind the bars. After two years, the Communist Party of India (CPI) was divided with the emergence of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M). Most of the prominent Communist leaders in Baroda joined the CPI(M), except Bhalchandra Trivedi who preferred to be in CPI. Interestingly enough, even on this internal issue of the party, most of those who joined CPI(M) were arrested and put in jail in 1964 (Anadkat 1967:144). As if this was not enough, one of them, Magan Desai, who left the united CPI, during the Chinese War, formed the Communist League, creating a third party of those Communists who claim to follow Trotsky. Later, he formed the Workers' Committees organizing workers of some plants. (Since they were not affiliated with any national federation, and since they did not survive for long, we have not taken them into account
Thus, the trade union front of the Communist Party was once again in disarray for quite some time, due to these developments.

After the split in the Communist Party, both CPI and CPI(M) continued to work together in the AITUC at all India level until the CPI(M) decided, in 1970, to start its own federation the CITU (Karnik 1978:344). Activities of the AITUC in Baroda were managed by the CPI leader, Bhalchandra Trivedi, when the CITU came into existence. The CITU was just beginning to establish itself when its leader, Vasant Mahendrale, was arrested in 1974-75 under MISA due to the declaration of internal emergency in India and its opposition by the CPI(M).

AITUC, along with the CPI, supported Mrs. Gandhi’s Government throughout this period and did not face any political threat. Bhalchandra Trivedi, who had been consistently working in the field for more than thirty years, in the meantime, put the AITUC on a sound footing especially by extending its influence in more than a hundred engineering units of Baroda. The AITUC has added to its strength and respectability by bringing in its fold the workers of the Alembic group of industries in the early 1970s.

HMS

In 1947, Socialists who had been working within the Congress as the Congress Socialist Party since 1934, left Congress and formed the Socialist Party of India. One of the issues which caused the secession of the Socialists from the Indian National Congress was the latter’s decision to form its own trade union federation namely, INTUC, as against the AITUC in which the Congressmen, the Socialists
and the Communists were working together since long. The Socialists, thinking that this would divide the working class movement, opposed the move to form a rival federation of trade unions by Congress at the national level and preferred to be in AITUC along with the Communists. Ironically, they also later on decided to start their own federation of trade unions viz. Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) in 1948.

In Baroda too, about a dozen Socialists started the Socialist Party in 1947 under the inspiration of Chotubhai Purani (Bhamdhere: 1965). In 1948 H.R. Gokhale, who was till then in Praja Mandal but ideologically closer to the Communists decided to join the Socialist Party and form the HMS at Baroda. Immediately after its formation, the HMS under the leadership of Gokhale, fought the struggle of Maharaja's Khangi staff (employees of the Maharaja's Household) which successfully ended in January 1950, when the Bombay Government agreed to pay pension and gratuity to these ex-employees of the Maharaja of Baroda. By this time several trade unions were associated with the HMS in Baroda. However, Gokhale, the founder of HMS at Baroda, left the city for good, after his defeat in the Parliament election in 1952, which he contested on the ticket of the Socialist Party.

In the meanwhile, the Socialist Party merged with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party to form the Praja Socialist Party (PSP). By this time Gokhale had left Baroda. But the HMS under the new PSP leadership of Sanat Mehta, Murlidhar Ranalkar and G.G. Paradkar increased its strength mainly by forming unions among non-textile workers. They added a feather in their cap by forming a union among the Sarabhai group of industries in 1954, under the title of the Chemical Mazdoor Sabha, which remained the backbone of its
organization and the main source of strength until the early 1970s.

In 1956, the leaders of HNS formed Baroda City Labour Council (B.C.L.C.) to coordinate the activities of different trade unions affiliated with HNS in Baroda and to extend its influence among the unorganized workers.

**Factions in HNS**

The Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) which emerged as next only to the Majoor Mahajan (INTUC) in strength during the 1950s and the 1960s started weakening in the 1970s. At present it is clearly divided into two factions, one led by Sanat Mehta and the other led by G.G. Paradkar, both competing to acquire control over union membership in Baroda.

