CHAPTER IV

GROWTH AND STRUCTURE OF TRADE UNIONS IN THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY

1. Origin and Growth of Trade Unions in the Southern Railway

In an industry like the Indian Railways, a mere aggregate analysis of the growth and structure of the trade union movement at the national level may not reveal the real picture of the movement in its various layers. Although the overall control on all the railways is exercised by the Railway Board at the national level, the actual running of the railway system is carried on by the nine zonal railway units which enjoy considerable autonomy. In fact, zonal railway authorities are responsible for recognition of unions. Most of the unions with the exception of some categorical unions are organised as zonal unions and hence the need for focussing the analysis on the growth and structure of unions at the zonal level. However, there are nine zonal railways and analysis of the growth and structure of unionism at each of the zones is neither possible nor necessary for the purpose of the present study. Therefore it is reasonable to confine the analysis to one zonal railway. The Southern Railway is selected for the study of the growth and structure of unionism at the zonal level.3

1. This section to a large extent is based on an account of the ‘History of the Union’ in Golden Jubilee 1919–1969 Souvenir, SEES, Perambur (Madras) 1969. Throughout this section only sources other than the Souvenir are cited.


3. The choice of Southern Railway for the case study was influenced by the proximity of its Headquarters to the place of work of the author.
Southern Railway System

Before setting out with the description of the trade union movement, a few lines on the organisation, extent of operation, size and structure of employment of the Southern Railway are in order. When the Indian Railways were reorganised into zonal railways in April 1961, in South India the three railways viz., (i) South Indian Railway (SIR), (ii) Madras and South Mahratha Railway (MSMR) and (iii) Mysore State Railway (MSR) were merged together to form the Southern Railway. At present the Southern Railway, one of the nine zonal railway units of the Indian Railways, consists of six divisions and seven extra-divisional establishments. The day to day running of the railway is managed by the Headquarters Office located at Madras. The Headquarters office is headed by the General Manager who is assisted by various departmental heads. The Divisional Offices are under the control of the respective Divisional Superintendents assisted by different Divisional departmental heads. Chart IV.1 presents the organisation of the Southern Railway.

The Southern railway network runs into about 7,200 route kilometers extending over the entire States of Tamil Nadu and Kerala and parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The total employment in the Southern Railway was about 1,22,000 of which the Class I and Class II employees account for about


5. Ibid.
CHART IV. I. ORGANISATION OF THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY
700 or less than 0.5% and the rest are class III and Class IV workers eligible for unionisation.6 Annexure IV.1 shows the division and class-wise distribution of employment.

Besides the geographical dispersal the employment in the railways is characterised by a wide variety of activities. Apart from those in the extra-divisional establishments like workshops and headquarters office, the employees may be divided into eight broad departments. Annexure IV.2 shows the department-wise distribution of the employees in the Southern Railway.

**Antecedents to Unionisation**

In the Southern Railway, as elsewhere, sporadic collective labour action long preceded the formation of a trade union. A description of the circumstances culminating in the birth of trade union movement proper in the Southern Railway, it is hoped, would place the whole analysis in a better perspective. The antecedents of trade union movement in the railway can be traced back to 1905 when workers of Perambur Workshop under the then Madras Railway Company Ltd.7 staged a sit down strike demanding higher wages. In 1911, under the leadership of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants headed by some London Railwaymen, another strike was organised by the running and open-line


7. In 1907 the Madras Railway Co. was merged with the Southern Mahratta Railway Co. to form the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Co. (M & SMR).
staff to press their demand for mileage allowance. In 1912, encouraged by the spreading of labour movement to other branches of the railway, the Perambur Workshop employees went on a week-long strike. But most of these sporadic labour action brought more misery than benefits to the workers. At the conclusion of each of these strikes some workers were victimised.

In 1913, agitating Perambur Workshop employees were fired upon, leaving two workers dead and several injured. A week after the incident when the Workshop was reopened, 75 workers were identified by the management as leaders of the agitation and criminal proceedings were instituted against them and as a result 12 workers were imprisoned. The repeated struggles of the Workshop staff and almost certain failure each time, made the workers realise the need for an organisation to sustain their movement and promote their interests. The management was determined to thwart any move towards formation of a union by the workers. In the face of threats of victimization, the workers had to look for outside help and leadership. Philanthropists and political leaders willingly came to their rescue.

First in 1918, D.P. Vadia, a philanthropist, organised the Union Madras Labour Union for the textile workers. Inspired by the formation of a union for the textile workers, the workers of Perambur Workshop, braving the intimidating circumstances,
made repeated attempts to launch a union. Two of their meet-
ings to form a union were disturbed by the management by in-
voking police intervention or by out right brute force. Not
long after these disturbances the workers succeeded in meeting
at a temple on 7 February 1919 and the Madras and South Canara-
Railway Workshop Union (M & SSMU) came into existence.

"Horizontal" A week after the formation of the Union, B.P.
Expansion Wadia was elected as its President. He suggested
extension of the Union so as to open the Union to workers in
all the workshops under the Railway Company. "The first thing
that I would like you to do is to get all along the line at
evry place where there are workmen belonging to this Railway
Company, to bring them together and form small unions". 8

Accordingly, efforts were made to organise workers in Arkanas
and other workshops. There was a change in the name of the
union into M&SM Railway Employees' Union (M & SSMU) with a
view to keeping the membership open to not only workers in
other workshops but also to extend it to other categories of
employees. 9

6. B.P. Wadia's address to the M&SM Railway Workshop Union on
7 May 1919. Reproduced separated in the Golden Jubilee

9. The AITUC refers to another Union viz. M & SM Engineering
Workmen's Union, AITUC Fifty Years, Documents, Vol. 1,
AITUC, New Delhi, p.83. No more details about this union
are available.
The efforts at horizontal expansion of the union to cover the workers of other workshops on the Railway started yielding results. In 1924 the membership of the Union, including Arkansas Workshop, stood at 5,000. The Union demanded recognition from the management but with no effect. By 1925 branches were opened at Cooty, Arkansas, Asiapura and Madras and the membership increased to 8,352. The pace of expansion of the Union was not to the liking of the management and therefore it suggested that the union be confined to the workers of Parambur Workshop.

'Vertical' expansion The enactment of the Trade Unions Act in 1926 gave a further stimulus to the growth of the Union. In 1928, the M & SN Railway Employees Union was registered under the Act and was affiliated to the AIRE and AITUC. It also set space the vertical expansion of the union and a large number of clerical staff started joining the union. And the Madras Clerical Branch was opened in 1929. It may be observed here that it took almost a decade for the Union to experience the much needed vertical expansion by bringing the white-collar workers into its fold. The usual white-collar inhibitions and values might have been a crucial factor in delaying their unionisation. The prevalence of the notion that a union was

---

for blue-collar workers was quite evident from the fact of non-association of clerical workers in the early stages of unionisation in the Southern Railway and thus leaving the credit for founding a union to the workers of Perambur Workshop. It may not be a sheer coincidence that clerical staff started joining the union only after the enactment of the Trade Unions Act. At any rate, the entry of all ranks of railwaymen into the M&SM Employees' Union increased the membership to 28,000 by the end of 1929. 11 A union by the name M & SM Railway Non-Workshop Employees' Union gave evidence before the Royal Commission. 12 It was stated in the evidence, "M & SM Railway Employees' Union was one single union.... But, later on when the strike on the M&SM broke out the outlook of the men towards pacifist leaders changed and the non-workshop staff could not agree with the workshopmen on certain questions. It was, therefore, decided to form a separate union for all the non-workshopmen. " 13

The year 1930 saw vigorous expansion of the union activities. The fifth Annual Conference was held in Madras in April 1930. It was for the first time that an Annual Conference of the M & SM Railway Employees' Union was held outside Madras.

11. Ibid., p.549.
13. Ibid., p.581.
14. Memorandum of M & SM Railway Employees' Union to the Royal Commission on Labour in India, op. cit., p.549.
The purpose was to spread the union movement through the length and breadth of the whole of the railway. In 1939 the employees of the Mysore State Railway organised the Mysore Railwaymen's Association.

