CHAPTER 3

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICERS' UNIONS

Trade unionism among officers is in several ways an extension of the emergence and growth of trade unionism among lower sections of employees, especially clerical and other subordinate staff known in the banking industry as the award staff (as their employment and working conditions are governed by awards made by various industrial tribunals). All the white collar trade unions including those in the banking industry have on their part been influenced by the experience of unionism among blue collar workers in Indian Industry. I shall therefore, discuss the emergence and development of trade unions among bank officers against the background of trends in blue-collar and white-collar unions.

UNIONS AMONG INDUSTRIAL WORKERS:

During the early years of industrialization in India, the industrial workers were governed by highly exploitative norms and practices. Revati (1972: 14-15) notes:

"Workers then were forced to put in excessively
long hours of work without any rest; men, women and children were herded together in the work houses to toil under miserable conditions... there was no compensation for loss of life or limb, rates of wages were unduly low and a semi-subsistence wage was paid."

The first few labour organizations were formed by "the relatively more educated workers in the railways, the printing press and in the textile industry in the late years of the nineteenth century" (Sharma : 1972 ; 7.). However the real beginning in trade unionism in India was made soon after the first world war. Karnik

Karnik notes the factors which helped the growth of trade unions at that time. "The first and the most important factor was of course the economic condition. Wages had not kept pace with the rise in prices, as a result there was acute distress and discontent among workers. Industries had on the other hand developed during the war years and were experiencing a period of prosperity..... it was more profitable for them to concede the demands of workers and keep the factories working than to resist the demands and face stoppage of work. Moreover during those couple of years there was a comparative shortage of workers owing to the epidemic of influenza which swept through the country. Workers were therefore in a better bargaining position."

"However, workers were not in a position to take upon themselves the task of organization. They were illiterate,
ignorant and backward ..... they were not accustomed to the environment in which they were placed. They were not a homogeneous mass, having come to the factory from different parts of the country. There was a wide social gulf between them and the employers and managers and other officers ..... they were afraid of employers, police, government. In this situation they needed some outside assistance to get over their initial feeling of fear and nervousness. Hence some eminent public-men, political leaders, philanthropic and social workers came forward during those early years of the movement to organize workers into trade unions."

"Another factor which helped was the new upsurge of the national movement... Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene and under his unique leadership the national movement spread far and wide in the country and became a people's revolt against foreign rule. Workers in cities were also drawn into the movement. Political leaders came in contact with them, talked to them about their miserable conditions of life and work and this kindled a desire in their minds to organize themselves to improve their lot. Some of those leaders did not remain content with talk. They took the lead in setting up organizations. Many trade unions were formed in those days by political leaders or under their inspiration and guidance. The political ferment that followed the end of war had a beneficial effect on the growth of trade unions." (Karnik : 1960 : 15-17).
The establishment of International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919 also provided the occasion for the formation of national organization. As one of the founder members of ILO India had to send its representative at the ILO conferences. The Government therefore felt the need of a national body for a proper representation at ILO. This led to the formation of All India Trade Union Congress in 1920. Subsequently, with the adoption of the Indian Trade Union Act in 1926, trade unions acquired legal status as well as protection for legitimate union activity, resulting in steady growth in workers' unions.

WHITE-COLLAR UNIONS:

A few unions among white collar employees were formed in the early days of industrialization in India. The National Union of Railwaymen of India and Burma was formed in 1907. Between 1913 and 1920, several categories of government employees formed unions. Three unions of bank employees were established as early as 1925 (Karnik: 1978: 255). However the white collar workers unions grew rapidly only in the wake of the second world war and Indian Independence (Singh: 1967: 182). Rapid increase in white-collar employment appears to be a major situational factor in the growth of white-collar unionism. According to Goyal (1968: 129) employment in trade, banking and insurance companies, commercial offices etc., rose by between 2$\frac{1}{2}$ and 3$\frac{1}{2}$ times.

As was the case with industrial workers, economic conditions have been highlighted as the most important -
Factors in the growth of white collar workers' unions. "The war-time inflation and rising cost of living in the post independence period made the middle class little better than the working class.... the widening gap between the income and expenditure created an urgency for unionization among white collar employees." (Goil 1968:110). However, several non-economic factors have also been responsible for growth of white-collar unionism. As Mitra (1968:pp147) states:

"The impersonal nature of relations between superior and his subordinate and widened hiatus between them, lessening chances of promotion and identification with the supervisory class, and the latter's treatment to them contributed to the growth of white collar unions." Pandey (1968) adds to this list one more factor; the increasing amount of educated unemployment which acts as a threat to job security.

The gains achieved by industrial workers through their unions had a demonstrative effect on white collar employees. They were conscious of their key position in the administrative process. Being educated they themselves took the initiative to organize unions. At the same time, central trade unions also showned interest in organizing white collar employees. However, a significant number of white collar unions stayed away from the central trade unions. They kept their unions separate and regarded themselves superior to industrial workers' unions. They believed their problems to be different and regarded themselves capable of solving these by themselves" (Karnik : 1978 : 254).
White collar unions are seen as different from the blue collar workers' unions. Mathur and Papola (1968) have shown that traditionally, white collar unions have been differentiated from those of manual workers at two broad levels: "At the first level their breadth of objective is considered narrower than that of manual workers' unions. The degree of solidarity among white collar unions is said to be lower than among blue collar workers and the practices of white collar unions are said to be generally moderate in contrast to the militant approach of the manual workers' unions. At the second level, they are distinguished in terms of lack of common affiliation to any central organization, less number of paid employees and lower subscription rates."

The character of white collar unions has however changed over the years. "Modernization of an organization and its growth in size cause proletarisation of white collar workers: the preindustrial social identification of white collar workers with the employers ceases to be operative in practice. This phenomenon, along with other factors (e.g. employers' relevance to negotiate with white collar employees and their preference for arbitration which involves employees in costly and protracted proceedings) is regarded to have resulted in a change in the tradition of white collar workers from moderation and passivity to militancy. The fact that the militant approach of workers' unions brought them greater benefits than those who remained less forceful in their demands is said to be an additional
factor in the observed changes in the policies and approach of white collar unions." (Mathur & Papola : Pp 134-143).

Discussing the changing character of white collar unions in India, Pandey (1968) has highlighted such characteristics as increasing use of direct militant action, increasing political involvement, emphasis on collective action and concern with wider social, economic & political issues. According to Punekar (1971) some of the strong points of present day white collar unions are: 80%-100 percent membership, sound finances, internal leadership, members' confidence in their leaders, & educated & intelligent membership.

**TRADE UNIONISM AMONG BANK EMPLOYEES:**

As mentioned earlier Trade unionism among bank employees began during the early years of the Trade Union movement. The directory of trade unions prepared by AITUC in 1925 notes three unions of bank employees (Karnik: 1978: 255) However Bankmen in general showed little interest in the movement till the end of the second world war. They regarded themselves as socially superior to blue-collar workers with whom trade unionism was largely associated.