The tensions developed when a large majority of Baroda Praja Socialists, who controlled the HMS, decided to join one of the factions in the Congress called Congress(R) in 1971 under the leadership of Mehta, while Paradkar refused to follow him (Pantham 1976: 40-41). However, in 1975, when at the All-India level one faction of HMS decided to support Mrs. Gandhi's 20 point programme, which implied a tacit support for the emergency rule also, the other faction led by Shanti Patel and others opposed the move. This created a rift in the HMS at national level (Karnik 1978:402) having consequences in Baroda too. Since then, the two factions have been at loggerheads. Meanwhile the Mehta-faction of HMS also lost its important leader, Murlidhar Ranalkar, due to his death in 1973. As a result, HMS now is a divided house with consequential loss of strength.
BMS

The Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) as an All-India federation of
trade unions, was formed in Bhopal on July 23, 1955, the birth anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak (Thengdi ND:1). In Baroda it started functioning around the mid-sixties (Anadkat 1967:48-52).

Politically it is known to have affinity with the former Jan Sangh, a political party which merged with other parties to form the Janata Party in 1977 and now has remerged as Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP).

Its Baroda office was opened with the help of Keshav Thakkar, a political activist associated with the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and the Jan Sangh. He was soon joined by Bhaskar Thakkur, another RSS activist as a full-timer. The leaders of BMS were new in the field and therefore, their influence was limited only to a few units at the outset. However, by the early 1970s they acquired some influence in the engineering industry.

Thus, all these federations are closely associated with different national political parties existing in the city. The national political developments such as emergence of new political parties or splits within the existing parties and consequent divisions in their trade union fronts are also reflected at the local level. Further, the influence of state policies is clearly visible at the grass roots level as illustrated by the fact that the unions of the Communists had to face several hurdles and crises both in the feudal state of Baroda and also in the post-independence period.
Ideological Orientations: The Leftists and The Rightists

All these trade union federations have both short-term and long-term objectives. The short-term objectives are common to all federations as they pertain to wage-and-work related problems of the workers. However, these federations justify their separate existence by referring to their long-term goals. These long-term goals, which in a sense legitimize their independent existence, differ from federation to federation.

AITUC and CITU are manifestly committed to the Marxist ideology of class conflict of CPI and CPI(M) respectively. HMS of the Socialists also believes in the ideas of socialism and class struggle (cf. Ramaswamy and Ramaswamy, 1981:96-98, Myers and Kannappan, 1970: 152-154). Thus these federations have, by and large, a radical orientation.

On the other hand, INTUC and Majoor Mahajan (NLO) are espoused to the Gandhian ideology. It is argued that Gandhi could not formulate his ideology of industrial relations very clearly, because of his pre-occupation with the national politics (Patel, 1984). As a result, whatever ideas he formulated, are believed to have remained vague and therefore have been subject to partisan and hence contradictory interpretations by the employers and the workers respectively. Nonetheless, the most outstanding feature of the Gandhian ideology, relevant to the trade union movement, which is highlighted by INTUC and its splinter Majoor Mahajan (NLO) alike, is industrial peace. They are not in favour of the Marxist principle of class conflict. They prefer to settle the disputes mostly through negotiations, conciliation and adjudication (Ramaswamy and Ramaswamy 1981:94-96, Myers and Kannappan 1970:151-152).
BMS, the federation which came into existence later, is also ideologically opposed to the principle of class conflict. One of its major objectives is to counteract communist influence over workers (Karnik 1978:297). The leaders of BMS consider the Marxist slogan 'Workers of the World Unite' as a dividing slogan since it views the society divided into the mutually opposed classes. Hence they propose a new slogan 'Workers, Unite the World'. They reject the idea of celebration of May Day also as they consider it a symbol of class conflict. They celebrate the birth anniversary of a Hindu God (Vishwakarma Jayanti) as the workers' day (Myers and Kannappan 1970:72-73).