In 1931, as a sequel to the depression in the economy, the M & SM Railway Company decided to retrench some workers in the Perambur and Arkonam Workshops. The M & SMFU protested the decision. But on 7 April 1931 sixty workers in the Perambur Workshop were retrenched. The AIFR took up the issue with the Railway Board. A Court of Inquiry was appointed but the workers were not satisfied. Then a Committee was appointed to go into the problem of retrenchment. The Committee recommended a wage cut in the place of retrenchment but it was not acceptable to the workers.

In 1932, the Union took a strike ballot and the verdict was in favour of a strike against the wage cut. The Agent of the Railway Company did not take the strike threat seriously. Finally, the Union was left with no option but to serve a strike notice. The strike began from 24 October 1932 and lasted for over three months till 9 January 1933. When the strike was called off on the persuasion of the Citizens' Committee many workers were retrenched in Perambur, Arkonam and Hubli Workshops. The General Secretary of the M & SMFU was dismissed. The ruthless action of the hostile management created a scare
among the workers. They were afraid of joining the Union and paying the subscription. It was a terrible blow to the Union movement and the membership of the M & SMUL dropped from 32,000 in 1932 to 600 in 1933.

**Political Insights** The period 1934-46 was a period of internal dissen-
sion and political insights in the Southern Railway Labour Movement. However, it was not until September 1946 that leaders who felt that the Communist domination was not to their liking, broke away from the M & SMUL to form the M & SM Railway Employees' Association with headquarters at Vijayawada.

It was in the same year that a similar split occurred in the Union in the adjoining South Indian Railway. The South Indian Railway Labour Union (SIRLU) started functioning in 1937 and was recognised by the Railway Administration in December 1938. Since 1937 up until 1946 the South Indian Railway Labour Union (SIRLU) was the only Union on the South Indian Railway. A section of the leaders of the South Indian Railway Labour Union found that the Union was too much under the influence of the Communist Party and therefore broke away from it to form the South Indian Railway Workers' Union (SIRWU).

---


16. Ibid.
In 1946, the Mysore State Railway, in contrast to the E & M Railway and the South Indian Railway, witnessed a merger of the existing unions. This was due to ideological unanimity among all the three unions viz., (i) Mysore Railwaymen's Association, (ii) Railway Workshop Staff Union, and (iii) Loco and Transportation Staff Union. All the three unions merged together to form the Mysore State Railway Employees Union (MSREU). The following table 4.1 shows the important trade unions in the three railways in the South at the end of 1946.

Table 4.1 Important Trade Unions and their Affiliation in the Three Railways in South India, 1946

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Railway</th>
<th>Unions</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. M &amp; SM Railway</td>
<td>1. M &amp; SM Railway Employees' Union</td>
<td>30,353</td>
<td>AIFR</td>
<td>Recognised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. M &amp; SM Railway Employees' Association</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>INRUF (1949)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. South Indian Railway</td>
<td>1. South Indian Labour Union</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>AIFR</td>
<td>De-reconised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. South Indian Workers' Union</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mysore State Railway</td>
<td>1. Mysore State Railway Employees' Union</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>AIFR</td>
<td>Recognised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.A. = Not available

Reorganisation of Unions

In April 1951 when the process of reorganisation of Indian Railways into zonal railways was started, the three railways in the South viz., M & SH Railway, South Indian Railway and Mysore State Railway, were merged into a single zone – the Southern Railway. In March 1952, the M & SHU changed its name into the Southern Railway Employees Union (SREU) and after sometime, the M & SHU Employees' Association became the Southern Railway Employees' Association (SREA) while the South Indian Railway Labour Union was rechristened as the Southern Railway Labour Union (SRLU). There was also a feeling among the railwaymen to restructure their unions in conformity with the reorganised railway administration. In 1952 the AIFP advised the affiliated unions to reorganise into one union in each zone. Accordingly the three AIFP affiliated union in the Southern Railway viz., the SREU, M & SHU and the SRLU decided to merge together to form a single Union, SREU. In June 1953, the Southern Railway Employees' Union was registered and affiliated to the AIFP.

By the end of 1953 there were three important Unions on the Southern Railway, two of which were Industrial-Federal and one Industrial-Regional type. Of the two IF Unions, Southern Railway Employees' Union was affiliated to the AIFP, while the Southern Railway Employees' Association (SREA) was affiliated to the INRIF. Both these Unions were recognised by
the Southern Railway administration. The third Union viz.,
the Southern Railway Labour Union was of the Industrial-Regional
type and was not recognised by the railway administration.

Further

Here a word about the ideological underpinnings

Mutation

of those three Unions is in order. Within the

and Growth

leadership of the Southern Railway Employees'

Union (SREU) there were two important groups: one with the

Socialist Party orientation and the other with the Congress

Party influence and the SREU was known to be a Communist Union.

The history of the union movement that follows is a history

of splits, mergers and further splits arising out of changes

in the nature of relationship between the Congress, Socialist

and Communist groups among the trade unions in the railway.

The merger and the split of the AIEF and INRPF at the

national level had their repercussions on the trade union move-

ment in the Southern Railway. The Congress dominated SREU

which was affiliated to the INRPF remained as an affiliate of

the NFIR. The SREU which was affiliated to the AIEF before

the unsuccessful merger at the national level, changed its

affiliation to the NFIR in 1957, not much to the liking of the

Socialist group within the union. Thus, in 1957 both the SREU

and the SREU came within the fold of the NFIR leaving no union

in the Southern Railway under the AIEF. In June 1957 the two

NFIR affiliates, SREU and SREU merged together to form the
Southern Railway Employees Sangh (SRES).

The merger was opposed by the Socialist group, especially those with the former SREU identity, in the SREU. When the Socialist group within the SREU failed either to retain affiliation with the AIF or to stop the merger with the SREU, they came out of the SREU and formed the Dakshin Railway Employees' Union (DREU). 17 The DREU was soon given affiliation by the AIF. 18

By the end of 1957, there were again three important unions in the Southern Railway but this time each union distinguished by a distinct political association: The SRES with the Congress orientation was affiliated to the NFIR. The DREU with the Socialist domination was affiliated to the AIF. And the SREU under the Communist leadership was not affiliated to any of the two national railway federations. However, the "ideological purification" of the unions was not yet over. There were complaints that the DREU was not completely under Socialist leadership and that there remained some active Communists within the Union. 19

In March 1959 the DREU claimed a membership of 23,000 which was more than the 10 per cent of total employment, a

17. Office Note, Files of the Establishment Division, Railway Board, New Delhi.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
CHART IV.2  PROCESS OF UNION MUTATION IN SOUTHERN RAILWAY
requirement then for a union to get recognition. But the union was not recognised for the main reason that it was dominated by the Communists.

As if to prove the reservations of the railway authorities, in 1960, leaders of the SRU came forward to merge with the DRU. In spite of severe opposition against such a move by many of the socialist group in the DRU, when there was a ballot on the merger issue in December 1960, the majority voted in favour. In January 1961 the SRU merged with the DRU to form Dakshin Railway Employees' Sangh (DRES) which claimed a membership of 35,000. In another six months the DRES reported an increase in the membership up to 41,000. But in June 1961 the AIUF withdrew its affiliation to the DRES. The Socialist group within the SRU, which was opposed to the merger with the SRU, came out and formed the Southern Railway Mazdoor Union (SRMU) in 1966. In 1962, the AIUF granted affiliation to the newly formed SRMU.

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Office Note on DRU, January 1962, Establishment Division, Railway Board, New Delhi.
23. The merger took place at a meeting of the joint delegation on 32 January 1961; Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. The SRMU was started on 21 Feb. 1961, with the Central Office at Madras. A note on 'History of the SRMU' handed over to the author by the General Secretary of the SRMU at Madras, July 1971. The SRMU was granted affiliation by the AIUF at its Annual Convention held at Udaipur in 1962. A Note on 'History of the SRMU' op. cit.
The process of trade union 'mutation' that took place in 1961 resulted in further regrouping and consolidation on political lines. While there was no change in the Congress oriented SIF, the Socialists in the MNS were eased out and formed the SSI while the Communists consolidated under the banner of the SPS. Thus by the end of 1962 there were again three important unions in the Southern Railway. These three unions continued to dominate the trade union scene in the Southern Railway until 1970 when a number of splinter groups within these unions started falling out to form separate unions. Chart 4.1 presents a graphic picture of the process of mutation from 1937 through 1971.