A number of environmental as well as organizational factors contributed to unionism among bank employees. The numerical strength of bank employees, began to grow rapidly along with the growth in the banking industry in the wake of Independence. As banking was essentially an urban industry, bank employees were concentrated in metropolitan centres and
large towns. These employees were hard hit by the soaring prices as their salaries were relatively low at that time. At the same time, the income gap between bank employees and organized industrial workers had begun to narrow down quite sharply as the latter secured improvements in their wages and allowances as a result of unionization. Moreover, bank employees worked under exploitative conditions including long and irregular hours of work, and the widespread treatment of clerical employees as personal servants by bosses. These conditions contributed to the emergence of trade unionism among bank employees. Karnik (1978: 255) notes that "organization among bank employees grew rapidly during the days of world war-II and the years following its end. During those days middle class employees of banks were hard hit by the rise in prices. Unions developed in many cities in many banks. The authorities of banks retaliated in some cases by taking disciplinary action against employees who were actively connected with unions. This acted as spur to further activity."

In the wake of independence, agitations took place in several banks for better pay scales as well as other amenities such as leave, provident fund etc. Bank disputes were referred to adjudication by some provincial governments; however, banking being a nation wide industry, difficulties were experienced in administering the results of adjudication and hence a need for national tribunal was felt.
The government brought the banking industry within the purview of the Industrial Disputes Act in 1949. Between 1949 and 1966 Industrial disputes between banks and their employees were referred to national tribunals whose awards resulted in marked improvement in emoluments, working conditions and service conditions of bank employees. Concurrently, trade unionism among bank employees grew in terms of both membership and activities. Regional unions as well as national federations were established among the major commercial banks. The employees and their unions agitated for bipartite settlements of disputes. The first bipartite settlement was made in 1966. Unions among the award staff (so called because they were governed by the awards of various tribunals) command a very high degree of membership among the employees concerned. In several cases, employees of individual banks have their distinct national and regional associations led by employees themselves. However the major national federations of bank employees covering the industry are led by professional trade unionists with specialized interest and experience in bank unions. All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) was the first federal organization of bank employees. Later dissatisfaction arose over its monopolistic attitude and ideological orientations. This led to the emergence of the National Union of Bank Employees (NUBW) to represent employees of the nationalized banks in 1970. A third federation viz. Indian National Bank Employees Congress (INBEC) came into existence in 1973. Thus politicization of unions and inter union rivalry characterize the trade -
unionism among bankmen as among the industrial workers.

OFFICERS' ORGANIZATIONS:

Until recently employees in the officers category (Including bank officers) kept away from trade unionism. Initially the officers staff in the banks was small in number, and was relatively better paid. Moreover it considered itself a part of the management, and viewed trade unions as something below its dignity.

Even when the officers in the bank began to experience dissatisfaction particularly relative deprivation, as the award staff began to receive benefits through trade unionism, they were reluctant to form unions. They were very much status conscious. Their opinion about trade unions was expressed by statements such as 'How can we go to the streets like workers? ' 'What will people say?' Their high social status restrained them from forming unions till 1960.

In course of time, some environmental and organizational factors as well as social considerations contributed towards the emergence of trade unions of the bank officers.

EXPANSION OF THE BANKING INDUSTRY:

In all the nationalized banks, expansion of the banking industry is a major environmental condition for the emergence of officers' trade unions; closely related objective conditions are the take over of the imperial Bank (renamed as the State Bank of India) by government in 1955, other local banks
during the period 1965-69, and nationalization of major commercial banks in 1969. These steps accelerated the process of expansion, modified the goals of the banking industry and increased the control of government over the banks.

With the expansion of the banking industry, a large number of bank offices were opened in the urban, semi-urban and rural areas. This resulted in the large scale promotion of bank employees as officers as well as direct recruitment of officers in the banks. This led to a rapid increase in the number of officers in the banks. At metropolitan centres such as Ahmedabad, a large number of officers were concentrated in all the major commercial banks. This facilitated discussion about common problems affecting them. At the Banks A, B and C, the beginning of officers' organizations took shape with the increase in the size and the concentration of officers in large cities.

Mohan Das (1975) has observed in this context "one reason why the officers' organizations emerge is the quantitative logic involved in the situation (which has nothing to do with hostility or antagonism against any target), emergence of a very large number of people with common problems of work condition and experiences which at a given point of time they feel can't be sorted out individually, gather in a collective exercise and that is how an organization is born."

Thus the expansion of the banking industry resulted in the rapid increase in the size of the officers' staff, their
concentration in big centres and led to new organisational problems; the change in the nature of work and the relationship within the work organization.

**NEW ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS**

The officers have now begun to feel that closeness, informality and identity between them and the top management which characterised the old set up has significantly changed in that they hardly feel as an integral part of the top management. This qualitative change in the relationship is attributed to the unprecedented expansion in banking industry and the rapid increase in the number of officers. Some officers said: "In old days we were very few and worked in close contact with the management. The boss used to take personal interest in us, encourage us, we did lot more work, without complaints; as we felt we were working for our institution, our bank. This identification with the work, the management and the institution has considerably weakened now. With the growth of large number of officers, everything has become impersonal. You could hardly see the top management for months, nobody takes interest in you. No matter now much work you put in, it is not appreciated."

As a result of this the work has now largely become routine, repetitive and leave little scope for discretion or exercise of legitimate authority. The officers no longer feel to be part of the top management. Dayal and Sharma (1971) have stated that alienation or lack of involvement in work was a major psychological factor experienced by large mass of officers' staff at the bank at the time of
the first indefinite strike. They have also referred to
the fact that the nature of work in the bank for most
supervisory staff was highly routinised & repetitive. It re-qui- 
red accuracy and attention but provided little scope for
individual discretion. It was time consuming and required
patience in performing it.

DIFFICULTIES OF FUNCTIONING IN THE WORK SITUATION:

While functioning as officers vis-a-vis the award
staff and the top management in the banks, officers
experience lot of difficulties. As a number of founder
activists and members have said, "Award Staff and their
union view us as part and spokesman of management, enforcing
rules, allocating work and getting it done from them, and
maintaining discipline in the work situation. Hence we are
the immediate management for them. The award staff often
does not co-operate with us; as a result, we have to do
lot of unfinished clerical work. Further the award staff
represents the fact that we are part of the management and
this attitude often results in harassment and even humili-
ation when some of their so-called legitimate demands are
not conceded."

"The policy of the union to support its members at all
costs and under all circumstances has encouraged irrespon-
sibility and lethargy. The award staff members often tend to
make issue out of insignificant things & this often borders
on militancy. The management has yet to find effective means
to combat this 'Union power' and gets tempted to 'buy peace'
at our cost, in total disregard of our dignity & position
in the bank. It is for this reason that we have organised
ourselves so that we can show them their proper place."

Working as officer, in their opinion, is a thankless job
especially in the absence of adequate support from the management vis-a-vis the award staff.