But, ironically, as the local BMS leader confessed, they find it difficult to celebrate a common day as Vishwakarma Jayanti at the national level as the Hindu calendar differs on certain matters from region to region. The industrial policy of BMS is reflected in the following three maxims: (i) industrialize the nation (ii) labourize the industry and (iii) nationalize the labour. That is, industrialization should spread. The industry should be labour dominated. And, the spirit of nationalism should be created among the workers so that they do not think in terms of their partisan interests. Therefore one of their main slogans is: Bharat Mata Ki Jai (Victory to Mother India) (Thengdi:ND, Mahendra:1981).

In view of the fact that AITUC, CITU and BMS believe in the Marxist principle of class conflict we have classified them for the purpose of this study as 'leftist' or 'radical' federations, since their goal is to radically change the present system in favour of the working class. The remaining three federations (BMS, INTUC and NLO) subscribe to the ideology of inter-class harmony and are opposed to the idea of class conflict. Therefore we have classified them as
'rightists' or 'reformists', as they aim to improve the conditions of workers by reforming the existing societal framework.

**Membership and Resource Mobilization**

Since every federation would like to spread its influence by mobilizing workers and other resources, it would be interesting to make a comparative analysis of these federations in terms of membership and resource mobilization.

**Trade Union Membership**

63,424 workers were organized in 64 trade unions by these federations in 1982-83 in Bareda. They have organized workers, as evidenced in Appendix I through VI, from different industries and spheres such as textile, engineering, chemical, glass, rubber, woollen, local self-government, hospitals, banks, restaurants, and several organizations belonging to the public sector. Some of them also have extended their activities to the neighbouring areas such as Panchmahal and Kheda districts. Table 2.3 shows the relative position of each federation in terms of number of trade unions affiliated with them, the membership claimed by them, and the average membership per trade union. The membership figures may be a little inflated by the union leaders, as it is a common practice in India, but there is no other alternative to verify the exact membership.

Table 2.3 reveals that the Majoor Mahajan (NLO) has organized the highest number of trade unions followed by BESS, AITUC, HMS, INTUC, and CITU. But in terms of membership claimed, AITUC ranks first followed by Majoor Mahajan (NLO), HMS, INTUC, BESS, and CITU. From the viewpoint of average membership per trade union, INTUC ranks first, followed by AITUC, HMS, CITU, Majoor Mahajan (NLO), and BESS.
In terms of ideological stance, the leftist federations (AITUC, BMS & CITU) have organized only 24 unions as against 40 unions of the rightist federations (BMS, INTUC, NLO). However, as far as membership is concerned there is no much difference between the two. As the leftist federations have 30,940 members whereas the rightist

**TABLE 2.3**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF TRADE UNIONS AND MEMBERSHIP CLAIMED BY THE FEDERATIONS IN BARODA, 1982-83.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federation</th>
<th>Total Number of Unions</th>
<th>Total Membership</th>
<th>Average Membership per Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>affiliated N</td>
<td>claimed N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITUC</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.87</td>
<td>18270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>8368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITU</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>10170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTUC</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>10.94</td>
<td>9650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLO</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.56</td>
<td>14466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>63424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The figures given in this table were collected from the main office of each federation between 1982-83.

federations have 32,484. But this makes a real difference in their average membership per trade union, as the leftists have 1284 average membership per trade union while the rightists have only 812. This is because of the fact that two of the rightist federations, namely NLO and BMS, have adopted a policy of having a large number of unions, though they may not be very big in size. The reason behind this policy seems to be in the M.S. University of Baroda's Act. In this Act there is a trade union constituency from which one representative
can be elected to the Senate of the University. According to the law, any registered union having a membership of 250 or more can cast one vote by passing a resolution in the Executive Committee. Therefore, it is advantageous to have as many registered trade unions as possible with 250 or more members for any federation interested in contesting the University Senate’s election from the trade union constituency.