2. The structure of trade unions in the Southern Railway

The present trade union scene in the Southern Railway is no longer the one confined to the industrial-federal and industrial-regional forms which dominated the history of the movement in the railways. With the rapid multiplication in the unions, the present structure has assumed a greater complexity.

Sources of Information

The analysis of the present structure and working of trade unions in the Southern Railway is based on information collected from the following three main sources:

(1) The Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras,
(ii) The railway authorities consisting of the Railway Board Office, the Southern Railway Headquarters Office and the Cuntakal Divisional Office, and (iii) some trade unions' offices in the Southern Railway. It should be remembered, however, that none of these sources individually or all the sources taken together contain complete information.

Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions

Normally the Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions should be the main source of data on the number of unions, their membership, affiliation and finances. Unfortunately, such an expectation is belied for various reasons. First, there are many Industrial-Categorical Unions functioning in the Southern Railway but registered elsewhere. Second, within the Southern Railway there are six offices of the Registrar of Trade Unions under the control of four different State Governments. Written requests for information did not bring any response from these offices and hence the limited information from only one office—the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras—which was personally visited by the author.28 As could be expected, the information available at this office was restricted to only fourteen unions on the register. Table 4.2 gives the list of unions of railwaymen and related information as was available with the office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras.

28 Information from the Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras, was collected in July-August 1972.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Union</th>
<th>Date of establishment</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Southern Railway Class IV Workers' Union</td>
<td>22.2.1957</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55 (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Southern Railway Employees' Sangh</td>
<td>12.10.1957</td>
<td>NFIR</td>
<td>40,516 (1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Southern Railway Mazdoor Union</td>
<td>7.11.1960</td>
<td>AIRF</td>
<td>32,000 (1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dakshin Railway Employees' Union*</td>
<td>16.2.1961</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18,193 (1962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indian Railway Sanitary Inspectors' Union</td>
<td>30.12.1959</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72 (1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Southern Railway Loco Works Canteen Workers' Union</td>
<td>1.8.1964</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24 (1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Southern Railway Coal Workers' Union</td>
<td>16.9.1966</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45 (1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>South Rail Industrial Workers' Union</td>
<td>16.1.1970</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23,000 (1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Electric Traction Drivers' Association</td>
<td>30.5.1962</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 (1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Class IV Workers' Union</td>
<td>24.6.1965</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>323 (1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>All India Loco-Running Staff Association</td>
<td>18.4.1968</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24 (1970)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Transferred to the Madurai Regional Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions in 1967.

Even in the case of unions on the register, continuous information over a period of time on their membership, finances etc. is not available. For, many registered unions do not submit their annual returns regularly. Table 4.3 makes this abundantly clear.

### Table 4.3 Number of Registered Railwayman's Unions Submitting Returns to the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of registered Railwayman's Unions</th>
<th>Number of Railwaymen's Unions Submitting Returns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1971, out of the thirteen unions on the register, only two unions had a record of submitting returns every year for the preceding five years. There were three unions which did not submit returns even once in a period of six years. Of course, the Indian Trade Unions Act 1926 provides

---

29. The two unions are: (i) Southern Railway Employees' Sangh, and (ii) Electric Traction Drivers' Association, Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras.

30. The three unions are: (i) SR Class IV Workers' Union, (ii) SR Loco Works Canteen Workers' Union, and (iii) Class IV Workers' Union. *Ibid.*
for drastic action against unions not submitting returns. In fact, notices were issued to three defaulting unions in 1967 but no drastic action was taken.

**Railway Authorities**

Of the Railway authorities, the Railway Board does not maintain any separate information on trade unions in the Southern Railway. Bits of information available in the files of the Labour section of the Establishment Division of the Railway Board were collected. The Southern railway Headquarters Office provided a list of unions operating in the Southern Railway in 1972. Including the two recognised unions the list consisted of 46 unions of various types. Interestingly enough this list did not include six unions found on the registers of the Registrar of Trade Unions, thus pointing to the fact that no single source is likely to provide complete information of the unions in the railways. At the Guntakal Division the communications of unions made available by the Divisional Personnel Office in October 1974, enabled to collect some more information about unions.

**Union Offices**

Finally a word about the information available with the trade unions themselves. Without exception, almost all trade unions which were approached, have been too...
willing in providing all their records and share all the
information available with them. Unfortunately, with one
exception, the unions have few records to be of any use. 33

External Structure

To gain an understanding of the structure of trade unions
in the Southern Railway, the available information shows
that in 1975 there were as many as 54 unions of various sizes,
forms and ideologies, operating in the Southern Railway. The
diversity of the types of these unions makes any attempt at
their classification a formidable task. For the purpose of
analytical convenience and continuity the same typology evolved
for the purpose of the study of the railway trade union move-
ment at the national level is used here. 34 Accordingly, the
unions are divided into three broad types, viz. (i) Industrial-
Federal (IF); (ii) Industrial-Regional (IR); and (iii) Indu-
strial-Categorical (IC). Within the last type a distinction
is made between (a) Industrial-Categorical, with national
scope and (b) Industrial-Categorical-Regional (ICR). Annexure
IV-3 gives the consolidated list of unions in the Southern

33. Southern Railway Employees' Sanbh is an unique exception.
Its central office is very well equipped with records and
a library which provide valuable information for a detailed
study of the working of the union at various levels.

34. See Chapter III, Section II, supra.
Railway classified into different types. Table 4.4 shows the type-wise distribution of unions in the Southern Railway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of unions</th>
<th>Number of Unions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Industrial-Federal (IF)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Industrial-Regional (IR)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Industrial-Categorical (IC)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Industrial-Categorical-Regional (ICR)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Unions</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:  
1. Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras  
2. Railway Board Office, New Delhi  
3. Southern Railway Headquarters Office, Madras  
4. Guntakul Divisional Office, Guntakul

It is interesting to note that the most dominant form viz. IF is the one with least number of unions, while the relatively recent and fragmentary type vis. ICR has the largest number of unions. The mere number of unions, therefore, may not suggest the strength or weakness of a union form. In fact, in the context of the Southern Railway there seems to be an inverse relationship between the dominant type and the number of unions in a type.

The following discussion of the forms of unions starts, however, with the most numerous form – ICR and extends to IC,
Altogether the 28 ICR Unions cater to 24 categories of employees in the Southern Railway. Of the 28 unions, 21 unions are organised at the rate of one union for one category of employees, while there are 3 unions for the category of "Class IV employees", 3 for "coal workers" and 2 for "casual labourers". In the case of the last three categories where there are two or more ICR unions for each of the category, it may be noted that these are somewhat general categories without any specific
skills and consist of relatively large number of employees and spread over a large number of departments in the Railway. Thus, larger and more general category greater seems to be the tendency towards multiple organisations within the ICR type.

It needs to be emphasised, however, that in the case of as many as 21 categories there does not seem to be any multiplicity of ICR unions. Further, it is important to note that all the ICR Unions are confined to organising those categories which are not served by any Industrial-Categorical unions. The large number of ICR unions, therefore, does not necessarily suggest rivalry between these unions. On the contrary there appears to be mutual cooperation between ICR unions. Thus, it should be made clear that there is not much of competition either within the ICR type of unions or between the ICR unions and IC unions. But both the IC and ICR unions do come into conflict with interests of the IP or IR unions which cater to all categories of railway employees.

There are 17 Industrial-Categorical unions operating in the Southern Railway. In the case of 15 categories there is one IC union for each category and

---

35. Personal investigations at the Guptakhal Division revealed that there was better understanding and cooperation between the Divisional branches of the Unions of 'Commercial Clerks', 'Stationmasters' and 'Loco-running' staff. While all these unions spoke hate of the recognised IP union. However, there does not exist any documentary evidence to show their mutual cooperation among the ICR unions.
in the case of "telegraph staff" there are two unions viz. the All India Telegraph Staff Association and the All India Telephone Operators' Association. The latter union is an interesting instance of a national federation trying to make inroads into categorical organisations. Each of these IC unions operates in a category where there is no ICR union. If starting of an ICR or IC union results in more than one union for the same category, then it would mean that the new entrant is trying to encroach into the area of the existing union, and conflict arises between the unions trying to organise the same category. On the other hand, if starting of an ICR or IC union is to organise a category on 'categorical' lines for the first time, then it would result in the multiplication of unions but not in conflict between one categorical union and the other. In Indian Railways the latter type of multiplication of categorical unions appear to be more in evidence than the former. It may be noted, that in either case of multiplication of the categorical unions, it would lead to conflict with interests of IF or IR unions which cater to all categories. In general, therefore, there is no conflict or competition either among the IC unions.