Quite a large number of officers complained about the lack of sufficient backing and support from the top management as they function as officers." As one officer said: "When we (officers) demand reasonable work from the award staff under us, and enforce discipline, we are not backed by the higher ups in the management, so we feel we are rule enforcers without powers to punish or reward." Officers also felt that their respect or status was not maintained in such a work situation. One officer said: "I gave up wearing a tie while coming to the bank. Where is the sense in wearing it when you are not respected but rather 'humiliated?"

Thus from the point of view of officers, unionization was the only way out as a third centre of power vis-a-vis both the militant award staff union and the management and a kind of mechanism in terms of the assertion of their legitimate rights and solution of problems. Many officers mentioned that they were not interested in trade unionism in the beginning, but dissatisfaction with the pressures generated by their immediate bosses on the one hand and on the other hand, the humiliating behaviour of their subordinates and their union pushed them into union activities.

Anomalous salary structure, a structure not commensurate with the extent of responsibility in comparison with the Award staff coupled with all the risk, an officer was
exposed to also added to the grievances on the part of the officers in all the banks in question. According to one of the founder members of the union, despite the fact that the officers had to work for long hours, even on holidays, they were not adequately paid. Officers in all banks expected a decent difference to be maintained between their emoluments and those of the award staff in proportion to their relative status and responsibility. In reality, however, there existed little difference in their incomes and in some cases, an employee promoted to officer's position received less emoluments than the award staff. Apart from this 'relative deprivation', adhocism in service conditions and lack of a clear promotion policy contributed to the officers' consciousness of being a distinct category within the organization. Similarly, in other aspects of personnel administration such as leave, transfers and placement, decisions were made on personal considerations. Some concrete experiences of officers in this regard are quoted below.

"I used to come early in the morning and return home late at night. I could hardly see the sun set. My boss used to tell me to leave the office only after finishing the work and also informing him (on phone) at his residence about it. Award staff members under me did not co-operate; they used to roam about, and leave office without completing
If I complained, it was taken as my incompetence. We officers were told to behave 'tactfully' and get work'.

"I was once placed in a branch outside Gujarat. My wife was pregnant and my presence was needed as no relatives were around us. Meanwhile, I got a transfer order, commanding me to move immediately. I explained my situation, but to no effect. I had to take charge at the next posting leaving my pregnant wife at the mercy of the neighbours."

"My mother was sick, almost on death bed. I got a transfer order, I applied for leave and requested permission to resume later at the new posting. My request was refused and I had to go. I did not see the face of my mother before her death."

Some of the officers were activists in the award staff trade union before they were promoted as officers. One of these promotee officers who was a union activist in Union B said, "When we were clerks, we felt the need of union to fight against our exploitation at the work place; poor wages, long hours of work, and harsh service conditions. We built a militant union and through it achieved benefits in terms of wage rise, better service conditions, and job security. However, as soon as we got promoted as officers we again fell in the trap of wage anomalies, exploitative service conditions, greater responsibilities and risk on the job and frequent transfers. To add to it all, we had to put up with harassment from award staff and their union. So we were
determined to form a trade union for officers to get legitimate salaries and service conditions as well as to improve our work situation and restore the dignity of officers in the bank."

INITIATIVE OF THE ACTIVISTS-LEADERS:

A few of the young, energetic internally promoted junior officers, who have had trade union experience and who in many cases were the founder members of award staff trade union, have taken leadership in the officers' unions as at the bank B. However at a number of banks, young - directly recruited junior officers without any trade union background and initially having a certain dislike for trade unionism, have also taken leadership in building up the unions for officers as at the bank A.

In some cases, senior officers happened to be the initial promoters of officers organization movement. For example at the Bank A, some senior officers backed by top management, established regional club like organization during 1963-64 for officers, for the representation of individual grievances. During 1966-67 this organization was converted into a trade union. At the Bank B newly promoted junior officers who had experience in building up trade union while working in the award staff cadre formed a trade union for officers, got it registered and started trade union activities.
The early leadership was more of a team leadership, a team or a group of like minded officers, had close friendship links. They were first activists. They started the organizing drive, and gave impetus to the officers trade union movement. It was observed that most of these founder activists interviewed possessed certain personality characteristics such as assertiveness, aggressiveness and an intense desire to fight against the injustices and exploitation.

Again it was noticed that the initial team of activists was made up of officers who had the reputation as sincere, responsible and efficient bankmen, who conducted trade union business in a reasonable, responsible way. The point is that it is not the weak, less competent or mischievous employees who have started union activities as is sometimes believed to be the case with regard to blue collar workers' unions. The founder members of the officer's union were conscious about their status both within the bank and without and saw to it that their unionizing activities did not adversely affect the working of the banks in question.

Thus, for the officers' unions, the initiative to organize and lead came from within. Apprehensive about the fact that they were not covered under Industrial Disputes Act, some officer's unions sought help from professional unionist from outside for the following major reasons:
(1) possible victimization by the management (2) to -
effectively represent their case before the management and 
(3) evolve a counter strategy in case of an unfavourable 
response from the management. All these considerations led 
some officers unions (like the Union B) to take the help of 
outside trade unionists and this has been continued even 
to this day as it has helped them immensely. Unions A took 
such help only in the initial stage and left it as it was not 
found to be useful.

RESPONSE FROM THE MEMBERS:

Junior officers were first to join the unions, followed 
by senior officers. The attitude of the senior officers was 
characterised by a certain ambivalence towards unionization. 
They were torn, in a manner of speaking, between two conflicting emotions; the need to form an organization that would take care of their legitimate demands and rights and the possible estrangement from the top management. The officers at the main centre of the bank in the region like Ahmedabad or Baroda, have started the union activity and here also those officers who were at the main branch and or administrative office of the bank (where a large number of officers are in proximity with each other;) have been the first joiners, later on organizing drive was launched to recruit officers at the middle level branches, at the small branches and also at other small centres of the bank in the region.

Third, 
Promotee officers were first to join, and the direct recruit joined later. This was on account of the fact that
the majority of the officers in these banks were promoted from the award staff; on becoming officers they carried with them the culture of trade unionism. Those officers who were recruited from outside had no background of trade unionism. In fact they carried a sense of superiority and elitism with them. However, they also, in most cases joined later on.

The early organizing drive was such that officers became members in groups rather than joining the union singly; activists used to visit the places where large number of officers were working, arrange an informal meeting and convince them about the need to join the union.

**ROLE AND RESPONSE OF THE MANAGEMENT:**

Management has played a significant role in the emergence and development of officers' unions. When banks were relatively small and privately owned they were mostly governed by the traditional, particularistic style of management; paternalism and adhocism often resulted from such a style. Even after the rapid expansion of the banking industry the same old style of management continued, and the institutionalized professional management was more or less absent. Mohandas (1975) has noted the absence of institutionalized professional management in the organized sector. Perpetuation of traditional bureaucratic and individualistic style of management has also contributed to the growth of officers' unions. Again officers' staff was taken for granted.
as part of the management, officers were perceived as middle class, status conscious and docile employees who would respect the management and would not stand against it.