Interestingly, the same candidate of Majoor Mahajan gets elected to the University Senate from this constituency since last more than twenty years. Of late the BMS also has adopted the policy of having a large number of trade unions precisely from this point of view, as expressed in the following words of its leader:

"...we have recently adopted a new strategy of forming separate union of each plant having more than 250 workers instead of having one amalgamated union of several factories. Because we are thinking of challenging the candidate of Majoor Mahajan in the forthcoming Senate election of M.S. University of Baroda."

In view of such expedient considerations, in addition to the doubtful validity of the membership figures given by these federations, it is difficult to assess their real strength merely on the basis of workers/union organized by them. Hence in the following sections we will examine the nature and type of unions formed by them, their industrywise influence, and the financial resources/assets mobilized by them, which are some of the other important indicators of their viability and strength.

**Types of Unions**

Most of the unions organized by these federations are plant unions. The names of some of these unions clearly indicate that they are plant unions such as Jyoti Karmachari Sangh (BMS), IFCL Employees
Majoor Mahajan (NLO) is the only federation which has a strong industrial union of the textile workers namely the Majoor Mahajan Mandal. No other federation has such an industrial union. Even Majoor Mahajan (NLO) has not been able to form a comparable industrial union in the non-textile industry. But, names of some unions give an impression that they are industrial unions, though in reality they are also plant unions. For example, Baroda Rubber Works Kamdar Mandal of Majoor Mahajan (NLO) is confined to only one rubber factory. However, this type of nomenclature has one advantage in that, it keeps the doors open for other workers or plants of the same industry. Some of these unions also have membership across the plants in the same industry. For example, Rasayanik Kamdar Sangh (BMS), Engineering Kamdar Union (CITU) and Baroda Engineering Works Kamdar Mandal (NLO) draw members from several plants of the same industry for which the respective unions are formed. But they hardly agitate or bargain on industry level, which is the essence of an industrial union. In the late sixties and the early seventies many disputes had arisen in engineering industry due to the recommendations of the Engineering Wage Board, but no effort was made by any federation, either individually or jointly, to organize the agitation at industry level despite the fact that there are a considerable number of engineering units in Baroda.

Of late, some general unions are also formed such as Baroda Mazdoor Sabha (BNS), Makarpura G.I.D.C. Employees Union (AITUC), Vadodara Jilla General Works Kamdar Mandal (NLO), Rashtriya Majdoor Union (INTUC), Bhartiya Kamdar Sangh (BMS) etc. These unions organize
workers from different plants of a particular region or locality cutting across different industries. Again, in reality, these unions, like the ones mentioned above, take up specific issues in specific plants. Thus, they too are loose associations of plant unions. The only advantage of this type of loose structure, like the one mentioned above, is that the workers in a plant who have a grievance but have no union of their own can take shelter under such broad-based general unions, without going into the time-consuming and difficult process of forming a new union.

There are, of course, some occupational or 'craft' unions formed by some of the federations. Baroda Municipal Corporation Drivers' Association (BMC), and Vadodara Shaher Gumasta Mahamandal (NLO) are instances in point. But they are very few in number. These unions are very small in size and are mainly concerned with the problems of a particular or craft. The Communist federations, such as AITU and CITU, who do not believe in organizing the working class on sectional interests, have not organized any craft or occupational union so far.

Thus, most of the unions are small plantwide or firmwide unions except the union of textile workers formed by Majoer Mahajan (NLO) which is the only citywide industrial union. What is more remarkable is that many of the unions exist as loose associations of several plant unions of the same industry or of different industries. Such loose structures with their 'open door policy', though at times useful to the ununionized workers in emergency, cannot be very strong in the absence of common and unifying bonds among the associates. The craft unions are also very few and small in size.
Industrywise Influence

According to a rough estimate given by a few trade union leaders about one lac persons are employed in the organized industry in Baroda city. From among them, about 42000 are employed in the following important industries of the city: about 12,000 in engineering; 9,500 in textile; 8,000 in pharmaceuticals and chemicals; 5,000 in petrochemicals; 2,000 in refinery; 2,000 in fertilizers and 1,200 in petroils.