36. The Southern zonal branch of the All India Railway Telephone Operators' Association was started on 9 April 1974 at Madras. A communication from the branch claims, "This Association is affiliated with SIUS locally and NFIR at all India level." This spells a beginning in the structural transformation an Industrial-Federal form trying to accommodate within its scope industrial-categorical unions.
and the ICII unions. Structurally, and operationally the conflict is between IC and ICII unions on the one hand and the IF and IR unions on the other. Altogether there are 45 IC and ICII unions in the Southern Railway catering to 39 categories of employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial-Federal and Industrial-Regional Unions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The difference between Industrial-Federal and Industrial-Regional type of unions is very thin. Both these types of unions organise all the categories of workers in a zonal railway but with one difference viz. that Industrial-Federal unions are affiliated to one of the national federations of railwaymen, while the Industrial-Regional unions are not. Because of the close similarity of form these two types are treated here together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The IF or IR unions represent the oldest form of union organisation in the Indian Railways. The history of trade union movement for quite a long period of time has been the history of Industrial-Federal or Industrial-Regional unions. Even to this day IF and IR unions continue to be most dominant form. There are 3 IF and 6 IR unions in the Southern Railway. Most of these unions are large in size and command considerable membership. Both the recognised unions in the Southern Railway are IF unions. The recognised unions viz. the Southern Railway Employees' Sangh (SRES) and the Southern Railway Mazdoor Union together organise nearly about 75,000 workers accounting
for about 60 per cent of the labour force employed in the
Southern Railway. Table 4.5 presents some of the salient
aspects of the IF and IR unions.

Table 4.5 SOME IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE INDUSTRIAL-FEDERAL AND
INDUSTRIAL-REGIONAL UNIONS IN THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY, 1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Union (i)</th>
<th>Year of Union</th>
<th>Establishment Type</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Southern Railway</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>IF</td>
<td>42,370</td>
<td>NPIL &amp; Congress (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees' Sangh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1971) INTUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Southern Railway</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>IF</td>
<td>36,100</td>
<td>AHF' Socialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mazdoor Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dakshin Railway</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>IF</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>BEMS Jan Sangh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karmik Sangh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dakshin Railway</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>18,193</td>
<td>Communist (CPM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees' Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Southern Railway</td>
<td></td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Communist (CPM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labour Union (ii)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Southern Railway</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees' Progressive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>South Rail Industrial</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>Congress (iii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workers' Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Southern Railwaymen's</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1973 Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dravida Railwaymen's</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: NA = Not available.

(i) The political party affiliation as obtained in 1973. Many
changes have since taken place both in the case of politi-
cal parties and the union affiliations.

(ii) It was merged with DMEU in 1964, but was revised again.
The exact date of revival is not available.

Sources: 1. Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras.
2. Southern Railway Headquarters Office, Madras.
In recent times there has been a tendency towards multiplicity of IR unions. Unlike the categorical unions where the increase in their number need not necessarily mean increasing competition or conflict between multiplying unions, in the case of IP or IR unions multiplicity means increase in the competition among these unions. Added to the multiplicity within the IR type, there has been increasing multiplication of unions of IC and ICR type which come directly into conflict with the interests of the IP and IR unions. In fact the IP and IR unions look upon the proliferation of categorical unions as a direct affront and threat to their established authority in the railway trade union movement.

While multiplicity of categorical unions has been sought to be explained in terms of various factors, political consideration appears to be one of the most important causative factors leading to multiplicity of IR or IR unions. "After Independence political parties became the main cause of bifurcation of unions." 37 It may not be an exaggeration to state that in recent times there have often been splits in the IP or IR unions with the splits in the political parties. The trade union political party links have been a very sensitive issue. Often union leaders deny any relationship with the political parties. 38 Notwithstanding these

37. The Treasurer of AIF, in an interview with the author on 29 May 1972, AIF Office, New Delhi.

38. The General Secretary of SBMU in an interview with the author in July 1971, SBMU Office, Madras.
disclaimers the fact remains that many IF and IR unions have close political party associations. 39

The circumstances leading to the formation of the Southern Railway Employees Sangh, the Southern Railway Mazdoor Union and the Dakshin Railway Employees' Union and the role played by political influences therein have already been explained. Since 1970 there has been a spurt in the formation of IF and IR unions in the Southern Railway and much of it was due to political considerations. The South Rail Industrial Workers' Union was started on 16 January 1970 by a splinter group of the SRES. The split was purely on political considerations. The General Secretary of the union wrote: 40 "This union was bifurcated from Southern Railway Employees' Sangh, as the Sangh was dominated by Syndicate members headed by Sri T.V. Andavan, M.P. Our Union is supporting the ideologies of Ruling Congress..." The Railway Employees' Progressive Union was launched in 1970 with a Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Party Member of Parliament as the President. 41 This was the first direct entry of the DMK Party into railway unionism. The Bharatiya Jan Sangh an erstwhile political party entered the

39. "Politics cannot be completely divested of trade unions!": General Secretary of the NFIR, in an interview on 26 May 1972, NFIR Office, New Delhi. The then Treasurer who is the present General Secretary of the AIRF, said, "Political parties of all shades are trying to have a foothold in trade union movement in Indian Railways; whether you welcome it or not, it is there." Interview, op. cit.


41. From the returns for 1970 submitted by the union to the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras.
railway union movement with a big thrust. As pointed out earlier, it established a national federation of railwaymen viz., the Bharatiya Railway Mazdoor Sangh and started organising zonal unions.\footnote{42} It entered the Southern Railway in 1972 by organising the Dakshin Railway Karmik Sangh. Further, when there was a split in the Communist party, the Marxists (CPM) held the sway over the Dakshin Railway Employees Union (DREU) with one of their Members of Parliament as its President.\footnote{43} The CPI group revived the Southern Railway Labour Union under the leadership of a Member of Parliament.\footnote{44} Interestingly enough, political parties seem to have a definite preference for IF or IR form against the IC or ICR unions. This may be due to the fact that though one IF or IR union they can reach all the categories of employees while embracing IC or ICR form would mean restricted influence. Thus, the experience of the Southern Railway shows that political considerations are definitely behind the multiplicity of IR unions.

3. Growth and structure of Southern Railway Employees' Sangh (SRES)

In the absence of adequate data relating to other unions, a detailed discussion of the dynamics of the structure and

\footnote{42} See Section 2, Chapter III, supra.
\footnote{43} Mr. K. Anandan Nambiar, a CPM Member of Parliament was the President.
\footnote{44} Mrs. Parvathi M. Krishnan, a CPI Member of Parliament was the President of the revived SRLU.
working of the movement at different levels is sought to be explained with the help of a case study of one union – the Southern Railway Employees' Sangh (SRES). As has been noted earlier, the SRES is the only union in the Southern Railway which was in a position to make available considerable amount of data on different aspects of its growth and functioning and hence the choice of the SRES for the case study.

Although the Southern Railway Employees' Sangh (SRES) was formed under the present name only in 1957 by merging SRJU and SRESA, its origin dates back to the M & SM Railway Employees' Union which was founded on 7 February 1919. The SRES celebrated its 'Golden Jubilees' in 1969. Not withstanding the splits, mergers and regroupings of trade unions in the Southern railway as described earlier, the SRES has been enjoying a great deal of continuity in its organisational leadership. The present President and the General Secretary of the SRES have been associated with the Union since 1930s.45 And the latter has the distinction of holding the office either as the General Secretary or as the President of the Union continuously for the last thirty years.46 Not only is the SRES a union of the longest standing but it is also the union which has been enjoying longest period of continuous recognition in the Southern Railway since 1953.47

---

46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
shows the growth of membership of the SLES since 1957. In recent years although the absolute membership of SLES remained around 40,000, its share in the total unionisation has been on the decline. The main reason is the increasing number of unions of all forms.

Table 4.6 GROWTH OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE SLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>41,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>36,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>36,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>39,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>40,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>42,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>66,194</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>75,035</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>38,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NA = Not available

Notes: (1) Actual membership figures for the period 1957-63 are not available either with the Union office or the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras. Therefore, resort is made to an approximate estimate of the figures on the basis of the strength of the SLES in the Working Committee of the N/MR during the period.