Management's response to the officers' trade unionism varied from bank to bank. The first reaction of the management to officers forming union in some banks was hostile and aggressive. Member of the top management at one of the banks exclaimed. "Officers forming unions and associations? It is vulgar, obscene. They are part of management, how can they form organizations against themselves." Such an attempt was looked upon with contempt by the management which tried to counter it by transferring the activists to distant branches. But this only consolidated the movement.

At some banks the situation was far from being clear. The management bosses in the beginning suggested that they would be able to solve the problems of the officers' staff better, if they had a representative body as at the Bank A; but later resorted to victimization when that body began to assert and confront them. While at the bank B initial hostility of the management towards officers' union later gave way to considerateness. In some cases, including Bank C, the management not only did not resist the officers' unions, but actually supported the unions by attending their meetings and conferences. Such responses from management were responsible for the development of guild like organization and dependent unionism among officers.
By and large in all the nationalized banks, within a couple of years or so, the management accepted officers' organizations which could legitimately speak on behalf of the officers. Only in a few banks (Bank B) the officers unions were fortunate enough to have a management that was inclined to accord, them the status of a recognized body to represent its members and arrived at solutions bilaterally. In majority of the banks the management was reluctant to negotiate with them. It tried to continue old paternalistic style of dealing with them, took them as a sort of discussion groups or petition making bodies. Most managements were not prepared to accept them as genuine trade unions and negotiate with them on the same terms and conditions as with the award staff unions (which are protected by Industrial Disputes Act, officers unions are not). At the negotiation meetings, in the Bank A, it was observed in the beginning that the top management functionaries did not remain present, points raised by the officers' union representatives were merely noted down and only assurances to convey them to the top management was given. The mutual give and take did not take place at the negotiation table at all, resulting in delay of the settlement of problems.

Secondly, regular minutes were not kept. Whatever points were agreed upon in such negotiation were not treated as settlements; the management informed about them only through staff circulars. The agreements arrived at were either ignored or implemented sincerely only after several reminders.
This style of dealing with the officers' unions on the part of the management, kept these unions continuously fighting for unsolved problems and this in turn made them aware of the need for organization, to consolidate their strength and power. This indirectly helped the consolidation of officers trade union movement.

The proclamation of emergency in 1975 saw the trade union activity being effectively curbed by the management. Not only this the establishment of Janata Regime in 1977 did not result in the status quo ante.

It may be said on the whole that the adhocism on the part of the management, absence of any ideology, reluctance to accept the officers' unions as equal partners at the bargaining counter and a highly personalized managerial style have driven these unions to militancy. An effective and institutionalised pattern of collective bargaining is still in a developing stage.

RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT:

The government also contributed towards the emergence and development of these unions. With the nationalization of State Bank of India and its subsidiaries as well as other major commercial banks, the control of the government over the banks has increased enormously. For the solution of all the major problems, including the staff problems, it
has now become necessary to get the approval of the government. Officers, particularly the activists felt that lot of delay in the solution of their problems occurs because of the governmental bureaucracy. Often wrongly briefed by the bureaucrats, the government takes steps which forces these unions to become militant.

Government which took a highly favourable and helpful approach towards the award staff trade union movement during the forties is perceived by the officers as helpful to them only in the beginning. In 1971 the government accorded a formal recognition to officers' organizations when it called their confederation (All-India confederation of Bank officers' organizations: AIOBBO), at the national tripartite meeting of the banking industry. As part of the programme of employee participation in the management, the government nominated officers on the Board of Directors in the banks, mostly those who were representatives of officers' unions. On the suggestion of the officers unions for standardization of salaries and service conditions for officers in all the nationalized banks, the government appointed a committee, which is known as Pillai Committee after the name of its Chairman.

Government appointed Pillai Committee, for the standardization of salaries and service conditions for all the nationalized banks after the expiry of bipartite settlement in 1972-3. The activists of officers' unions, (Confederation),
deposing before the Pillai Committee and submitting their charter of demands, were assured by the government that the Pillai Committee would leave enough scope for collective bargaining, that the tradition of bipartite settlement of issues established in the nationalized banks would be preserved and that only the broad framework and policy with respect to standardization of salaries and service conditions would be recommended by the Pillai Committee and it would be discussed with the confederation before their implementation. Again at the bank level, federation of the officers' unions and the bank management would decide about the details pertaining to implementation of the same. Came the emergency, hitting the trade union activities in general, the government as well as the management used emergency powers to cut to size and repress the trade union movement in the banks, hence the officers' union organizations also experienced a setback.

During the emergency the government unilaterally imposed service conduct rules on the bank officers which were felt to be totally inappropriate and detrimental to the staff in a financial institution like banks. Moreover it instituted enquiries by C.B.I. (Central Bureau of Investigation) against officers at a number of banks. Even after lift up of emergency and establishment of Janata Party rule, the government did not do anything to either modify or repel the service conduct rules thrust upon the officers during the emergency. To their utter shock and surprise, the -
officers found that the Pillai Committee recommendations were arbitrarily imposed on them. The activists blamed this on wrong and mischievous briefing by bureaucrats about officers' unions as becoming more. In their view, jealousy appeared as the reason for the wrong briefing.

This move of the government and the management was resisted by the industry-wide one-day token strike action programme by the officers' unions. In 1978, negotiations were offered on Pillai Committee recommendations between the officers' confederation and Indian Bank Association; however, they came to a dead end. The move to implement Pillai Committee recommendations was taken up. The move on the part of the government to arbitrarily and unilaterally impose the Pillai Committee recommendations was countered by three successful one-day token strikes at different times (27-9-1977, 12-6-1978, and 29-12-1978), to bring home to the government the fact that bilateral settlement of issues with due weight given to the unions is the only respectable and legitimate way of arriving at solutions.

Many activists have emphatically said that they want to develop an effective method of collective bargaining to get their problems solved, however they feel frustrated, by the adhoc, evasive, and unpredictable attitude and actions on the part of the government and the management. Officers' unions in general, perceive that the government has tried to ignore their organizations, and wrong briefing by the bureaucrats has often led to curbing of their legitimate activities.
Lastly, the way government handled officers unions has confirmed the belief that the successful show of strength and trade union action alone draws the attention of the government and the management towards their legitimate rights and grievances. This belief is largely responsible for the militancy on the part of these unions.

A brief resume of the landmarks in the development of officers unions will be relevant here. The officers trade union movement started after 1960. At five major commercial banks including the three Banks A, B and C; Officers' unions emerged by 1962-3. By the year 1965-66 four other leading commercial banks had officers associations in most of the regions in India as well as National federations. At the remaining (five major commercial banks), regional associations and National federations developed much later, mostly around 1939-70. In one bank a separate officers' union took shape only in the year 1977-78. Most of the officers unions in the banks got recognition from their respective managements for the negotiations. Most of the federations in the banks had their first detailed settlement regarding the salaries and service conditions with their respective managements by 1970-71. However, officers' Union at the Bank A had to resort to an indefinite strike lasting up to 17 days, before getting negotiations and detailed salary settlement, at other banks like the Bank B, officers' union had to resort to work to rule and non co-operation with the top management agitations to bring pressure on the management.
for settlement at the negotiations.