In terms of industrywise influence it can be said that the Majoor Mahajan (MLO) has monopoly over the textile workers, as it is the sole bargaining agent of workers in this industry. But Majoor Mahajan (NLO) is not equally strong in other industries.

Among the other federations, the AITUC has acquired considerable hold in the engineering industry having unions in more than one hundred plants, organizing nearly 10,000 workers.

Thus, the two major industries are captured by these two federations, and the rest of the industries are shared by all.

Income, Expenditure and other Assets

It is not easy to assess the financial position of these federations as all of them do not keep systematic records of their income and expenditure. Nor do they have a regular income as membership fluctuates from month and year to year.

Membership Fees

Traditionally the main source of income of all these federations, and their trade unions, is the collection of monthly membership subscription, which was until recently as low as fifty paise. But, since the last decade many of them have raised it to one rupee. Still,
there are some trade unions, though very few, where membership fees are twenty five paise or fifty paise per member, per month. Particularly, some old unions affiliated to Majoor Mahajan (NLO) and HMS resent any effort to raise their membership fees.

The unions collect fees monthly, four-monthly, six-monthly or annually, depending upon the convenience of their members. A few unions, like Chemical Mazdoor Sabha of HMS, have an understanding with the workers and the management to deduct their membership subscription annually from the bonus. But, most of the unions have to collect fees monthly on the pay day of their members, that too in some cases, outside the gate of the factory, or secretly if the management is non-cooperative or hostile to the union. This, compounded with the general unwillingness of some workers to part with any money, how-so-ever small the amount may be, for the trade union (or, for that matter, any voluntary activity which does not directly interest them or benefit them), makes the task of the fee collection still more difficult. Trade union leaders complain that many workers generally do not show much enthusiasm to pay the union dues regularly if they do not face any personal problem. It appears that there are two categories of such workers. Some of these workers are sympathetic to a union but avoid paying union fees either because of lack of interest or because, sometimes they are afraid of being identified with a particular union either by the management or by the rival union. Such workers are perhaps shy of this tendency and therefore, if personally contacted and persuaded, would not mind making the payment, though reluctantly. Some times, such workers pay fees to any union and every union which approaches them. But there is another category of workers who flatly refuse to pay the union fees even if
they are asked to do so, complaining: "Union Ne Hamare Liye Kya Kiya?" (what did the union do for me?). As one INTUC leader put it perceptively, such workers are of three types. One type of such workers consists of those who genuinely feel that the union did not solve their problems or did not even pay any attention to them, for whatever reason. The second type of such workers is of those who do not succeed in getting undue advantage or protection through the union and therefore they become turncoats. And, the third type of such workers is of those who never approach the union for any problem and yet they complain: "Union Ne Hamare Liye Kya Kiya?", just to avoid the payment of fees.

Besides, the top leaders of the federations have mainly to depend upon the union representatives or the activists of each union for the collection of fees, as they cannot personally go every time on the pay-day to every unit. But, all the representatives do not have enough interest and/or influence necessary for this work. Some of them are not even very honest, as in some cases after collection of the fees, on behalf of the union, they do not deposit the sum, partly or wholly. One BMS leader complained that they lost hold over one union because of such a dishonest representative who never deposited union dues collected by him. In fact no federation is free from such unfortunate experiences. Thus, for all these reasons the income from membership is not always certain.

In view of these problems it is not difficult to understand why most of the federations have liberalised their membership policy, in the sense that any worker can join the union any time by paying the whole year's fees, if he has any problem and needs the help of the union. This policy may be partly due to the fact that a trade union
is generally expected by a worker to help or protect him/her if he/she needs it. But, it is also partly due to multiple unionism, as every union treats a worker with a grievance as a potential defector. Therefore, the union leaders do not like to be strict with such a worker who becomes the member only when he has some problem. Otherwise, they are afraid, such a worker might join the rival union who would be quite willing to admit him. Therefore, almost all federations generally follow an 'open door policy' of admitting any worker, any time, for solving his individual problems by charging the annual subscription fees plus some lumpsum towards the case fee of about twenty five rupees for conciliation and one hundred to two hundred fifty rupees for the industrial tribunal/court.