2. Figures for the period 1964-74 are actual membership data available from the records of the SLES.

3. The sudden decline in the membership since 1966 was due to the transfer of two Divisions from the Southern Railway to the newly formed South-Central Railway in October 1966.
The organisational structure of the SNES, as presented in Chart IV.3, shows a striking resemblance to that of the administrative structure of the Southern Railway. The SNES has a three-tier organisational structure with the Central Office at the highest level parallel to the zonal railway Headquarters, the Divisional Offices at the middle-level parallel to the railway Divisional Office, and the Branch Offices at the grass-roots level.

The branch is the primary unit of trade union organisation and on it is based the whole pyramid of administrative and government structure. Because of the geographical scatter of employees in the railway over a wide area and the resulting physical distance between the union Headquarters and the place of work of members, the branch assumes all the more importance in the case of a union like that of the SNES. About 75 per cent of the employees in the Southern Railway are scattered throughout the open line areas while only 25 per cent of the employees are concentrated in the Divisional Offices or in the places where Extra-Divisional Establishments are located.48

The need to reach the employees all over the railway and to be in reasonable reach of the enrolled members the branches of the SNES have to be spread over the

48. Instructions on the Functions of Branch and Divisional Office Bearers (Hereafter referred to as Instructions), SNES, Central Office, Madras, p.2.
CHART IV: Organisation of the Southern Railway Employees' Sangh
length and breadth of the railway. Though there has been no
hard and fast rule, it has been taken care that the minimum
size of the branch would be about 200, so as to keep it
viable. As shown in Table 4.7 in recent times there has
been a tendency towards increase in the number of branches
and decrease in the average size of the branches. The tendency
towards larger number and smaller size of branches may be due
to a combination of two factors. First, there are some areas
where the existing branches find the size of membership and
the area over which they are spread out as unwieldy. Second,
there has been growing competition from the multiplying unions,
which is sought to be met by opening more branches so as to
concentrate more attention over a smaller area.

The modal size of a branch has changed from one of the
more than 1,000 members in 1965 to that of one with 200 to
400 members in 1971 and with it, the average size of the
branch has declined from 845 to 510. There has been a fall
in the over all membership in every division and strangely
there has been an increase in the number of branches just at
a period when the membership is declining. One possible ex-
planation of this phenomenon is that the tendency towards
decline in membership is sought to be combated by increasing
the number of branches so as to intensify the drive towards
enrolling of more members.

49. An interview with the Treasurer and the Joint General
Secretary, SNES, on 5 September 1971, SNES Office, Madras.
### Size - Specific Distribution of Branches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Size</th>
<th>Division-wise Distribution</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200 - 400</td>
<td>1 6</td>
<td>1 7</td>
<td>2 12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401 - 600</td>
<td>3 4</td>
<td>2 4</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601 - 900</td>
<td>3 -</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>2 -</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>901 - 1000</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>1 -</td>
<td>2 -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1000</td>
<td>4 2</td>
<td>2 -</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Branches</strong></td>
<td>12 16</td>
<td>7 12</td>
<td>12 14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Numbers</strong></td>
<td>12,002</td>
<td>9,075</td>
<td>5,080</td>
<td>4,504</td>
<td>7,768</td>
<td>5,023</td>
<td>7,284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
1. One branch had a strength of less than 200.
2. Out of 37 branches in 1971 there was no one in Trichy Division, two in Olavakkot and

**Source:** Annual Membership Register, 1965-1971, Central Office.
The responsibility for proper conduct of branch affairs naturally falls upon the elected office-bearers. With a view to ensure proper representation to the various categories of railway employees, the SRES provides for a two-stage election to the branch office-bearers every two years. The first stage involves election of branch delegates from the thirteen recognised categories, at the rate of one delegate for every 25 fully-paid members from each category. The minimum number of branch delegates are fixed at 25 per branch. The delegates thus elected form the electoral college for the election of the branch office bearers. The second stage involves election of branch office bearers from amongst the branch delegates. Each branch elects a seven-member branch-executive consisting of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and three Assistant Secretaries. Besides, the branch delegates also elect committee members at the rate of one for each recognised category. For instance, there were 67 branches of the SRES and Table 4.8 presents the category-wise distribution of branch office-bearers.

50. For the purpose of category-wise representation, the SRES lists 13 categories. See Instructions op. cit., p.15.
### Table 4.2 Category-Wise Distribution of Branch Office-Bearers of the SES, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Branch Office-Bearers</th>
<th>Branch Leadership Quotient (BLQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ministerial (1)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Running staff</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Operating</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ticket checking</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Signal and Tele-communications</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Store (1)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Workshop (1)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All categories</strong></td>
<td><strong>609</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

BLQ is calculated by the following formula:

\[
BLQ = \frac{\% \text{ of } X_1 \text{ category of leaders to the total branch leaders}}{\% \text{ of } X_1 \text{ category of employees to the total employees}}
\]

(1) There was some overlapping between the 'Ministerial', 'Store' and 'Workshop' categories and therefore it is not possible to calculate BLQ for these categories.

**Source:** General Secretary's Report, 53rd Annual Session, SNES, Madras, 1972, p.93.
Table 4.8 shows that the branch leadership is fairly distributed among all categories of railway employees. However, there are certain categories which show a higher leadership representation compared to others. This is evidenced by the differences shown by the "branch leadership quotient" (BLQ). Higher the BLQ of a category greater is the leadership representation of the category and vice versa. Given the varying conditions of employment and the literacy-skill composition of various categories of employment, a certain amount of over representation or under-representation is bound to occur in the case of branch leadership. For instance, the "engineering" and "mechanical" categories together account for a little over 50 per cent of total non-workshop employment in the Southern Railway but at the same time these two categories account for about three-fourths of total Class IV employees in the railway. Most of the leaders of the branches are Class III employees and therefore there is no wonder that categories with greater Class IV composition are under-represented in the branch leadership while categories with greater proportion of Class III employees are over represented.

Further, the SFES rules stipulate that for a member to be elected as an Assistant Secretary, Vice-Chairman, or

51. See Annexure IV.2, Infra.
52. Personnel Branch, Posts section, Headquarters Office, Southern Railway, Madras.
Treasurer of a branch, one should have served as Branch Committee member at least for two years.\textsuperscript{53} For one to become a Chairman or Secretary of a branch one should have served as an Assistant office-bearer at least for two years.\textsuperscript{54} These conditions are insisted to ensure that the branch office-bearers possess the requisite experience in running the branch affairs. However, there are many categories\textsuperscript{55} of employees who are subject to frequent transfers, and therefore do not have the opportunity to maintain continued contact with the membership in a place and hence their disadvantageous position in the leadership elections. On the other hand, there are certain categories like staff in workshops, administrative offices, stores depots of the Railway where the employees are not subject to frequent transfers and, therefore, possess an inherent advantage of continuity in a place which provides them with better opportunities to climb the leadership rungs.

The branch leaders, being the regular employees of the railway, attend to their trade union work after the normal working hours. Every branch office of the 

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{SWS}, Instructions, op. cit., p.5.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55} All categories of railwaymen except those in the workshops, administrative offices and stores depots, are liable to be transferred as often as possible – the maximum period an employee allowed to work at a place being five years. See Instructions, op. cit., p.4.
be open at least three hours a day for at least six days in a week. The branch office-bearers are expected to work at least three hours a day for at least three days in a week. If the office work of all the 87 branches of the Sangh were to be performed by full-time employees it would mean work equivalent to about 175 full-time workers. The SRES branches could hardly afford to have any paid-employee even on part-time basis. Therefore, the day-to-day administration of the branches is entirely dependent upon the honorary work of the elected office-bearers. The SRES lays down in elaborate detail the duties of each functionary of the branches.

**Branch** The basic functions of a branch are: (a) Enrolment of members, (b) Organisational activities, and (c) Attending to the grievances and problems of members.