All India Confederation of bank officers (federations) (AICOBBOO) known as (Confederation', began to function by 1968. Federation at the union A as well as at the Union B were among the first few federations that worked for the emergence and growth of the confederation. The Federation at the bank C remained away from the confederation movement as it emphasized the solution of officers' problems within the bank itself. The confederation got the formal recognition from the government and the Indian Bank Association in 1971. It became an effective force and consolidated itself after its first national convention in February 1975. During the period of the national emergency AICOBBOO was pressed to join the Pro-congress Indian National Trade Union Congress. After the emergency was repeated, AICOBBOO was recognized by government and the managements for negotiation of officers' demands. The confederation also organized strikes on a few occasions. It is currently (during the field work period and after 1978-80) negotiating over the standardized salaries and service conditions recommended by the Pillai Committee in order that they are implemented in the nationalized banks. The strikes have firmly built up and consolidated the officers organizations at all the levels; particularly at the banks where they were weak. The confederation has got firmly rooted at the national, regional as well as grass root (in most of the cities) levels during the three-strike period.

A wider forum for the officers unions in various public and private sector industries is also functioning
since 1974, (AICC00). It was transformed last year (1978)
into a National Centre of Officers Organizations, (NC00).
AICC00 was concentrated mostly in the Western regions, so
incorporating officers organizations on the eastern regions
as well, NC00 became a wider national organization, Confed-
eration of Bank Officers, is one of the new focal founder
organizations that are actively associated with the forma-
tion and functioning of the national forum for officers in
the country and it has international linkages as well.

It is significant to note that the officers' unions
have originated at the regional level. In most of the
banks, officer's unions have been initially organized at
the regional level, particularly at the biggest centre in
the region. This is because of the fact that officers'
unions have come into existence fully on the initiative
from the officers themselves. At the biggest centre in the
region, where large number of officers who were, homogene-
ous in their social background, worked at the main branch,

* The officers' unions differ from the unions of the Indus-
trial workers in India. The latter started functioning at
the national federation level. This is mainly due to the
fact that the initiative to organize the workers' unions
was taken by a politician or a social worker or a trade
unionist who belonged to central trade unions with politi-
cal links who presided over many such unions in different
industries.
administrative office and other branches of the bank, and a team of founder activists located at such regional centres has started these unions at most of the commercial banks.

All the nationalized commercial banks had their region (or area or circle) level offices in different regions (or parts) and central head quarters at one centre in the country. So some of the problems of the officers could be dealt with by meeting the regional level management. So Region level unions, emerged first and began to represent some of the problems of the officers staff.

However, they soon realised that most of the problems related to the officers' staff in general at the bank and therefore could be tackled only by taking them up with the top management at the head office of the bank. So the need for a central level federation was immediately felt by them. Activists at these unions started building up and consolidating their union at both the levels, regional and national. Within the region, they tried to build up grassroots level organizations by developing sub-regional or zonal units.

It was the regional level union B which first organized itself and later on played a key role (with few other such regional unions) in the development of the national federation, while at the Union A regional level unions at a few regions developed first and with the help of one of these help as well as the help of federation, the earlier
club-like organization of the officers in the region transformed itself into a trade union. At the Bank C both the officers' unions started in the wider western region of which Gujarat formed a part. Because of this development, the regional level unions (particularly those which are strong and established ones like unions A and B enjoy considerable autonomy and develop as fairly independent organizations, although linked they are with the bank-level federation.

Four patterns could be discerned in the emergence and development of the officers' trade union movement. These are as follows:

1. Initial staff club-like organization which later on transformed itself into a trade union,
2. Management dependent trade union which gave rise to independent union,
3. Combined (for the award staff and the officers' staff) union which led to separate officers' union and
4. Registered officers' union right from the start.

It is necessary to illustrate these patterns, as they clearly show the trend of officers' movement. It is from these developmental processes that the salient characteristics of officers' union have developed.

Pattern one: At the bank A, a staff club or guild like organization of officers was established by a few senior officers with the sympathetic backing of the top management. It was close to the management, emphasized co-operation with...
it and depended solely on its good will. Initially it was little inclined to come into confrontation with the management. However, when the members tried to press for the solution of their problems, the management transferred some of the promoters to far off places to dampen such a movement. Aware of the fact that they were not covered under any labour law, the officers invited an outside trade unionist to act as their President. However both the management and the officers' Federation at the national level refused to accept him as such.

Again, as the promoters of the early organization were all senior officers, the large bulk of junior officers did not find it easy to approach them with their problems.

At the general body meeting of the Regional Organization in the year 1966-67, in which a few federation activists were also present, the outsiders (President & Vice-President) were dropped and in the elections that followed, the senior officers left the field open to junior ones by deciding against contesting for posts. The elections returned a new team of office bearers and other officials which included some in experienced, but all enthusiastic, and dedicated band of young people in charge of the union activities.

Thus the former club like organization became transformed into a genuine trade union which was prepared if need be, for militancy.
Pattern Two: Dependent unions later on developed into independent member-oriented unions. At the bank C early (1963-64) efforts to organize were actively encouraged and backed by the management. The founders of the organization CX did not want it to be just a trade union. They equally emphasized the apparently conflicting goals of the organization and the employees. The goals stated in the union constitution were: (1) maintain and promote a sense of service to the bank's constituents, and public generally and loyalty towards the institution; to take all steps to maintain a standard of efficiency and upright conduct consistent with the tradition of the bank, and also (2) to protect and promote interests, rights and privileges of members, in all matters relating to emoluments, service conditions etc by making representations to the authorities."

They wanted the organization to be useful to the bank in question and its employees and tried to develop what they called 'constructive trade unionism. The top executives actively participated in the annual conferences where seminars and discussions on topics relevant to the development of the bank and its business operations were held. Only in its last conference with emergence of a rival union becoming a distinct possibility, the topic of Industrial relations was discussed and a committee was appointed to look into the problem of communication with Members.
Union CX was very close to the award staff union (which was the only union in the bank in the early days); and so all the three, viz. the top management, the officers' association, and the Award Staff union, perceived themselves as a wider family of the bank; institutional interests were given the top priority followed by the interests of the employees, management also saw to it that employees remained satisfied. Industrial relations problems were considered as internal working of the bank and were sought to resolve amicably.

Officers' organization at the Bank C was one of the first few to develop in the commercial banks; However it did not join or become active in the bank officers' confederation movement that emerged later; and took a rather selfish view that since they already had got sizable concessions in terms of salaries, fringe benefits and service conditions for the officers by identifying with the management, it was unnecessary for them to join the officers' confederation movement. However more important consideration was that they wanted to confine the trade union activity to their bank alone and develop their union as a sort of combination of a union and a professional group within the bank. Later on an independent member centred union CY developed at the bank C. (See appendix I to the chapter).

Pattern Three: At some banks, employees, even after their promotion to the officer's position, continued their membership in the Award staff union. This situation gave
rise to a sort of combined union for all the categories of the staff in the bank, a kind of Industrial Union. However, senior officers as well as the directly recruited officers did not join it.