**Expenditure, Deficit and Some Compensatory Devices**

In most of the cases the membership subscription, howsoever strictly collected, takes care of only routine establishment expenses such as honorarium of the full-timers and other office expenses which include rent, stationary, printing/typing/cyclostyling, telephone bills, travel & conveyance expenses, legal fees etc. Sometimes even these expenses are not adequately met. Therefore, another method adopted by these federations is to raise funds through donations collected from members after winning substantive benefits for them. Generally, the workers give five to ten per cent of the benefits earned by them individually or collectively. For example, when Alembic Karmachari Union of AITUC successfully settled their issue of exgratia bonus, the workers donated the sum of twenty-six thousand rupees to the union, which is put in the fixed deposit account of the union. In some cases they also give gifts to the federations in
kind such as wall-clock, radio, chairs, tables, fans, cupboards, scooters and other such items, usually inscribing the donor union's name on them. In most of the federation offices such articles are conspicuously visible.

In some cases, however, as some leaders complain, the workers after getting the substantive benefits, do not even bother to pay the actual legal expenses. As one BMS leader said:

...Some workers got the benefit of as much as ten to twenty thousand rupees through our efforts and yet they did not pay a single paisa to the union.

Therefore, some federations insist upon adding a clause in the settlement that a certain percentage of the cash benefits earned by the workers through their efforts would be directly deducted from their arrears for the union. Or in some other cases they make an arrangement with the management to disburse such arrears in the presence of the federation leaders so that they can immediately collect the union dues.

Another method used to raise funds is through collecting advertisements for union souvenires. This method, however, is not very frequently used and the federations of the Communist Parties do not like to collect money from the "capitalists" against whom they fight, nor do they expect much response from them. The HMS in its hey-day in the 1960s, used this method to a great extent, publishing two special numbers of their fortnightly Mazdoor Samaj every year containing a number of such advertisements.

Some of the federations who are not able to meet the deficit by raising funds through any of these means have to impose a cut in the honorarium of their full-timers, which is not infrequent in the federations like CITU or INTUC.
Accumulation of Assets

However, these federations have been able to accumulate some assets such as office premises, office staff, vehicles, other necessary equipment and veteran full-time leaders.

From this point of view the Majoor Mahajan (NLO), the oldest of all the federations of Baroda, has accumulated sizeable assets. It has, for instance, four full-time and one part-time paid trade union leaders. Besides, it also has five full-time and one part-time office staff. Mahajan's monthly salary bill in the year 1982-83 was of Rs. 8,601-00 which did not include the scooter-and-travel-allowances given to their full-time office-bearers in addition to the honorarium. Besides, it is the only federation which gives provident fund, gratuity and other benefits to its staff.

Mahajan (NLO) has its own two-storeyed spacious building known as Mazdoor Bhavan on Vinoba Bhave Marg. Their building was built in 1966-67 at the cost of Rs. 72,519-00. In addition to this they have acquired other property also which includes furniture worth Rs.52,000=00, ten typewriters, three scooters, fifteen fans, ten sewing machines and a loudspeaker set. The Majoor Mahajan has instituted Yasin Khan Pathan Labour Welfare Trust also with Rs. 2,25 lacs for undertaking welfare services for their workers such as setting up maternity homes, hospitals, to provide educational help etc.

AITUC has five full-time trade union leaders and their monthly salary bill in 1982-83 was about Rs.4,000=00. Besides, they have one typewriter, one megaphone and one electronic calculator. It does not have its own independent office building. AITUC's main office is in one rented room in the Sun-Moon building, on New Laheripura Road.
It houses simultaneously the office of Baroda unit of CPI also. Some of the unions affiliated with AITUC, such as those of Alembic group of industries and that of Operation Research Group employees have got independent offices individually taken on rent.