**Enrolment** Enrolment of members into the SRES is one of the primary functions of every office-bearer in the branch. Each branch committee member is expected to enroll a minimum of 50 members every year. This may not be always possible, because in some areas the number of employees in a category may not be fifty. The Branch Executive, in the light of trends in the membership, is required to fix targets for

---

56. *Instructions*, op. cit., p.10-A.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., pp.3-40.
membership enrolment every year and work towards realisation of these targets. The following table shows the performance of the SMES branches in achieving the membership targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year where targets were realised</th>
<th>Number of Branches</th>
<th>Total No. of Branches</th>
<th>Membership Target</th>
<th>Membership Realised</th>
<th>Percentage of Col.6 to col.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>41,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>41,300</td>
<td>38,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49,800</td>
<td>39,040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: During the period 1966-1971, no targets were reported for the years 1967, 1970 and 1971.

Sources: Annual Membership Register, Central Office, SMES, Madras.

It is clear from the above table that in the case of majority of branches the targets set remain unfulfilled. Nevertheless, targets are insisted by the SMES to enable the branches to regularly review their membership-oriented performance, to list causes for not reaching the target and to device appropriate measures to overcome the shortfall.

Membership Dues Collection of membership subscription and enrolment are normally carried on simultaneously.

Usually, the SMES branch office-bearers prefer collection of
the entire amount of annual subscription at the time of enrolment, because of the convenience and the certainty involved in collecting all the subscription at a time and because of the inconvenience and possible lapse involved in collecting subscription in instalment. But in the face of competition from other unions and in some cases the inability of the members to pay all the subscription at a time, part-payment is also accepted from the members at the time of enrolment. In the case of part-payments it is the responsibility of the Branch Committee Members to help the office-bearers in realising the remaining part of the subscription. On the basis of the nature of payment of subscription the S.I.S.S. classifies the members into two categories viz., (i) fully paid members and (ii) partly paid members. The part-payment of subscription has often caused lapse of the instalments due. The available information, as shown in the following table, reveals that there has been gradual decline in the proportion of 'partly-paid' members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fully-paid members</th>
<th>Partly paid members</th>
<th>All members</th>
<th>Partly paid members as a % of all members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>25,077</td>
<td>15,477</td>
<td>41,767</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>26,659</td>
<td>9,666</td>
<td>41,360</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>29,565</td>
<td>8,355</td>
<td>40,900</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>31,761</td>
<td>7,270</td>
<td>39,040</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>34,277</td>
<td>6,239</td>
<td>40,516</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Membership Register, Central Office, S.I.S.S., Madras.
Besides enrolment of members, the SRGS branch office-bearers have to deal with a number of organisational activities like conducting propaganda on behalf of the union, organising public meetings to keep in contact with workers and to educate them in union activities, holding monthly branch committee meetings to review the activities of the branch etc.

Branches and Grievance Redressal

The whole of the organisational machinery of the SRGS is geared towards redressing of grievances of the members through Permanent Negotiating Machinery (PMN). The branch is the grass-roots organisation which is of immediate access to the members and therefore most of the grievances of the members are brought to the branch secretary first. After discussing the grievance with the aggrieved and satisfying himself about the case for representation the branch secretary first makes a written representation to the Divisional or Extra-Divisional authorities, as the case may be. If the grievances are not satisfactorily resolved even after a month of written representation, the issue becomes eligible for representation at a meeting with Divisional authorities under regular contact meetings or meetings under Permanent Negotiating Machinery (PMN). See chart 4.4 for a graphic description of the grievance representation by the SRGS at the branch level. It is the duty of the branch secretary to impress upon the Divisional Assistant General Secretary, on the need for
CHART IV. SOUTHERN RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' SANGH AND GRIEVANCE REPRESENTATION AT THE BRANCH AND DIVISIONAL LEVELS
inclusion of the grievance as a subject under PM meeting. For it is the latter who is responsible for drawing up agenda for the PM meetings with the Divisional authorities. Although no comprehensive information on the branch-wise representation of grievances is available, the total number of grievances brought for negotiation by all the branches run into several thousand.

**SME : Divisional** The Divisional offices of the SMEs act as level organisation the liaison between the activities of the Central office and the branches spread over various divisions and Extra-divisional Establishments. The divisional level organisation consists of two office bearers for each Division and they are designated as the Divisional Vice-President and the Divisional Assistant General Secretary.  

In the case of Extra-divisional Establishment every unit has one office-bearer designated as the Assistant General Secretary.

Of the twelve Divisional office-bearers in 1972, ten belonged to 'Ministerial' category, one was an electrical fitter and another an Assistant Station Master. The categorical balance very much sought to be achieved in the case of branch leadership, no longer seems to be relevant at the divisional level. Skills of composition and communication and familiarity with the rules, regulations, and conventions

---

50. Ibid., p.410.
50. Ibid.
51. Register of Central Office-Bearers, Central Office, SME, Madras.
seem to be overwhelming qualifications for Divisional leadership and the clerical cadres, therefore have a definite edge. Further, all the twelve Divisional office-bearers work at the places where the Divisional railway headquarters are located. Moreover, with the sole exception of the Assistant Station Master, all of them work in Divisional Railway offices which don’t involve frequent transfers. Besides the basic skills of communication, stability and proximity of employment do seem to play important role in the election of Divisional Office bearers.

**Function of Divisional Office**

The main functions of the Divisional Vice-President include the supervision of the organisational activities of the branches in the division, fulfilling of membership targets for each branch, ensuring regular Branch Committee Meetings etc. 62 The Divisional Assistant General Secretary coordinates the service-rendering activities of the branches, especially ensuring the regular frequency of PNM meetings, consolidation and submission of subjects for these meetings and participation in the meetings. 63 Since the introduction of the PNM in 1952 the most important function performed by the Divisional office bearers has increasingly been the settlement of grievances through PNM. One of the

---

Divisional offices issue a monthly bulletin in Tamil on the achievement of the union in the division in particular and in the railway in general. 64

Also, it is the responsibility of the Divisional Office of the SLES to ensure organisation of Divisional Categorical Forums for highlighting the problems of various categories of employees. The SLES lists thirteen recognised categories for this purpose and each category should have a Divisional Forum consisting of branch delegates belonging to the respective categories. Each Forum should meet at least once in a year to discuss the problems peculiar to that category and advise the union on suitable remedial measures. 65

The Divisional Office-bearers of the SLES, like branch office-bearers, are full-time working employees of the railway and therefore their trade union work is carried on in addition to their regular duties as railway employees. No one is paid for the trade union work except a part time typist. The Divisional Office-bearers are required to devote at least three hours a day for their union activities. In practice, they devote much more time to trade union work.

64. The Trichy Divisional Office issues a Tamil monthly, 'Sangh News'. See General Secretary's Report, 53rd Annual Session, SLES, Madras, p.63.
SLES : Central Office

The Central Office is the kingpin in the administrative structure of the SLES. The Central Office is mainly responsible for the overall supervision as well as day-to-day administration of the union. The Central Office is under the direct control of the Central Executive consisting of the President, four Vice-Presidents, the General Secretary, the Working General Secretary, two Joint General Secretaries and two Assistant General Secretaries.

SLES : Central Leadership

The present President and the General Secretary of the SLES are retired railway employees who have been associated with the union for over thirty years. It may be noted that the General Secretary of the SLES is also the President of the National Federation of Indian Railway (NFIR) and one of the Vice-Presidents is the General Secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC). The rest are the employees of the Southern Railway and they do not get any remuneration for the trade union offices held by them.

Leaving the President and the General Secretary who are ex-railway employees and the Vice-President who is a representative of the INTUC, of the remaining nine Central Office-bearers in 1972, five belonged to the 'Ministerial' or 'commercial' categories, three worked in the railway workshops and one belonged to 'ticket-checking staff'. Except the last one,
the others work in departments which do not involve frequent transfers and therefore enjoy continuity of contact with membership and hence the leadership. Further, of the nine, only two are employed at a place away from the Central Office, while seven are employed in different railway offices or workshops in the city or suburbs of Madras — where the Central Office of the union is located. The proximity of employment to the Central Office may be an important factor in determining the holding of any position at the Central Office. Therefore, it may be concluded that other things being equal, stability of employment and proximity of employment to the Central office are likely to be two important factors in the election of office-bearers to the Central Office.