Compared to the Award staff, the officers were not only small in number but they also realised their problems were not given due considerations. Besides, they often found it embarrassing to respond to the call given for trade union action by the combined union. They also realised that their role and functions were different and distinct from those of the Award staff and that in case of a clash between the two, the inability or unwillingness of the combined union to help them often found themselves being forced to take recourse to law (at different other banks) for establishing their right to representation and thereby implicitly denying it to the combined union. Later on the officers organizing movement began to gather momentum in most of the major banks and a confederation of all the federations emerged. Officers, at few banks in the region where the combined union situation prevailed, came out of it and established separate union for officers in their bank, with the encouragement and help from the other bank officers' unions as well as the confederation.

Pattern Four: At the Bank B soon after 1960, a large number of officers got promoted from the award staff cadre to the officers cadre. They saw that anomalies existed between the salaries of the officers staff and the award...
staff. Some of them who were promoted to officers cadre got a total emolument which was often less than what they used to get in their lower cadre. So during the probation period, some of these newly promoted officers thought of reverting to the award staff cadre; however they soon discovered that they were viewed as part of management and treated with suspicion and hostility. The award staff union was not keen to keep them. It pressed them to join all the union calls to leave work from time to time and participate in agitations. However, they, as officers, felt more responsible and hence could not participate in such agitations. Under these circumstances, they eventually decided to leave the award staff union and organise themselves into a separate trade union for officers.

The separate union was precipitated as follows:

One of the officers of the founder group wanted to go on leave for a day or two on medical ground, which was denied by the management. Hence, the officers got furious. They saw only two alternatives left to them; either go back, to the award staff or remain as officers and fight out and get justice for the officers in the bank. In a historic meeting, 27 officers facing the similar fate, discussed what to do and gradually decided to form a trade union and fight for their rights. They became founder activists of the Union B. Two of them approached some leaders in the Textile Labour Association and requested them to accept leadership positions in the union. They secretly got the
association registered as a trade union; and then informed the management.

Thus visualizing the problems of the officer, and experiencing some of these during the probation period, employees promoted as officers from clerical cadres, who were cautious and security oriented, and had the experience of building up trade union when in the award staff cadre, formed a union for officers in the Bank B.

From the above depiction of the development of officers trade unionism it could be observed that the officers' unions are developing as a separate interest group, as independent trade unions away from the domination of either the management or the politically aligned central trade union organization. Again they remain exclusive for the officer's staff and so remain separate even from the white collar unions of the award staff in the banks. It is relevant to examine these characteristics in some details.

**NON-POLITICAL NATURE OF THE UNION:**

To remain away from unions with political links and thus remain neutral and independent of the party politics, is a wide-spread and firmly held belief among the members and the activists of these unions. Some of the reasons advanced by these people for this belief are:

1. They wanted their unions serve their specific interests and felt competent to achieve this objective without outside help.

* Fast majority (87 percent) of activists and members believe this way.*
(2) In their view aligning with unions having political links would subject them to undue political pressures from politicians and parties.

(3) In their opinion the award staff union often acted more out of political considerations than the concern for the interests of its members.

(4) Unity was the most important consideration and unified organization with its own intrinsic strength would be the best guarantee against possible victimization and this would also augment their power of bargaining. Political alignment may lead to fragmentation, groupism and this might defeat the very purpose of forming the union.

(5) Also political alignment in the face of fluctuating political fortunes and power equations, they realised, could not be very helpful in furthering organizational interests. On the other hand steering clear of such snags and pitfalls would leave them sufficient leeway for manoeuvring in pursuing their interests.

(6) Most officers had no political ambition. They also did not look for career opportunities within the trade union hierarchy except in so far as they were involved in the activities of their specific unions.
EXCLUSIVE UNIONISM:

Officers do not want one (Industrial) union for all the employees in the bank, because they believe that their role and functioning and service conditions in the bank are different from those of the award staff. So they also perceive their problems to be of a different nature. Hence the separate union for officers.

It seems officers want to preserve their identity, exclusiveness and high status as officers in the bank. They do extend co-operation occasionally to the award staff union when identical issues or problems such as the issue of dearness allowance or bonus are involved; however, often each union considers the other a rival.

Officers' unions are affiliated to their respective National Federations in the bank as well as to the confederation (at the national level) and also to the wider forum (such as AICCCO - All India Coordinating Committee of Officers Organization) and NCVO (National Centre for Officers Organizations), where AICCCO is made broadened and so renamed) of officers' unions in the public and private sector industries in the country.

CONSTRUCTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE UNIONISM:

Most of the sample officers, members as well as activists, emphasise the fact that their trade union is different from that of the other trade unions, in that theirs' is a constructive and responsible kind of unionism.
Constructive and responsible trade unionism means, according to the activists, presenting the facts as they are before the management and convincing it about the reasonableness, sensibility and legitimacy of their demands rather than confront it with undue pressures or black mailing.

As many activists said, "we offer our suggestions on the major issues of the banking profession such as customer service, rural expansion."

Officers hold responsible positions in the bank, so they want to build up a trade union which is in keeping with their responsibility and status in the bank.

The very fact that they have named their union 'Association' shows that they are different from traditional union of workers; while talking to 'members' and even 'activists' it was observed that officers do not like the term 'union' being used for their 'association'; In their opinion the term 'union' smacks of something, that is 'irresponsible', 'below dignity', 'political' (Award staff unions at the Bank B and C are politically aligned), 'unduly militant' going on strike (pen-down strike) or demonstrating on the streets on a slightest pretext (such as fans are not working properly or 'water is not cool'-'there is no ink in the pot', etc...). Their association does not believe in all this, so it is never referred to as a union by them.

Some of the founder activists of the officers' union who also happened to be the pioneer activists in the award staff trade
union said emphatically that as activists in the award staff union, they insisted on and tried to develop respectable and responsible trade unionism, only later on award staff union began to change its character.

Officers' unions at the nationalized commercial banks are all small sized registered trade unions having a very high degree of unionization. These unions do not come under the purview of Industrial Disputes Act. However, they are not keen to get categorised as workmen, as did the award staff in the past. They believe that it unduly increases their dependence on the government; particularly, its legal machinery. However they often have to take recourse to legal measures. Of course, going to the courts is perceived to be costly and time consuming. Therefore they have often resorted to strong and even militant trade union action in order to bring pressure on the management and government for sincere and serious negotiations. They want to consolidate the practice of bipartite settlement of problems. Success at the negotiating table depends upon the strength of a unified organization. At the Banks A and B, the unions have built up a solid organization. As will be seen later, the unity is highly emphasized by these unions. At the Bank C, the emergence of a rival union was found, inevitable by the activists and also most of the members in Union CY, however, at present, high concern is shown to build up one union for the officers and some activists continue to work for the same.
PROFILE OF THE FOUR UNIONS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY:

In the Gujarat region at present, fullfledged regional level unions of officers exist in all the four large-sized* and three medium sized banks. A unit of officers' union functions in all the eight small sized banks. The state unit of the Confederation functions at Ahmedabad.