MPS has four full-timers and their monthly salary bill was Rs. 1,150=00 in 1982-83. In order to coordinate the activities of several unions associated with it, an apex body known as Baroda City Labour Conference (BCLC) was established in 1956. The BCLC has its own two-storeyed building, known as Shram-Sadhana, which is located near the Police Ground, behind the Collector's Office (Kothi Kacheri). The office-building was built in 1967-68 at the cost of about 90,000=00. In addition, they have a printing press worth Rs.30,000=00 which was donated by the USAID for trade union publications. But now no one from MPS is able to look after this press. Therefore, it is given on contract on monthly rent of Rs.800=00. This money is used to maintain the Shram Sadhana building. Besides, they have two typewriters and one cyclostyling machine.

MNS has three full-time leaders and four part-time office staff. Their monthly salary bill in 1982-83 was about Rs.2,000=00. Their two-room rented office located at the Shastri Pole near Salatwada is in a building which also accommodates the office of RSS. However, both the offices are separate and independent. Among other assets they have two scooters, one motorcycle, two mopeds, one fan, three typewriters, one cyclostyling machine and one tape-recorder.

INTUC has a one room office near Salatwada. It has three full-timers, one of whom is not paid any salary as he is a Municipal Corporator. Their monthly salary bill was about Rs. 1,000=00 in
1982-83. They have a rented office and have no other assets, except one megaphone.

CITU has three full-time leaders but one being Municipal Corporator is not paid any honorarium. The monthly salary bill of CITU was Rs.700=00 in 1982-83. Their office is accommodated in the small two room office of CPI(M). They have no other assets.

News-Bulletins, Meetings and Other Means of Communication

Role of communication in mobilizing workers can never be ignored. One of the complaints of the leaders of all these federations is that local newspapers do not give much coverage to the trade union news. But all federations do not have enough resources to have their own regular publications. Only Major Mahajan (NLO) has been able to publish its fortnightly Majoor Partika very regularly for over 30 years. HMS also had its own fortnightly publication namely Magdoor Sama, but after the split in its leadership in the 1970s it has ceased to be published. INTUC also started publishing its own fortnightly Shram Satte in 1977, at the time of the general elections but it was discontinued immediately after the elections.

Therefore, some of the commonly used means of communications are meetings of workers, handbills and notice boards. The meetings of workers are of different types and are called according to the purpose. For a very general issue, affecting a majority of the workers, general meetings of the members of all the unions affiliated with a federation are called. But such meetings are very rare and are usually held on May Day or on the occasion of some joint action programme. For an issue pertaining to one particular union, such as to decide whether to start an agitation in their plant, a meeting of the General Body of
that particular union is preferred by some federations. For the routine matters Executive Committee meetings of the concerned unions are called. For preparing charters of demands, meetings of the departmental representatives is found useful by some. However there are inter-federation and intra-federation variations in these preferences. Besides, though General Body and Executive Committee of each union is constitutionally required to meet periodically, the constitutional provision is not always operative in all the unions. However, one of the most preferred forms of meetings by all other federations, except NLO, is the gate-meetings which is rather an extra-constitutional form of meetings. These meetings are held at the gate of the factory, usually at the time of recess or change of shifts. The purpose of these meetings is to make short announcements or to apprise the workers about the burning issue. Speeches made here are usually short but at times fiery.

A notice-board or black-board put up in the union office, is another important means of communication. On such boards generally the dates of hearing of the cases of different workers/unions/plants are mentioned and some special announcements are also made.

When a union affiliated to a federation is involved in some struggle, the federation would publish handbills also, giving details of the struggle and the day-to-day developments. These leaflets, along with the gate-meetings, have great educational value.

Sometimes they also use what is known as Muftardi Patrika (toilet-leaflet). These are hand-written cost-free leaflets pasted inside the toilet of the factory. In such leaflets unpublishable news about the management or its henchmen or about the rival union are given.
Sometimes, to make these leaflets interesting, cartoons are also drawn. However, as one BMS leader remarked, these leaflets are most effective when they are used against the management. But they are not equally effective against the rival unions, because when their representatives or activists notice such leaflets, containing propaganda against their union, they immediately remove them.

**Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter we saw that Baroda, which was the capital of an erstwhile feudal state, has been industrialised on a large scale only after formation of the state of Gujarat in 1960. The recent boom in high-technology industries of petroleum, petrochemicals, fertilizers, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and engineering has contributed to the rapid growth of the city. The industrial relations in Baroda are characterised by increasing working class militancy as reflected in the relatively rapid growth of the industrial conflicts which are not only prolonged but also quite widespread.

However, the main concern of this chapter has been to give an overview of the contemporary trade union situation with a focus on the national federations of trade unions at the local level. The foregoing discussion shows that these national federations are actively engaged in organizing workers and their unions at Baroda. They are rooted in the city and have managed to form 64 trade unions with 63,424 members, organizing about 63 per cent of the organizable workforce of Baroda. Thus they cannot be described merely as existing at the national level having only "head and no body".
As a matter of fact the above evidence supports Sheth's observation (1968) that there is an inevitable inter-dependence between the central union federations and their local affiliates. The dynamics of national developments are clearly reflected at the local level, including the effects of splits in political parties and their trade union fronts.

Further, all these federations have both short-term goals and the long-term goals. The short-term goals are common to all, which refer to the Dal-Roti problems of the workers. It requires articulation of workers' demands and solving their individual as well as collective issues. Since workers are primarily interested in the immediate problems concerning their wage-and-work conditions, the federations need to fulfill these short-term objectives.

The long-term goals, which refer to the future image of the working class in the system of stratification differ from federation to federation. They are reflected in their working class ideologies and political allegiances. These ideologies range from Marxist (AITUC-CITU) to Socialist (HNS) to Gandhian (INTUC-NLO) to Nationalist (BMS). But they can be classified into two broad categories: (i) the radicals or the leftists and (ii) the reformists or the rightists. AITUC, CITU and HNS follow the leftist ideology and aim at revolutionary changes in the social system through class conflict. While the rightist federations namely, BMS, INTUC and NLO, seek reforms within the existing societal framework for amelioration of the condition of working class, without resorting to class conflict.

But, workers in general appear to be guided by their own expedient considerations. The competing federations are successful in
attracting workers mainly on mundane bread and butter issues. Monetary and real gains win and retain members, not the abstract, long-term, ideological issues. Even success in winning concrete benefits for workers does not necessarily guarantee that they would pay their membership dues regularly.

Besides, most of the unions formed by these federations are small plantwide unions. Strong industrial or craft unions are almost non-existent. And the so-called 'general unions' are loose structures often characterized by the lack of a common and unifying bond among the associates. It is therefore not uncommon to find some of the federations chronically plagued by the paucity of funds and personnel.

Nonetheless, these federations have emerged as viable organizations. The very fact that they have survived for such a long period and kept themselves actively engaged in their activities, despite many a crises faced by each one of them, is the testimony of their viability. Another fact to be noted is that they have been able to accumulate some permanent assets, of course, in varying degrees such as office-premises, vehicles, other equipment, office-staff and above all veteran full-time leaders.

However, the situation described above raises a few pertinent questions: How far these federations are able to create a core of active supporters and ideologically influence them, which in fact is the real test of their vitality? Further, if each federation is trying to socialize its members in its own political ideology then, how valid is Marx's assumption that the trade unions, whether they intend or not, radicalize their members without regard to their ideological pursuits?
But, before we answer these questions (chapter 6-7) we will try to find answers for the following questions: How do these federations try to combine their long-term ideological goals with the immediate interests of the workers? Since each federation is trying to enhance the sphere of its influence what is the actual process of inter-federation competition? What are the environmental forces which shape this competition? What are the consequences of such competitions? (chapter 5-4) Who are the leaders of these federations? What role do they play in politically socializing the workers? (chapter 5).