Working of Central Office

In running the Central Office, the Central Executive is assisted by one office manager, two clerks, one part-time stenographer and two attenders — all employed by the SITs. The Central Office is located in a spacious building owned by the SITs. The union owns its printing press and publishes a Tamil fortnightly bulletin, Thoshilalar Murasu, for publicity among members. Since most of the Central office bearers are regular railway employees they attend to trade union work after their office hours. Normally, most of them arrive at the Central Office after 5 p.m. and attend to the day-to-day trade union work till 8 p.m. Some of them visit
the Central Office even on holidays. On an average each of
them devotes about three hours per day to the Central Office
work.

The day-to-day work of the Central Office is divided into
various sections like the Permanent Negotiating Machinery (PNM),
publicity, membership enrolment etc. and each of the Office-
bearers attends to one or two sections of the work. The most
important work which takes much of the time of the Central
Office-bearers relates to the solving of the grievances of
members through representation and negotiation with the Southern
Railway Administration. The main forum of negotiation is the
Permanent Negotiating Machinery under which the Central Office-
bearers meet the General Manager of the Southern Railway. The
PNM meetings are to be held every quarter and the subjects in-
cluded for discussion should be those not within the competence
of Divisional Superintendent. The agenda for the PNM meetings
with General Manager should be drawn by the Central Office of
the SRRS and the subjects included for each meeting should not
exceed thirty. The stupendous amount of work involved in
coordinating the grievances pouring in from the different
Divisional Offices, shifting of issues and their classification,
drawing up of an agenda representing proper priority of issues
etc. no wonder, renders the Central Office, to a large extent
as a grievance representing authority. Every year on an average
the Central Office, receives about 3,000 representations and
letters of various grievances and problems from their divisional offices. In other words, the Central office receives on an average about ten grievance representations per working day. It would mean about 750 representations per quarter. But the union cannot include more than 30 subjects in the agenda of the quarterly FNM meetings. Sifting 750 representations and choosing 30 subjects is no mean task.

It is obvious that all the grievances received by the Central office cannot be included in the FNM meetings. Therefore, besides FNM meetings, the negotiations are also carried on through other avenues like the 'fortnightly contact meetings', with the Railway Administration, special meetings with the various heads of the departments of the railway, and also joint meetings along with the representatives of the other recognised union, with the Heads of the Departments. It looks as though the union's efforts are directed to one object and that is: how to redress the employees' grievances which they encounter in their day to day working life. The major issues before the union are not that of conflict between the interests of labour and management but those of securing to its members the rights and benefits granted by the employer.

66. For instance the Central Office received 1050 letters or representations in the last five months of 1970; 3003 in 1971 and 2188 in the first eleven months of 1972. See General Secretary's Report 53rd Annual Session, SNEC, Madras, 1972, pp.51-53.
S:

Structural Transformation

The above description represents a static picture of the SWS. A static picture of a union is not only descriptively inadequate but analytically defective, in that it obscures the dynamics of change in the internal organization and the external form, as a response to changes in the overall environment. To overcome the descriptive inadequacy, reference should be made to the morphology of the SWS at least since its reconstitution in 1957. The SWS has been responding to the changing trade union environment by making suitable amends both in its external and internal structure. These changes have often been subtle but some are discernible. An attempt is made here to identify the main changes in the external as well as internal structure.

Changes in External Structure

In the external structure of the SWS there have been certain changes which if extended, are bound to affect the pure Industrial-Federal form of the union. For instance, the Electric Traction Driver's Association was registered as a trade union in 1962. It claims affiliation to the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (NFIR) through the Ewing branch of the SWS. Though it is not actually affiliated to the NFIR it is treated as an 'associate' of the SWS. For all practical purposes it is like a branch of the SWS. But it is not directly represented on any of the governing

67. As mentioned by the Electric Traction Drivers' Association in its 1971 returns filed with the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras.
bodies of the SBS.

In recent times there appears to be a tendency on the part of the SBS to extend 'associate' status to some Industrial-Categorical type of unions. Technically an 'associate' union is independent but for all practical purposes it follows the policies of the SBS. In March 1974 an Industrial-Categorical type of union by the name Indian Railway Bridge Staff Association was formed. At the formation meeting it was "unanimously decided to affiliate this Association with the Southern Railway Employees' Sangh and to function as a separate branch of the SBS all levels". In April 1974 another Industrial-Categorical Union, All India Railway Telephone Operators' Association, was formed. The statement issued by this union reads: "This Association is affiliated with the Southern Railway Employees' Sangh locally and the NTR at all India level." It seems certain that the SBS and the NTR are ready to accommodate new types of unions into their fold and make amends to their traditional Industrial-Federal structure, if only it should lead to their strength.

Changes in Internal Structure

In the case of internal structure, the SBS has been constantly responding to the changing circumstances by introducing suitable modifications.

---

68. The Indian Railways Bridge Staff Association was formed on 17 March 1974 at Madras. A communication to that effect was sent by the Association to the Guntakal Divisional Office.

69. Based on the communication received by the Guntakal Divisional Office.
formerly, the union had a two-tier administrative structure con- 
sisting of the central office and the branch offices. with the 
growing importance of the PM as the means of achieving the 
union objectives, it became necessary to change the admini-
strative structure of the union parallel to the negotiating 
machinery.

In 1957, the divisional office was created and all 
branches in each division were placed under a divisional secre-
tary. the working of this system for about two and a half years 
made the Sangh to feel that the two aspects of functions—organ-
isational activities and redressal of grievances of members— 
required two divisional office-bearers. therefore, from January 
1960 the posts of divisional presidents were added...70 In 
1971, when it was found that the work of the branches was heavy, 
the size of the branch office bearers was raised from six to 
seven by adding the office of vice-chairman.71

Further, the growing tendency towards formation of cate-
gerical unions has been a matter of great concern to the SUES. 
The SUES has left no organisational stone unturned to provide 
adequate internal representation to various categories and 
thereby to create a feeling among the various categories that 
their interests are well represented and protected within the 
SUES, one such far reaching organisational innovation introduced

70. Instructions, op. cit., p.41.
71. General Secretary’s Report, 53rd Annual Session, SUES, 
Madras, p.93.
towards improving internal representation involved transformation of the size and composition of the General Council. Annexure IV.d provides a brief description of the Governing Bodies of the SBES. The Constitution of the union was amended to the effect that the representatives of the General Council are "elected at the rate of one for every 100 fully paid members of a recognised category in each Division, replacing the earlier provision of one member elected for every 1,000 regular members from each branch." The amendment, besides raising the size of the General Council, has changed the very character of its representation from general to categorical. In addition, provision is made for formation of Central and Divisional Forums for each or a group of categories. These categorical Forums may be considered as an effort to provide identity to various categories of employees within the union.

Further, with a view to bring about more categorical balance in the leadership at the branch level, suitable changes were introduced in the rules to provide that the delegates to the branch annual meeting shall be elected from each group of categories, and then the Branch Committee members and office-bearers be elected from amongst such delegates. Whatmore, to bolster the identity of each category within the SBES, rules were changed in 1972 to provide that those nominated to

73. Instructions, op. cit., pp.16-17.
participate in the PW meetings should bargain on the problems of a particular category or group of categories only with the assistance and along with the divisional representative of that category, so that the positive feeling created by such direct participation creates confidence and a sense of belonging. 74 Thus the SLES has been spearheading internal structural transformation to overcome the grievance of neglect or inadequate representation of the specific problems of individual categories and at the same time to maintain the strength and harmony of all categories of members.

In response to organisational changes in the railway, suitable changes in the internal structure of the SLES were made. When in October 1966, two Divisions of the Southern Railway were transferred to the newly formed South-Central Railway, the size of the SLES and its' organisational bodies had to face a decline. However, the SLES with a view to maintain the size of its General Body at a reasonable level, changed the delegate representation to one for every 200 fully paid members, 75 instead of the earlier provision of "one member elected for every 250 regular members...". Similarly, appropriate changes have been introduced in the Working Committee to enable it to gear itself up to increasing work. There has been repeated upward revision of the number of elected Working Committee members.