All the bank officers' unions in the region are independent and separate for the officers' staff; only one (the Union B) union has affiliation with the politically aligned central trade union and an outsider as their President. All other unions are independent trade unions. Only at the bank C, two rival unions for the officers' staff exist. At all other banks a single union for the officers' staff exists. (A short profile of the unions A, B, C, X and C, Y is given in the table no. 2).

* In terms of the number of bank offices in Ahmedabad, the nationalized commercial banks are classified as large (having more than 40 bank offices or branches), medium (having more than ten, but less than forty bank offices or branches), and small (having less than ten bank offices or branches) banks in the region in the year 1977-8.
Union A: It started functioning in the region as an organization of officers by 1963. Initial club like organization was transformed into a militant trade union by 1967; (see for initial phase of its development Pp. 60).

It has near 100 percent membership since 1968-69, when it fought an indefinite strike lasting for 17 days. It is maintained continuously till today. In 1968 it had 425 members while membership in 1979 is 1622, however increase in the membership is the result of increase in the number of officers in the bank.

It is housed in a spacious office room with an airconditioned cabin (given by the bank) for the union executives, in the main building of the bank. It enjoys check off facility, and is permitted by the management to place its notices on bank's notice boards, circulate information and hold meeting in the bank premises. It has two-three paid employees working as clerks, typists and secretaries. All the meetings are held in the same building, while general body meeting is held in a hall in the city.

The union office runs full time; one (or some times two) top union executives manage (by informal understanding with the management) to take full time off from the bank work and are fully engaged in the union work; one or two activists are always available in the office. Also, a number
of activists are available to the union whenever needed during or after the bank hours.

Union office throbs with activities. A few activists and members would always be found engaged in informal discussion of the issues. On an average daily, more than fifty persons (members) from within the city and outside visit the union office. Visitors come to the union office with different motives. Many bring with them their problems, which are being patiently listened to by the activists. Many members come just to pay their regards to their activists and get the latest news from the union. Also members and activists from a far and near, come with information for the union office bearers. Communication is thus two way, free floating, informal and friendly as between equals in the organization. Equalitarian atmosphere prevails in the union office.

Union activists patiently listen to all the members, The General Secretary with his confident, pleasing personality and a responsive ear, welcomes members, assures them of every possible help. Members are given due importance, offered tea etc. at tea time.

Often, the visitors to the Union are so many that the activists find it difficult to conduct other union work. Still they attend to all the members with their problems.

Each member is given due importance and is treated as such. It is from this that the union has developed as an
independent, member centered multi functional militant organization, which is like a fraternity of officers.

Union B: Right from the beginning (in 1963) Union B started as a registered trade union, affiliated to politically aligned central trade union (See Pp. 64). At present, it is the activists from within who manage the union affairs and the guidance and help of the outsider President is freely sought whenever needed.

It has maintained almost hundred percent membership continuously after the initial formative (three-four) years. It had 318 members in 1969 while at present (1978), the membership is approximately 700. However the rise in membership is due to the increase in the number of officers, in the bank.

Union office (small room space in the corner, in the main building of the bank and given by the bank) remains open daily for 2 hours or so in the evening and for a few more hours on Saturdays. One or two office-bearers are present in the office to look after the union work as well as attend to members who come with their problems. None of the present activists takes full time off from the bank work, for the union work (however in the past, the general secretary in particular used to do so.)

All the formal meetings for the activists as well as for the members are held in a big hall in the office of the outsider President's organization.
The outside President never comes to the Union Office. Instead he is approached by the top union executives, for guidance or help. He leads the team of negotiators, attends most of the meetings for activists. He also writes a column entitled 'President's Message' in the union magazine.

Members are appreciative of his expertise as a negotiator, the benefits (salary settlements) he has brought to them. However many members resent his attitude towards them, particularly the 'working class' treatment which he gives to the office members.

Comparatively, few members visit the union office. Few office-bearers, 'core' activists, meet daily, or on most days of the week, discuss the current issues and attend to the union work. No gap or social distance exists between the activists and the members. However the relations are more of a matter of fact type and functional at the Union B compared to those at the union A, where they are more cordial and informal. Members rarely visit the outside President at his office.

* He makes them sit for long hours, keeps doing his own work (reading and signing papers or telephoning) while listening to them, as if they are less important.
rarely visit the office. Instead they meet at each other's work place after the bank hours or in case of urgency during the recess time. They hold meeting for members in a hall in the city.

Rival union CY is not given any space for office however it is housed in the office of the Director of the Award staff in the bank. Daily two to three activists go to this office in the evening and do the union work. A few members also visit the office. The activists often do typing and such other clerical work themselves.

At the bank C, the total strength of the unionized officers in the region at present is approximately 1000. Exact number of members separate for the Unions CX and CY could not be known as fierce rivalry was going on between the unions while the field work for this study was under way. However it was observed that the new union CY had a majority while Union CX a minority of the total unionized officers. A few officers have remained neutral, that is, they have left the old Union CX but have not joined the new union CY.

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**TABLE NO. 2**

Salient features of the four Unions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Union A</th>
<th>Union B</th>
<th>Union CX</th>
<th>Union CY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At the Bank - A</td>
<td>At the Bank - B</td>
<td>At the Bank - C</td>
<td>At the Bank - C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>1972-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>regional level union</td>
<td>regional level union</td>
<td>Not - Registered</td>
<td>Registered at federation level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, formally recognized gaining approval.</td>
<td>No, uses space of the Award staff union director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, do not much use.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Old and established union.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Loosing majority union.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Union in its formative period.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Whether exclusive for officers.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd....
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. to confederation (AICOB00)</th>
<th>2. to AlCCO through state</th>
<th>3. to state AlCCO</th>
<th>4. to state AlCCO</th>
<th>5. to politically aligned central trade union.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, from the beginning &amp; even at present, when its federation got disaffiliated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes and active</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes and active</td>
<td>Yes, federation in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes and active</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes and active</td>
<td>Yes, federation in the past.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Officers Union and Award-staff union

1. No. of award staff unions in the bank.
   - one
   - one
   - Two
   - Two

2. Award staff union affiliation. to politically aligned central trade union.
   - No
   - Yes, AIBEA
   - One to- AIBEA
   - One to- INBEC

Contd....
3. Relations with Award staff - union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Relations with Award staff - union.</td>
<td>More - rivalrous</td>
<td>Both accept Co-existence, often get rivalrous.</td>
<td>Co-operation with one rivalrous - with other.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Union and Management.

1. Relation with management.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relation with management.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Negotiations and collective Bargaining.</td>
<td>Yes, highly emphasizes considers it as a central objective.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes, considers it as central objective but not formally recognized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Whether has periodic negotiation sessions.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Whether is capable of Militancy</td>
<td>Very much militant</td>
<td>Yes, reluctantly but firmly.</td>
<td>No never</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd...
5. Whether has Resort to trade union action in the past.
   Yes, many times, many types of action programmes.

6. Whether declared token strike in recent years.
   Yes.

14. Relations with officers unions.
   Whether helps other officers unions in other banks and other Industries.
   Yes, very much helps.

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(Table No. 2 Continued.)

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<th>1</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Whether has Resort to trade union action in the past.</td>
<td>Yes, many times, many types of action programmes.</td>
<td>Yes, only once.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes, from the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Whether declared token strike in recent years.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes, but only once when Industry wide strike was declared by all the other unions of officers and staff.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Relations with officers unions. Whether helps other officers unions in other banks and other Industries.</td>
<td>Yes, very much helps.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes, gets help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

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Activists at the Union CX developed their union as dependent union not so much to survive as organization or get quick and favourable results for officers. The more important reason appears to be the fact that they perceived themselves as part of the management and they wanted their problems to be solved by identifying with it as such. Besides conscious of the fact that they unlike 'low' Industrial workers' belong to the middle class with a high Socio-economic status. They wanted their organization to be more 'dignified' by associating with the management and emphasizing institutional and professional objectives.

By 1966, it had 100 percent membership, and till 1971, it was the only organization for officers in the Bank. However by 1972, movement for a rival union had started. The rival Union CY established itself as a trade union, held its first conference in 1974, passed its Constitution, and elected its office bearers. The officers-union members and activists- at the Bank C described at length the reasons for the emergence of the rival Union CY. The following appear to be the main factors perceived by them as responsible for the emergence of the rival Union CY:

(1) The Union CX by close cooperation with the Management was very successful and got lot of benefits
from the management in terms of salary, bonus, dearness allowance and other perquisites. Thus, it became management dependent union, satisfying the management more and more and ignoring organization building in the process. Individual grievances of the members were not given proper attention by the activists; instead the activists developed vested interest in leadership, made no room for others in the union, as a result of which the second line of leadership did not develop. The activists used union positions for the personal benefit for themselves and 'their' group of officers, got special increments, quick promotions superseding number of other officers and entered top management positions themselves.

Both the key position in the bank and in the union for benefiting their own men (members) and those who did not toe their line were harassed.

Members referred to the bossy, autocratic way the union activists behaved, they exhorted members to sacrifice (e.g. suffer hardships and accept transfer etc.) for the institution and expected gifts, liked to be flattered and indulged in corrupt practices themselves.
They dabbled too much in the working of the top management, took more interest in enthroning and dethroning the top executives in the bank than in the problems of individual members and building up the union organization.

(2) Organization CX did not function democratically; no regular elections took place; the first General Secretary continued all the years. In fact, the first elections took place in 1972. Its annual conferences were attended by nominated delegates.

(3) There was communication gap between the office-bearers and the members, and the members even felt afraid of approaching them with their grievances.

(4) Activists of the new Union CX, said that they perceived it almost impossible to change the leadership by remaining within the old Union CX. Since there was complete absence of internal democracy, coupled with the fact that the leaders were powerful, autocratic and top management functionaries, the members found it extremely difficult to get the requisite support of two-third delegates needed to change the leadership of the organization at the annual conference. The fact that many delegates were nominated made this doubly difficult.
A few during officer activists started the move for a member centred union at the Bank C. They announced the formation of the trade union CY, got it registered, and affiliated (at the federation level, not region level) to INTUC, in the event of possible victimization by the management and even harassment by the Union CX. They joined the confederation and entered the main stream of bank officers' trade union movement and got lot of support and help from the confederation activists. Union CY remained close to one of the two award staff unions at the Bank C and got help from it. The activists and founder members of the Union CY then gradually tried to persuade and convince members to be fearless and join the new Union CY. Initial victimization of the Union CY activists by management actually gave a boost to their movement. The activists toured extensively, held informal meetings and tried to organise the new Union CY, which held its first national federation conference in 1974 at Ahmedabad, got the constitution passed, elected office bearers and activists.

However, declaration of national emergency 1975 brought their movement to a grinding halt as trade union activities in general during the period were heavily curtailed. After the lifting of the emergency they vigorously took up the organising drive, tried to persuade, convince and win over officers from junior most to senior most -
cadres from all the offices of the bank and by 1977 became a union, with a majority of the employees as its members.

The process of switching over of officers from Union CX to Union CY is interesting. Friends of activists especially close to them were the first to join, as also those who were utterly dissatisfied. Those who had personal unpleasant experiences with the Union CX were the first to join. While the onlookers, the cautious ones who waited and watched the movement joined much later. The fence sitters (neutral) left the Union CX but did not join the Union CY. The hard core supporters and those who were close to activists, in the Union CX continued to be with it.

The new union sought to prevent the usurpation or concentration of power by an individual or a group of them by suitably amending the constitution, according to which anyone who became a member of the top management structure could not continue as office bearer of the union.

It emphasized democratic norms and practices and started implementing them by offering the election of activists, and also of the delegates for the annual union conferences.

Activists assured help to all the members, listened to their problems and tried to solve them by meeting the management functionaries informally as it was not yet recognized by the management. Although the old Union CX
continued to enjoy recognition, it could not effectively and legitimately speak on behalf of its members as its strength had dwindled completely. The new union CY, however, was successful in solving the problems by informally meeting the management. A feeling developed among the members that the management listened more to the new Union. The union CY kept its members informed about the developments in the union by sending frequent circulars, arranging meetings and informally meeting them, so there was no communication gap between the members and the activists and the members willingly responded to the calls given by the union.

Trade union situation at the Bank C became very complex indeed as there were two rival unions for the award staff, both affiliated to politically aligned central trade unions and two officers' unions. As was observed during the interviews, majority of the members and activists at the Bank C do not approve of the two union situation and number of arguments are put forward by them in support of one unified union for officers. This has encouraged the move for unification of the two unions. The main contributing factors in this regard are:

(1) According to the officers, the management takes maximum advantage of the rival union situation by employing the policy of divide and rule at the negotiations,
As such very few officers come forward for union work, most of them being career oriented. Those who do can devote only part of their time and that too for a short period. Officers feel that the time and energy of the activists get wasted dealing with the rival union and the main trade union functions suffer in such a situation.

Officers in the Bank get divided, so to say, into two camps, which disturbs congenial work situation and this often lead to the harassment of staff by the boss belonging to the rival union. All this comes in the way of developing team spirit.

However, a few officers in the Bank C seem to welcome the rival union situation for several reasons. First, it has created a responsive leadership that is sensitive to the problems of the members. Second, it has enabled the members to keep the leaders on their toes and lastly, the harassment to the members has stopped as the leaders shudder at the prospects of members crossing over to the rival union.

Union CX got a clause, in its constitution forbiding any officer member in the top management position, from becoming office bearer within the trade union. So the first and last General Secretary had to step down. Also Union CX passed the resolution to merge with rival Union CY.
Union CY also passed the resolution for merger of the two unions, and a committee is appointed to work out the details of the unification process.

Recent development shows that management was happy with two union situation and has started playing the game to weaken unification efforts. It has started to head to the old union CX, and play the game of divide and rule.

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