74. General Secretary's Report, 53rd Annual Session, op. cit., p.32.

75. Article 9 (a) of the Constitution of the SLES as amended in 1970.
from two in 1964 to three in 1966 to six in 1967 and to finally the present level of seven in 1970.\textsuperscript{76}

There are certain seemingly minor changes which are of major importance from the point of view of the union leadership. The original constitution of the S\&S restricted the 'membership' only to the railway servants and not even retired railway servants were eligible to become members of the union. When some of the most important leaders of the S\&S had to retire, the constitution was suitably amended to provide for 'honorary members'. The constitutional provision reads:

The General Body of the Sangh, may, before holding elections to the working committee, admit not more than two ex-railwaymen and one representative of the INTUC as honorary members and they shall be eligible for elections to the working committee and hold office in the Sangh.\textsuperscript{77} The significance of this innocuous change may be gauged from the fact that the present President and the General Secretary of the S\&S are the two ex-railwaymen and the INTUC representative is a Vice-President.

Yet another change involves the affiliation of the S\&S. Originally the S\&S was affiliated only to the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (NFIR) but later the union was also affiliated to the INTUC, whose objects and means are also akin

\textsuperscript{76} Register of Central Office-Bearers, Central Office, S\&S, Madras.

\textsuperscript{77} Article 7 (B) of the Constitution of the S\&S as amended in 1970.
to those of the Sangh." Thus S&H enjoys a 'dual affiliation'.

There have been two main driving forces behind the structural transformation of the S&H: (i) to consolidate and strengthen the union organisation in the face of keen external competition, and (ii) to gear the union administration to match the increasing emphasis on the function of negotiated settlement of grievances of the members. In the light of the fact that the S&H had not called for strike even once since its inception leaves 'negotiation' as the sole method of the union action. It may not be an exaggeration to state that much of the achievements of the S&H depend upon the extent to which it has succeeded in 'negotiating' better working and living conditions to their members. The impact of the institution of negotiating machinery on the structure and working of the S&H is considerable.

The preceding analysis of the growth and structure of trade union movement in the Indian Railways implies that the structure of unionism has been evolving into increasing complexity. The impact of the political, economic and institutional factors on the evolution of the unionism in the railways has not been inconsiderable. With continuous changes in the social, political and economic environment within which the unions work, there is nothing final about the existing trade
union structure. Once this dynamic aspect of the structural problem is recognised, then it will be possible to identify present problems and highlight the possible solutions. One should hasten to add, however, "that there can be no solution for all time; there can be a provisional analysis and weighing of arguments." 78

## Division and Class-wise Distribution of Employment in the Southern Railway as on 30-6-1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Class IV</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>9,571</td>
<td>12,122</td>
<td>21,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gunthankal</td>
<td>4,516</td>
<td>6,690</td>
<td>11,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Trichy</td>
<td>5,393</td>
<td>7,908</td>
<td>13,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Madurai</td>
<td>5,450</td>
<td>8,721</td>
<td>14,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Olokkott</td>
<td>6,472</td>
<td>10,110</td>
<td>16,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nysore</td>
<td>4,510</td>
<td>7,563</td>
<td>12,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Extra-Divisional</td>
<td>23,606</td>
<td>16,971</td>
<td>42,579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total     | 61,526     | 70,124    | 1,31,650 |

**Source:** Personnel Department, Posts Section, File No.P(P) 135/USP June 1971, Southern Railway Headquarter Office, Madras.
### Department-wise distribution of Employment in the Southern Railway as on 30-6-1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>No. of Employees</th>
<th>Percentage to total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Class III &amp; Class IV)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Operating</td>
<td>18,951</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>9,967</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>23,777</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>22,862</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Signal &amp; Telecommunications</td>
<td>2,108</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>5,235</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>3,517</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>2,734</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Extra-Divisional Establishment</td>
<td>42,579</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,31,650</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Same as in Annexure IV.1
Consolidated and Classified list of Trade Unions in the Southern Railway, 1975.

I. Industrial—Federal (IF)

1. Southern Railway Employees Sangh (SRES)
2. Southern Railway Mazdoor Union (SRMU)
3. Dakshin Railway Karmik Sangh (DRKS)

II. Industrial—Regional (IR)

1. Dakshin Railway Employees' Union (DREU)
2. South Rail Industrial Workers' Union (SRIU)
3. Southern Railway Employees' Progressive Union (SRPU)
4. Southern Railwaymen's Union
5. Southern Railway Labour Union (SRLU)
6. Dravida Railwaysmen's Union (DROU)

III. Industrial—Categorical (IC)

1. All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA)
2. All India Station Masters' and Assistant Station Masters' Association
3. All India Guards Council
4. All India Train Clerks' Association
5. All India Railway Ministerial Staff Association
6. Indian Railway Signal and Telecommunication Staff Association
7. All India Railway Commercial Clerks' Association
8. All India Cash Office Staff Association
9. Indian Railways Technical Supervisors' Association
10. All India Telegraph Staff Council
11. All India Railway Stenographers' Association
12. All India Railway Draughtsmen's Association
13. All India Upgraded Accounts Staff Association
14. Indian Railway Foreman's Association
15. All India Train Controllers' Association
16. All India Railway Telephone Operators' Association
17. All India Personnel Branch Staff Association

Industrial-Categorical-Regional (ICG)

1. Southern Railway Class IV Workers' Union
2. Indian Railway Sanitary Inspectors' Union
3. Southern Railway Loco-works Gatemans' Workers' Union
4. Southern Railway Coal Workers' Union
5. Madras Railway Coal Workers' Union
6. Indian Railways Production Control Organisation Inspectors' Association
7. Electric Traction Drivers' Association
8. Class IV Workers' Union
9. Southern Railway Ticket checking Staff Association
10. Southern Railway Engineering Labourers' Association
11. Southern Railway Yard Khalsasis Council
12. Southern Railway Mechanical Artisans' Council
13. Southern Railway Basic Tradesmen Committee
14. Southern Railway Loco Artisans' Association
15. Southern Railway Switchmen's Association
16. Southern Railway Mechanical and Rolling Staff Association
17. Southern Railway Supervisory Staff Association
18. Southern Railway Construction Workers' Union
19. IV Shed Labourers' Association
20. Southern Railway Engineering Inspectors' Association
21. Southern Railway Class IV Council
22. Indian Railways Bridge Staff Association
23. Dakshin Railway Casual Labour Union
24. Southern Railway Casual Labourers' Union
25. Railway Protection Force Association
26. Southern Railway School Teachers' Association
27. Southern Railway Foreman's Council
28. Indian Railways Permanent Way Staff Association

Total .. 54

Sources: 1. Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras
2. Southern Railway Headquarters Office, Madras
3. Cantakal Divisional Office, Southern Railway, Cantakal
4. Railway Board Office, New Delhi
A Brief Note on the Governing Bodies of the SES

Working

The SES is governed by three important Constitutional Bodies viz., (i) the Working Committee, (ii) the General Body, and (iii) the General Council. The Working Committee is the executive organ of the SES. The Working Committee has the constitutional power of general supervision of the administration of the union. Besides, it is responsible for the execution of the policy decisions of the General Body. The Working Committee of the SES consists of the office-bearers of the Central Office, the Divisional and Extra-Divisional Office-bearers and seven members at the rate of one for each Division and one for the Extra-Divisional Establishments. All the officers of the Working Committee are elected by the General Body, normally for a period of two years. The constitution places a limit on the size of the Working Committee at 25 and the present size is 22 which is far below the upper limit. The Working Committee is expected to meet every quarter or more frequently if necessary.

General

The General Body is the supreme policy making authority of the SES. It is a democratic body consisting of (i) delegates directly elected by the members at the rate of one for every 200 fully paid members; (ii) the Chairman and Secretaries of branches, and (iii) the Working Committee members. The present size of the General Body is about 400. It meets
once in every year to decide inter alia, the accounts, annual report and any other matter of importance referred to it by the Working Committee. The annual session of the General Body is an important event of the union, where an opportunity is provided to the union leaders not only to take decisions on important matters but also to meet and exchange ideas on various aspects of union administration at various levels. With a view to carry the message of the union far and wide and to create a sense of direct participation among the rank and file, the SRES has been trying to hold the annual sessions of the General Body at different places in the Southern Railway area.

General Council The General Council of the SRES is neither an executive nor a policy making body. It is an organisational innovation towards satisfactory handling of the problems of numerous categories of railway employees. It is an advisory body to make specific recommendations on the problems of different categories. The composition of the General Council, therefore, retains the emphasis on the categorical identity of the members. The council consists of representatives elected at the rate of one for every 100 fully paid members of a recognised category in each Division.

Besides the delegates, the General Council consists of all the members of the Working Committee and the Branch Chairman